Tactical Cosmopolitanism and Idioms of Belonging: Insertion and Self-Exclusion in Johannesburg

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Research amongst immigrant groups in Johannesburg points to the emergence of distinctive ways of negotiating inclusion and belonging that transcend ethnic, national or transnational paradigms. Confronted with new South African nationalism, a restrictive immigration regime and xenophobia, immigrants have reacted with what we term 'tactical cosmopolitanism' to negotiate partial inclusion in South Africa's transforming society without becoming bounded by it. Rather than a coherent philosophy, it is a mishmash of rhetorical and organisational tools drawing on a diversity of more established discourses and value systems. In so doing, they capitalise on cosmopolitanism's power without being bound by its responsibilities. This paper contributes to the emerging literature on cosmopolitanism 'from below', conceptualised not as a philosophy but as a practice and form of experiential culture.

Keywords: South Africa; Johannesburg; Immigration; Xenophobia; Cosmopolitanism

Introduction

Like a prism, cosmopolitanism renders visible the complexities, intricacies and limitations in the inherently bounded concepts of nationalism and transnationalism. But even within debates on cosmopolitanism's content, rarely have scholars adequately considered the accounts and everyday experiences that constitute cosmopolitanism 'from below' and the cosmopolitan-like practices that emerge in the absence of a coherent philosophical framework. By focusing on African migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa, this article illustrates how, when confronted with a

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restrictive immigration regime and high levels of xenophobia, foreigners have adopted a series of cosmopolitan tactics that enables them to achieve their partial inclusion in South Africa's transforming society without becoming bounded by it. Rather than a stable philosophy or De Certeauian (1984) strategy for systemic change, these tactics are a mixture of rhetorical and organisational tools drawing on a diversity of more established discourses and value systems with strong cosmopolitan content. This is a kind of 'thin' or cool cosmopolitanism (cf. Roudometof 2005: 113), but one that cannibalises rather than commits to its power and universalist duties.

This paper consists of three main sections. After a brief review of our conceptual and methodological foundations, and drawing on recent data from surveys and interviews with migrants, service providers, advocates and local government representatives, we schematically review the forces that tactical cosmopolitanism has emerged to resist: a harsh immigration regime and a sometimes brutal set of social responses. We then outline the facets of tactical cosmopolitanism and review its empirical manifestations: the rhetoric of claims to space, the fragility and fragmentation of migration associations; and efforts to elude 'capture' by South African socio-political institutions and other migrants. We end by raising a series of empirical questions that, when answered, will add depth to our discussion by speaking to the dimensions, prevalence, persistence and social importance of tactical cosmopolitanism.

Conceptual and Methodological Foundations

Our inductive efforts to reveal migrants' 'tactical cosmopolitanism' help loosen the concept from the two pairs of capstans that have long pulled it in conflicting directions. Two of these pulleys are worked by philosophers who speak of what Beck and Sznaider (2006) term 'the cosmopolitan condition' (see also Appiah 1998; Beck 1998). This includes those celebrating the potential of transgressing nationalism and others who are distressed by cosmopolitanism's threat to the communitarian bases of human society. Others fear cosmopolitanism as a nefarious, Trojan horse for elite, 'Western', capitalist and consumerist values (Carens 1987; Waldron 1992; Walzer 1983). The remaining pulleys are worked by prophets who, on the one hand, speculate about a new world of pastiches and hybridity, and on the other, explain and fret over the reassertion of localised identities emerging in response to pressures of globalisation (Featherstone 1990; Geertz 1986: 121; Geschiere 2006; Sassen 2002; Smith 1995: 20). In almost all cases, these philosophers ponder how we should react to these opportunities or threats: policy response, a new ethics, and new ways of being in the world.

What these accounts too often miss are the forms of 'actually existing cosmopolitanism' (Beck and Sznaider 2006: 6; see also Robbins 1998; Vertovec 2006) that emerge as ordinary people in relatively poor countries address quotidian challenges to meet their broader individual and collective objectives. Even among those focusing on existing cosmopolitanisms, attention is usually on economically

privileged individuals and societies (cf. Furia 2005). Some go so far as to overtly deny the cosmopolitan potential of the poor and, more specifically, poor migrants. Hannerz, for example, claims that the majority of migrants are not cosmopolitan, as their 'involvement with another culture is not a fringe benefit but a necessary cost, to be kept as low as possible' (Hannerz 1990: 243). Without claiming that all migrants are inherently cosmopolitan, we argue that it is unfair to dismiss the poor's cosmopolitan potential even when it emerges from pragmatic concerns. In so doing, we share Beck's (2002: 21) view that 'in the struggles over belonging, the actions of migrants and minorities are major examples of dialogic imaginative ways of life and everyday cosmopolitanism'.

To begin revealing these innovations, this essay draws on an ecumenical set of data in illustrating the emergence of tactical cosmopolitanism in Johannesburg. As the region's sole metropolis, Johannesburg shapes and is shaped by socio-economic dynamics throughout Southern Africa and the world, including human migration (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004). It is also a palimpsest in which new patterns of investment, belonging and mobility are being inscribed over legacies of apartheid planning, social fragmentation and new patterns of migration. As a result of new freedoms, people once excluded from Johannesburg's central 'forbidden city' are now moving in *en masse*, transforming neighbourhoods at bewildering speed. Many of these are South African citizens, but Balbo and Marconi (2005: 3) report that international migrants now represent 6.2 per cent of Johannesburg's total population. Leggett's survey (2003, n = 1,100) in central Johannesburg found that almost 25 per cent of residents were foreign-born. Four years later, unpublished work by Kagiso Urban Management found that foreigners comprised the majority (or close to it) in the previously white neighbourhoods of Yeoville and Berea. For these and a host of other reasons, Johannesburg provides an apt laboratory for uncovering novel social forms in their early stages.

Most of the information reflected here stems from migration-related research in Southern and Eastern Africa—beginning with Johannesburg in particular—undertaken between 2002 and 2007. This includes original survey research complemented by formal and informal interviews with migrants, service providers, advocates and local government representatives. The 2006 iteration of the migration survey, first undertaken in 2003, is a collaborative project among Wits University (Johannesburg), Tufts University (Boston), the French Institute of South Africa and partners in Maputo, Lubumbashi and Nairobi. The 2006 Johannesburg sample, from which we draw much of the discussion here, included 847 respondents in seven central Johannesburg neighbourhoods. Of these, 30 per cent were from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); 24 per cent from Mozambique, 22 per cent from Somalia, and 22 per cent from South Africa. The remaining 2 per cent is from other countries mistakenly included in the sample. Overall, 60 per cent of the respondents were male, generally reflecting official estimates of the inner cities' demographic composition. These data are by no means representative of South Africa's 'migrant stock' or of Johannesburg's population as a whole. They nevertheless provide critical illustrations

of trends and the possibility of new forms of socio-political organisation and categories of belonging. By drawing on existing and on new quantitative and qualitative research from these areas, this essay opens space for further empirical and conceptual investigations.

South African Xenophobia in Attitude and Practice

South Africa's official ambitions to overcome past patterns of exclusion based on arbitrary social categories have done little to prevent xenophobic policy and daily practices. West Africans (particularly Nigerians) were long the archetypical antagonist and 'other', but South Africans remain ecumenical about applying the derogatory label for a foreigner—*Kwere Kwere*. More recently, Zimbabweans have started to take the blame for Johannesburg's crime and other social ills. Although attitudes vary, few African migrants find an accommodating reception from their South African hosts. This is not surprising given that 65 per cent of the South Africans in the 2003 Wits survey thought it would be good if most of the foreigners left the country, with many openly supporting drastic measures towards this end. Justifications for such sentiments include perceived connections between a non-national presence and the country's most visible social pathologies: crime, HIV/AIDS and unemployment (Leggett 2003). The prevalence of violence against foreigners in Johannesburg and elsewhere suggests that this is not mere sabre-rattling (see Landau and Haithar 2007). More recently, the government has proposed policies to limit foreign land-ownership to better protect the country's native population (*Mail and Guardian Online* 2007). Indeed, behind all of this is a suspicion that foreigners are derailing the country's progress towards national self-realisation and the promises of freedom—prosperity, equality, security and global prominence.

Anti-foreign sentiments are not only an organic or spontaneous response to street-level tensions, but have also been shaped and legitimised by politicians and bureaucrats. The famously xenophobic (former) Minister of Home Affairs (1994–2004), Mangosuthu Buthelezi, has accomplished the most in this regard, although his efforts have been bolstered by others' active and passive support. In addressing a meeting discussing migration in the region, Buthelezi explicitly argued that the 'free movement of persons spells disaster for our country'. Somewhat more subtly, Johannesburg's Executive Mayor reflected a widely held sentiment in his 'State of the City 2004' speech when he reported that 'While migrancy contributes to the rich tapestry of the cosmopolitan city, it also places a severe strain on employment levels, housing and public services'. The city is now, officially, 'migrant friendly', but such pronouncements come long after nativist sentiments have taken hold in both public and political discourse.

These exclusionary sentiments have helped to generate and legitimate a set of practices that effectively prevent non-nationals living in the inner city from becoming full members of the urban community. While South African legislation demands that all children have rights to schooling, a 2000 study on the Somali refugee community

in Johannesburg found that 70 per cent of the children of school age were not in schools (Peberdy and Majodina 2000). Although some schools have since opened their doors to foreigners and unpublished research by Wits University suggests the figures have improved, officials continue to blame immigration for their inability to meet public demand, despite most of the city's newcomers being South Africans. A similar pattern is reflected in migrants' efforts to access health services, particularly emergency care. Despite Constitutional guarantees of access to emergency medical care, a 2003 national study of refugees and asylum-seekers found that 17 per cent of all respondents were denied it (Belvedere 2003). Calculating this as a percentage of those seeking such care, the figure would be much higher. Some of these refusals are due to confusion over who is entitled to care, but one of Nkosi's (2004) refugee respondents reported hearing nurses talking about foreigners taking government money and having too many babies. Another heard staff describing their hospital as 'infested' with foreigners (Pursell 2005).

The police have also capitalised on foreigners' unpopularity to bolster their reputation and bank accounts. A study conducted in late 2000, for example, found asylum-seekers arbitrarily arrested and detained based only on their physical appearance; their inability to speak one of South Africa's official 'African' languages (of which there are nine), or simply for fitting an undocumented migrant 'profile' (Algotsson 2000; Lubkemann 2000: 58–9; Madsen 2004). Non-South Africans living or working in Johannesburg, for example, consequently report having been stopped by the police far more frequently than South Africans, despite their having generally lived in the city for shorter periods. Although instructed to respect non-nationals' rights, police often refuse to recognise work permits or refugee identity cards and some non-nationals report having their identity papers confiscated or destroyed in order to justify an arrest. Combined with their tenuous legal status, (often) poor documentation, and tendency to trade on the street (hawking or informal business), some police officers have come to see foreigners as 'mobile-ATMs' (Templeton and Maphumulo 2005). In the words of one Eritrean living in Johannesburg, 'As foreign students we are not required to pay taxes to the government. But when we walk down these streets, we pay.'

Illustrating the length to which the city goes to exclude non-nationals, a joint operation launched by the City of Johannesburg and the Department of Home Affairs in September 2003 deployed helicopters and almost 1,000 private security officers in a thinly disguised effort to rid the city of unwanted foreigners in the name of crime prevention and urban renewal. After sealing an apartment block, officials confiscated four illegal firearms—modest by Johannesburg standards—and arrested 198 illegal immigrants. As unpalatable as this operation may seem in a country committed to curbing the arbitrary use of force, a senior city official proudly reported on their success to a public meeting called to help combat social exclusion. The violent and often extra-legal efforts to protect national territory recently reached new extremes when police raided a Church and stole cellphones and money (including the poor plate) from the hundreds of asylum-seekers seeking sanctuary there (Kharsany and

Zvomuya 2008). These are also not the only efforts to rid the city of foreigners. Soon after South Africa's first democratic election, Alexandra Township, north of the city centre, organised a campaign entitled 'Operation *Buyelekhaya*' (Operation Go Back Home) in an effort to rid the township of all foreigners (Palmary *et al.* 2003: 112). Combined with South Africa's hyperactive deportation regime—the government 'removed' close to 250,000 migrants in 2007—the fear of violence, social exclusion and scapegoating offer powerful barriers to migrant inclusion.

As South Africans forge a new nationalism through their engagement with each other and the state, they confront a foreign-born population that is making claims to the very territory on which their nation is to be anchored. Their compulsion to exclude non-nationals has meant that foreigners seeking lives in South Africa's 'forbidden cities' (Landau 2005) must either become invisible or find ways of justifying and legitimising their presence. Unable or unwilling to address the structural and ideological roots of their exclusion, they have developed a series of tactics designed to achieve these ends.

Tactical Cosmopolitanism Defined

As non-citizens encounter and attempt to overcome the opposition to their presence, they draw on a variegated language of belonging that makes claims to the city while positioning them in an ephemeral, superior and unrooted condition where they can escape localised social and political obligations. The remainder of this paper explores the content of this fragmented and heterogeneous discourse—what we term tactical cosmopolitanism—and how it draws on pan-Africanism, South African human rights rhetoric, religion and the language of global elites. In doing so, it illustrates foreigners' agency in mitigating xenophobia's effects by at once inserting themselves into city life and distancing themselves from it.

Before describing tactical cosmopolitanism's empirical manifestations, it is worth reiterating that this is not a coherent or self-conscious collective philosophy or set of tactics. Unlike theoretical or 'high' cosmopolitanism, these are not necessarily grounded in normative ideas of 'openness' nor intended to promote universal values of any form. Rather, migrants practically and rhetorically draw on various, often competing, systems of cosmopolitan rights and rhetorics to insinuate themselves, however shallowly, in the networks and spaces needed to achieve specific practical goals. Unlike transnationalism, which is often about belonging to multiple communities (or shuttling between them), these are more 'decentred' tactics that emphasise individualism, generality and universality, all 'central pillars' of cosmopolitanism (cf. Pogge 1992: 48; Roudometof 2005: 121). However, they do so variably, and often contradictorily, in relation to the migrants' very personal current needs, interests and rights. Although it may exist, we do not claim this as evidence of a stable, inclusive 'cosmopolitan consciousness'. This leaves them, in Friedman's (2006)

words, 'betwixt and between without being liminal ... participating in many worlds without becoming part of them' (quoted in Vertovec 2006: 3–10; cf. Simmel 1964).

Migrants achieve this outcome by drawing heavily from cosmopolitanism's philosophical foundations but without adopting its universalised concern for others—even a norm of limited reciprocity. Through evocations of universalism and efforts—rhetorical, organisational and through daily practice—they help to ensure that their various rights are at least occasionally extended to the individual in ways that transcend national or ethnic borders. This cosmopolitanism—especially in its current form—constitutes a form of 'experiential culture' (Lamont 2000: 2), but one that has risen from the need to achieve tactical targets rather than being the result of an appreciation of cultural diversity or philosophical consideration.

In a paper of this scope, it is only possible to illustrate with signs of cosmopolitanism. There are four particular areas where we see signs of cosmopolitanism, with three demonstrating a form of tactical cosmopolitanism.

The first example of migrant cosmopolitanism is linked to the composition of the population and their relations to people outside South Africa, a *de facto* cosmopolitanism, although one that may be easily confused with an elaborate transnationalism. The second is the rhetoric of self-exclusion and transient superiority that distances this group from a South African national project and cultural assimilation. The third is in the rhetoric they use to claim membership in South Africa—a varied mix of pan-Africanism and other liberation philosophies. The fourth, and most critical to the tactical component of our argument, is in how they organise themselves to avoid the ethics of obligation to other migrant groups and their home communities. It is this mix of atomisation and fluid association that is unique to this form of life. It is not an alternative way of belonging, but a use of cosmopolitan rhetoric and organisational forms allowing them to live outside of belonging while claiming the benefits of it.

De Facto *Cosmopolitanism and Orientation to Other Places*

The tactical cosmopolitanism we describe features a strong orientation to yet unknown and untravelled places outside both the host and the home country. When asked about future plans, just over 13 per cent of foreign respondents thought they were likely to return to their countries or communities of origin within the next two years, 16 per cent were planning onward journeys and 13 per cent did not know. Among the Congolese, however, almost 30 per cent expected to be in a third country. Critically, journeys home or onwards often remain elusive for practical reasons of money, safety or social status. This leaves large sections of Johannesburg's non-national population effectively marooned in the city, but not necessarily planning to be here. This reflects the kind of cosmopolitan 'outlook' which Vertovec describes, one that 'is largely acquired through experience, especially travel' (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 13). Looking at

migration trajectories, it becomes clear that many migrants are in fact 'well-travelled'; however, for tactical purposes:

> I lived in Botswana, I was in Mozambique, Zambia, it's like when you are in a country which is not your home country, just try and get cash you see, you don't have much time to look for entertainment, all you do is part of life, whether you like it or not (Zimbabwean migrant, male).

As one of its core constituents, cosmopolitanism is defined as 'a practice or competence' (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 13), an ability to familiarise oneself with different cultures and to partially adjust to a multiplicity of cultural systems (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 14). Among migrants included in the 2006 Johannesburg survey, almost a third had already lived somewhere other than South Africa or their 'home' country. Among Somalis, that figure is just under 50 per cent. However, whereas we share a focus on competence and familiarisation, we differ from other accounts in the motivations for such engagements. Tactical cosmopolitans acknowledge the benefit they gain from these interactions, but are not 'cultural omnivores' (Peterson and Kern 1996) nor are their practices based on the 'respect and enjoyment of cultural difference' (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 13). As one Zimbabwean migrant notes,:

> I was in Zimbabwe, I was not doing this, I didn't have a job, now I am here and I am doing this, if I go to Botswana, it's going to change, there I do construction, if I go to, say, California, I am going to learn more skills, and more languages, wherever you go you learn something new, that is a good thing.

It is not only familiarisation that is at work here. So, too, are the connections that enable people to move. Johannesburg's migrants are not only transnational— although many remain regularly in touch with people in their home communities—but they retain an extraordinary array of contacts with friends, relatives and associates across the world. Through these connections, they are developing multi-sited families, economies and categories of belonging that transcend national borders and are, in some cases, so fluid as to almost transcend territory altogether. The frequency with which people are in contact with relatives and kin elsewhere suggests that these are, in Benedikt's (1991: 10) words, nomads 'who are always in touch' (quoted in Bauman 2000: 78).

Rhetoric of Self-Exclusion

In response to the violence, abuse and discrimination which they experience in Johannesburg, many foreigners have developed a rhetoric of self-exclusion that fetishises their position as the permanent outsider or wanderer in a way that 'distances him or her from all connections and commitments' (Said 2001: 183; see also Malauene 2004; Simone 2001). So, rather than striving to integrate or assimilate, non-nationals' extended interaction with South Africans is leading to a reification of differences and a counter-idiom of transience and superiority. Whatever the source of

exclusion, only 45 per cent of the foreigners we surveyed felt they were part of South African society—39 per cent of the Congolese and 54 per cent of the Somali population; 96 per cent of South Africans felt they were 'in'. One migrant from Lesotho who has lived in Johannesburg for four years reveals many dimensions of a discourse of non-belonging:

> I don't think any right-thinking person would want to be South African. It's a very unhealthy environment. South Africans are very aggressive, even the way they talk. Both black and white. I don't know what's the word, it's a degenerated façade they are putting up . . . They are just so contaminated.

Ironically, foreigners often brand South Africans with the same flaws levied against them: dishonesty, violence and vectors of disease. Few trust South Africans and only a minority speaks of close relationships with them. All this is further complemented (and justified) by a sense that South Africans are uneducated or do not appreciate the opportunities they have for education (or other social services), are promiscuous (female promiscuity is particularly jarring), overly tolerant (especially regarding the acceptance of homosexuality) and unreligious.

Clinging to the status afforded those belonging to the 'mobile classes' (see Baumann 2000), migrants hover above the soil by retaining loyalties to their countries of origin, and orient themselves towards a future outside South Africa. This emerges from a combination of both original intent (i.e. why people came to a given city), and a counter-response to the hostility or exclusion they face when they arrive. Whatever its origins, many migrants deny ever having held aspirations of assimilation or permanent settlement (i.e. total inclusion). Others claim that they would refuse such opportunities were they available. For them, allocthon status is not a scarlet letter, but represents their own, alternative form of deterritorialised inclusion. While many more foreigners would like their children to learn English or another South African language, they remain wary of them ever considering themselves to be South African.

Rhetoric of Rights: Inclusion without Membership

Kihato's (2007) work on migrant associations in the inner city described Awelah, a group that rose, phoenix-like, from the ashes of an Ivorian association that had collapsed after an internal power struggle. Unlike most of the city's previous organisations that were based on ethnic or national foundations, Awelah offers up a new kind of Pan-Africanism. In the words of its founder, quoted at length in the paper:

> We want to shift our patriotism to the continent, not to a country. We Africans share a history together; we are bound together by a neo-colonialism. When you dig up these feelings all Africans have the same history. This is the link that we have got now, we are African even though we butcher each other but we are African. In our day-to-day living we are all confronted with problems of nationality,

ethnicity and so on. But when you have this [broader African] perspective you do not see these problems anymore.

But there is more to this than a desire to build a community of all Africans as an end in itself. Rather, the evocations of Pan-Africanism—drawn from 1960s liberation philosophy, Mbeki's notion of African Renaissance, and the rhetoric of Africa's World Cup to be played in South Africa in 2010—are particularly designed to erode the barriers that separate foreigners from South Africans. By helping South Africans to realise connections to their continental kin they undermine the legitimacy of any barriers to inclusion that South Africans may erect in front of them. Ironically, the foundation for such mobilisation remains firmly rooted in a transnational articulation of Ivorian identity from where most of the new members come. Through this rhetoric and these tactics—tactics which we are only beginning to explore— migrants adopt a *de facto* cosmopolitanism that demonstrates a willingness to engage a plurality of cultures, an openness to hybridity and multiple identities (cf. Hannerz 1990: 239). In the account of a Malawian migrant:

> Africa is a family, just to uplift Africa as a whole, as a continent, I think if it is us Africans, we should uplift one another, for the benefit of us as a family. You can't just let your sister or your mother starve.

This is not, however, openness without boundaries, but rather one that draws on multiple identities simultaneously without ever accepting the overarching authority or power of one. Importantly, their rhetoric is distinctly non-transnational. Nowhere does this new language speak of maintaining ties to a specific location. Rather, it is a tactical effort to gain access to the city, but without a view of becoming exclusively or even partially bound to it or any other concrete locale.

Elsewhere, migrant groups have used South Africa's relatively liberally—if inconsistently—applied asylum laws and its Constitution to provide rights of residence and work. However, very few refugees use this language of rights to justify their position in the country. Rather, they call on norms of reciprocity—claiming a right to the city (and the country) based on what their countries did to assist South Africa during the Apartheid period.

Nigerians, for example, will often claim (with some substantiation) that ANC activists were given full university scholarships in the 1970s and 1980s, opportunities that were not always available to Nigerian citizens. Mozambicans, Zimbabweans and even Namibians claim that they personally suffered from wars tied to South Africa's anti-communist campaign and efforts to destroy the strongholds of the African National Congress (ANC) or its active military wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) within their countries. If they did not experience the war first-hand, then they were deprived by an economy that had been destroyed by years of fighting. Others plausibly argue that, because South African business derives so much profit from investments in their countries (in the past and now), they have a reciprocal right to South Africa's

territory and wealth. In this way, South Africa's own transnationalism—past and present—serves as justification for transcending national residential restrictions.

By drawing on religion, African tradition and almost any other rhetoric that is available, the ever-expanding pool of Nigerian-run Pentecostal churches operating within Johannesburg's inner city appears to be fashioning an organisational form that at once bridges barriers with South Africans (and South Africa) while preparing people for a 'life beyond' South Africa. Indeed, in many cases, the churches prepare people for a life beyond any territorially bounded nation. Many of these offer up 'health and wealth' promises seen elsewhere in evangelical communities, promises that offer an alternative to the material deprivation many migrants experience. Although there is not space here to present the diversity of testimonies and preaching included in even one five-hour 'mass', almost all reflect the lived experiences of people in the city. In some instances, the preaching bears only the faintest influence of biblical pronouncements, but is instead fabricated out of contemporary challenges and generalised evangelical Christian philosophy. The promises and guidance offered within such oration also bring in South Africans to the community, generating one of the rare common spaces between nationals and foreigners in the city. As one Zimbabwean migrant states: 'In the church, they help us in many ways, no matter where you come from, they just help you'.

With their strong links to communities in Nigeria, Ghana and the United States, the churches also open further connections out of Johannesburg. For many of the churches' founding pastors see South Africa primarily as a place where they can enter global discourse and influence the lives of people across the continent and beyond. In the words of the Nigerian pastor at the 'Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church', 'Africa is shaped like a pistol and South Africa is the mouth from where you can shoot out the word of God'. And, consequently, anyone doing the work of God has divine right to South African territory. Others are exploiting the popularity and themes of Nigerian cinema by also producing DVDs that promote the triumph of good over evil.

Unlike the rhetoric of the street, church ideology is potentially generative of community, with social pressures and disciplines that may transform tactics into a counter-hegemonic strategy. However, they presently remain far too fluid, and many of their pronouncements too pragmatic and flexible to offer a coherent, stable alternative organisational form. Instead, the churches are often functional units, helping people to find jobs, transcend boundaries or find ways (physically or spiritually) out of Johannesburg's hardships. If successful, these resources often physically help people out of the city (or at least the inner city) and onto more prosperous grounds.

Organisation and Atomisation

Due to its philosophical heterodoxy, tactical cosmopolitanism is both enormously flexible and unable to discipline its practitioners. This is clearly illustrated in the dynamic organisational configurations evident among the city's migrants.

Mang'ana (2004) reports, for example, that even people from the same country are careful to avoid the mutual obligations and politics that come from close association with other 'exiles'. Although there are instances in which migrant groups assert a collective (usually national) identity, these are often based on instrumental and short-lived associations. Amisi and Ballard's (2005) work on refugee associations throughout South Africa, for example, finds an almost universal tendency towards repeated reconfiguration and fragmentation. As Götz and Simone (2003: 125) suggest, 'These formations embody a broad range of tactical abilities aimed at maximizing economic opportunities through transversal engagements across territories and separate arrangements of powers'. They are not associations founded on preserving identity, but instead use combinations of national, ethnic and political affiliations for tactical purposes.

In many instances, even people from the same country carefully avoid close association with other 'exiles' or cling to multiple points of loyalty that allow them to shift within multiple networks. These act as resources to provide the weak links needed to gather information while allowing them to shift affiliations and tactics at a moment's notice (cf. Granovetter 1973). In so doing, they avoid capture by friends, relations and the state while inadvertently reshaping the city's social and political dynamics. This limits these networks' ability to foster permanent inclusion, but also allows a flexibility of membership and opportunity, with people shifting alliances and allegiances to a degree that is tenable given their documentation, language skills and appearance. Somali traders may be a partial exception but, even among this more insular community, fragmentation, mistrust and other divisions often trump solidarity ties.

Rather than integrating or assimilating, the form and rhetoric of organisation exploit their position as the permanent outsiders in ways that 'distance[s] him or her from all connections and commitments' (Said 2001: 183). As Simmel (1964) notes, these strangers are not fully committed to the peculiar tendencies of the people amongst whom they live. They can, therefore, approach them with a kind of scepticism, 'objectivity' and self-imposed distance. But they are also cosmopolitan for, as Hannerz (1990: 239) suggests they should, many demonstrate a great personal ability to 'make their way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting', as well as through carefully developed skills for meandering or manoeuvring through systems of meaning and obligation.

Conclusion: Potential Consequences of Tactical Cosmopolitanism

Tactical cosmopolitanism is a heterogeneous set of practices that has emerged from a form of constant, if not always conscious, struggle against the harshness of city streets and hostile attitudes. As Beck (2004: 134) suggests, this is in some ways a 'side effect', something developed to help to achieve other economic, social and even political goals. As such, this is not a unified, counter-hegemonic or 'strategic' movement that seeks to create an alternative, articulated order. Rather, this is a motley collection of

actions undertaken by groups that are often fragmented by language, religion, legal status and mutual enmity; rarely do they control significant economic resources or organisational capital. They are, however, able to swiftly combine disparate segments of the population according to current necessity and do so in ways not premised on their moral worth necessarily being realised through national membership (cf. Bowden 2003: 239).

Despite tactical cosmopolitanism's short-lived, contradictory and often ineffective practices, it is nevertheless a powerful force. Even when failing to deliver the intended goals, cosmopolitan tactics occasionally elicit strong reactions from more strategic actors: the police, the business community or frustrated South African citizens. It is in these counter-reactions to migrants' tactical activity that their greatest power lies. So while Lee (2006) argues that tactical citizenship—a concept sharing a similar legacy to our notion of tactical cosmopolitanism—is simply a reactive and a not transformative response, we argue that these reactions, counter-idioms and forms of self-exclusion may be fundamentally transformative, although not necessarily in intended ways.

Although it is possible that their current fluidity will preserve extraordinary levels of combinatorial freedom, it is likely that the repeated iterations of hybrid and novel mobilisation strategies and rhetoric will generate new categories of belonging that may eventually crystallise in ways that exert disciplinary powers of inclusion and exclusion. It is too early to tell what the nature of these will be, but it is unlikely that they will conform to existing modes of belonging, although they are likely to resonate with aspects of them. Like the marginalised populations that developed Christianity, Islam and other transcendent, deterritorialised membership, migrants in African cities may pioneer forms of membership that reshape how we understand our relationship to each other, to space and to institutions. This may take the form of 'common norms and mutual translatability' (Robbins 1998: 12) that help overcome the legacy of Apartheid and national formation. However, it is unlikely that the outcome will conform so closely to the philosophers' vision.

If Mbembe and Nuttall (2004: 356) are right that Johannesburg—like cities everywhere—is a site of imagination, of collectively enacting shared or individual visions, then we are indeed witnessing a novel form of existence with dual categories—post-national migrants on one hand and modern citizens on the other, simultaneously representing 'both resistance to domination and new hegemonic categories that perpetuate domination' (Basch *et al*. 1994: 268). But the visible presence of uprooted tactical cosmopolitans threatens the nationalist project and gives cause to question the necessity of national consolidation. Whatever the ultimate outcome, it is through the 'dialectics of conflict' which can potentially and fundamentally transform social relations from above and below. Given that South Africa's institutions remain so malleable, the results will most certainly bear the tensions between citizens and cosmopolitans.

Freed from a normative agenda, a view through a cosmopolitan lens is able to provide us with fresh and original insights into the contemporary social, cultural and

political spheres we inhabit. New (or simply as yet unrevealed) forms of social organisation, belonging and identity emerge, and we find that they often fit quite uneasily into the more conventional frameworks we work with. Most notably, nationalism as a paradigm proves less and less pertinent, and we can no longer uphold the idea that societies are territorially confined. Being this closely intertwined, the integration of perspectives from Africa and other locations in the global South into sociological theory is not only enriching and intriguing but will also, so we contend, become increasingly critical for contextualising any society, class and polity, worldwide.

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