Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa: The Challenge of Rising Xenophobia*

Owen Ben Sichone**

Abstract

The internationalisation of university education globally has coincided with the opening up of post-apartheid South Africa to the world market, and the number of foreign students (along with other visitors to South Africa) has shot up very rapidly since 1994. As a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), South Africa has an agreement (the Education Protocol) with its partners to cooperate in the area of education and training. In the absence of a similar spirit of cooperation allowing for the free movement of citizens of the SADC region, however, the wishes expressed in the Education Protocol cannot be fully realised, and many African students studying in South Africa still have to navigate long and difficult bureaucratic channels to obtain student visas and study permits. In addition, they face an increasingly hostile and xenophobic public on and off campus. Their experience will not provide them with fond memories of their student days in South Africa. This paper advocates greater freedom of movement for migrant students as a means of social upliftment and greater pan-African cooperation.

Résumé

L'internationalisation mondiale de l'enseignement supérieur a coïncidé avec l'ouverture de l'Afrique du Sud post-apartheid au marché mondial, et le nombre d'étudiants étrangers (de même que d'autres visiteurs) s'est accru très rapidement depuis 1994. En tant que membre de la région SADC, par contre, le souhait exprimé

par le Protocole de l'Education ne peut être réalisé, et de nombreux étudiants africains étudiant en Afrique du Sud doivent passer par des procédures bureaucratiques difficiles et longues pour obtenir des visas d'étudiants et des permis d'études. De plus, ils font face à un public de plus en plus hostile et xénophobe sur les campus et en dehors. Leur expérience ne sera pas l'objet de bons souvenirs de leurs années études en Afrique du Sud. Cette contribution milite pour une plus grande liberté de mouvement pour les étudiants étrangers comme moyen de promotion social et de plus grande coopération panafricaine.

Introduction

> Today's African citizens, like people everywhere, want to benefit from a good education and find a decent job, but they also expect to be able to express their opinions, engage in political debate, question conservative cultures and break free from social constraints. If they are unable to meet these expectations in their own country, then they will seek to enter the labour market in societies where such opportunities are more available (Global Commission on International Migration 2005: 14). Mobility thus climbs to the top rank among the most coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce resource and an unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times (Bauman 1998: 2). The global elite (those who are cosmopolitan and liberal) will of course come from all nationalities. In the new universal cosmopolitan culture of the global tier of the world system, your ancestry and skin colour will be far less important than your education, your values and your travel plans (Shweder 2001: 170).

It is now something of a cliché that neoliberal ideology advocates free movement of capital, information technology experts, tourists and foreign investors but not of refugees, asylum seekers and unskilled labour. As the report of the Global Commission on International Migration (2005: 14) noted, many young people in Africa and other poor societies reject this limitation on the basis of a human rights discourse and, influenced by the same global mediascapes that are so essential for globalism and globalisation, insist on their right to be mobile. Shweder's vision of a new liberal world order is spot on in associating education with both social and spatial mobility and confirms influential sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's observation that mobility is the number one stratifying dimension (more important than race, class and gender) in our globalising world. Nevertheless it is difficult to imagine how cosmopolitanism would exist outside ancestry and skin colour, as Shweder suggests, in an increasingly paranoid world. Thus, although young Africans are stubborn about moving to Europe, the USA or even South Africa, their journeys and experiences, whether

happy or devastating ones, will depend very much on what their linguistic, racialised or religious heritage is.

In post-colonial Africa upward social mobility has been facilitated by access to schools and colleges that most nationalist governments promoted. One of the injustices of colonial rule was its system of what apartheid called "Bantu" education, denying colonial subjects access to schools and colleges and trapping them in poorly paid agricultural and industrial work, in menial jobs rather than mental labour and thereby conflating race, class and gender in ways that reinforced the racist stereotypes of the imperialist mind. Unfortunately there does not seem to be any basis for Shweder's cosmopolitan vision other than wishful thinking. Maybe it is possible to escape race, class and gender, but any attempt to achieve this will depend on ancestry and skin colour as much as on education, values and travel plans.

I will suggest, in line with Bauman's take on free movement, that access to university education is a particularly important means to individual and collective social mobility. By limiting young people's right to education, free movement, work and settlement through security, visa and passport requirements, xenophobic governments are limiting access to better human security. According to the Commission on Human Security (2003: 135) international migration 'reflects the growing interdependence among countries and people.' Consequently the commission recommended a humane migration framework that would increase migratory opportunities and burden sharing among nations.

I argue that controlling the movement of people is a medieval device quite contrary to the basic philosophy of free capitalist competition, although very much in line with apartheid, the notorious South African system of racial oppression that worked to limit the movement of black people and keep them in rural slums euphemistically called "homelands". The apartheid policy of Bantu education trained black South Africans to be part of the unskilled labour force whose cheap labour allowed the gold mines and farms to operate so profitably for so long. It is this same policy that is responsible for the chronic lack of skilled professionals that today prevents South Africa from matching the economic growth of countries like India or China, whose large pools of highly educated young people have allowed them to become competitive in today's high-tech industries. As critics of hegemonic economic ideology have noted, there are many similarities between apartheid and neoliberal policies, and the notion of a global apartheid effectively and accurately describes the exclusionary practices of the market in denying the majority of the world's population schools for their children, secure employment for the adults or freedom of movement as a basic human right.

During the "lost decade" of the 1980s the idea took root that poor African countries need not spend money on tertiary education. In a process that Chachage (2006) referred to as the irresponsibilisation of the state, African governments seemed easily persuaded to cut back on expenditure on education, which may have forced some students to leave their countries in search of higher education. In a World Bank-sponsored meeting of the African vice-chancellors in Harare in 1988, it was even claimed that Africa's need for university education to fill white collar jobs could be met by overseas institutions, so that resources could then be channelled to primary, tertiary and vocational education. The assumption was that Africans were destined to remain unskilled workers for a long time. This was an expression of the position of the World Bank's first African-specific education policy paper, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalisation and Expansion*. According to Chachage (2006), by the start of the new millennium, the World Bank (but not African governments) had changed their minds about cutbacks in education and were advocating increased education budgets. However the damage had already been done, and many African institutions are yet to recover from the shocks of under-funding.

The current global development agenda for reducing poverty (see the Millennium Project 2005: xiv) appears like a bureaucratic game when we consider that, although migration can contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, priority is given to the production of poverty reduction strategy papers by the end of 2006! The call for more foreign aid and more open markets for tropical products seems designed to keep poor people in poor countries and to "contain" poverty as communism was once contained. Looked at in this light, the numerous economic and political development instruments produced by the Millennium Project appear like devices of apartheid, designed to keep poor people in ignorance and insecurity. Even post-apartheid South Africa itself is not free of the effects of global apartheid. Crime is blamed on international crime syndicates, and the government seeks solutions in isolationist "Proudly South African" nationalism. The ANC government tries to juggle this isolationism with a pan-African vision that places South Africa in a leadership role championing the cause of the continent's rebirth by promoting development, democratisation and cooperation.

In Chapter Two of the SADC Protocol on Education one of the key principles is the need to relax and ultimately eliminate immigration formalities and facilitate freer movement of students and academic staff. In addition SADC officially promotes policies to create an enabling environment for appropriately educated and trained people to apply their knowledge and skills for the

development of the region. In line with this goal the South African Council on Higher Education (2000), in its report on higher education in South Africa, stated:

> South Africa is not focusing sufficiently on promoting its higher education system internationally. There is immense potential to attract students from the southern African region, other parts of Africa and elsewhere without reducing efforts to expand access to South African students. An appropriate framework and infrastructure that draws in various relevant government departments should be created for this purpose and internationalisation should be promoted. International students must be specially catered for to ensure that they enjoy rewarding social and educational experiences. Enrolling students from the rest of Africa would be a means of contributing to their human resource development and giving expression to our commitment to African development and the African Renaissance. It would also be a source of revenue for institutions and the country.

In the absence of a spirit of cooperation allowing for the free movement of citizens of the SADC region, however, the wishes expressed above and in the SADC Education Protocol are not being fully realised. Many SADC students wishing to study in South Africa still have to engage in long and difficult bureaucratic negotiations for student visas and study permits. Although some political and business leaders see the advantages of internationalisation for South African skills development and for the country's desire to raise its prestige in global politics, the same cannot be said for the more nationalistic politicians and security officials who tend to equate internationalisation with social and health problems (Nyamnjoh 2006: 65-69). In a continuation of the well-established "laager" mentality of the apartheid era, many South Africans believe it is precisely by keeping out of Africa that their country can develop. The European Union, which seeks to develop special trade agreements with South Africa and exclude the rest of the continent, encourages this myopic view. Although the European Union is South Africa's leading trading partner, there is a lot of untapped potential for intra-African trade to generate future economic growth. This divide-and-rule strategy encourages the exceptionalism that many South Africans believe in and further promotes xenophobic tendencies towards the rest of the continent. Corporate South Africa knows better than the politicians the value of doing business in Africa, as is shown by the tremendous expansion of mining, commerce and industrial production into the rest of the continent by South African Breweries (SABMiller), MTN, Vodacom, Shoprite, the mining houses and others.

When unemployed youth in poor countries venture into the world to try and improve their lives and those of the people they leave behind, one place they

will seek out in the new country is the university. After obtaining their qualifications, many of these students will return home, but some will stay in the country or relocate to wherever they are offered a job. Why should anyone care where people live or work in a free society? Many of these international students return home more hostile to foreigners in their own countries than they were before studying abroad. British sociologist W. Outhwaite (1995) refers to a newspaper report that said participants in international exchange programmes often became more xenophobic as a result of their time abroad. In this paper I will draw upon my research into the issue of xenophobia in South Africa and try to make it relevant to the problem of higher education. So although this paper is not a study of the experience of foreign students as such, it tries to show some of the problems that various types of international experience generate using a few university students as a case study. Xenophobia is a much-debated topic in the new South Africa, and the universities will have to play a part in reducing the extent of the problem not just through appropriate research but also by providing examples of international cooperation and multicultural interaction.

International Students or "Migrant" Students?

Universities by definition are institutions rooted in a universal cultural experience, although, over time, they have developed individual and national characteristics and traditions which are preserved and marketed extensively. Ironically, in this age of globalisation, the liberal idea of higher education as a citizens' right or as a state-funded national project for producing well-informed and independent-minded citizens has given way to the increasing privatisation of education as a consumer item reserved for the wealthy. Despite the decline in state-funded education, the rising costs have not put off young people who desire to improve their lives by acquiring the necessary skills and training. In many classes at the University of Cape Town, a large number of semester-abroad students from Europe and America can be found. Certain postgraduate cohorts in the school of law, for example, have been known to comprise exclusively German students. The rationale for studying abroad is to broaden one's horizons and experience, but it is also for economic reasons, as it is cheaper to study in South Africa than in America.

For African students the poorly funded and poorly equipped universities in their own countries may be the reason why middle-class families may send their children to South Africa to study. These students do not just enrol in "world-class" institutions such as the University of Cape Town but in private colleges and universities that specialise in a limited range of popular course such as business administration or computer sciences. A typical example of

these private-sector higher-education institutions is the Gauteng-based Midrand Graduate Institute, a division of Educor, where by 2003 foreign students made up over 50 percent of the enrolment at its campus in Johannesburg. The great majority of these were from neighbouring SADC countries, with a small group originating from as far afield as Nigeria and Pakistan. Refugees from countries like Rwanda and Angola comprise another large group of foreign students. In response to this growth of foreign student enrolment, the Midrand Graduate Institute introduced an International Students' Office to facilitate the experience of foreign students at its campus (Macdonald and Kerry 2004). The University of Cape Town has a much larger and more diverse student population, but it is noticeable from the 2006 cohort of applicants that large numbers of students come from neighbouring countries within the SADC region, most notably from Zimbabwe (775), Botswana (259) and Namibia (166). Although there were only eight students from the USA in the 2006 cohort, a far larger number tend to come as semester-abroad and exchange students, thereby giving overseas students a larger presence than these statistics suggest.

Whatever local and global forces may be driving it, such internationalisation in higher education has some positive social implications. Although the children of the wealthy and powerful may dominate the student body in an unprecedented manner, it may also become more international as mobile elites criss-cross the globe looking for the best MBA, computer science programme or medical school. As for the negative consequences of internationalisation these tend to lie outside the education sector. The policies and practice of nationalistic Home Affairs bureaucracies and security officials, coupled with the xenophobia of host country populations, tend to oppose the free movement and settlement of people and the emergence of cosmopolitan citizenship. If South African universities become more elite as well as more cosmopolitan, this may make them less integrated into the societies in which they are located, since the xenophobic attitudes prevalent in society may be directed towards the wealthy foreign students. As the following case studies suggest, foreign students experience the same kind of hostility as refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants.

Case Study 1: Congolese Engineering Student

Michel Landu was a student at the engineering faculty at UCT. In his home country he represented the youth league of the Revolutionary Popular Movement (MPR). The MPR is the party of former president Mobutu. As a youth leader Michel had very strong ties to different political figures in Kinshasa. Among them was the ambassador of North Korea in Kinshasa. So when Laurent Kabila toppled the Mobutu government, many members of the MPR ran away

for fear of being arrested. When Michel was trying to convince members of his youth movement in Matete (Kinshasa) that it was important that they continue with their political work, some of the members went to report him to the new government. Michel was arrested and interrogated by the RPF soldiers from Rwanda who had helped Kabila's war against Mobutu. When he was released five weeks later, he continued with his political activities, making speeches and organising meetings.

Michel was arrested again on Christmas Eve 2000 after a meeting that was held at his house in Matete. The police told him that he was not allowed to hold political meetings in his house and said they had information that he was in touch with MPR people in exile who wanted to start a rebellion. Michel pleaded not guilty to the charges but was detained. The Ambassador to North Korea intervened, and Michel was once again released. Michel then left Kinshasa for Bas-Congo, the neighbouring province. When he arrived there he briefed some of his friends and colleagues about his situation. The next day the police said that they had received reports about Michel's political activities and warned him to stop or be arrested.

When Michel told them that the new government was more dictatorial than the Mobutu regime, the police arrested him and threatened to send him back to Kinshasa. Michel realised that this time he would not be able to survive, as he could no longer count on the protection of his mentors. He therefore bribed the police and escaped across the border into the Cabinda province of Angola. From there he went to Luanda and then flew to Windhoek in Namibia, where he was sent to a refugee camp in which, as he puts it, the situation was 'not good'. He was not allowed to continue his studies and could not work, because the camps were far from any town, and so decided to move to South Africa. When he arrived in Cape Town, Michel got help from a migrant from Ghana, who gave him a job and provided a place to stay. But Michel was not happy to stay in a "township" (Philippi) and decided to move to the (previously white) middle-class southern suburbs to look for a job. A few days before he moved from Philippi, his Ghanaian benefactor was killed and his businesses closed. Michel found a place in Maitland and met a coloured family who invited him to join them every Sunday for prayers. Michel joined their church (His People) in Rondebosch and made more friends. After about a year he moved to Observatory and registered as an engineering student at the University of Cape Town.

Michel said that he was a victim of racism and mentioned incidents that happened at his church and university to illustrate this. One day a woman from his church invited him out. He accepted the invitation and went out with her. The next day he received a call from his pastor telling him that he needed to

have a meeting with him, Michel said that he was busy and could not meet the pastor that day. The pastor angrily told him that, if he did not come for the meeting, the pastor would call the police. When Michel asked what was going on, the pastor said that he was aware that Michel went out with a lady from the church and attempted to rape her. Michel strongly denied the accusation and said he had never even kissed or touched the lady. The pastor replied that he believed what the lady had told him, and he gave Michel one day to come and see him or he would have him arrested. Michel told him that he would not go to see him unless the lady was also present, but the pastor refused. Michel said that he never went to see the pastor, and when he went to church the next Sunday, the pastor did not bring up the matter nor did the lady ever come to that church again. Michel's opinion was that it was all due to the fact that the lady was white. He did not rape the lady, and wondered how the pastor even came to know that he had gone out with that lady. Michel believed that the pastor probably saw them together and went out of his way to put an end to the friendship by concocting the false rape accusation.

Michel said that many others had complained about that pastor, but the church had refused to remove him. He said that a lot of people in the church were not tolerant, especially the coloured members of the congregation, and always undermined blacks. Michel said that even though Afrikaners are 'good', they sometimes insult the foreigners. He added that blacks sometimes accused them of being in South Africa to take their wives and their jobs. Michel explained that one day when he was in Langa (Cape Town's oldest black township), he met two men who asked him where was from and, when he told them that he was from Congo, they told him that he should go back to his country. He said that even the policemen were xenophobic and would always take the side of South Africans in any problem between South Africans and foreigners.

Michel claimed that even at university there were some professors who gave marks according to a student's skin colour. They routinely gave high marks to white students and low marks to the blacks. He cited his lecturer in Topology as an example, who he claimed deducted marks from blacks and made sure blacks failed his course, dropped out or changed their programme. Michel also spoke of a female student from Congo who had complained about the same professor. In Michel's view 'racism is not visible in South Africa but it is nevertheless everywhere'. He said that he was ready to return to his country as soon as the peace process in the Congo succeeds, as he would like to use his skills to help in the reconstruction of his country.

Michel's privileged position in the Mobutu regime made his escape from Kinshasa relatively easy, but his experience of racism and xenophobia in Cape

Town is typical. Although most of his fellow refugees remain in menial jobs
and do not have the opportunity to continue with their education, his determi-
nation to return to his country is in part due to the hostility and racism he
experienced in South Africa. The unfairness of neo-apartheid practices at the
university, and the fact that even his fellow Christians apparently viewed him
with suspicion, were constant reminders of his lack of rights. He confronted a
hostile population in church, on the street, in his dealings with officials and
even in the university. Considering that he did not leave his country voluntarily
and that he had been relatively powerful and influential before the fall of the
MPR regime in the Congo, it is understandable that he had little patience with
this. Neither the wider society nor the university community was free of
exclusionary neo-apartheid practices and beliefs.

Case Study 2: Itinerant Cameroonian Lawyer

One day in the summer of 2004 I returned to my office after giving a lecture
and found a well-dressed young man waiting outside. He greeted me in Bemba
with what I thought was a Congolese accent (he turned out to be Cameroonian)
and informed me that he had brought me a letter from my friend Ferdinand
Akuffo, who at that time was a professor at the University of Zambia. The
letter consisted of just one sentence asking me to render any help I could to the
young man. The young Cameroonian, Claude, had come to South Africa in
search of higher education and carried with him laminated originals of his
Yaoundé 1 university certificates.

He told me that he was an LLB graduate and had spent some time in Zam-
bia trying to get admitted to the bar. He loved the Zambian people, had made
many friends there and considered it his second home. His attempt to obtain a
Law Practice Institute (LPI) qualification in Zambia was only hindered by his
failure to raise money for the fees, as the LPI had accepted his application for
admission. Claude then found work with AfroNet, a Human Rights NGO based
in Zambia, hoping to work his way through college, but the Zambian immigra-
tion authorities had then refused to change his student visa into a work permit.
Of course it is a common experience for a foreign worker to find employment
only to have Home Affairs officials refuse the necessary permit. Yet, in the
final analysis tax-paying workers, irrespective of their nationalities, are better
than dependent refugees or illegal migrants who resort to bribing police offi-
cials or obtain forged documents in order to work. Governments, however,
seem to be stuck in influx control mode.

So Claude left Zambia for South Africa, where he had friends, and on get-
ting there he made enquiries at the University of the Western Cape, where one
of the International Relations lecturers expressed a willingness to supervise

his research if it was on an African affairs theme. However Claude now had his mind set on entering Pretoria University's LLM programme in Human Rights, and his visit to my office was to ask me to write a letter of reference for him. I naturally advised him to ask one of his former lecturers at Yaoundé 1, since I did not know him and was not qualified to judge the quality of his work as a law student. He appeared not to understand what I said and impatiently asked me to just write the letter so that he could complete his application and mail it, adding that it did matter that I did not know him because 'this is Africa'.

I told him that it was precisely such bending of the rules that was to blame for the African crisis and that, as a lawyer, he should understand this better than I. In frustration he angrily told me that he was determined to obtain his LLM and that he would not let the matter of a letter of recommendation deter him. He told me that a former classmate of his had been in the last cohort of the Pretoria Human Rights course and was now at Harvard doing his PhD even though the classmate's academic record was not as good as his own. He said that, if he was admitted to Pretoria, he was certain to excel in his studies. In his mind I was behaving like the Home Affairs bureaucrats who had refused him a work permit, and in a way I was. Whereas I was sympathetic to his desire to work his way through college in Zambia, and even to give him what support I honestly could to get him into Pretoria University, I drew the line at writing recommendation letters for people I did not know. Why could he not just ask his former lecturers in Yaoundé to do this for him? That is a topic for another paper.

I gave him the email address of Professor Hansungule, a fellow Zambian who taught law at the University of Pretoria, and sent him on his way after convincing him that he had no choice but to ask his former lecturers in Cameroon to be his referees. He was not at all convinced by my argument. Evidently, in his mind, the best referees were people who could influence his selection whether they knew him well or not. Later on I wondered whether I had been too harsh with him. Quite a number of Cameroonians have come to South Africa with the aim of obtaining university degrees, and I know quite a few who have managed to get their qualifications and are either working in South Africa or studying at North American institutions. They pay for their studies by trading in Cameroonian fabrics and other goods that they import through family networks, or they find work in the informal sector. In order to do this, however, they enter and reside in South Africa not as students but as refugees. It should be acceptable to African and other governments that young people, if given the opportunity, can and should work their way through college. Why must legal migration be limited to a refugee status?

Claude visited my office a few more times to borrow books. A few months later he phoned to tell me he had found a job with a Cape Town-based human rights NGO and that he was calling me from his own office overlooking the Cape Town docks. He now understood and appreciated my advice not to take shortcuts for convenience and was optimistic about his future. That was the last time I heard from him.

Unlike Michel, Claude was not a refugee but a migrant student. He is that category of migrant that leaves home specifically in search of knowledge. His story is not unique; there are many determined and hardworking young people who are willing and able to invest a lot of energy in improving their qualifications, and it just does not make sense to frustrate them with influx controls, since they are able to contribute to the improvement of other people's lives as well as their own. Were he European or from a different day and age, Claude's efforts would have been applauded instead of being challenged and criminalised by state officials.

An older example of the determined migrant student is Malawian Legson Kayira. When I was at school in Zambia, we read Kayira's autobiographical 'I Will Try' (which was also the motto of his mission school), in which he describes how he walked from Malawi to Sudan, a distance of over three thousand kilometres, seeking opportunities for further education. Eventually, according to Killam and Rowe (2003), he was admitted to an American college and later studied at Cambridge. However, for every successful Legson Kayira, there are probably many who fail, but those who make it tend to be successful at what they do because of their determination. The barriers put in their way by officials make their work that much harder. In South Africa the current government has relatively liberal regulations pertaining to refugees and asylum seekers who enter the country easily. However South Africans have acquired a reputation for not being welcoming to foreigners. The police appear stuck in the influx-control mentality of the colonial and apartheid eras and assume that every foreigner is a potential criminal. Since South Africa does not have refugee camps and prefers that refugees and asylum seekers mingle with the South African population, the hostility that the host population has towards foreigners sometimes degenerates into violence.

Internationalisation of Education in South Africa

According to South Africa's National Commission on Higher Education (1996):

> of crucial importance for higher education is the rapid international development of the "learning society". The term refers to the proliferation of knowledge and information in the contemporary world. The production, dissemination, acquisition and application of knowledge are shaping the structures and

dynamics of daily life to an unprecedented degree. The learning society places a premium upon lifelong and continuing education: growing arrays of public and private organisations ("non-specialised learning organisations") share in knowledge production with institutions of higher education. The challenge to higher education is to adapt to these changes and to sustain its role as a specialised producer of knowledge. If knowledge is the electricity of the new globalisation, higher education institutions must seize the opportunity of becoming major generators of the power source.

However, for Africans who have immigrated to South Africa since the end of apartheid, xenophobia has been a source of anxiety and disappointment. The pan-African solidarity that Africans across the continent gave to South African freedom fighters has been repaid with hostility. Many victims of South African xenophobia could not say why South Africans found it difficult to reciprocate. However the unchanged nature of the South African economy after 1994 made it very difficult for black South Africans to play host to thousands of immigrants and refugees in the same way that other countries did. And even though it has been shown in numerous Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) surveys that immigrants create work and contribute to the South African economy, the news media continue to perpetuate the view of the foreign African as a parasite and criminal.

As Nyamnjoh (2006: 69) has shown, although Africans have always been mobile, a dominant yet shortsighted tendency portrays migration as necessarily productive of ruptures and anomalies. Indeed if you accept the "out of Africa" origin theory, then migration was started in Africa, with all the history-making consequences this implies. Of colonialism's many injustices, denying Africans the right to move freely has been the most devastating. The point is that mobility as a survival strategy did not start with globalisation. For Africans globalisation, like colonialism, immobilises and impoverishes. The presence of African workers in Europe, we may argue, occurs in spite of, rather than because of, any natural trend in global capitalism to recruit labour where it may be most profitable.

Although the derogatory label "makwerekwere" (babblers), which South Africans use to label African migrants, implies linguistic or cultural reasons for fear or hatred of foreigners, it is obvious that the economic marginalisation of black South Africans, rather than cultural differences, is a major factor driving xenophobia in South Africa. Both positive and negative stereotypes of foreigners are based on economic rationalisations. Immigrants who create wealth and provide jobs are welcome; those who take away jobs are not. Thus some nationalities are less welcome than others, depending on whether they are perceived as job creators or job takers. According to Statistics South Africa (2003

viii) most documented immigrants fall in the productive twenties to forties age group. Some of these are university or college students, and most are seeking employment. A positive view of immigrants would point to their skills and productive capacity, but a negative view would blame them for creating new pressures on South Africa's scarce higher-education and employment facilities. Migration being what it is, however, there are even larger numbers of South African émigrés of similar age who have been recorded in other countries. The difference is that South African professionals are deliberately enticed to relocate to Australia, New Zealand, Canada or the USA and thus welcomed as a skills gain rather than a social problem in their new countries.

The threat of permanent unemployment occupies such a central position in the minds of South Africa's essentially unskilled and landless black proletariat that it is understandable why foreigners are perceived as the people who take away jobs and threaten livelihoods. Although government grants exist for child support, pension and disability, wage employment is the only means by which black South Africans can break out of poverty. Other than the right to vote, everything that black South Africans hoped for in post-apartheid South Africa requires money. The peasant farming that enables poor people in other parts of the world to function within the colonial capitalist economy is not a viable option here.

There is a Zambian saying in the Bemba language – 'Umwana ashenda atasha ba nyina ukunaya' – which translates as 'The child who never leaves home is forever praising his mother's cooking'. Children who think their mother is the best cook in the world may well be right, but the fact that they have never left home makes their judgement more than biased because it is based on ignorance. If ignorance is one factor that drives xenophobia, we do not expect university students to be xenophobic, because they are supposed to be well informed, cosmopolitan and open-minded. However, as Outhwaite has suggested, using his concept of "reflexive" xenophobia, even cosmopolitans can be xenophobic. Indeed we have seen how East Europeans, for example, upon arriving in South Africa, sometimes assume the most right-wing of colonial prejudices. Such "cosmopolitans" are actually xenophiles, but they identify with their foreign love so closely that they end up assuming its xenophobic culture. Thus the architect of South African apartheid Hendrik Verwoerd, who was Dutch, and Janusz Walus, the Polish killer of South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani, can be seen as xenophiles who loved the Afrikaner so much they ended up adopting Afrikaner xenophobia.

Today xenophobia debates in South Africa are dominated by the human rights violations meted out to foreign Africans by South Africans, Batswana and, to a lesser extent, other SADC Home Affairs, Police and state officials as

well as citizens generally. Although official statistics do not show that there has been a 'flood of foreigners' into South Africa, the newspapers continue to churn out grossly exaggerated guesstimates quoting alarmist academics, independent researchers, security think tanks and political leaders. Consequently the belief that millions of "illegal aliens" are present in the country is widely held. Foreign Africans in particular are blamed for contributing to the spread of squatter settlements, violent crime and horrible diseases. Although this myth has been disproved by a number of researchers, notably those involved in the Southern African Migration Project at IDASA (MacDonald et al 1998), it refuses to die out.

It is widely believed in wealthy countries that the world's poor are all determined to make their way to Europe, the USA or South Africa, but most people do not wish to leave their home countries. For example, despite the opportunity given to them to become permanent South African residents, thousands of Basotho and Mozambican migrant workers opted not to accept the offer. With the exception of Zimbabwean professionals, for most SADC citizens South Africa is not the preferred country of residence or work, in part because South African cities have always been regarded as anomic and violent. Johannesburg, as the place of gold, is where workers have to go to earn money, not where families want to raise their children or where old people can retire peacefully. It is not surprising, therefore, that the departure of skilled white (and now black) South African professionals has not been matched by immigration of skilled people, as the net loss of people shown in Table 1 below indicates.

Table 1: South Africa Migration: main destinations

Year	Documented Migrants	Self-declared Emigrants	Net gain/loss
1994	6,398	10,235	-3,837
1995	5,064	8,725	-3,661
1996	5,407	9,708	-4,301
1997	4,103	8,946	-4,843
1998	4,371	9,031	-4,660
1999	3,669	8,487	-4,818
2000	3,053	10,262	-7,209
2001	4,832	12,260	-7,428
2002	6,545	10,890	-4,345
2003	10,578	16,165	-5,587

Source: Stats SA Report No 03-51-03-(2003)

Europe is the preferred destination for most South African emigrants, and most but not all of these are of European origin themselves. Europeans also favour South Africa as a place of retirement or resettlement where Euros and Pounds have a higher buying power.

Table 2: Selected Occupation of Documented Immigrants

Occupation	Immigrants		
	2001	**2002**	**2003**
House keeping	137	131	7,277
Child not scholar	204	236	315
Scholar - student	901	1,182	1,427
Engineers	62	34	61
Professional	524	576	499
Natural Sciences	59	59	51
Medical	41	88	73
Educational	179	189	90
Managerial	258	382	416

Source: Stats SA Report No 03-51-03-(2003).

Whereas the departure of South Africans to Europe and elsewhere is seen as a loss of skills and capital, and as a brain drain, the African arrivals are usually seen as a problem. Only recently has there been an attempt to adjust immigration laws specifically with a view to appear less hostile to foreign workers, investors and professionals. It is likely that professionals from Africa will join the flight to the north, because the aggressive recruiting of Britain and New Zealand for medical staff is likely to attract them as well. After all wages and working conditions are better all round in the wealthier countries.

This view of South Africa as transit point does not just apply to professionals, but it is true for young unskilled migrants as well. South Africa provides opportunities for getting skills, money and contacts and, for many, a chance to improve their English before embarking on the trip to America or the UK.

College Exclusions under Neo-Apartheid

University training has always been expensive, a privilege enjoyed by economic and social elites. Since the 1990s, however, a combination of factors has made affordability the main factor in determining who may have access to institutions of higher learning. Whether new lecturers are hired on permanent

or short-term contracts depends on funding. This has meant that when South Africa should have been increasing the number of black students and researchers in order to correct the social imbalances caused by centuries of colonial oppression and apartheid, the number of black graduates has not increased significantly and tends to be concentrated in the humanities and social sciences. The need to change the naturalised institutional cultures of the white universities has been highlighted by black South African students and faculty members who have a long history of exclusion and who find working in the new environment of a predominantly or historically white institution to be alienating. Despite this problem increasing numbers of students, usually the children of the elite from countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and Nigeria, suggest that, whether they reform or not, the white universities will continue to enrol increasing numbers of black students. Zimbabweans have a longer tradition of studying in South Africa, and Oucho (2006: 59) has shown that Zimbabwean professionals are also more likely to seek work in South Africa than graduates from any other SADC country.

Table 3: Nationality of students applying for admission to UCT in 2006

South Africa	9,089	Uganda	28
Zimbabwe	775	PRC	27
Botswana	259	Nigeria	10
Namibia	166	Korea	18
Mauritius	99	Angola	15
Tanzania	98	Cameroon	14
Kenya	79	Ghana	10
Lesotho	67	Germany	9
Zambia	66	USA	8
Malawi	32	Chinese Taipei	7
Mozambique	31	Ethiopia	6
Great Britain	29	Norway	6

Source: Adapted from UCT Admissions 2006.

Cape Town born and bred students might find it more difficult to fit into UCT life than Zimbabwean or Kenyan students. In a study of black women academics at UCT Meny-Gibert found that Nomsa, ex-Fort Hare, and Asthenia, ex-University of Zimbabwe, both felt that they were well prepared for their studies at UCT. Faye, ex-University of the Western Cape, on the other hand, was less certain:

I felt very at home at UWC, I don't feel at home at UCT. You know, I must think about that. It's not really because the people are – it's not because of the environment. It's because of the perception … what you are used to … my past … It's very different for my peers who are younger. They would have gone immediately into – I don't know, I just get the feeling that it's different.

The perception that UCT is 'not for us' may be due to long-standing local social problems, about which foreign students know nothing. The Legson Kayira type of migrant student or the wealthier semester-abroad international student does not know what kind of political baggage UCT carries and will happily go about their business, oblivious to the discomfort of others around them. Congolese student David Fuamba, who acted as my research assistant, confessed after a few days of interviewing fellow Congolese about xenophobia that he was seeing things from an entirely new perspective. Before that his life on campus revolved around his studies and his circle of international students. He had not experienced the hostility that his fellow Congolese spoke to him about. However, one night, when he had been with his group of white fellow-students and friends, one of them had wanted to leave early and asked for some money from David so he could take a cab. As David was giving his friend money, the bar man saw this and, assuming that a drug dealer was in the house, angrily told David to get out and never show his face there again. David maintained, previously he would have written this incident off as a misunderstanding, but since conducting interviews for me, he has become aware of the prejudices and discrimination that had previously not bothered him.

Ironically, until recently, historically white South African universities did not officially attach much importance to the nationality of students, preferring instead to keep account of the racial breakdown of the student body. By representing the children of the African elites in other countries as previously disadvantaged on account of their race, they are actually postponing the implementation of proper student and staff development programmes that would redress the apartheid legacy. In this regard some of the recipients of the Wenner-Gren fellowship which ran in the University of Cape Town's social anthropology department until 2005 are from very privileged backgrounds in their home countries. Although the intention of the fellowship was to encourage more black anthropologists, irrespective of their class background, by the time it was wound up, it had created much resentment among some of the white lecturers and students due to the fact that needy white students were not allowed access to the fund. Needless to say, those who felt excluded blamed those who were favoured and claimed that affirmative action is reverse discrimination, a view given credence when black elites receive scholarships instead of the chil-

dren of the black poor. It has to be mentioned, however, that most recipients of the fellowship were honours-level students (considered a postgraduate qualification in South Africa) and not MA or PhD.

The number of black South African postgraduates is still too low to solve the social problems that emanate from previous exclusions, and the African migrant student or professionals cannot solve these uniquely South African problems. A more concerted effort needs to be undertaken to promote the training of black South Africans in local and international institutions. The aim of such investments would not only be to recreate the black intelligentsia that was almost destroyed by apartheid but also to reduce the sense of resentment that may result from the perceived domination by foreigners of positions of influence in the academy.

Conclusion

Access to good university education can contribute to the eradication of global apartheid and the bridging of national, regional and international income gaps. It may even reduce racial and ethnic tensions at both individual and collective levels. Universities also provide a unique opportunity for future leaders to forge links and create social networks that cut across race, class, gender and national differences. In the past Fourah Bay College, Makerere, Fort Hare and the University of Dar es salaam have all shown how one institution can promote ideas and create networks of alumni that can have positive impacts on history in several countries. Since they have an obvious leadership role to play in their communities, university graduates can also function as positive role models symbolising genuine international cooperation by drawing on their campus friendships. The experience in colleges and universities in Europe and America also shows how influential alumni can use their international networks of fellow business and political leaders for the good of both the alma mater and their various countries.

If this paper could conclude with just one policy recommendation, it would be that the South African government should take the lead in SADC and the African Union in promoting the rights of citizens to enjoy free movement across the continent and make a contribution where they can without being criminalised by xenophobia or bureaucracy. Most people are law-abiding and productive and should be treated as such in whatever country they choose to study, trade or reside in. As far as the universities are concerned, their long history of internationalism and multiculturalism makes them automatic candidates for facilitating cooperative research and teaching and other exchanges that are essential for making globalisation in other aspects of life feasible.

As the case study of refugee and migrant students in Cape Town has demonstrated, there are many formidable barriers to the smooth development of a SADC migration strategy, and even more difficult policy issues have to be addressed if international migration across the African continent and globally can ever be normalised. The SADC Draft Protocol on Free Movement of 1995 was scuppered by South African opposition based on the well-known national paranoia that prevents the country from fully integrating in African life and makes a mockery of its pan-African agenda of a African Renaissance. Cross-border migration for students, migrant workers and traders thus continues to be influenced by police and surveillance strategies rather than the development of an African Union. Universities and other institutions of higher education can play a role in reversing this unfortunate attribute of South African culture. It is hoped that this paper can stimulate more research, debate and creative policy-making to challenge the counterproductive xenophobia and promote a pan-Africanism that will unleash the full potential of African youth.

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