

Xenophobia and xenophilia in South Africa

Africans migrants in Cape Town (1)

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Abstract

Anthropologists are citizens of the world because they are able to manoeuvre in and out of foreign cultures but there are other ways of being cosmopolitan. African migrants display similar competencies when they are away from home. A certain type of migrant, the sort that travels without passports or visas, without any particular place to go, making new lives wherever they happen to be challenges the system of global apartheid and claims the right to move freely in defiance of the regime of state borders (erroneously referred to as 'national boundaries'). Such migrants also make it possible for others, who belong to the immobile 97 per cent of the human population that never leaves home, to connect with the world in ways that facilitate various cultural, economic and other transfers between resource surplus and deficit areas. Sometimes their impact upon the host population in dramatic and unpredictable ways belies their small numbers.

My presentation celebrates demotic cosmopolitanism, personal mobility in post-apartheid South Africa and seeks to shift the focus in migration studies from labour migration and refugees to independent 'economic' migrants. Despite the best efforts of postcolonial states to tie African people's mobility to labour contracts, some migrants have managed to venture beyond the confines of their nation-states, crafts or levels of education in order to 'find a place for themselves' wherever they choose.

Depending as they do for their success on personal relationships with fellow migrants and with individuals in the host country these migrants are able to make journeys to unknown destinations reminiscent of the migration myths of old, the sort of journey that in Zambian Bemba is referred to as going *iciyeyeye*.

¹ The research from which this paper is derived was funded by the University Research Committee of the University of Cape Town and the Centre for Scientific Development/National Research Foundation Grant number 15/13/16/0290. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the NRF or UCT. I am grateful for the research assistance I received from Serge, Mrs. Brinkhuis, Issa, David, Rachel, and Mrs. Dhlomo in conducting the research and also to Professor Brokensha and Professor Pendleton for commenting on earlier drafts of this paper. The errors and omissions that remain are my responsibility.

1. Introduction

'Mwana shenda atasha nyina kunaya

'He who doesn't travel claims his mother is the best cook in the world.'

Zambian saying.

One of the justifications for the National Party's apartheid policy was that peaceful co-existence was only possible when different racial/cultural/population groups lived apart. Many anthropologists had already declared that 'segregation is impossible'² by the time the colonists created the apartheid state and then as now the state continues to segregate. Whatever the advantages of *apartness* are (more economic than cultural), the South African system came to an end just as the rest of the world was reinventing it in new forms. Global apartheid policed by the regime of visas and passports in a manner that African migrant workers who used to have to carry their *vitupa* and passbooks to gain access to wage employment would easily recognize as colonial still does the job of keeping wealth and poverty apart. Labour migration from cheap labour to high wages economic zones makes a lot of sense just as it makes sense for capital to relocate continuously to high profit economies. State capitalism violates the right of equal pay for equal work as well as the right to free movement by imposing the regime of borders and visas which global apartheid possible. The irony for South Africa as Bond (2001) has shown is that the political activists who fought against apartheid at home ended up acquiescing to the demands of the global system once they were in government and doing business with finance capital.

Hart (2001) has given a comprehensive review of the ongoing 'battle between territorial nationalism and cosmopolitan commerce' which explains why global apartheid the preoccupation of the state and not the market. Even in the system of virtual capitalism where the 'absentee landlord Mark II' capitalists can avoid seeing the negative effects of their trading (Bauman 1998) thereby feeling free to do

² This view was expressed by Radcliffe-Browne in his UCT Inaugural lecture and in various ways also by Schapera and Gluckman as analysed by Cocks (2002).

nothing about the unemployed and the poor, the irresponsible state that they have created though it may be unable to provide drinking water is nevertheless provided with sufficient means to put out the fires of revolt. Like the Bantustans of the old South Africa, many states throughout the world now find that their main function is to wage war against terror, stop trade in counterfeit goods, narcotics, control anti-globalisation activists, and deport 'illegal aliens'. In many ways, what Mamdani has described for the colonial world in his citizens and subjects thesis whereby 'In a nutshell, different races were meant to have a common future; different ethnicities were not.' (Mamdani2004:5) This is an accurate description of global apartheid as well except that the latter does not tolerate customary law and espouses a universal human rights charter and common law while ensuring that human rights, like wages remain unevenly distributed.

Bauman (1998: 86) postulates a 'global hierarchy of mobility' wherein:

The dimension along which those 'high up' and low down' are plotted in a society of consumers, is their degree of mobility – their freedom to choose where to be.

Thus mobility is the main stratifying principle in 'the postmodern consumer society' and despite this, the population flows are neither a new thing nor as massive as they are made to sound (Trouillot:127) The desire to leave home, has not produced the apocalyptic floods of humanity that alarmist governments and xenophobes around the world complain about. The great majority of the world's population does not appear to be interested in leaving home even in times of war and famine. Thus although it has been noted (Cohen, 1997: 162) that, 'In the age of globalization, unexpected people turn up in the most unexpected places.' These are a tiny minority. Furthermore, this not an entirely new thing as sociology tends to suggest. Unexpected people have always turned up in unexpected places and not always in times of economic or environmental stress. The oral traditions of many villages, clans, kingdoms suggest that travellers have always been part of life. Many anthropologists who have worked in Africa have certainly been

aware of strangers (like the Ndebele that Colson encountered in Tonga villages, or Banyarwanda that Robertson met in Uganda not to mention the urban migrants) and much of what we currently grapple with concerning hybrid cultures and identities was anticipated by that early work.

My interest in the lives of migrants in Cape Town was in part stimulated by newspaper stories on the plight of migrants in South Africa. But rather than look at refugees and asylum seekers as such, I sought out the free agent whose refugee status is mainly a means of gaining access to government documents, and who might otherwise be called 'economic migrants'. Although driven to migrate by economic and social pressures, such a migrant does not leave home to look for a job on a farm or in the mines but sets out to attain upward social mobility and create their own niche in the global market – what some of my informants referred to as 'finding a place'. This concept is central to the making of shifting citizenships. As in swidden agriculture (shifting cultivation) movement is in stages and thus involves straddling the sites of declining fertility that have supported life up to now and the still hostile and unknown new sites of higher productivity and future abundance. Shifting citizenships involve gathering what is available and staking a claim to civic citizenship in return for new labour. As will be shown below, the women more than the men in Cape Town seem to understand the practice of greeting strangers with gifts of food and on the third day, as Julius Nyerere once explained, giving them the hoe and inviting them to join in the cultivation of the land. The assessment of the South African men seems to be that more strangers means less resources for everyone.

Freedom of movement like the free market is a concept that the colonial world systematically undermines and global apartheid generates the same kind of *laager* mentality that sees everyone who is on the other side of the border as an enemy. In South Africa both the new global apartheid and the old colonial legacy combine to create a system that goes against the country's liberal constitution as well as

the Rainbow Nation ideology that was created by the makers of the miraculous transition out of apartheid.

Even though apartheid as official policy ceased to exist in 1994 when South Africa held its first democratic elections based on a universal adult franchise, the colonial legacies still linger on in the institutionalised spatial, social and mental divides. This society that separates people from one another though historically they have been together for centuries is what thousands of immigrants found when they arrived in increasing numbers in the New South Africa. As many studies show, they found black and white South Africans generally hostile hosts.³ Crush and Pendleton (2003) showed that in their xenophobia surveys there was no statistical difference between the attitudes of men and women, or black and white South Africans. Although my work did not refute the SAMP findings, the survey does not tell the whole story and at the microlevel persons may make choices that contradict their own beliefs and attitudes. The perception of many migrants, as will be shown below, is that South African men are more xenophobic in practice than women.

South Africa, and especially Cape Town, is one of the 'most cosmopolitan regions of the world' in the manner Joel S. Kahn described South East Asia. The Report of the Global Commission on International Migration (2005:42) describes global cities as '...highly cosmopolitan urban areas that accommodate large numbers of migrants, allowing them to be well placed to capitalize on new trading, investment and business opportunities opened up by the process of globalization.' Cape Town was such a place centuries before jet travel and the Internet. It seems to me that to be human (humane) is to be cosmopolitan. The truly isolated and xenophobic society is almost fictitious but in South African history the hospitality of the host population has tended to be overshadowed by the violence and inhumanity of imperialism which has over the long period of colonial rule and apartheid left the country with a very divided society. Wilson

and Mafeje (1963) studied the predominantly African township of Langa but made sufficient references to Langa's connections with the rest of the city to demonstrate that segregation was indeed impossible even at the height of apartheid urban planning because the different sections of the city operated within one social and economic system.

With the end of official apartheid scholars shifted their research focus from labour migration to forced migration and refugee studies. The global anti-apartheid movement likewise sought new challenges pertaining to the protection of basic human rights generally and especially the rights of refugees and migrants i.e. those who were being excluded from South Africa's new democratic society. Despite having one of the most liberal constitutions in the world, South Africa has acquired a reputation for illiberal, xenophobic and nationalist attitudes and practices in both the state and civil society. Exposing the violence of the police and immigration officials against foreigners (especially foreign Africans) has become the specialisation of many a journalist and scholar and xenophobia stories are now as frequent as murder and disaster reports. A Cape Town newspaper, for example, dedicated almost its entire current issues page to three reports by the same writer on the plight of Nigerians in South Africa and described how Nigerians have to keep receipts for everything they buy because when they are raided by police they could be arrested for not being able to prove that their television, DVD player or microwave oven was not stolen.⁴ Such reports tell South African and overseas readers that the manner in which the apartheid state mistreated Africans is as bad or may even have been exceeded by the violent xenophobia that migrants and refugees face today. Thus for example black policemen are reportedly more cruel in their treatment of Nigerians than their

³ The most comprehensive studies of South African xenophobia are in the Southern African Migration Project led by Jonathan Crush which has been monitoring migration policy, patterns and related issues since 1996.
<http://www.queensu.ca/samp/>

⁴ Yolandi Groenewald 'Desperately seeking status' *Mail & Guardian* March 31 to April 6, 2006, p14 or Bearegard Tromp (Independent Foreign Service) 'Tarred with the same dirty brush: years of poisonous xenophobia have made it almost impossible for Nigerians to build a life here' *Cape Argus* Tuesday March 14 2006. p.10. Articles of this nature have been appearing regularly in the local press since the late 1990s see for example 'Job-less Mob Goes on Death Rampage,' *Cape Argus*, 4 September 1998, p.9.; 'African Foreigners Terrorized,' Tangenu Amupadhi, *Mail & Guardian*, 18-23 December 1998, p.3; or 'Media Berated for Stoking Xenophobia,' Pamela Dube, *The Sunday Independent*, 27 February 2000, p.3.

white counterparts. This goes against the findings of the SAMP surveys which show levels of xenophobia to be evenly distributed in South African society but confirms the stories I heard from Congolese and East Africans in Cape Town.

Cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitans

In this section I will examine popular(vernacular, demotic etc) ways of doing cosmopolitanism. Anthropologists like to think that they are citizens of the world because they are able to manoeuvre their way in and out of foreign cultures but they are not the only ones. The Bemba saying above suggests that in order to know that your mother is not the best cook in the world you should visit your other relatives, venture further a-field and explore. Your mother may well be the best cook in the world but unless you have something else to compare to you will never know. Despite this value attached to travel, migration statistics suggest that not more than three per cent of the global population live outside the countries of their birth. Thus according to the Report of the GCMI (2005:5) ‘.. the number of international migrants has doubled in the past 25 years, although as a proportion of the world’s total population it remains rather modest, at around three per cent.’ Whether this is because they do not wish to travel or because they cannot afford to is not clear but we can safely say that for most countries, there hasn’t been a deluge of foreigners. In South Africa as elsewhere, the number of ‘illegal aliens’ or undocumented migrants is simply raised to more than twenty percent of the population by security officials without any evidence to back their claims. Needless to say such alarmist guesstimates help to create a sense of siege in the local population. Hussein Solomon quotes sociologist and politician Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert as announcing at a Human Sciences Research Council symposium that the number of illegal aliens in the country might be as high as twelve million. As Solomon notes ‘Once again, it is not certain how such a figure was calculated. Moreover, the figure of twelve million might be an over-estimation, since this would imply that one in four South Africans is an illegal alien!’

[‘http://www.up.ac.za/academic/libarts/polsci/uafs/immigration.html](http://www.up.ac.za/academic/libarts/polsci/uafs/immigration.html)

African migrants thus come to a hostile South Africa and need to develop the relevant skills and competencies to survive hostile officials, foreign cultures and street violence. Certain migrants, the sort that travel without passports or visas, without any particular place to go, making new lives wherever they happen to be: not only:

- challenge the system of global apartheid which uses the obsolescent regime of state borders ('national boundaries') to keep wealth away from the poverty stricken;
- make it possible for others who belong to the immobile 97 per cent of the global population that never leaves home, to connect with the world in ways that facilitate the transfer of resources between centres and peripheries;
- sometimes impact upon the host population in dramatic and unpredictable ways that belies their small numbers. The cases discussed in this paper celebrate the mobility of a very small group of mobile Africans who are not the usual labour migrant or refugee camp fare of anthropological studies.

These young men (women and children are also involved) are not normally recipients of state, UN agency or NGO humanitarian charity or relief and who enjoy their freedom of movement despite the best efforts of postcolonial and post imperial states to limit them. What they depend on for their survival are personal relationships with each other and with individuals in the host country. Although cosmopolitanism as a movement or way of thinking is perceived by many political studies and IR theorists as the antidote to the resurgent nationalism in a globalizing world, the paper argues that there is much that is not new in the African migrants' method of shifting citizenship. Modernisation has meant sedentarisation rather than steadily increasing mobility for most Africans, as Cooper (2001) has shown. The numerous mass migrations of pre-colonial Africa provide us with a model, some idea of how clan, kingdom, territorial and other borders were crossed in the past by people who embarked on one-way journeys to unknown destinations or what in Zambian Bemba is referred to as *icijeyeye*. It is still believed that people leave home to seek work. Even the report of

the Global Commission on Migration which has a very comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon of migration nevertheless attaches a lot of attention to labour migrants and their rights. Needless to say, migrants who are not refugees or labourers have little sympathy from the authorities. Nevertheless they do exist. In a song made popular by Alick Nkhata *Kalindawalo ni mfumu*, the migrant sings: *Napita nkaone njanji ningafe ko saiona* 'I am off to see the railway lest I die without setting eyes on it. (The Alick Nkhata 'album Shalapo' was issued on RETRO4CD). This goes beyond the bright lights or rite of passage theory of migration based on pull factors in that it defines a world in which the freedom of movement is highly valued and this freedom was seriously compromised by the border myths of the tribal authority and the colony. In theory tribute paying was voluntary and not even the martial regimes of the Nguni kingdoms could subject everyone to their rule by force. Subjects could deprive kings of tribute by going *icinye* and not looking back. The modern colonial state fenced in its subjects and could thus rule them whether they liked it or not. In a similar way state capitalism does not free (African) people from feudal immobility on the contrary it creates and enforces a system of regulated labour migration where some people die without seeing the railway because they lack the necessary papers.

3. Xenophobia in Cape Town

In this section I will describe the colonial tradition of divide and rule which is based on violent competition for scarce resources and show that in Cape Town this struggle occurs in the male dominated arena of competing nationalisms. While arguing that segregation was impossible, Radcliffe-Browne apparently did not think an open society based on free competition and free labour was a good idea and must have thought 'white civilisation' was worth fighting for. One thing that the early anthropologists saw was that there were forces at work beyond the control of even the most authoritarian regimes. In similar vein the vigorous state managed attempt to limit globalisation to the free movement of capital, controlled mobility of certain goods to certain markets but limited movement for poor people flies in the face of

capitalism and common sense. Segregation is impossible at the national and global level but of course some people will die trying to make it work. In South Africa as in the rest of the world exclusionary practice is justified by ideologies that glorify difference in order to thereby generate bogeymen against whom terroristic wars are fought or scapegoats that can take the blame for the failures of the state capitalist system to provide work, security and health.

In the European tradition, xenophobia is different from but closely related with racism, anti-Semitism and now, Islamophobia. According to Banton (1996: 8) racism may be defined as that dimension of ethnocentric behaviour:

...by which persons assigned to another group are kept at a distance because they are considered racially inferior.

Xenophobia can designate the way that others are kept at a distance because they are considered different.

In practice, there is little difference between racial and cultural excuses for anti-human behaviour. Persons and societies either promote tolerance or accept intolerance and the latter has in the past usually resulted in gross human rights violations.

In South Africa, xenophobia manifests itself generally in the form of a nationalistic, (proudly South African as the jingoistic manufactures' jingle goes) fear of non-South Africans no matter what their origins. Post-apartheid xenophobia, is, however, most notorious as hostility towards black Africans who do not speak a Nguni or Sotho language and who are defined as being 'pitch black'. In the 1998 Human Rights Watch Report on South Africa, (<http://www.africaaction.org/docs98/sa9805.htm>) whose very production suggests that the violation of migrants basic human rights had attracted international attention - the Police were reported as arresting people perceived to be different:

South Africa has been deporting an increasing number of migrants each year since 1994, and reaching close to 200,000 people in 1997. Suspected undocumented migrants are identified by the authorities through unreliable means such as complexion, accent, or inoculation marks. We documented cases of persons who claimed they were arrested for being "too black," having a foreign name, or in one case, walking "like a Mozambican." Many of those arrested--up to twenty percent of the total in some areas by our calculation--are actually South African citizens or lawful residents, who often have to spend several days in detention while attempting to convince officials of their legitimate status.

This hostility towards the racialised other African even extends to, for example, Venda speakers who though South African are demonised together with Senegalese or Congolese as *makwerekwere*.⁵

Soon after this report came out the South African Human Rights Commission together with other refugee rights, legal aid organizations and human rights activists supported by the Department of Home Affairs got together to launch a campaign to 'Roll Back Xenophobia'. This public awareness campaign was a response to the horrible media reports of violence against foreign Africans, some of whom were refugees and asylum seekers. Six years later the campaign may have had a positive impact in that although we cannot tell if the extent of xenophobia has declined or what the causes are, the condemnations of xenophobia have been quite loud. Before that the government was silent on the matter and newspapers were reporting regular attacks. The UNHCR in Pretoria noted that:

Xenophobia is on the rise in South Africa. In the past two years more than 30 innocent refugees and asylum seekers have been brutally killed, simply because they were foreigners. Increasingly, persons perceived as foreigners fall victim to hostile attacks and otherwise outrageous xenophobic

⁵ This can be translated as 'the babblers' a term Colson used to refer to the Tonga description of the Ndebele strangers in their midst

behaviour. Unfortunately it took the brutal killing of three foreign Africans on a train near Pretoria, to awaken a large part of the public to the dangerous phenomenon called xenophobia. UNHCR, 1999:1)

The three victims, one Mozambican and two Senegalese were attacked by a mob that was part of a group returning from a march for jobs in Johannesburg. Their murders were thus a result of 'mass action' although the leaders of the association of the unemployed, naturally, disassociated themselves from the violent attack. The UNHCR's 'Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign' defined South African xenophobia as '...a deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals' but who are these *nationals*? Essentially nationals are in this context, people with government ID documents and not members of a particular nationality. We can argue for example that Zimbabwean and South African Zulu speakers belong to the same Nguni nation even if they are not subjects of the same postcolonial state, but in any case xenophobes do not ask their victims for government papers before attacking them. The South Africa police have been accused of tearing up valid travel documents belonging to people they perceived as foreigners. Thus, in the apartheid tradition, people are whatever state officials define them to be and not what they claim or know themselves to be. Gellner (1995: 7) defined European xenophobia as '..hostility to the Other' based on age old cultural differences and social boundaries. He also warned that

By linking dislike of the Other to citizenship rights, nationalism turns xenophobia from what may, in favourable circumstances, be a mere human foible, into a destructive, dangerous, force.

Even in Europe where the Other tends to be black, nationals cannot be identified by their appearance because the Other has now come to stay in Europe and cannot be wished or legislated away. In South Africa both police and private citizens try to identify foreign Africans as the Other by their darker pigmentation and by their incompetence in South African languages, however, there are enough South Africans (born

and bred) who have failed these (judging nationality by appearance method) tests as to render them unreliable. This has not stopped xenophobes from looking with suspicion upon those who appear 'pitch black' or are heard to speak English, French, Portuguese or another African language in contexts where Nguni and Sotho languages are the norm.

On Sunday, 11 July 1999, I met with Pascal, Cindy his South African girlfriend, Roman his friend from Congo, Peter from Burundi and John his fellow Tanzanian in professor Chachage's Forest Hill flat in Mowbray, Cape Town. I wanted them to tell me about the life of a migrant in South Africa and how it compared with what they had experienced in other countries. I expected them to talk about Zambia or Botswana, and they did, but they also spoke about how Koreans stare at black people in Pusan and John mentioned in passing that he left Johannesburg for Cape Town because 'Hillbrow is like Harlem'. Needless to say I found the world of the African migrant that they were describing intriguing and set out to find out more about these demotic cosmopolitans who are not anthropologists, refugees or asylum seekers and who travel the world as they please (until some government authority blocks their path).

As already noted dark skin still carries the negative stereotypes it had under apartheid and today *makwerekwere* are placed at the bottom of the pigmentocracy by South Africans. Thus Pascal, a Tanzanian migrant who became South African by obtaining an ID document and also by learning to speak isiXhosa recalled that when once asked his Xhosa friends what the meaning of *kwerekwere* was. The friend looked at him and said, 'Your appearance is not like a *kwerekwere*'. When asked why he replied - *Because you are not so black*. Looking like a South African is not difficult and is mainly a matter of what clothes one wears. Looking like a foreigner is equally easy but foreign clothes can be worn by anyone. What this example shows is that like the cannibals of old, *makwerekwere* are at close range

Official statistics do not show that there has been a flood of foreigners into the country, but guesstimates put out by alarmist both in academia and the news media as well as political leaders, promote the belief that millions of 'illegal aliens' are present in the country. They are blamed for contributing to the spread of squatter settlements, crime and disease. This is a myth that has been disproved by a number of researchers notably those involved in the Southern African Migration Project at IDASA, (see for example David McDonald et al., 1998).

According to the Report of the GCIM all countries are origin, transit and host countries and this is true of South Africa as well. Migrants with professional qualifications as well as unskilled workers move to other parts of the world the chance presents itself. South Africa provides opportunities for getting skills, money, and contacts and for non-English speakers the chance to improve their English before embarking on the trip to America, Australia or Europe but the country also benefits from the 'brain gain' by employing well trained workers and professionals from other countries.

In a study of xenophobia in 16th Century London Lien Bich Luu (2000) has shown that the main cause of London's reputation as a xenophobic city was the discriminatory laws that the authorities applied differently to native born and aliens. Amsterdam, which had a more friendly policy, attracted most of the immigrants' capital and skills at London's expense.

In Britain they ask: 'When are you going back?' and in South Africa they say: 'Go back to your own country – or else. Usually the threats come from colleagues at work but also from police who make regular raids on houses where foreigners are known to stay. An Angolan refugee recalled how his South African work mates aggressively reminded him that the war was over in Angola and he had no business in South Africa any more. There were some Angolans who rushed back to Luanda as soon as the war ended but others decided to stay. As far as the South Africans are concerned these people are stealing jobs from the locals. In a way, there is a desperate life and death struggle

for work in the formal economy but there are also opportunities in the informal sector which also pit South Africans against foreigners. As the SAMP (1998) surveys showed, foreigners have had a positive impact on the South African economy – creating work rather than ‘stealing jobs’ especially in the informal sector where many migrants earn their living as traders.

It is as if the xenophobe is convinced that his own (and it usually is a man) existence is threatened by these foreigners who steal his woman and his job. Many migrants know from direct or indirect experience that foreigners do get stabbed or thrown off moving trains. Even refugees from war torn countries consider their lives at greater risk in South Africa’s violent cities and are thus always on the look out for danger. But how can we tell if a Congolese is attacked because he is a foreigner and not because he is being robbed of a cell phone? In many cases the violence that foreigners fall prey to is also directed at locals but migrants seem to find violence in South Africa particularly senseless and unpredictable. As an Angolan refugee said:

I stayed in the township but sincerely I do not have any South African friend, because once you befriend them, next time you will argue and the following day you end up being stabbed by your so called friend around a glass of wine or beer, so I try to say ‘Hi’ on the road and that’s all. The more you trust them the greater your risk of death.. (Joaquin Francisco, interviewed Tuesday May 18 2004)

The reflexive xenophobia of the migrants, like that of the South Africans is based on belief that the Other poses a threat to their existence. Although all South Africans are considered racist - (this confirms the SAMP survey findings that South Africans tend to be xenophobic irrespective of their social background). African migrants hardly have any contact with white South Africans and thus they experience most of the insults and violence at the hands of their black colleagues and neighbours with whom they live in the shack settlements and townships.

Migrants explain South African xenophobia as being due Bantu education and apartheid era isolation. When asked to describe their experience of xenophobia they give accounts of conflict that suggest that black South African men in particular resent the presence of foreign African as rivals for wage employment, urban housing and other resources. Another Angolan refugee described how his colleagues liked to remind him that 'The war in Angola is now over, you must go back'. Although his colleagues called him a *kwerekwere*, they never physically attacked him but what he thought was that whites and coloureds did not taunt him in this way because they were 'more educated' and that 'Blacks from South Africa are sometimes jealous because I do my job very well'. (Antonio Do Santos Interviewed May 2004)

In the next section I will highlight the little studied phenomenon of xenophilia, the love for the foreigner which is also part and parcel of the encounter between foreign Africans and South Africans, in other words, the same xenophobic South African society that has been exposed by journalists and SAMP surveys also absorbs and cares for thousands of foreigners. In an earlier attempt to tackle this issue (Sichone 2003:138) I came to the conclusion that '...one of the conclusions that South Africans who befriend foreigners reach is that they are not so different after all.' I will not refer to the support that NGOs, faith based and other organisations give to migrants and refugees but focus instead on the South African women who take care of the migrants when they first arrive, My Tanzanian contact, Pascal referred to some of them as the 'Xhosa mama' who provide new arrivals with accommodation and counter the ill-treatment that *makwerekwere* suffer at the hands of South African men. The 'Xhosa mama' treats foreigners, strangers, aliens etc as fellow human beings from the beginning just as the xenophobic men are hostile to strangers even before they encounter them. On the one hand the women show empathy and compassion while the men in the same situation are violently opposed to the presence of the Other African

Xenophilia and the goodness of women

South Africa is different from Central Africa where citizens always open the doors to their neighbours. Only the women are good here in South Africa, if it was that the women were not good, we will never survive in this country. (Christian, a refugee from Congo-Brazzaville interviewed Paarl 2001)

Migrants and refugees consider South Africans to be lacking in hospitality and claim that in their own countries neighbours and relatives visit each other and even strangers are welcomed into people's homes. This is not entirely true suffice it to say that those who trust the Other do get invited and do venture into their homes. Thus although the xenophobe may accuse foreigners of stealing our jobs, our houses and corrupting our women and thus pose a danger to us, friendships and marriages between foreign men and South African women show that the latter do not consider migrants a threat to their existence (except when they blame the spread of HIV on foreigners). In what might be described as re-Africanisation, some of the migrants teach their South African partners to cook Central or West African dishes, some of the women convert to Islam. Angolan refugee Raphaël even imposed a new name and domestic regime on his wife:

Raphaël and Muambuyi

Having been married for 10 years this couple had stayed in Gugulethu (predominantly black) with the wife's mother but they relocated to Mitchell's Plain (predominantly coloured) to escape the constant harassment from thieves. Raphaël was very aggressive about giving his wife and children an Angolan identity even though (or maybe precisely because) he had made the decision to make South Africa his new home. He justified the giving of his wife an Angolan name thus:

I had made sure from the beginning that she changes her character and starts behaving like a typical African lady. She does what I tell her to do and listen to what I say. Her name is

Central African one. I just gave her that name to make her more mine, not in a sense of owning, but more familiar if she had the name that I give her. (Raphaël and Muambuyi, Interviewed 28 June 2004)

In other words to make her less foreign he sought to erase her own identity. Raphaël can be accused of 'stealing our women' although he has learnt to speak IsiXhosa while his wife speaks neither Portuguese nor Lingala. They have never been to Angola to meet his people and although he thinks he is creating an Angolan family abroad, it is at present a very South African family.

For her part, although Muambuyi complained about being made economically dependent like a child she had in part bought into the idea that South Africans are too westernised and that Raphaël was teaching her the African culture she had lost. She was proud of the fact that she had learnt how to prepare Angolan meals and boasted that she was now a much better cook than her husband but in a way she had become through him a stranger in her own country:

My husband used to be attacked and robbed when we were in (Gugulethu) township, but now that has stopped shortly before we left for Mitchell's Plain. I can say we used to be victims of robbery at home, just my husband was making business in township and that created a feeling a jealousy in township's boys. I now feel like I am also not from here, because he leads me in an African way (Raphaël and Muambuyi, Interviewed 28 June 2004)

The Case of an integrated Angolan

Alfonso Joa Domingos an Angolan of Mbundu ethnic affiliation is married to a South African woman and speaks isiXhosa. He has refugee status and has decided to make South Africa his home despite being an MPLA activist in Angola. His experience of South African life is very different from that of most Angolans in Cape Town and he

attributes this to his wife's influence and especially his ability to speak a local language. He works as a driver for a Portuguese businessman, who was originally from Mozambique and says:

If you are white, I think it is easy to have a paper from Home Affairs. My Relation with coloured people is very good, even with blacks, because I can speak my wife's language. When I spoke this language it's really hard to notice that I'm from Angola. The majority of my friends are black South Africans. I met them at work and in Township nightclubs.

In contrast other Angolans tended to be more comfortable with white and coloured colleagues and to regard their black South African neighbours, not to mention government officials, as consistently hostile towards foreign Africans.

The Restless Congolese

(1) Jaque Ilunga – Ngdie is from Congo (Kinshasa) of Baluka-Katano extraction single, after more than five years in the country he did not feel adjusted. Despite his three years of tertiary education the only work he could find in Cape Town was that of a security guard. After his arrival in June 1998 he waited for two years to get his refugee papers in a process he describes as 'extremely complicated'. He had previously lived in Zambia and Mozambique but left for a better life in South Africa. His assessment of his current situation however suggested a very frustrated man:

Life is basically impossible in South Africa as a refugee. I'm tempted to go else where like Canada. Yes I have a job, the majority of society do not like us, only the security companies (offer work). Racial abuse, violence, discrimination and xenophobia I have seen it all. Sometimes blacks from South Africa call us makwiri kwiri. I do not exactly know the meaning of this word. Before I came in South Africa I was in Zambia and Mozambique. I

spent two months in Zambia and no one called me foreigner, not even in Mozambique. South Africans treat you better if you are white foreigner. My own experience; white and colored South Africans are better than blacks. The way that whites and coloureds manifest their racism is really different from blacks. I do have one South African friend, I met him at church, he is colored. (Interview May 2004)

(2) Richard Kunku is from Congo (Brazzaville) he left his country in 1998 via Cabinda, Angola and Namibia and got to South Africa in 2002. He has refugee status and although he says he enjoys more peace and freedom than he did in Angola refugee camp he does not regard South Africa as his final destination:

My intention was to come here and rest my soul, and go home if everything goes well, but an opening is seen to go away to Europe, I shall go for it because here we are treated far less than human and discriminated at the lowest stage of the world. The job that I do takes all my time and I get paid (little), 75 Rand (7 pounds) for a day. (Interview 18 May 2004)

The two men have had quite different experiences but they both do work that is not commensurate with their levels of education. The humiliation of working as poorly paid security guards, supermarket trolley attendants etc. drives some to try out informal sector trading. Hair salons are particularly common though it has been suggested that they are a front for illicit enterprises. Others enrol in local colleges to improve their English and obtain higher qualifications in computer science or law but there are almost no scholarships to help refugees fund their university education and the migrants who attend college are either supported by families abroad or by South African partners.

The Case of the Somali Nomad

This extended case study of a Somali man's wanderings is not meant to be representative. Rather the aim is to show the skills that are deployed and the resources that are deployed when migrants are away from home. Ishmael had refugee status, was married to a Cape Town woman and well established as a street vendor on Durban Road, Mowbray when Pascal introduced him to me as a fellow East African. During the course of our discussions I provided him with information about refugee rights, visas and international travel which he used to relocate to Britain. His stories show one thing that my other cases have confirmed, that even in the most hostile societies, there are always those who take it upon themselves to help others. It would be impossible to travel or do fieldwork if it were not for the hospitality that people give to others.

Ishmael's grandfather was a well to do businessman in British Somaliland who traded in camels and other live stock. He married a woman from the Ogaden and during the interclan war of 1948 (? See I.M. Lewis, 1980: 135) he lost his entire herd of more than 200 camels. His affines (some people do indeed marry their enemies!), who were from a rival clan, spared his life but took away all his animals. He relocated to the Kenya border. Ishmael's father, Ahmed, was fourteen when they crossed into Kenya. It is ironical that East Africans seem to have enjoyed greater freedom of movement during the colonial days than they do today. There was no real border at the time as East Africa was all-British territory, the same could be said for other parts of the continent.

At the age of sixteen Ahmed joined the King's African Rifles and was posted to Somaliland where he acted as interpreter for what must have been a kiSwahili speaking contingent. At the age of 18 he married and was transferred to Tanganyika where he worked for five years. When Tanzania became independent, Ahmed left the army and became a trader. The East African units of the Kings African Rifles were recruited

from all the different British colonies and were deployed on counter insurgency duties in various countries. I am not sure if Ishmael's father just retired or was required to make way for locals but it seems the Africanisation process was mainly concerned with the replacement of British officers and that other Africans continued to serve as Tanzanian citizens (see Tanzania People's Defence Forces, 1994). Ahmed probably chose to leave the military to start his own business for he remained in Tanzania for a while. For Ishmael, his claim to Tanzanian citizenship did not arise until much later in his life when needed to get a Tanzanian passport in order to remain mobile, having lost his Somali papers in circumstances that will be explained later.

After living in Tanzania for a while Ahmed received word from his wife's brother who had made a fortune trading in the Arab countries, that he wanted his sister to return home to Somalia, as they had not seen each other since she was a young girl. She persuaded Ahmed to sell his business and the family set off to start afresh in their Fatherland. When they got to Kenya however, Ahmed's sister pleaded with him not to leave her alone in Kenya, as they were the last two siblings. 'We must bury each other' she told him. Much to his wife's displeasure, Ahmed decided not to proceed to Somalia and his family settled in Kenya.

In 1966 the secessionist border war started and Kenyan Somalis were treated with suspicions by their government and their fellow Kenyan citizens who considered them a fifth column for the feared Greater Somalia project. Other countries in the Horn of Africa including northern Kenya, the Ogaden in Ethiopia and Djibouti were all parts claimed for Greater Somalia. With the Zambian president Kaunda acting as mediator between Kenya and Somali dangerous civil strife was prevented but thereafter Somalis continued to suffer humiliation at the hands of the Kenyan army, which they have not forgotten.

Ahmed tried to send his children to university as a way of giving them a better chance in life given the decline of pastoralism and because he had seen how young Africans were benefiting from the opportunities presented by independence. Ishmael however did not make use of the

opportunities and now continually laments not having followed his father's advice. Expelled from one school after another he squandered the school fees his father gave him on women and qat and caused all sorts of problems for his family. Finally, his father gave up and left him to his own devices at the age of 18 by which time he had managed to get up to standard seven in school.

In 1977 Ishmael set off for Somalia to join Siad Barre's army which was expanding rapidly and the Western Somali Liberation Front was pushing the Ethiopian army out of the Ogaden (Lewis: 223). Ishmael's calculation was that the education he had received in Kenya was enough to earn him a commission in the Somali army. His journey to Mogadishu did not go according to plan however. By the time he got to Mogadishu his money had run out. The older travelling companion who had kept the money for him appeared to have swindled the inexperienced traveller. Finding himself in Somalia for the first time in his life and without a penny in his pocket, he was saved by members of his clan provided for him and gave him enough money to return to Kenya.

Ishmael's life after this took him to Saudi Arabia where he lived for many years. I was not able to discuss what happened to him there except that he earned a lot of money working as a driver but wasted it all on qat and holidays in Bangkok. His easy life came to a sudden end when he accidentally killed a pedestrian and was imprisoned after failing to pay the \$20 000 blood money. He was rescued from prison by a Saudi prince, the governor of Jeddah, who paid the fines of all poor people in prison to mark a special festival. The reason why the Isaq clan did not come to his rescue on this occasion was because Ishmael had cut himself off from them when he was living well and had not been paying his contribution to the clan fund. The elders of the group took this opportunity to show him that it was precisely to cover such contingencies that they collected subscriptions.

When he was released from jail, he could not get back to work as his work permit had expired. His papers appear to have become mixed up

during this period for he was deported to Eritrea. Using the support of his clan-family in Somalia, he made his way back to Kenya to join his mother and sisters. Returning from Saudi Arabia penniless was an embarrassing thing so he tried to get back to the Gulf but could not get a passport in Somalia or Kenya. That was when he decided to use his birth certificate to claim his Tanzanian citizenship.

We shall skip Ishmael's adventures in Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and Mozambique and take up the story with his bid to leave South Africa for the USA.

The role of patrilineal kinship in Somali identity is a crucial one. Not only does it define the place of everybody in relation to others; it also provides an alternative citizenship to that of the nation-state as Ishmael's experience in many countries repeatedly showed. Somali, and other African migrants in Cape Town, do not exist as individuals but always as holders of various group identities. Any one person has obligations to several other people and loyalties divided between Greater Somalia, different states within the dismembered Greater Somalia, states outside Greater Somalia that they find themselves living in, as well as clans and sub-clans. Full citizenship is thus an ideal never achieved whether they are in their homeland or in a foreign country. This is not peculiar to the Somali as most Africans have strong loyalties to moral and political communities other than the nation-state. Although Somali are entitled to and obtain the support of the corporate clan network this is not always available and they thus have to develop relationships outside of their clans, learn new languages and adopt a cosmopolitan identity to supplement their Somali nationality.

3.1 An Isaaq Man in Cape Town

Ishmael did not come to South Africa to stay. His plan was always to travel back to the Middle East, join his brother in Sweden or go to the USA. Nevertheless he married a Cape Town woman and obtained South African residency and put a lot of effort into his petty trading. He

remained in contact with his family home in Kenya where his mother lives and regular phoned other members of the family across the world.

One day he told me that the South African authorities had given him a travel document. I had informed him that as a resident married to a South African he could if he chose apply for citizenship, which would entitle him to a passport. He had misunderstood me and immediately rushed to the Home Affairs department to apply for a South African passport and his request had quite confused the officials in the Cape Town office who had phoned to Pretoria for advice. Finally it was agreed that he could not get a passport but was given a temporary travel document.

He was pleased that it did not refer to him as a refugee. Although he was a South African resident and had never legally been a refugee except in order to facilitate his own movement across borders, it was the most important identity he carried with him after that of being Somali. If he could shed his refugee status in South Africa his progression to the next phase of his journey to America would be much smoother.

He planned to fly to Guatemala en route to America, via Mexico. He complained about how expensive the ticket was that his travel agents quoted him. Apart from that, he was also finding it difficult to obtain a visa. I told him that Guatemala did not seem to me to be a safe route into America and told him he may be getting himself into trouble. 'Why do you want to go to Guatemala?' I asked him. He had not really thought it through but clearly he has discussed with other Somalis and someone must have used this route before. 'But why not Canada? At least there are other Somalis there and you will not have language problems who will help you in Guatemala?' He had not really thought about it. 'That is why it is important to talk to educated people, tell me what I should do.' What could I tell him? I had never been to that part of the world and he probably knew more about the precarious world of the border jumper than I do. He had already worked out for example, that the authorities would be easier to bribe in Guatemala than in Mexico. In

the end he decided that Canada was a better route into the US than Guatemala.

On Friday 11 May 2001 I found three desperate sounding messages in my voicemail. Ishmael, whom, I believed to be in Pretoria or lying low in Mitchell's Plain to keep out of his ex-wife's way, wanted my help urgently. He phoned again in the evening and told me that the Canadians had responded to his application for a visa and wanted to interview him, what should he do?

I had no idea what the Canadian diplomats wanted to ask him. Normally they want to know that you have a return ticket, a job to return to and enough money to survive on while in their country. But being Somali they would obviously be aware of his refugee status and would be determined to ensure he remains a South African problem. At the same time I knew the Canadians were friendlier towards African immigrants so if he told them the truth they might be willing to take him in.

After a week without hearing from him I wondered if he'd already left. I found Hassan, the young Somali mechanic who was manning the sidewalk cigarette stand and he told me that Ishmael was still around. As we were waiting for him to come down from his flat, Hassan told me his R200 a week wages were not adequate for him to support his family in Tanzania. He'd only left his job at Ohan transport in Lusaka because he was misled into thinking he'd get a better job in South Africa. Once he got here he found that employers were asking for college certificates and other documents which he did not have so he'd given up on getting work and was thinking of moving on. At the time of the interview he had obtained leave from the garage where he worked in order to help Ishmael with his street vending and the idea was that if Ishmael got his visa and left the country Hassan would take over the cigarette stand on Durban Road.

If Hassan was eager for the older man to leave Ishmael himself was even more desperate to get out of Cape Town. He told me how the

Canadian consular staff asked him straightaway if he was not trying to sneak into America. He told them he just wanted to see the grave of his relative who died there in 1997 and he'd promised his mother that if he ever got enough money he would go, and well, now he had saved enough. But given that he could not tell the consular staff where exactly his relative was buried he was told that Canada was too big a country for him to embark on such a search with his limited funds so his visa application was not approved. To add to his misery, his estranged wife had fallen into depression again and was pleading with him for reconciliation. After he'd left her she had fallen onto hard times even though he'd left his entire stock of cigarettes and sweets and allowed her to keep the kiosk that he owned at the Mowbray train station. The quality of her meals had deteriorated and she'd lost customers. Soon she was behind on the R650 rent for the flat. Probably because of this, she sought out the father of her 12-year-old son who was not paying the child maintenance and soon after they'd appeared in court he was found dead in a ditch where he had apparently drowned after getting drunk.

While she was trying to run the kiosk on her own working from dawn to dusk, her son who had stabilised while Ishmael was staying with them (the boy even called him dad) went wild again and was using drugs. Doctors advised that both mother and son should be hospitalised. This the mother refused for fear of losing both her flat and her kiosk she therefore begged Ishmael to return to live with her and apologised for the trouble she had caused him. She even brought her father to plead her case. Ishmael offered to give her R400 to help with the rent and to arrange for a Somali family to sublet-half of the flat so that they could pay part of the rent but he was completely determined to flee Cape Town. He told his wife that his mother wanted him to go back to Kenya and he would be returning there soon.

All these problems were taking their toll on he him. He looked visibly stressed out. His main worry was that his wife's sister, who had never liked him, could cause trouble for him by having the authorities strip

him of his residency rights. That was why he was so eager to get out of the country before all the various conflicts caught up with him.

What are your options? I asked him. He said he would try Libya and Malta as a final resort. All he wanted was to get out of South Africa once he was on foreign soil getting a new set of identity papers would not be difficult. During our conversation he referred to information he had about other Somalis who had tried their luck with or without success in different parts of the world and knew how the different countries worked.

At Cape Town international airport, corrupt officials were running a racket squeezing bribes out of Africans travelling overseas. They demanded transit and other visas even when they were not required. Travellers anxious to proceed with their journey and not knowing their rights usually paid up.

In Kuwait, the immigration authorities had tightened controls at their ports of entry while the Argentineans would provide easy entry into Europe or America if only he could find a way of getting there.

From his life history I have worked out how he sets out to make his fortune without having a solid project plan. Almost fatalistic in his belief that if luck is on his side he will succeed, he does not worry about arriving penniless in an American city and beginning from scratch to find work. The family is always there to fall back on and his brother in Sweden has sent him money on several occasions to help him out of a fix. He remembers that he told his brother that he already had the visa for America when he asked him for money and now that his travel plans had been halted he did not know what to say to him. I advised him to phone and tell him that his visa had fallen through, after all it had happened to him before.

In the end he made his own plans and successfully entered the UK as an asylum seeker thereby, I would say, regaining his birthright as a British colonial subject. The last I heard of him in late 2001 he had

undergone training as a forklift driver and was working in London. In many ways Ishmael may not be a typical example of a Somali migrant but he is in any case a perfect example of the cosmopolitan postcolonial subject who does not have a college education but is fluent in four languages, has lived in over ten countries on three continents and is Somali by ethnicity, Kenyan by choice (his parents') Tanzanian by birth, South African through marriage and now both by accident and by choice residing in Britain and supporting his family in Kenya.

Conclusions

The main point I have made in this paper is that there is more than one way to be 'cosmopolitan'. Migrants have the competence to make the same journeys as anthropologists and other globetrotting world citizens and to move in and out of different cultural settings. Unlike anthropologists they are more likely to be accused of being cosmopolitan in an unpatriotic way, although in the colonial world anthropologists did indeed get labelled as such since being cosmopolitan by 'going native' was tantamount to letting the empire down. In today's globalising world the political philosophers have defined cosmopolitanism in various ways. Whether we see it as based on liberal notions of human dignity, (Appiah, 2005 ch6), 'obligations of justice to non-nationals' or merely being 'marked by diverse cultural influences' (Synowich: 56) the European capitalist who has long offered himself as the ideal type fails the test. It is not just failure to protect strangers in Europe but the whole imperial episode of colonial oppression, i.e *uncosmopolitan cosmopolitanism*. In my view we would do better to look to remote Africa villages and congested urban slums to find the woman who greets the stranger with a tray of food and this woman who has never left home lives her cosmopolitanism by welcoming the world. One does not need to be well travelled to be a polyglot, polymath or cosmopolitan if one is plays host to the world as the women of Cape Town have done since the Mother City was constructed.

(see Frankental and Sichone, 2005 for a fuller discussion of colonial Cape Town)

Maybe other women on the trans-Sahara to Europe or the road to Johannesburg who look after penniless migrants, give them homes, pay for their education and transform them from less than human babblers, *makwerekwere*, into citizens and fellow human beings qualify on both ethical and cultural accounts. If we want to understand the cosmopolitanism of global justice we may find the answer not in liberal constitutions or UN conventions but in the real lives of the world's a dollar a day multitudes. Many migrants in Cape Town would probably agree with the Congolese refugee who said, if it were not for the women, we would not make it.

If Cosmopolitanism is a devotion to the interests of humanity as a whole then there is nothing more uncosmopolitan than millennial capitalism in its various guises, and its global apartheid project especially. But if to be human is to be cosmopolitan (i.e. to be your brother's keeper) then we will find cosmopolitans in the most unexpected places not just Parisian salons, anthropology conferences or gatherings of human rights NGOs.

The South African constitution, modelled as it is on the liberal constitutions of the North Atlantic democracies, repeats the mistake of the colonial powers and limits full humanity to democratic citizenship. Postcolonial subjects that find their freedoms diminished have sought ways of regaining their humanity and staking a claim in a society that seeks to keep them out. It is in this regard that irregular migration is undertaken as a necessary means to freedom and not necessarily to undermine an oppressive regime. In similar vein those who reach out to the stranded stranger do so, as they have always done, because they must as *abantu* and not necessarily to challenge the state.

The case of Ishmael has been used to demonstrate that strangers are found in remote villages and big cities. That humanity shines through when people take in the stranger and provide care. Equally, xenophobia on the other hand, as the destructive rejection of the

stranger is most pronounced in the world of the retrenched worker, the men who must blame their unemployability on foreigners and who see themselves in a zero sum battle for survival. The hospitality of the women on the other hand is what makes the mobility of the men humanly possible.

Inherent in this discriminatory practice of the postcolonial state is the xenophobic practice of keeping poor people out and not the xenophile tradition of recruiting affines, subjects or friends. For Somali people like Ishmael, the well defined rights, duties, obligations and ascribed roles of the clan-family provide another form of political community that has served them well in times of crisis. The corporatism of the Somali clan is one that any member of patrilineal descent systems will be familiar with though other African migrants have not maintained their clans in the same way.

Thus while agreeing with Norman Long (1999:199) that there has been an emergence of new ‘imagined communities’ that are increasingly detached from fixed locations or territories, I fear social scientists may have attached too much importance to the phenomenon of global nomads, internally displaced persons and refugees and forgotten that most people have stayed at home.

What the rising airline and airport traffic statistics do not tell us, is that ‘More than 98 per cent of the world’s population remain in the country where they are citizens’. (Hammar and Tamas, 1997:1) Surely if populations are this stable, at least in terms of remaining within national borders we should expect old identities to be less prone to destabilization than the notion of the global village suggests. Real existing African villages should continue to provide the mobile citizens of the global village with a source of identity and refuge. That the village has also been destabilised is due to the emergence of the irresponsible state during the 1980s and 1990s that has on a scale not seen since the days of the slave trade, undermined the ability of people to reproduce themselves.

At the end of the day the local situation is more important than the global for human survival even if the reverse is true for capitalism which must reproduce itself on a global scale. It is at the local level that cosmopolitanism flourishes for globally all we have are unfulfilled UN charters and conventions negotiated by cold war generals. What we seek to do is not necessarily to denounce elite models of cosmopolitanism exemplified by the work of international scholars, global social movements or human rights activists but rather to demonstrate that for the dollar a day multitudes ultimate security lies in *ubuntu*.

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