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**ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE,
DYNAMICS AND TRENDS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

by

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I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the degree Magister Societatis Scientiae at the University of the Orange Free State is my own, independent work and has not been submitted previously at any other university or faculty.

I furthermore cede copyright of this dissertation in favour of the University of the Orange Free State.

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CHAPTER 1

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THE METHODOLOGY

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Migration has occurred throughout the history of man and migratory patterns have always shaped social interaction patterns, culture, politics and the economics of human society. In the past whole nations were in fact created by migration. Current patterns of migration will yet again have profound effects on social and political structures and paradigms. Before focusing on these current migratory patterns it will be useful to reflect briefly on the historical course of the phenomenon of migration.

When examining migration it is important to distinguish between old and new patterns of migration. Before World War II people usually migrated from areas in Europe and Asia typified by dense populations, to colonies like America and Africa that were typified by less dense populations. These people migrated in search of better opportunities in the new colonies and generally did so voluntarily. However, although migration was to a large extent voluntarily this does not imply that migration during this period was only voluntary. A large number of people were, in fact, forced to migrate during this time. Examples of this include people fleeing Ireland as a result of the potato famine of the 1850's, people fleeing the European continent due to religious persecution and prisoners from Britain exiled to the penal colony of Australia. After World War II, migration took place mainly from the former colonies and currently developing regions like South America and Africa to the developed European and North American continents. The driving forces behind this new migration pattern are poor economic circumstances, high population growth, political instability and environmental degradation in developing countries¹. The main difference between previous and current patterns of migration is that whereas people previously moved *voluntarily* towards unexplored, unpopulated areas, currently, many people are *forced* or

¹ These driving forces are dealt with extensively in Chapter 3 of the study. See, for instance, chapter 3, paragraphs 2 - 5.

compelled to migrate due to factors that they did not always themselves create and certainly cannot control (Jackson, 1986:1; Harper, 1996:163).

From these established patterns of migration two different categories of migrants can be identified, namely *voluntary migrants* and *forced migrants*. Under voluntary migrants two subcategories, namely *documented* and *undocumented* migrants are recognised. These concepts of documented and undocumented are usually employed to refer to migrants who cross political borders. This is not to say that people do not voluntarily migrate within national borders, but only when international borders are crossed does it become a concern for the international community. Documented migrants are people who use accepted and established ports of entry into new political areas, while undocumented migrants either enter countries clandestinely, or use falsified documents to enter at established ports of entry, or enter legally but later become undocumented because their residence or work permits have expired.

The concept *forced migration* is an umbrella term that identifies people who were compelled to locate to other areas because of factors beyond their control. Again, this entails crossing international borders, although forced migrants can also be internally displaced. Two subcategories, namely political refugees and environmental refugees, are identified under the forced migration category. All indications point towards a current and unprecedented increase in forced migration. Worldwide the number of refugees is estimated at 43 million. However, this does not include the approximately 14 million people who are internally displaced (Myers, 1997:167).

Research on migration has to a large extent until now dealt with the phenomenon of migration in general and mainly with forced migration caused by political factors. This research does not, however, deal with these aspects of migration again, but focuses rather on an area of forced migration that has not yet received much attention in migration research: **the issue of forced migration resulting from environmental factors**. More specifically, this study focuses on the nature, dynamics and trends of forced environmental migration, with special reference to how it is manifested in Southern Africa.

To explore the need for research into this relatively new area, it is necessary to bring the extent and nature of the problem of environmental refugees to the attention of the reader.

2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Environmental refugees as a category of forced migration has been identified as a problematic issue only during the last two decades. This can mainly be attributed to the fact that the extent of environmental degradation has only recently begun to have a serious and detrimental impact on the capacity of natural environments to sustain life. The current and unprecedented impact of environmental degradation is largely attributable to humanly induced factors that prevent the natural environment from regenerating itself sufficiently. Humanly induced factors, therefore, place increasing pressure on a finite natural resource base. This, in conjunction with a rapidly increasing population, sets the scene for an increase in forced migration due to environmental factors. Non-sustainable environments caused by overpopulation, overgrazing and soil erosion, among others, lead to an increasing number of people that will be forced to find refuge elsewhere. Environmental refugees are, therefore, a direct result of non-sustainable environments. Against this background Myers & Kent (1995:18) has proposed that environmental refugees be defined as: “ *persons who can no longer gain a secure livelihood in their traditional homelands because of environmental factors of unusual scope, notably drought, desertification, deforestation, soil erosion, water shortages and climate change, also natural disasters such as cyclones, storm surges and floods. In the face of these environmental threats, people feel they have no alternative but to seek sustenance elsewhere, whether within their own countries or beyond and whether on a semi-permanent or permanent basis*”.

Since environmental refugees is a category of forced migration, it would be useful to determine where precisely this category falls within the broader context of forced migration. A brief distinction between political refugees and environmental refugees is, therefore, necessary to outline the research problem further.

2.1 The distinction between political and environmental refugees

Forced migration is, in effect, an umbrella term that describes people who are compelled to leave their former residences because of factors beyond their control. These factors are diverse, mostly complex and interconnected, meaning that it is often difficult to pinpoint the exact causes that force people to migrate. Political, economic, social and environmental issues all contribute to forced

migration. Two main categories of forced migrants can currently be identified, namely political refugees and environmental refugees.

There is a tendency to use the terms *forced migrant* and *refugee* synonymously, both in migration literature and in general. Richmond (1994:72) however, points out that not all types of forced migrants are recognised as refugees by the international community. Currently, only persons who are forced to migrate due to political factors can receive the status of a refugee and are eligible for the protection provided for refugees by the international community. The status of political refugees is recognised and protected by the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967¹. These descriptions of political refugees also provide researchers with a clear-cut operational framework of the issue that makes it possible to identify problematic areas concerning political refugees.

Where political refugees, therefore, have protection and recognition in the international community because of a clear conceptual framework, environmental refugees is mostly a disregarded issue of forced migration. The lack of categorisation and a clear-cut definition in determining the status of environmental refugees are, however, not only problematic in the political arena where the status of refugees must be determined. The problem concerning categorisation and recognition of environmental refugees as a legitimate group of refugees, is also highlighted by the fact that, until recently, research and literature concerning forced migration has focused mainly on the political factors that force people to migrate. A large body of literature deals with the factors that contribute to political refugees and the effects that they have on the global community and on host countries. This, in turn, has influenced many of the policy decisions and much of the international treatment of forced migrants solely from the perspective of political factors, with little or no cognisance being taken of environmental factors.

Sadik (1995:1) emphasises this lack of recognition of environmental refugees when she states that: "*[w]hile political and ethnic conflict accounts . . . for much of the refugee movement that attracts headlines in the press, there is far less publicity on population movements caused by environmental disruption,*" (emphasis added). The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status

¹ For a detailed discussion on the international conventions governing the protection and treatment of refugees see Chapter 6, paragraph 2

of Refugees' definition of refugees, discussed previously as the main frame of reference for determining the refugee status of a person, also does not include environmental factors when determining a person's refugee status. Therefore, people who are forced to flee environmental degradation cannot obtain refugee status based on this internationally accepted definition. Environmental refugees cannot, in the light of this, be included successfully in social and political decisions. They are literally left out in the cold because of a lack of recognition.

To put this dilemma into perspective one needs only to reflect on the situation concerning Mozambican refugees. Many Mozambicans received refugee status in South Africa because they could not survive in their homeland as a result of the volatile political situation there. The South African government however announced in 1996 that from January 1997, refugee status would no longer be extended to Mozambicans on the grounds that the civil war had ended (Klotz, 1997:43). Although the war might have ended, the country is even today largely still not habitable because of environmental degradation. Much of this environmental degradation is a direct consequence of the war. As an example, landmines still litter the countryside and make farming dangerous. This, combined with lack of food and other natural resources, forces people to find refuge elsewhere. In the eyes of neighbouring governments they can, however, not receive the same treatment as political refugees, although circumstances beyond their control still force them into a refugee situation. Given this, Richmond (1994:72) emphasises that the current definition of refugees is very restrictive and does not allow for types of forced migrants other than political refugees.

A further problem caused by the current lack of a conceptual framework for environmental refugees is the blurred distinctions between different types of migrants. This will now be discussed briefly.

2.2 Blurred distinctions between categories of migrants

Two problems can be identified in this regard. Firstly, it is not always possible to distinguish between environmental refugees and political refugees. Secondly, because environmental refugees cannot be dealt with within a clear-cut operational framework, they run the risk of being branded as undocumented migrants.

Environmental and political refugees cannot always be separated from each other. This is illustrated by the situation in countries such as Somalia, where severe droughts as a source of environmental degradation, starvation and famine, coupled with political instability and economic deterioration exist. Myers & Kent (1995:106) indicate that large numbers of people in Somalia are regularly displaced due to a combination of environmental problems and military activities. They estimate that during the 1978-1980 Ogaden war and the 1988-1991 conflict in the country, approximately 400 000 people fled during each conflict as a result of the war and resultant food shortages. Both environmental and political factors are responsible for forced migration in this case, but it is not always easy to determine which factor eventually *pushed* these people to migrate. This does not, however, mean that the current categorisation and conceptualisation of refugees are sufficient. The fact that political factors are involved does not cancel out the fact that, as was indicated by the issue of Mozambican refugees, environmental factors must be included into any conceptualisation surrounding refugees.

Furthermore, because environmental refugees do not receive the same recognition as political refugees, they are mostly branded as undocumented migrants and treated as such by host countries¹. Most environmental refugees are compelled to become undocumented migrants. They were forced to migrate from their former homelands because of equally relevant and life-threatening reasons as those presented by political refugees and can, therefore, not return home. Many then attempt to earn a living in the host country, but in so doing they are seen as voluntary economic migrants and are deported as illegal migrants when caught.

This lack of distinction does not, at present, seem to generate much concern. According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR): “[p]eople displaced by environmental degradation or natural disaster undoubtedly need assistance. They do not necessarily require the kind of international protection implied in the word ‘refugee’. There are nevertheless, clear links between environmental degradation and refugee flows” (Hough, 1995:4). This statement implies that although environmental factors contribute to the generation of

¹ The impact of environmental refugees can, due to a lack of proper categorisation and definition, only be explored within the context of their undocumented nature. See chapter 4, paragraph 2 and chapter 5, paragraph 3 for a discussion of the impact of environmental refugees in terms of their undocumented nature.

refugees, currently and maybe in future, environmental refugees will be forced to become undocumented migrants because they cannot receive refugee status.

2.3 The extent of environmental refugee movements

Although political factors do account for a large number of refugees, estimates put the number of persons displaced by environmental factors worldwide as high as 25 million. These numbers will grow even more in the near future as the environment deteriorates further. According to Gordon & Suzuki (1990:100), the World Watch Institute indicates that the number of environmental refugees may even be higher than the number of political refugees. Myers (1997:167) shares the view that the number of environmental refugees is a cause for concern when he states that of the 43 million refugees worldwide, 25 million are environmental refugees. This estimate clearly indicates that the number of environmental refugees already constitutes more than half of the total number of refugees worldwide.

When reflecting on actual environmental conditions in a number of countries and population movements occurring alongside these conditions, it becomes clear that environmental factors play an important part in forcing people from their homelands. Following are a number of cases where environmental conditions have led to forced migration:

- 250 000 Marsh Arabs had to flee Iraq after Saddam Hussein built canals and dams in the Tigris and Euphrates that effectively dried up the Marshes, making the Marsh Arab's environment unsustainable (Fell, 1998:1).
- Unsustainable farming, desertification and climate change are forcing 900 000 Mexicans to migrate every year – most go to the United States (Fell, 1996:25).
- In the Sahel, ten million people have been forced to migrate as a result of the prolonged drought of the 1980's (Myers & Kent, 1995:15).
- The Three Gorges dam being built in China's Yangtze river would displace two million people when it is completed as cities, farmlands and villages are being covered by water (Zich, 1997:8).
- An estimated 10 million people in eastern, southern and western African countries abandoned their homes as a result of the 1980's famine (Vlachos, 1996:130).

These cases represent only a limited view of the impact of environmental factors on forced migration. The current estimated numbers of environmental refugees can become alarmingly high if current environmental degradation persists. Environmental refugees are currently considered to be the fastest growing category of refugees in the world and is already surpassing the number of political refugees (Myers & Kent, 1995:16).

Africa is the continent that generates the most refugees and because of current levels of environmental degradation and political instability, Africa may in future be responsible for generating even more refugees. According to Kakonge & Imvbore (1994:1), certain factors present in Africa are responsible for creating unsustainable environments, for instance, droughts, desertification, poverty, soil erosion and population growth. All these factors, together with political instability and economic deterioration, have the potential of generating large numbers of people that will be forced to migrate. Myers (1994:7) indicates in this instance that: “[o]f the aggregate total of 43 million of all types, three out of five being environmental refugees, 20 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa”. This clearly emphasises that the issue of environmental refugees should explicitly receive attention within the African context¹, especially since refugees in Africa have a direct impact on the social, political and economic structuring as well as the environment in Southern Africa.

Environmental problems, such as water shortages, deforestation, desertification, drought, floods and extreme weather phenomena associated with global warming, could push up the number of environmental refugees to 50 million by the year 2010. Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions that is particularly at risk from environmental problems and it is estimated that there could currently already be as many as 50 million environmental refugees in the region. These 50 million people constitute 7.3% of the region’s total population (Myers & Kent, 1995:128). These authors emphasise that although these estimated numbers are alarmingly high, there has not been any: “..... official attempt to determine how many [refugees] could be designated environmental refugees”.

From the discussion above it is clear that the main problem concerning environmental refugees is that there is a lack of conceptual clarity on environmental refugees in the field of migration studies

¹ Environmental refugees within the Southern African context is explored in Chapter 5.

in general and in policy-making in particular. Following from this, it is, moreover, difficult to determine to what extent environmental degradation at present influences and will influence migration movements in future, both globally and in Southern Africa. Because it is at this stage difficult to determine the status of environmental refugees, future trends and possible solutions can also not be successfully determined. Lastly, the lack of a proper definition creates a situation where distinctions between environmental refugees, political refugees and even undocumented migrants are blurred. Environmental refugees are often branded as undocumented immigrants because they cannot be classified as refugees according to current definitions. This type of refugees can therefore not be adequately dealt with within the existing political, social and environmental decision-making processes.

The main goal and the research questions that will guide the study will now be discussed against the backdrop of the above problem.

3. RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of this study is the **development and formulation of an operational framework** to assist in the study and management of environmental refugees, particularly in the Southern African context. The function of such a framework is to enable both researchers and policy-makers to clarify some of the many uncertainties surrounding environmental refugees.

From this goal the following objectives are set:

- To assess the extent and nature of the environmental refugee movement both globally and also specifically in Southern Africa;
- To assess the social, economic and political conditions that are responsible for the generation of environmental refugee movements.
- To assess the factors that in future could trigger environmental refugee movements, specifically concerning Southern Africa;
- To provide a sound theoretical framework from where the problem can further be studied and addressed;
- To evaluate the applicability of the current international and local – South African – policy frameworks to incorporate environmental refugees into policy decisions;

- To determine some workable solutions towards addressing the issue of environmental refugees;
- To contribute to the literature base on the issue of environmental refugees, especially concerning Southern Africa.

The above research goal and objectives are in turn divided into a number of **research questions**. The following research questions guided the study. In addition, these questions were the main points of departure in formulating the baseline questions that were used in the field study:

- What are the current and potential influences of environmental degradation on forced migration, globally and specifically in Southern Africa?
- Do officials working with undocumented migrants and refugees show any recognition for the issue of environmental refugees?
- Do environmental refugees generate any concern in official circles?
- What are the implications of environmental refugees for the broader Southern Africa, and what are the likely trends in future?
- Can environmental refugees be included successfully in the broader definition of refugees as outlined in the Geneva Convention of 1951 and in the 1967 Protocol, as well as in the views taken by the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) on refugees?
- What can be done in terms of local policy to address the problem of environmental refugee movements?
- What is the community's response to this type of forced migration and how do community views influence future policy decisions, specifically in South Africa?

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study is mainly exploratory, although the study also has a descriptive component. Neuman (1997:19) states that exploratory and descriptive research have many similarities and are often blurred in practice. Exploration forms an important part of the study because of the current lack of both understanding and of research into environmental refugees.

Myers (1994:7) emphasises that environmental refugees are currently an unconventional category of refugees and also that it was established beforehand that little research into this issue has been undertaken. When exploration is the purpose of research, researchers mainly want to familiarise

themselves with the current knowledge and establish a theoretical basis from where further research can be undertaken. As this study furthermore set out to provide a categorisation and analysis of the current trends and the underlying dynamic of environmental refugees, the study also reflects an important descriptive element.

This study was conducted in two parts:

- a literature survey and analysis and;
- an empirical field study that relied on the use of unstructured data-gathering methods.

Before the research commenced the researcher completed an in-depth literature study on the issue of illegal migration and refugees in the Southern Africa region. This literature study provided the background information necessary to undertake this study. This previous study established the issue of environmental refugees to be a very important issue and a topic that, therefore, necessitates further research, especially in the light of the current environmental degradation experienced worldwide.

4.1 The literature survey

The first part of this study consisted of a very extensive and intensive **literature study** that included studying relevant literature and various documents on the issues of forced migration, refugees and undocumented migration. Issues that were looked into were factors contributing to environmental refugee movements, the impact of environmental refugees on host countries and the international community, the international conventions on refugees and policy frameworks dealing with refugees. This part of the study was ongoing and drew to a close only with the finalisation of the research report.

Various local and international data bases were consulted to identify relevant literature. Among the data bases consulted were the University of the Free State's local data base, the Kovsidex, the Social Sciences Citation Index and the Academic Search Index. The researcher further relied on searches conducted on the Internet and continuously kept up to date with refugee situations and environmental disasters taking place during the course of the study through the popular media – television, radio and newspapers.

Gathering relevant data on the specific subject of environmental refugees proved difficult due to the lack of literature on the subject. However, the researcher bridged this problem by focusing searches on the wider topics of undocumented migration¹, refugees in general and specific forms of environmental degradation rather than to concentrate specifically on environmental refugees. Keywords generally used in the study included *environmental refugees*, *environmental refugee movements*, *environmental degradation*, *refugees*, *disasters* and *undocumented migration*. More specifically, different forms of environmental degradation and different countries generating refugees were identified and searches were also conducted using these specific countries and specific forms of environmental degradation as keywords. Examples of specific environmentally focused keywords include *land degradation*, *drought*, *flood*, *urbanisation*, and *population growth*. Countries that generally experience large flows of migration due to political and environmental factors such as Brazil, Mexico, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Russia were also used as keywords in searches. With this method the researcher ensured that the study area was covered thoroughly and extensively.

4.2 The qualitative field study

The second part was a **field study** that consisted of personal interviews with strategically placed officials who were actively involved in the fields of undocumented and forced migration². Unstructured interviews were used as the method for collecting data. Interviews were conducted with a wide range of knowledgeable people in the field of migration, each with a different outlook and field of expertise. Therefore, instead of constructing an interview schedule, the researcher developed some baseline questions for each respondent individually. These interview schedules served only as a general framework for each interview and the researcher was led by respondents to include other relevant issues as each interview progressed. Some interviews were conducted to gather background information on the nature and impact of undocumented migrants on South Africa in general, while the remaining interviews were directed towards the issues of knowledge and recognition of the environmental refugee problem and the question of policy concerning refugees and undocumented migrants.

¹ Undocumented migration was included as a study area due to the fact that environmental refugees are usually categorised as undocumented migrants by the international community and host countries.

² See table 1.1 and paragraphs 5 and 6 for a more detailed discussion of the personal interviews that were conducted.

Information gathered through the literature study combined with the research questions outlined in subsection 3 provided the background information for developing the baseline questions used during the interviews¹. These questions could, therefore, only be developed after the literature survey was well underway. The objective with the field study was, firstly, to explore the issue of environmental refugees on a practical level. Another goal of the field study was to determine the current views of knowledgeable people working within the field of undocumented and refugee migration concerning the nature of the problem, policy issues and general concern over the issue. Furthermore, interviews were employed to identify issues and areas of concern that were not identified in the existing literature on the topic of environmental refugees.

5. OPERATIONALISATION OF THE FIELD STUDY

Two aspects are important during the operationalisation phase, namely the sampling method used and the actual operationalisation of the study. Each of these aspects will be dealt with separately.

5.1 Population and sampling

To achieve the goal and objectives of the study, ideas, opinions and suggested solutions of knowledgeable persons working within the field of migration were needed. The unit of analysis that was used was organisations, since the researcher wanted to focus on the official viewpoints of people in the migration field rather than the respondents' personal ideas concerning environmental refugee movements. Therefore, the views expressed by larger groups or structures, such as government departments and non-governmental organisations, were significant to this study. Nonprobability sampling was used to determine interviewees.

A number of different organisations and official structures were identified beforehand that could be targeted in the field study. During the course of the literature study and after initial contact with some of these organisations, it appeared that some organisations would not have much to offer in terms of increasing the understanding of the problem of environmental refugees².

¹ For an example of the baseline questions used during the interviews see Annexure A.

² Initially organisations such as the South African Red Cross and the Centre for the treatment of torture victims were identified as possible targets for interviews, but after telephone conversations with people in these organisations it transpired that their field of expertise falls outside of the scope of this study.

Five interviews were conducted in total¹. Snowball sampling as a nonprobability sampling method was used to identify relevant persons within non-governmental organisations and government departments with whom to conduct interviews. Neuman (1997:207) describes snowball sampling as a method that establishes a network of persons that can be targeted for interviews and it is also referred to as chain referral or reputational sampling. This method was a very useful tool in identifying interviewees knowledgeable on this topic. Although the researcher identified relevant official structures dealing with migration during the course of the study, some of the actual respondents with whom interviews were conducted still had to be identified and the snowball sampling method provided the means to identify these people.

5.2 The interview phase

The appropriate persons with whom to conduct interviews were determined by telephone conversations, e-mail and personal referrals by respondents. Initially three interviews were set up – with the Department of Home Affairs, The UNHCR and the Aliens Investigation Unit. Each of the respondents in this set of interviews was asked for referrals to other respondents. Out of these referrals two more interviews were conducted. Some of the people that the researcher was referred to did not work for official structures that are actively involved with migration and were therefore of no assistance in the study². Since the field of environmental refugees is a relatively new and unrecognised field of study, most of the respondents did not know of many more people with whom interviews could be conducted. Therefore, only two more interviews were set up. Interviews were conducted by the researcher personally. The interviews that were conducted are outlined in table 1.1.

¹ See table 1.1 for a more detailed outline of the different interviews

² There researcher was, for instance, referred to the Organisation for Human Rights and Amnesty International. Although these organisation are working with refugee issues, their field of expertise fell outside of the scope of this study since they mainly deal with human rights abuses and issues of political asylum.

TABLE 1.1: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Respondent	Organisation	Official position of respondent	Date of interview	Duration of interview
W. Vorster	Department of Home Affairs	Deputy Director, Aliens Control	1/2/2000	90 minutes
B. Swartz	Aliens Investigation Unit	Detective	1/2/2000	45 minutes
B. Leerschool	UNHCR	Protection Officer	4/2/2000	60 minutes
D. Beneke	South African Police Department	National Head, Land Border Unit	26/9/2000	30 minutes
A. Manser	Department of Home Affairs	Head of Immigration	27/9/2000	30 minutes

All interviews were recorded on audiotape after consent to tape the interviews was obtained from each respondent. Interviews were conducted in English and Afrikaans, depending on the preferred language of the respondent. As was pointed out previously, each interview was conducted by using a set of baseline questions, but due to the unstructured nature of the interviews, space was allowed for the discussion of issues not addressed by these baseline questions. Each interview was transcribed and then analysed qualitatively by the researcher¹. **Qualitative analysis** entails studying each interview in depth in order to identify similar areas of concern. This information was integrated into the already established literature component of the study.

6. CONCEPTUALISATION

In order to provide clarity and a workable conceptual framework for this study, certain concepts have to be explored briefly. The first concept that needs clarification is *migration*.

▪ Migration

Migration as a social concept means the movement of people either temporarily or permanently. Jackson (1986:2) defines migration as a: “..... *movement of individuals and groups between two societies; that which they have left and that to which they have come. The process is usually*

¹ For transcription of the interviews see Annexures B-F

achieved by physical movement and consequent change of residence and other circumstances". Migration is however a complex phenomenon that cannot be isolated from the reasons associated with population movements. Parfit (1998:11) states that migration is: "*..... all the ways – from the seasonal drift of agricultural workers within a country to the relocation of refugees from one country [to another] – in which people move*". The complexity of migration is highlighted by the different existing categorisations under the broad concept of migration. Two categorisations are important for the purposes of this study, namely **voluntary or forced migration** and **internal and international migration**.

▪ **Voluntary migration**

Voluntary migrants are people who leave their former places of habitation mainly out of choice. This does not imply that there are not certain external factors, such as economic factors, that might have influenced the migrant's decision (Jackson, 1986:7). A well-known example of voluntary migration in the South African context is the labour migration of mine workers from rural to urban areas (Johnson & Salt, 1992:2). Where international migration is concerned, voluntary migrants may also be illegal migrants – people who migrate to another country either illegally or stay there illegally after their work or holiday permits have expired and who are motivated mainly by economic factors.

▪ **Internal and international migration (voluntary)**

Migration does not always entail migrants crossing international borders in the process. Many people simply move to another place within their own political boundaries, or within the boundaries of individual nation states (Johnson & Salt, 1992:3). These are, for instance, people migrating from rural to urban areas in search of employment opportunities or sunbelt migration whereby people temporarily migrate to warmer climates. This type of migration is referred to as **internal migration**.

On the other hand, **international migration** implies that migrants cross international borders when they migrate. According to Jackson (1986:6), international migration is formalised in the sense that distinctions are made between different categories of migrants, for instance legal immigrants, asylum seekers and illegal aliens. All countries have devised regulations and have adopted policies to deal with this type of migration.

▪ **Forced migration**

Where voluntary migrants largely exercise a right to decision-making when considering migration, forced migrants are compelled to leave their places of habitation due to threatening circumstances beyond their control. Reasons for forced migration are diverse and range from factors such as slavery, persons fleeing human rights abuses, war and the degrading of their environment (Richmond, 1994:68,69). Jackson (1986:7) defines forced migrants as people whose lives are in danger according to their own understanding and in the view of others. Any person having to leave his former place of habitation for reasons beyond his control and where such circumstances are life-threatening will be defined as a forced migrant in this study. Two categories of forced migration are significant in this study, namely forced migration due to political factors and due to environmental factors.

▪ **Internal and international migration (forced)**

Not all forced migrants cross international borders in the process of migrating. Many forced migrants, be they political or environmental, are **internally displaced**. An internally displaced person is someone who does not leave the boundaries of his nation-state by migrating, although the factors that drove him from his former residence are life-threatening. Both forced political and environmental migrants can be internally displaced. Neither forced political nor forced environmental migrants that are internally displaced can claim assistance from humanitarian organisations since the United Nations Convention and Protocol as well as the OAU recognise only forced political migrants that cross international borders as being in need of assistance (Richmond, 1994:75).

▪ **Political Refugee**

Since migrants that are forced to flee political factors are commonly referred to as refugees, this category of forced migrants will be referred to as political refugees. When this concept is used, it will refer to persons that are recognised by the United Nations' definition of a refugee and the Organisation of African Unity's definition as someone whose life is in danger due to the political climate in his country or area of residence.

▪ **Environmental refugee**

This term is not recognised by all people working in the field of migration – researchers, academics, policy-makers and officials – as representing forced environmental migration. Many prefer other terms such as *ecological refugees*, *resource refugees*, *environmental migrants* and *ecomigrants* (Richmond, 1994:75; Wood, 1995:4). The term, in spite of this, is still commonly accepted and understood to mean people fleeing life-threatening environmental conditions. An environmental refugee, for the purposes of this study, is a person forced to migrate because environmental destruction has made his place of habitation unfit for living. Arms (1994:155) defines environmental refugees as: “. . . *people driven from their homes by severe environmental damage . . .*” Environmental destruction will mean any natural or anthropogenic action that makes an area uninhabitable for an extended period of time. This will assume that environmental refugees, like political refugees, have no hope of returning to their former homelands in the foreseeable future.

▪ **Forced environmental migration**

This concept will refer to any long-term movement of people from one area to another due to life-threatening environmental conditions. This movement includes internal and international migration due to environmental circumstances.

▪ **Undocumented migrants**

Undocumented migrants will refer to all people who cross international borders in a clandestine way or those who stay in a receiver country after their official resident permit or study permit has expired. Another term usually used to refer to undocumented migrants is *illegal migrants*. Since environmental refugees are currently not recognised and are treated as undocumented migrants by both receiver states and by the international community, they are not illegal in the real sense of the word. Therefore, when the term *undocumented migrant* is used, it will be used to refer to all people who cross international borders clandestinely or attempt to gain access to host countries in an illegal way. This would include conventional illegal migrants as well as forced migrants, such as environmental refugees, who are not recognised as having a legitimate reason for migration.

▪ **The UNHCR**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

▪ **The Geneva Convention**

This will mean the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951.

▪ **The 1967 Protocol**

This will refer to the Protocol Relating the Status of Refugees of 1967

▪ **The OAU**

The Organisation of African Unity

▪ **The OAU Convention**

This will refer to the Organisation of African Unity's Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1967.

The above comprise the most frequently used concepts in this study.

7. VALUE OF THE STUDY

The completed study will be of value in the following sense:

- The study will provide conceptual clarity on environmental refugees, since it is currently a relatively blurred area in terms of distinctions, dynamics and trends.
- The study provides a theoretical framework for understanding environmental refugees. Such a framework will help all involved in the field in making sound decisions concerning environmental refugees in Southern Africa and in influencing policy on migration. To this end, all institutions and organisations listed in paragraph 5 above will be supplied with a condensed report of the project which highlights the major findings and suggested strategies for dealing with environmental refugees.
- The findings provide a basis for further research into this specific category of migrants, especially in the context of Southern Africa where research is currently lacking.

Concerning the interest that this study might have for the community at large, the findings will be communicated to the broader community by means of some popular publications and radio talks so that this sector of the community will be informed about an issue that has not yet been covered in

the popular media. Furthermore, the members of the broader scientific community are being informed about the issue through the publication of a number of articles in scientific journals¹.

In the following chapter, the emphasis falls on establishing a general theoretical basis for studying the problem of environmental refugees as an important part of the relationship between humankind and the environment.

¹ One article on the subject has already been published. See Annexure G.

CHAPTER 2

ESTABLISHING A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANKIND AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental refugees as a field of study for sociology necessitates that sociological interest in the relationship between man and the natural environment be explored. This necessity flows largely from the fact that the relationship between the environment and society is still a relatively new field of study for the social sciences. Sociologists only became interested in this relationship in the 1970's, as environmental disasters focused the attention on man's impact on the natural environment (Cock, 1994:16; Laska, 1993:3,4). Currently, the destructive nature of the relationship between man and the environment is challenging the sociological discipline to become more actively involved in the study of environmental problems.

Sociology is one of the disciplines that can significantly contribute to understanding the relationship between humans and the natural environment and that consequently are useful in developing insight into environmental problems. This stems from the fact that sociology is geared towards examining larger social processes and towards dealing systematically and simultaneously with multiple units of analysis (Laska, 1993:5). Sociology can, therefore, play an important role in understanding the relationship between social processes and the environment, the political and economic nature of environmental problems and the forces that generate concern about these issues (Cylke, 1993:11). Particularly where environmental refugees are concerned, sociology can add new insight into the nature of the relationship between man and the environment.

However, theoretical assumptions and paradigms entrenched in the sociological discipline may hamper its contribution to this field. Among these assumptions, the most important is sociology's insistence on delimiting a separate field of study concentrating strictly on the social. Hereby sociologists exclude factors such as the biological and the environmental from their analysis (Canan, 1996:33). Not only must the dualism entrenched in the social/natural debate be dealt with,

but also other theoretical dilemmas that are imbedded in the sociological tradition. Benton (1994:29) explains as follows: "*[T]he basic conceptual legacy of the sociological traditions has to be radically re-worked. In particular the dualistic oppositions between subject and object, meaning and cause, mind and matter, human and animal, and, above all, culture (or society) and nature have to be rejected and transcended.*" Sociologists in the field of environmental sociology generally agree that these dichotomies pose a threat to environmental sociology. Environmental sociology cannot and must not be separated from the core theoretical assumptions of the discipline (Laska, 1993:3,4).

The main aim of this chapter will be to explore the nature of sociological inquiry into environmental issues. This is imperative for the purposes of this study, since environmental refugees place a special emphasis on man's relationship with nature. In order to achieve this, attention will primarily be devoted to the nature of the social/environmental debate. Sociological interest in the relationship will be explored by focusing on classical sociological thought regarding the relationship between man and nature. The tendency of the classical sociologists, notably Durkheim and Weber, to devote limited attention to this relationship, is very significant in this regard (Buttel, 1986:337; Canan, 1996:33).

Furthermore, current theoretical assumptions concerning this relationship will receive attention. Here the focus will be on contemporary theories that contribute to our understanding of the relationship between the social and the natural, especially the thoughts of Giddens and the contributions of the critical theorists. Explicit attention will also be given to the theoretical models of Catton & Dunlap, Duncan and Schnaiberg, since these sociologists' theoretical work is geared specifically towards the field of environmental sociology.

Lastly, a critical assessment will be made as to whether sociology as a discipline can contribute to the understanding of environmental problems. This will be done first by focusing on those core assumptions of sociology that may hamper its contribution. It will, however, also be pointed out that sociological inquiry into environmental issues is an important and necessary exercise if we are to progress in our understanding of the environment and man's relationship with it.

2. THE NATURE OF MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

The relationship between man and nature, or between the social and the natural, is a subject of controversy for sociology, since it forces sociologists to come to terms with their views on nature and man's relationship with it. The relationship between man and the environment is often referred to as a duality (Benton, 1994:29; Buttel, 1986:337; Harper, 1996:34). Referring to the social-natural dichotomy as a duality is appropriate since it involves opposing assumptions of how we view ourselves, how we view nature and the relationship between ourselves and nature. As with any duality both assumptions have merit, but the focus on one, or the other influences the nature of analysis (Harper, 1996:35). Since environmental sociology is focused on the relationship between humans and their environment, how sociologists view this relationship will influence their analysis and their conclusions about environmental issues.

On one side of this duality, humans are viewed as the unique creators of social environments, while the other sees humans as just another species that forms part of the broader natural environment (Buttel, 1986:338). Harper (1996:35) suggests that, while biologists and ecologists tend to emphasise the fact that we are but one among many species, social scientists place a larger emphasis on the view that humans have exceptional qualities that enable them to create unique social environments. This does not suggest that nature or biological thought did not influence sociological theory. As will be explained later, biological thought has, especially during the early years of sociology, played a significant role in shaping theoretical assumptions about the social environment (Buttel, 1986:338).

As a result of sociology's emphasis on the uniqueness of humans in creating and changing their social environments, little attention was devoted to the other side of this duality. The dualistic view that became established in sociological thought has certain effects on sociological theory, particularly where environmental issues are concerned. Benton (1994:29) asserts that it is generally agreed that in order to do meaningful research into environmental issues, it is necessary to move beyond this dualistic view. Moving beyond this duality might prove difficult since it is deeply embedded in the core of the discipline. In order to understand the sociological emphasis on the social part of this duality, a brief discussion into the development of this dualism is necessary.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DUALISM BETWEEN SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Sociology has, from its conception, demarcated the social sphere as its primary field of study. Sociologists therefore deliberately disregarded any reference to the natural or biological spheres in their analysis. Benton (1994:30) emphasises that the early sociologists' attempt to demarcate a separate field of study for sociology was well grounded, since it focused attention on the unique social aspects that shape human life. Sociological thought developed in a specific time and space setting, where certain views on man and nature were present. These prevailing views influenced the nature of sociology.

Sociologists cannot, however, enter the field of environmental sociology with their views on the dualistic nature of human life still intact. We have to go back to establish the reasons why these views became established in order to rebuild certain foundational principles dealing with the relationship between man and the environment.

3.1 The emergence of an anthropocentric worldview

Sociology's basic premises and assumptions were laid down during the nineteenth century. To understand why sociologists insisted on concentrating on social aspects, one has to explore the dominant worldviews during this period and before that. The formation of certain paradigms and worldviews even before the nineteenth century must therefore receive attention.

Harper (1996:36-48) indicates that changes in the social systems from the hunting and gathering society to the industrial society have led to changes in people's worldviews. These changes in their worldviews have, in turn, influenced their thoughts on nature. The worldview that for a very long period influenced human kind's view on nature is what Catton and Dunlap have referred to as the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) or the Human Exceptionalist Paradigm (HEP) (Freudenburg & Gramling, 1989:444). This paradigm developed as people gained a certain mastery over nature, for instance by taming animals, domesticating edible plants or by advances in technology.

Social scientists generally think of the development of modern society along three phases. Firstly, hunting and gathering societies, then pastoralist and agrarian societies, and lastly modern industrialist and post-industrial societies. In the hunting and gathering phase, people had a

negligible impact on the environment because their social organisation consisted of small groups of nomadic tribes that controlled their impact by migrating from place to place and thus giving the environment a chance to restore itself regularly. Hunting and gathering societies possessed primitive technological means that further limited their impact on the environment. Agrarian societies had a more profound impact on their natural environment, since they became settled in specific areas. Improvements in agricultural methods led to increases in population growth that heightened their impact on the environment. Harper (1996:42) points out that with the evolution of society into agricultural and pastoral societies, the dominant social paradigm began to shift from *people as a part of nature* towards *people controlling nature*. With the advent of the industrial revolution, people were able to dominate and appropriate nature very successfully. The impact on the environment during the modern era was, and still is, influenced by a combination of social organisation (for instance urbanisation), major advances in technology and increases in population growth. A strong anthropocentric worldview emerged during this time.

Anthropocentrism was strengthened by the popularity of the assumptions of the Enlightenment. Enlightenment ideas included the idea that humankind's condition will improve with every new generation. Furthermore, it placed a high priority on scientific knowledge and reason (Stavrianos, 1991:498). Emphasis was placed on progress, modernisation and control of nature through science and technology (Benton, 1994:32). Sociological theory was influenced by the anthropocentrism embedded in Enlightenment ideas, but sociology also developed through counter-Enlightenment ideas. Sociology, for instance, attributed greater importance to larger social processes in determining man's actions than to the impact of individual freedom on their choices and decisions. Assumptions like these ran contrary to the Enlightenment emphasis on individual ingenuity (Ritzer, 1992:11).

Another important factor that influenced the sociological emphasis on the social was the high regard accorded biological and evolutionary ideas during this time. Buttel (1986:338) emphasises that each of the early sociological theorists, notably Durkheim, Weber and Marx: "*..... wrote their distinctive, pathbreaking sociologies in places and at times in which biologically-related social theories had prominence*". Although social theory was primarily a reaction against biological determinism, many ideas of the early sociologists were influenced by developments in the fields of science and biology. The evolutionary ideas of Charles Darwin strengthened the assumption of

human superiority over other species and the unique capabilities of humans as an evolved species. At this point, it is important to explore the development of the ideas of Durkheim, Weber and Marx in the context of the intellectual tradition of their time.

3.2 The ideas of the classical sociological theorists

Before discussing the ideas of these theorists, the rationale behind focusing on certain theorists must be explained. Although there were many other sociologists that influenced the foundational principles of sociology, Comte and Spencer among others, it is generally accepted that Durkheim, Weber and Marx are the *founding fathers* of the sociological tradition (Buttel, 1986:338; Canan, 1996:33; Redclift & Woodgate, 1994:51). Marx is generally not considered to be a sociologist, but since there are many sociological principles embedded in his work, especially concerning the relationship between man and the environment, his ideas are pivotal in understanding the relationship.

These three theorists had significantly different views on society and the relationship between humankind and the environment. However, certain aspects bind them together. Firstly, all three structured their thoughts within the social and intellectual climate of their time, which placed a high emphasis on human intellectual superiority and, therefore, man's ability to master nature. As Canan (1996:33) states: "[t]he theories that form the sociological tradition were products of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution which reinforce the dominion of human beings over the physical environment". Secondly, all treated the environment as something that is either non-existent or of limited importance in understanding social issues (Redclift & Woodgate, 1994:51).

One reason that the environment was seen as unimportant was that, at that time, nature seemed to have an abundant supply of resources for humans to utilise. Thirdly, although they did not devote explicit attention to the relationship between humankind and the environment, there are still references to the natural in their work that are worth discussing. Buttel (1986:339) is of the opinion that the natural environment did feature in each of these theorists' work, but this was not brought to the fore by interpreters of their work. Each of these theorists' basic ideas concerning man's relationship with the environment will be discussed briefly.

3.2.1 Durkheim (1858 – 1917)

In the intellectual atmosphere of his day, where biologism featured very strongly in social theory, Durkheim rejected any reference to biological analogies. Buttel (1986:339) states that Durkheim deliberately rejected the social evolutionary views of, among others, Spencer. Spencer was an advocate of biological determinism and saw humans and social institutions as serving the purpose of the whole (society). If a certain institution no longer served a purpose, it would become extinct and be replaced by another functional structure. Darwin's ideas on the process of natural selection greatly influenced Spencer in this regard. Another theorist whom Durkheim opposed concerning biological determinism was Comte. Comte saw society as a living organism consisting of structures and institutions that contributed to the functioning of the whole, just like a living organism consists of organs. Society, according to Comte, was a result of knowledge and progress, evolving towards an increasingly perfect society (Ritzer, 1992:77).

Durkheim rejected these prevailing biologically-orientated ideas on the grounds that the social environment is distinct from the natural environment and can only be studied if seen in relation to other social aspects. He emphasised that sociology had a distinct subject matter, namely social facts. Social facts could only be understood and studied in terms of other social facts. Society could therefore not be explained by incorporating natural factors such as instinct and race into its analysis. In his view, the natural environment was not a social phenomenon. If it were, he would have treated it as a social fact. Although Durkheim distinguished the natural from the social environment in his theories, he did suggest that society was a phenomenon of nature, or that the natural sphere was a precondition for society (Redclift & Woodgate, 1994:52).

He did not explicitly deal with the relationship between man and the environment, but did touch upon it in his work. In doing so, he also incorporated evolutionary ideas. His *The Division of Labour in Society* explores the idea of how natural scarcities influence structural changes in society. In this work he explores how primitive societies, with a simple division of labour, evolve into complex modern societies, with a complex division of labour, due to demands and constraints that develop out of population growth and scarcity of resources (Buttel, 1986:340). Durkheim's treatment of the natural environment in this work attempts to explain how nature might influence society, but does not devote any attention to the effects of social processes on the natural environment. Redclift & Woodgate (1994:52) sum up Durkheim's legacy to environmental

sociology as follows: "[t]he Durkheimian emphasis on explaining social behaviour in essentially social terms . . . does not easily accommodate the view that our environmental problems are the outcome of the way we view nature. However, Durkheimian approaches do lend authority to the view that environmental problems can only be understood within the context of cultural production and reproduction".

3.2.1 Weber (1864 - 1920)

Weber structured his views on society from an entirely different outlook than Durkheim. Where Durkheim concentrated on society as a phenomenon that could be understood and studied independently from the smaller parts that it is comprised of, Weber emphasised that society is essentially made up of smaller parts. Like Durkheim, he also rejected the emphasis on biologism and evolution. Yet, he also rejected Durkheim's view of society as having a determining influence over its subjects. In spite of his rejection of evolutionary ideas, the intellectual emphasis on evolution still, to an extent, managed to influence his thinking. Harper (1996:51) points out that evolutionary ideas were present in his work on ancient agrarian societies and in his comparative work on religion.

Unlike Durkheim, he did not see a simple causal relationship between nature and society. He would have been more inclined to treat the environment as one of the many interrelated factors that are involved in shaping man's understanding of his social situation and, therefore, of social interaction patterns. Central to Weber's sociology is the human capability to determine the direction and nature of society through interpretation of situations and their interaction. Thus, society cannot exist as a separate entity that has a determining influence on the individual. In the same way, nature could also not have been viewed by Weber as having an external, determining influence on the human individual.

Weber did not have an explicit view of the relationship between humankind and nature. Buttel (1986:343) points out that he paid little attention to the resource problems of the capitalist-industrialist society of his time. We can only deduce a tentative view from the general assumptions in his theory. In the current climate of concern over the limits posed by the environment, it is generally assumed that contrary to Weber, humans might not be the self-aware actors able to influence their social environments without external limitations.

3.2.3 Marx (1818 - 1883)

Marx devoted more attention to the relationship between humankind and the environment than did other theorists of his day. Where Durkheim presented a simple causal relationship between humans and nature and Weber accorded this relationship limited attention, Marx presents us with a more complex model for understanding man and his relationship with his environment.

The Enlightenment influenced Marx in his ideas on humankind and their relationship with nature. Marx was a firm believer in the progress of humankind and in their ability to provide technological solutions for their problems. This has led critics to accuse him of having an anthropocentric outlook that is of no value in the current ecologically-orientated theoretical framework (Buttel 1986:342 and Turner *et al.*, 1995:137). In spite of this criticism, it is still worthwhile to consider Marx's contribution to environmental sociology.

The central theme in Marx's work is the emphasis he places on economic forces as the most important changing agent for society. Marx pointed out that the economy is dependent on the utilisation and transformation of elements in the natural environment. Humankind are rational beings that, unlike animals, can decide on how to manipulate their environment to their advantage. Humans therefore begin to produce goods from the natural environment for their purpose and survival. Marx recognised that humankind's use of nature does not occur outside of a social context. Furthermore, Marx not only thought that humans transform nature, but also that people are transformed in the process of appropriating nature (Redclift & Woodgate, 1994:53; Turner *et al.*, 1995:132). It is important to explore Marx's ideas on the social context to understand his views on the relationship between man and nature.

Marx viewed society as having developed through a number of stages. Each stage was characterised by exploitation and class divisions becoming more identifiable. Modern industrialist-capitalist society was the culminated effect of the historical process of conflict and exploitation. Modern society, according to Marx, comprised of groups with unequal access to the means of production. Means of production were, of course, all the means necessary for creating capital and would therefore include natural resources. Natural resources had to be utilised to create commodities that could be sold for profit. Access to natural resources was an important factor in determining man's social class and the power he had to create wealth. Although nature was an

important element in the chain of production, he did not think of the natural environment as a force for change in society. Social change was primarily the result of conflict between opposing economic classes (Benton & Redclift, 1994:53).

The early theorists left modern sociology with a legacy of anthropocentrism and a critical posture towards biological and environmental considerations. In the current struggle towards achieving a balance between human need and the limits we are faced with from the natural environment, this theoretical legacy might seem to hinder our progress, as sociologists, to deal with these issues. In defense of the sociological tradition Buttel (1986:343) states the following: "*[T]he classical tradition when viewed in the historical context within which the classical theorists wrote their sociology, can be seen as an advance in rejecting oversimplified views of societal-environmental relations and in establishing comparative frameworks for more meaningful analysis of these relations*".

Next, we will turn to current, or more recent, advances in sociological theory that can assist us in establishing the nature of the relationship between man and his natural environment.

4. CURRENT THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The traditional focus of sociology on exclusively social phenomena is still a reality for the sociologists of today. However, there has been a heightened interest in the environment since the 1970's, due to media involvement and political interest in environmental issues. Society as a whole has become concerned about the effect of environmental degradation on its future (Laska, 1993:4). Sociologists as investigators of social change had to take notice of this change in society's attitude towards the environment. In spite of the growing interest in the environment, the theoretical basis for environmental sociology remains limited. Some theorists have, however, focused on establishing a theoretical basis for environmental sociology. These theorists' work will receive attention, but the contributions of other current sociological theories not distinctly focused on environmental considerations must also receive attention.

4.1 The contributions of environmentally motivated theorists

Environmental sociology as we know it today has developed largely out of the field of urban ecology. This field of study developed during the 1920's due to the work of the sociologists of the Chicago University. It wanted mainly to explain spatial patterns of class, ethnicity and land use in urban areas (Harper, 1996:55). Urban ecology did not, according to Hannigan (1995:16), become influential in its own right. It did, however, pave the way for human ecologists to take cognisance of the interplay between the environment and society. During the 1960's and 1970's a number of ecologically-grounded theories emerged that attempted to explain the relationship between humankind and the natural environment. Among these, Duncan's POET-model, Catton and Dunlap's New Ecological Paradigm and Schnaiberg's treadmill of production are probably the best known and the most influential. Each of these will be considered briefly.

To focus only on these theoretical models does not imply that these theorists were the only ones influential in establishing a theoretical basis for the relationship between humankind and the environment. Freudenburg & Gramling (1989:441) point out that many theorists did attempt to contribute to the theoretical basis of this field. Many of these attempts were, however, overlooked, ignored or forgotten as a result of sociology's preoccupation with social issues. In their opinion, environmental sociological explanations came to the fore only during the 1970's, as sociologists had to react to the rise of environmental movements in the late 1960's and the 1970's.

4.1.1 Catton and Dunlap's New Ecological Paradigm

The establishment and demarcation of the field of environmental sociology is generally attributed to the work of William R. Catton & Riley E. Dunlap. In the opinion of Freudenburg & Gramling (1989:443), the field of environmental sociology that emerged during the 1970's did not have a clear focus and identity. Catton and Dunlap set out to provide this focus and thus defined environmental sociology as the study of social-environmental interactions. Their work in this regard led them to question existing sociological views and to advocate the adoption of a different perspective on the social/environmental debate.

In their view, sociologists functioned inside the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) that placed humans above the rest of the natural environment. The DSP led humans to believe that they were

exceptional creatures that must dominate nature. Humans furthermore were fully in control of their destiny and could apply any means necessary to achieve their goals. The natural environment provided an unlimited supply of resources for people's benefit. Lastly, human history was on a path of constant progress and technology could surpass any challenge posed from the environment (from Cylke, 1993:13). The DSP reflects the view of Western society and Calvinistic Christianity on nature, and man's relationship with nature, that prevailed for many centuries. These assumptions about man's dominant position are also termed the Human Exceptionalist Paradigm, later renamed the Human Exemptionalism Paradigm (HEP). Using the term exemptionalism instead of exceptionalism acknowledges that humans do possess traits that distinguish them from the rest of the species, but that it does not exempt them from ecological constraints (Freudenburg & Gramling, 1989:445).

The New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) is seen by Catton and Dunlap to be in direct opposition to the HEP. This new paradigm is evident in the growing sociological literature on the social-environmental relationship (Freudenburg & Gramling, 1989:444). The main assumptions of this paradigm propose, firstly, that although humans are exceptional creatures because of their ability to use technology and their having culture, they remain an interrelated part of the ecosystem. Furthermore, although humans are influenced by social factors, they are also influenced by nature and in turn influence the natural environment by their actions. The biosphere that humans share with other species is finite and places limitations on human actions. Lastly, although humans have the ability to stretch natural resources and extend the carrying capacity of the system, ecological laws will prevail in the end (from Cylke, 1993:13). The main assumptions of the HEP and the NEP are outlined in table 2.1.

Currently the NEP is gaining strength, not only in the work of sociologists, but also in the view of the general public. Awareness of a redefined relationship between man and the natural environment is growing. Although Catton & Dunlap's model gives important insight into the artificial distinction between man and the natural environment, sociology as a discipline is a long way from adequately theorising the complex relationship between man and the environment.

TABLE 2.1: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE HEP AND THE NEP

	Main assumptions of the HEP	Main assumptions of the NEP
About the nature of human beings	People are fundamentally different from all other creatures on earth over which they have dominion	Humans have exceptional characteristics, but they remain one among many species in an interdependent global ecosystem
About the nature of social causation	People can determine their own destiny, can choose their goals and learn to do whatever is necessary to achieve them	Human affairs are influenced not only by social and cultural factors, but also by complex interactions in the web of nature, therefore human actions have unintended consequences
About the context of human society	The world is vast and provides unlimited opportunities for humans	Humans are dependent upon a finite biophysical environment which sets physical and biological limits on human affairs
About the constraints on human society	The history of humanity is one of progress; there is a solution to every problem and progress need never cease	Although the inventiveness of humans and the powers derived therefrom may seem for a while to extend the carrying capacity limits of the planet, ecological laws cannot be repealed

(adapted from Barry, 1999:209)

4.1.2 Duncan's POET-model

With this model, Duncan explained the interplay between the social and the natural environments by pointing out that there are four aspects that mutually affect each other. These four elements are population (P), organisation (O), environment (E) and technology (T). All four these elements are interdependent and change in one therefore affects change in the others. The elements in this complex have equal importance with no causal relationship among them. Duncan presupposed that the elements in this complex interact in such a way that there is equilibrium within the system. (Hannigan, 1995:16). According to Freudenberg & Gramling (1989:445), another characteristic of this model was that it emphasised the role of social organisation and technology in acting as mediators between the population and the environment. It therefore builds on the idea that there is a definite relationship between man and nature, but it incorporates two very important factors in the

nature of this relationship. These two factors, technology and social organisation, will contribute equally with its population size to the relationship that man has with nature.

Critics point out that the concept *environment* is not adequately conceptualised and can, among others, refer to built environments and social environments. It is further criticised because of its failure to include cultural aspects, such as values and paradigms, in explaining the relationship between man and the environment. Lastly, the fact that it supposes an equilibrium between the elements is criticised, especially since the relationship between man and the environment is often perceived as being in a state of conflict (Harper, 1996:55).

4.1.3 Schnaiberg's treadmill of production

Another influential theory in the field of environmental sociology is that of Schnaiberg. His explanation of the relationship between man and the environment has its roots in the ideas of Marx and Engels. He traces environmental disruption by man to the inherent need of the capitalist system to yield profit. People are continually bombarded with advertisements that entice them to buy new products to keep the capitalist need for profit going, even if the environment suffers in the process. Environmental problems, such as resource scarcities, are counteracted by opening new areas for exploitation, rather than advocating reduced consumption. For Schnaiberg there is a dialectic tension embedded in this system as a result of the conflict between the need for profit and the need for protecting the environment. The state plays an important role in maintaining this tension. On the one hand, the state must protect the environment to prevent exploitation of resources and so maintain its legitimacy with the people. On the other hand, it must ensure economic growth and the continuation of the capitalist system (Hannigan, 1995:20).

4.2 General social theories influencing environmental sociology

Apart from the above theorists who specifically concentrated on establishing a theoretical framework for environmental sociology, some conventional sociological theorists also left their mark on the study of environmental issues. Among these theorists, the most prominent would be the critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, and the structural theorist Giddens. Each of these theoretical contributions will be discussed briefly.

4.2.1 Critical theory

The main contribution of critical theory, especially early critical theory as represented by the work of Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, lies in its critique of the anthropocentric outlook on the natural environment that has prevailed since the Enlightenment era. These ideas will briefly be considered. Dobson (1993:193), referring to the undertheorized nature of green politics states that critical theory: “..... *might provide material and historical analysis of the relationship between human beings and the natural world*”.

Critical theorists are adamant that it was due to the emphasis of the Enlightenment on rationality that humans developed an exploitative relationship towards the environment. Barry (1999:85) saw Horkheimer and Marcuse's work, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as: “..... *an examination and explication of the 'dark' side of modernity, the costs and dangers of advanced technological, industrial society and its dominant modes of thought and behaviours*”. Nature, as a result of Enlightenment ideas began to be perceived only in an instrumental fashion – it only had meaning in so far as it was of value to man. The outcome of this rationality would, according to Horkheimer, be that humans would be incapable of thinking independently. Everything would be perceived instrumentally and opposing this instrumental reasoning would therefore become impossible (Dobson, 1993:193). Instrumental reasoning is, according to critical theorists, also related to technocratic thinking or rationality wherein humans attempt to find the most effective means for achieving a goal, without subjecting it to independent reasoning on the long-term outcome (Ritzer, 1992:283).

Although critical theorists perceive instrumental reasoning concerning nature as the culprit in creating our current exploitative relationship with the natural world, there is a certain amount of agreement that there is no turning back from this position. Marcuse, for instance, reasons that a world where there is absolute peace between man and nature is impossible, because nature will always have instrumental value for man. Instead, he advocates a pacified world in which man and nature are still in opposition, but where man attempts to reduce his effect on the natural world (Dobson, 1993:197).

Critical theory provides environmental sociology with a workable and well-theorised basis for studying the relationship between man and nature. Although critical of the exploitative and

dominant relationship of man over nature, they do not advocate Utopian visions of returning to a previous era where the relationship between man and nature was undisturbed by exploitation and domination. Instead, they incorporate very useful ideas on how man is to deal with the natural environment.

4.2.2 Giddens' theory of structuration

The work of Giddens provides valuable insight into the relationship between man and environment although, as Redclift & Woodgate (1994:54) point out, his theory on structuration was not developed to deal specifically with environmental concerns. Giddens (1984:2) outlines the main aim of his structuration theory as follows: "*[t]he basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time*". According to Barry (1999:94) his work, just like that of the critical theorists, is concerned with the problems of modernity. Unlike the critical theorists, however, he places more emphasis on environmental issues and nature in his theory, especially in his theorisation of structure & agency and time & space.

Giddens aims at achieving a synthesis between the dichotomy of structure and agency. Structure and agency represent two opposing views of society. Structuralism generally assumes that man's actions are determined by processes and structures that function separately from the individual. Giddens (1984:16) explains structure as: "*..... [appearing] as external to human action, as a source of constraint on the free initiative of the independently constituted subject*". Structure is therefore the organising aspects of human society that controls the ordering of social practices across space and time, without the interference of human actions. Agency, on the other hand, acknowledges that man is in control and is able to change and create the structures of society at his own will. Man therefore determines the nature and the changes of society. In Giddens's view man functions as an autonomous agent that is able to change his social environment, but maintains that he does not do it under conditions of his own choosing. The structure therefore fulfils an enabling as well as a constraining role in individuals' attempts to change their society (Canan, 1996:34).

Giddens's use of the concept structuration leaves room for incorporating the environment into the social context. The environment can be considered a structure that enables and constrains human

action, while humans might at the same time change the natural environment by their actions. Redclift & Woodgate (1994:54) are of the opinion that treating the relationship between man and the environment in this way may lead to a broader sociological view on the subject.

Another facet of Giddens's theory is the way he deals with time and space. He emphasises that: "..... *spatial configurations of social life are just as much a matter of basic importance to social theory as are the dimensions of temporality*" (Giddens, 1984:363). Especially where environmental issues are concerned, it is crucial to understand the role of time and space in their development but also in the impact that they have. Barry (1999:94) states that because Giddens is concerned with time and space in his analysis, he is more sensitive than other social theorists to ecological concerns. Ecological problems are at present linked to the process of globalisation. Giddens views the fact that globalisation compresses time and space as an important factor in the spread of *global* environmental problems such as global warming, climate change and ozone depletion, all of which developed in specific geographical regions but transcend geographic borders in their effects.

Now that the theoretical basis for studying the relationship between man and the environment has been established, attention will be devoted to the role of sociologists in the study of environmental issues from a social perspective.

5. THE ROLE OF SOCIOLOGY IN STUDYING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

When looking into the problems social theory faces in incorporating the environment into analysis, questions about sociology's ability to contribute to the study of environmental issues are raised. For instance, does sociology possess an established theoretical framework for dealing with environmental issues? Due to the anthropocentric legacy of the discipline and a long tradition of focusing on social aspects, sociology has to face the constraints placed upon it by this legacy. As was noted previously, sociology has a long tradition of disregarding any references to non-social aspect in their analysis. Currently, however, sociologists are increasingly recognising the importance of incorporating other factors, such as the environment, into their analysis of society. The environment was in the past, according to Laska (1993:3), considered as a: "..... *given within modern Western culture*". Abundant natural resources and the perceived ability of technology to

utilise the natural resource base are viewed as being the main reasons for this. The situation that modern society is faced with differs extremely from this historical perspective. Currently, humans are continually realising that nature is, in fact, finite and that even technology has its limits. This change in people's perception of the environment, Catton & Dunlap's NEP, has made the environment a social issue.

It would be wrong to assume that sociologists became interested in this problem only as a result of changes in public perception. The seriousness of environmental degradation and destruction also causes and contributes to specific social problems. Sociologists, in view of their field of study, cannot ignore the impact of the environment in creating unique social phenomena and societal problems. In this regard, Benton & Redclift (1994:2) state that: "*..... social sciences have a more significant role to play in understanding and responding to environmental crisis than has been widely assumed in the past*". More specifically concerning this study, a whole new category of refugees emerged as a result of the interplay between man and the environment, namely environmental refugees.

Sociology specifically adds a distinct and very important dimension to studying environmental issues, namely a social dimension. Due to sociology's past emphasis on the analysis of social elements, sociology developed a methodology and approach to studying societal issues that can be of great value in studying environmental issues. Laska (1993:5) holds the opinion that sociologists seemed to be taking the lead in studying environmental issues because of the ability of sociology to incorporate multiple units of analysis simultaneously and systematically into their analysis.

On another level, sociology has been successful in applying sociological methodology and in asking theoretical questions on environmental issues, thereby emphasising the relationship between social and environmental issues (Canan, 1996:32). Cock (1994:16) points out that environmental sociology is interested in issues such as: "*..... the social causes and consequences of environmental problems such as the depletion of natural resources environmental attitudes and values, environmental policies and the social composition and nature of the environmental movement*". Laska (1993:4) adds that environmental problems are important at all societal levels, both locally and internationally. The environment is therefore challenging society in a number of ways and sociologists can contribute significantly to the study of the environment. However,

another deeply entrenched idea within sociology has to receive attention if sociology wishes to contribute to the study of the environment. Until now, society – as the subject matter of sociology – has presupposed social entities that were localised in a specific time and space setting. Currently we are witnessing numerous changes in society that challenge this idea. These changes are collectively referred to as the process of globalisation. Since there are similarities between the challenges that globalisation poses to sociology and the challenges that the environment poses, attention must be devoted to this very significant process.

6. THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISATION

Sociology has established itself as a discipline that focuses on society as its main unit of analysis. A very familiar and generally agreed upon definition of sociology is that it encompasses a systematic and objective study of human society. Until very recently the concept *society* was commonly accepted to refer to specific social groups that could be found in a specific time and space setting. Therefore, the nation-state with its specific physical and conceptual boundaries became synonymous with the sociological idea of a society. Yearly (1996:9) emphasises that: “..... while claiming to be the scientific study of society as an abstract entity, sociology has in practice long acted as though society was only found in the form of nation-states”. Not only with macro-theories, that concentrate on society as a whole, but also in micro-theories has the concept *society* been the central point of departure for sociologists. According to Barry (1999:212), this does not mean that sociology did not have an international dimension, since sociologists did assume links and interaction between different societies. Sociology’s main emphasis, however, remained on the “*internal dynamics of society*”.

With the onset of the process of globalisation, it became increasingly difficult to demarcate society in terms of the conventional physical and conceptual boundaries and to focus on individual societies in sociological analysis. Globalisation refers to the process whereby traditional geographic, social and cultural boundaries are becoming blurred and part of this process is the growing consciousness or realisation among people that such a process is underway (Waters, 1995:3). Some of the implications of this process are that space and time are becoming compressed, while the diffusion of a globalised culture is creating a sense of unity among the different peoples of the world (Yearly, 1996:9).

One area where globalisation is very much apparent is the growing realisation among people that the environment is a common concern. Environmentalists are, according to Yearly (1996:25): *"..... at the forefront in attempting to identify the image of the globe with their political projects"*. Many environmental problems refuse to be limited to a specific social setting and regularly become international problems that can be dealt with only in a global context. Barry (1999:27) emphasises that people are now thinking in terms of a common global environment where we all share the blame for the destruction of the natural environment and accept that we must all work together towards a solution for our environmental problems. Indicative of the globalisation of environmental concerns, according to Frank (1997:409), is the growth in the number of world orientated environmental associations and inter-governmental organisations. Especially since the 1960's through to the 1980's there has been a sharp increase in the number of international institutions focusing their work on global environmental problems. Global environmental organisations include the World Wide Fund for Nature (1961), Friends of the Earth (1971), Greenpeace (1971) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (1972).

Presently, another environmental concern that is set to have global repercussions is the growing number of environmental refugees. Environmental refugees are often the result of environmental problems generated by global processes and they have implications far wider than the migration from one nation to another. These problems will be discussed in depth in the following chapters. It is imperative to take note of the globalised nature of this phenomenon in order to come to an understanding of the dynamics involved in creating and dealing with environmental refugees.

7. CONCLUSION

Sociology as a discipline has progressed tremendously from its early theoretical foundations in respect of the dualism between the social sphere and the natural sphere. Where the environment was first perceived as unimportant for sociological analysis, it is now viewed by many sociologists as one of the most pressing factors that society has to deal with. This relationship is also emphasised by the emergence of problems that resulted from the relationship between man and the environment, such as environmental refugees. Although incorporating the environment in social analysis might prove challenging to the social sciences due to the factors discussed previously in this chapter, sociology is well equipped to deal with this challenge since it possesses a well-defined theoretical core and proven methods to analyse social-environmental problems. Furthermore, there

has been an increased insistence from social scientists that social science expertise and input should be incorporated into environmental studies.

This research study will proceed from the assumption that sociology is able to analyse and explore an issue that has definite environmental and social components. The researcher does not, however, propose to favour any of the theoretical orientations discussed in this chapter specifically – mainly because the phenomenon of environmental refugees is too complex and too recent to subject to any one specific theoretical orientation alone.

In the following chapter the focus shifts to the social, political and economic dimensions of environmental degradation.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental factors play an important part in creating circumstances that are conducive to forced migration. More important, however, is the social, political and economic climate that underlies and influences the environmental conditions responsible for forced migration. Environmental problems are often the natural manifestations of deep-rooted social, political and economic problems prevalent in a certain geographic area. It is, therefore, often difficult to pinpoint the specific environmental problems responsible for environmental migration. Even where environmental factors can be pinpointed as the overbearing reason for migration, the environmental problems involved did not develop linearly, but were the result of a range of social, political and economic factors (Fell, 1998:4). Sensitivity towards the interplay between environmental problems and social, political and economical circumstances is therefore crucial.

In this chapter, the objective is to outline the social, political and economic conditions that are conducive to forced environmental migration. In this regard, the researcher is of the opinion that too much emphasis has been placed on explaining the seriousness and severity of environmental problems, without giving sufficient attention to the socio-political and socio-economic dimensions of the problem. Since this chapter aims at providing only a broad theoretical overview of the factors influencing forced environmental migration, the specific situation in Southern Africa will not be discussed. The nature and extent of environmental refugee movements in Southern Africa will receive explicit attention at a later stage.

Firstly, the social issues involved in environmental problems will receive attention. Population growth and population pressure; and social organisation, specifically family structures, societal structures and urbanisation will be discussed. Population growth, especially in developing countries, is a crucial social issue, since a growing number of people inevitably place more demands on their natural environment. Although population pressure cannot be singled out as *the* culprit in environmental destruction, there is a distinct relationship between a country's population

growth and its ability to deal with serious environmental concerns (Raven *et al.*, 1993:157). Furthermore, traditional family and societal structuring might influence people's use of their environment. In many developing countries, a traditional emphasis on large families and the practice of the division of land between siblings are responsible for certain environmental problems (Harrison, 1993:148). Lastly, urbanisation may lead to a specific range of environmental problems. Currently, most urban growth occurs in developing regions. Poor economic circumstances and environmental degradation force people to migrate to urban areas, although these urban areas cannot cope with the influx of people, and so more environmental problems are created (Seitz, 1995:31).

Politics are very much a part of the development of environmental issues. Many feel that it is not so much population pressure that is responsible for environmental destruction as it is that certain groups are deprived of their fair share of natural resources (Raven *et al.*, 1993:159). Where groups feel deprived of resources, or where the natural environment place limitations on the use of resources, conflicts between interest groups might ensue. It is therefore necessary to explore the political underpinnings of environmental problems by focusing on distribution of and conflict over resources.

Lastly, economic issues involved in the degradation of the environment will receive attention. Industrial and agricultural practices that are harmful to the environment will be weighed up against the social and political issues involved. For instance, certain industrial and agricultural practices are known to be harmful to the environment, but countries are economically compelled to let these practices continue. One insightful example of the interplay between the economy and the environment is provided by Harrison (1993:84). He cites the case of farmers in Madagascar who, due to poverty, cannot afford to employ new agricultural practices, such as the use of fertilizers to replenish nutrients, on their farmlands because these practices are too expensive.

After the social, political and economic factors involved have been dealt with, a broad overview of possible environmental problems that have developed as a result of the above political, social and economic conditions is given. Here, environmental degradation as the manifested result of the above factors is discussed. Attention will be devoted to environmental issues such as pollution, climatic changes and global warming and also desertification and deforestation.

The emphasis in this chapter will be almost entirely on the situation in developing countries since this study focuses on the issue of environmental refugees within the Southern African region, which forms part of the developing world. Many factors relevant to environmental degradation in developed countries have been omitted for this reason.

2. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Social factors form part of the social make-up of society, and are central to environmental issues. These factors would include population pressure and population growth, the social organisation of the family and urbanisation. Although more social factors can be identified, the focus here will be on the most pressing factors that might influence environmental migration. The first aspect that is dealt with here is the issue of population and more specifically the issue of population pressure.

2.1 Population pressure

Population has for long been a contentious issue surrounded with controversy and conflicting viewpoints. This is mainly because different interest groups attach different meanings to the population issue. Whereas population growth is viewed negatively by many in the Westernised world, in many traditional societies it is interwoven with broader socio-economic factors that lead people to view large families as desirable (Seitz, 1995:33,34). These reasons include the fact that in most traditional societies, children are not seen as a financial burden, but as a source of labour contributing to the family's livelihood and later on as a source of security caring for elderly parents in the absence of pension funds and old age facilities. Traditional societies also place a high premium on sons. Couples will, therefore, continue to have children to secure the likelihood that at least one son will survive to adulthood (Weeks, 1994:126). In addition, women in traditional societies do not have a high social standing and children, especially sons, increase women's social status. Lack of education for girls and a lack of knowledge of contraceptives by women further exacerbate the problem (New Ground Fact Sheet 15, 1994:4; Seitz, 1995:35). In spite of the fact that relevant reasons for population growth exist in developing countries, uncontrolled growth is often responsible for creating, or exacerbating, the environmental and economic problems associated with forced migration.

The problem with population growth is not only numerical. It must be seen in relation to environmental and economic constraints. Population growth means that there are continuously more people having to rely on a certain area for food, energy and water. Where the pressure on the surrounding environment exceeds the capability of that environment to sustain this population, the area becomes overpopulated. When a growing number of people place a demand on a limited resource base, it inevitably becomes depleted and people are forced to migrate (Raven *et al.*, 1993:161). Environmentally fragile areas might become degraded even if the population density is low, since the population is placing a demand on the environment that cannot be met without serious damage to the environment.

The United Nations indicates that 93 % of the current population growth occurs in the developing world. Africa, where the population grows at 3% per year, is currently contributing 20% to the world population and it is estimated that their contribution will increase to 35% in the period 2020 – 2025 (World Social Situation in the 1990's, 1994:95). Rapid population growth in Africa, as in other developing countries, has led to, or exacerbated a number of environmental problems that might be linked to forced migration. Harper (1996:165) is of the opinion that a growing population will lead to internal and international migration that will in turn place a social and political burden on the world community.

The impact that a growing population has on the environment is tied up with the social and economic organisation of the people. This will now be discussed.

2.2 The impact of traditional societal and family structures

To understand how traditional lifestyles contribute towards environmental degradation, it is necessary to outline the development of traditional family and societal systems. In most developing regions people progressed from a nomadic hunting and gathering lifestyle to a more advanced system of subsistence farming and pastoralism. The system of subsistence farming had implications for family structure and for the ways in which societies structured themselves. Earlier these societies consisted mainly of small groups of people living in close proximity, each family with a plot of land on which they provided for themselves. Once parents aged or died, the family plot was divided among the children. This system functioned well while population growth was slow, since the plots were still large enough to provide adequately for the families. Dividing land

among siblings cannot, however, be sustained indefinitely, since plots eventually become so small that they are unable to sustain families any longer. This plunges families into poverty and may even force them to sell their land and migrate to already overpopulated urban areas. In India approximately three-quarters of all farms are less than two hectares in size and three-fifths are less than one hectare. These farms are too small to provide subsistence for a family and if the situation deteriorates due to population growth, large numbers of people might be forced to migrate (Myers & Kent, 1995:77). Harrison (1993:130) writes that: "*[i]n Africa population growth rates are so high that in densely settled areas a family can jump from smallholding to landlessness in just two generations*".

Providing for a growing number of families by subsistence farming on small plots of land, especially if the family is poor, places pressure on the natural environment. On a small plot important agricultural principles, such as allowing a fallow period, must be violated since the family might starve if they do not produce a crop. Families having to survive from the yields of a small plot are often already impoverished, making it impossible for them to allow a fallow period. This exhausts the soil and decreases the yields from it, plunging the family further into poverty.

In most instances, the families clear more areas for cultivation, where this is available. Mostly these new plots are situated in marginal areas, such as on steep slopes and semi-arid areas, increasing the likelihood of land degradation in the form of soil erosion and desertification. Not only do an increasing population impact on the environment through agriculture, but also through cattle farming. More people need more cattle to provide meat and dairy products. An increase in cattle also leads to environmental problems such as contributing to desertification, deforestation and soil erosion due to overgrazing. Two of the primary causes of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon have been government-subsidised cattle ranching and large-scale slash and burn agriculture. Many environmental problems occur as a direct result of deforestation, such as soil erosion, landslides, soil degradation and laterisation which further decreases the sustainability of the area (Middleton, 1995:33,35).

Another way in which overpopulation exacerbates environmental degradation is the means of energy that the inhabitants rely on. In most developing regions, energy for cooking and heating is obtained from wood. Small numbers of people collecting wood have a negligible effect on wood

sources. When a large number of people are concentrated in the same area, there might be a profound effect on the surrounding vegetation. The issue here is not population growth as such, but rather population density and the ability of the environment to sustain that number of people. In marginal areas, such as semi-arid regions, a significant rise in population numbers can cause severe damage to existing trees and vegetation in people's demand for firewood.

Africa abounds with cases where overpopulation has played an important role in serious environmental degradation that eventually leads to forced migration. Forced environmental migrants do not necessarily always cross international borders. Many flee to cities once they can no longer sustain themselves. Environmental degradation therefore might be one factor contributing to the rise in urbanisation.

2.3 Urbanisation

Most of the urban growth experienced in the world today occurs in the developing world. By the end of the twentieth century seven of the world's ten largest cities would have been in the developing world according to previous estimates (Seitz, 1995:31). Much of the urban growth in these developing regions can be attributed to environmental degradation in the region. Myers & Kent (1995:58) emphasise in this regard that: "*[e]nvironmental refugees often head, in the first instance at least, for urban communities, even though they may find their daily-life situation is little more favourable than that they have left behind*". This is the case for many Mexicans who, when they find they cannot sustain themselves in Mexico City – after they have migrated there to escape environmental degradation in the rural areas – head towards the United States.

The problem with urban growth in the developing world is that the growth rate is usually so fast that infrastructure cannot be put in place fast enough. In many cities in the developing world, lack of infrastructure, poverty and a high demand placed on resources may place tremendous strain on the existing structures to accommodate the growing number of people. Middleton (1995:184) describes the city as a: "*..... completely artificial environment; they absorb vast quantities of resources from surrounding areas and create high concentrations of wastes to be disposed of*". This leads to a number of environmental problems that might in future degrade these urban environments to such an extent that people will be forced to move due to environmental degradation in urban areas, sometimes for a second time.

Forests surrounding cities are usually severely degraded. Harrison (1993:177) states that in Delhi approximately 613 tons of firewood a day were railed to Delhi from Madhya Pradesh 700 kilometres away, since the surrounding forests surrounding Delhi were depleted. As cities grow, agricultural land is often lost and agriculture has to move to marginal areas, creating more degradation. Harrison (1993:108) states that New Delhi's surface area increased from 43.3 sq. km in 1900 to 660 sq. km today and has swallowed up 100 agricultural villages in the process. Similarly, Egypt lost 13% of its farmland to urbanisation between 1973 and 1985. The growth of cities moves farmland to less fertile areas and although small areas are usually affected, in areas where fertile farmland is in already short supply this can be very negative for the environmental state of the whole area.

Since new farmlands are situated in less fertile areas, more fertilizer will be needed to maintain agricultural production which increases the impact of pollution on the area. Furthermore, densely populated areas without the necessary infrastructure can become severely polluted which would also affect the habitability of the whole area and not just the urban environment. In Dakar, for instance, the municipal waste dump is situated between two freshwater lakes, both of which are used by people in the surrounding residential and farming areas (Main, 1995:53). Mexico City is one of the cities in the world with the highest levels of air pollution, making it an extremely unhealthy environment to live in. According to Harrison (1993:176), 90% of the respiratory problems in the city can be attributed to the high levels of air pollution. The city is built on a dried up lakebed that is subject to severe flooding in the rainy season, and this increases risks of sewage and waste contaminating living areas. However, it is mostly the poor who cannot afford to safeguard themselves against these environmental conditions that become victims of environmental degradation.

From the above discussion, it is evident that there are numerous social factors involved in creating degraded environments. Each of these factors of population growth, traditional social organisation and urbanisation feed on each other to contribute to environments being unable to sustain their populations. This process of factors influencing each other becomes even more complex when economic and political considerations are taken into consideration.

3. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The impact that war, political instability and ethnic conflicts have on forced migration is well-researched and well-documented. A large percentage of forced migration occurs as a direct result of political factors. Another significant percentage of forced migration occurs indirectly as a result of political instability. Political instability, wars and conflict might induce environmental problems that also play a crucial role in forced migration. Furthermore, conflicts over scarce resources and the politics involved in the distribution of resources, such as land, play a role in forced migration.

3.1 The relationship between political conflict and environmental degradation

When a country is in a conflict situation, opposing forces often attempt to render certain areas uninhabitable, either to demoralise the civilian population or to drive out fighting forces. To accomplish this, armies have developed certain environmentally destructive methods over the years, such as the use of napalm and chemical weapons. Armed forces do not, however, need to go to such extremes to attain their goal of environmental destruction, as other methods such as polluting water sources, destroying crops and villages and planting landmines have the same destructive consequences. Usually, these methods were used to serve the purpose of the armed forces during the time of the conflict situation. The environmental damage is often so severe that it makes it difficult, or impossible, to inhabit those areas long after the conflict has been resolved.

Destruction by means of napalm or burning of forests has been employed during many armed conflicts such as the Vietnam and Gulf wars and in the wars in Mozambique and Angola. Certain methods, such as the pollution of water sources, pose a threat to the inhabitants. In some cases, chemicals have been added to water sources or, for instance, during the war in Mozambique, carcasses of dead animals were thrown into water sources to prevent opposing forces access to water. The long-term effect on the lives of people is seldom taken into consideration. Often the loss of vegetation and the impact on the environment as a whole makes it virtually impossible for inhabitants to make a living once the damage has been done. This forces many people to move to more habitable areas, even if their lives are not in immediate danger.

One very serious and destructive method employed in war situations is the use of landmines. The problem with landmines is that because they are hidden and not all are detonated during the conflict period, there is an ongoing threat to people's lives. Certain areas are so riddled with landmines that attempting to farm is hazardous. The threat to people's lives leads to forced migration although the immediate threat from persecution might be out of the way. Klotz (1997:43), referring to the fact that the South African government no longer accepts refugees from Mozambique states that: "*[n]umerous difficulties with this position have been pointed out [t]hese include the persistent problem of landmines that makes returning to farming dangerous, if not lethal*". The threat is especially significant in the case of rural farming communities that make their living through subsistence farming.

3.2 The politics involved in resource distribution

Many conflicts during this last decade may have been spurred by a struggle over resources. The Gulf War was the result of the struggle over oil fields in Kuwait and the civil war in Yugoslavia might have been partly fought over the control of water and agricultural land (Arms, 1994:156). Conflicts of this nature might become more frequent in future, as a result of growing populations and diminishing resource bases. Diminishing resources and environmental degradation may also force people to migrate to areas where resources seem more abundant, again bringing them into conflict with other groups (Kaplan, 1994:8).

Environmental destruction can be the result of an unequal distribution of resources. Some groups are disadvantaged in terms of land, water and energy resources (Raven *et al.*, 1993:159). Since this disparity has already placed them in a disadvantaged position, they will inevitably place more demands on the resources in their area and are forced to take more from the environment than is available. Forced environmental migration is, in this case, merely the result of long-term inequalities of wealth and resources. If all people had equal access to resources, it would not be necessary for people to degrade their environments to such an extent that it becomes uninhabitable. Inequalities in terms of resources and wealth are undeniably part of society and political factors have, without a doubt, played an integral role in establishing or exacerbating inequalities. The existence of these inequalities does, however, have consequences for migration movements.

Inequalities in the distribution of and access to land are particularly significant in this regard. As a case in point, valuable land in the Amazon rain forests is leased to large forestry corporations or cattle ranchers at the expense of the indigenous peoples (Wood, 1995:9). Furthermore, the Brazilian government sponsored roads into previously impenetrable areas thereby making fragile areas easily accessible. According to Harrison (1993:101) governments in Brazil and Malaysia even sponsored resettlement programs in the rainforests to relieve population pressure in urban areas and encouraged these new farmers to clear rainforest land. The government therefore can be an important facilitator in environmental destruction. In the long run, the rainforests are unable to bear the strain of these activities and the sustainability of the areas collapses. In other instances, development funding is lost in corrupt systems and is unequally distributed. This enforces the relationship between poverty and environmental destruction.

Another important aspect of resource distribution is the question of gender discrimination. In many developing countries, it is the women who make the most use of natural resources, but they have the least say in matters that will affect the utilisation of these resources. Women, for instance, are the first to notice a decline in wood sources and water shortages since they are usually responsible for fetching water and fuel wood. Declines in forests and drying of rivers will therefore mean that women will have to spend more time in order to obtain these resources (Harrison, 1993:265). The fact that they do not have any control over these resources, however, prevents them from managing them successfully in order to promote the sustainability of these resources.

In most developing regions women are not eligible to own land, as this privilege is reserved for male heirs. Barret & Browne (1995:35) emphasise that: "*..... gender issues associated with land tenure and resource control can also have serious implications for the environment*". According to these authors a number of studies have indicated that trees are, for example, the property of men. When the men decide to plant their tree crops on land previously used by women to plant crops, women generally lose their rights over these lands. In one instance in The Gambia, women deliberately destroyed tree crops or neglected them in an attempt to regain their control over the land.

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4. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Poor economic circumstances play an important role in creating conditions that promote environmental migration. Often, poor economic circumstances are the outcome of environmental degradation, but poor people also inevitably place more strain on their environment in order to survive. Another facet of the economic dimension is the fact that at ground level poor people are often forced into areas that cannot provide for them due to a lack of economic and political power. This makes it difficult for poor people to break the cycle of poverty. It is also mostly the poor people that, as a result of their poor economic position, have to face the effects of droughts, floods, soil erosion and desertification without being able to protect themselves against them. Economic considerations also emphasise the blurred distinctions between economic and environmental migrants, as well as the unequal distribution of resources among groups.

Many developing countries today were forced into a cycle of poverty, and environmental destruction in the aftermath of colonialism. As a result of colonialism, huge inequalities in respect of wealth exist between developing and developed countries. Today the developing world holds 79% of the world's population, but owns only 20% of the world's wealth. Furthermore, while only 10 to 15% of the people in highly developed regions are poor, up to 90% of the populations of developing countries are placed in the same category. Nearly a third of the world's population live along, or below, the bare subsistence margin (Nebel & Wright, 1996:144). It is these economic circumstances in the developing world that, in conjunction with other social and political factors, might worsen environmental destruction.

The relationship between economic circumstances and environmental degradation involves both large-scale economic processes and economic conditions at the ground level. Firstly, attention will be devoted to the large-scale social processes involved. Regarding macro-economic processes, unmanageable foreign debt loads, corruption in distributing development funding and the fact that developing countries are exploited by large corporations in the developed world are especially significant.

4.1 The impact of macro economic processes

Most developing countries are encumbered with unmanageable foreign debt. It is estimated that the developing world owes the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank approximately 2200 billion US Dollars. This debt is largely deemed unpayable and permanent. Debt causes large amounts of these countries' budgets to be reserved for the repayment of interest on debt. This is money that could have been used in facilitating development practices among the people. To repay their debt, many countries have to exploit their environments either by gaining capital from export farming or through environmentally destructive industrial production. These countries are unable to invest money in practices that would prevent environmental degradation (Gelinas, 1998:41,74).

Corruption and the mismanagement of development funds are other facets of this problem. Gelinas (1998:63) suggests that the whole system of lending money to developing countries is to blame for the mismanagement of funding. Development funding agencies had in the past insisted on using the state as the sole mediator between international funders and domestic economic spending. State officials have, instead of applying the funds to development, enriched themselves. In this regard, Kagonge & Imvobore (1994:4) point out that the positive effects of many developmental approaches have not been noticed at grass roots level as a result of this kind of corruption.

Foreign debt alone cannot be blamed for poor economic circumstances in developing regions. Another important factor is that money that should have been used for development and the prevention of environmental degradation is spent on unnecessary expenses such as military expenditure. Kagonge & Imvobore (1994:4) state that many African countries spend a disproportionate amount of money on defense and military expenditure, while neglecting safeguarding the environment from destruction. Furthermore, they argue that if these funds were used for social programmes, such funds could significantly affect poverty. Hansen (1994:332) adds that military expenses are unnecessarily expanded at the cost of primary health care and education.

4.2 The impact of economic factors at the ground level

At the ground level, poor economic circumstances force people into a situation where exploiting the environment is inevitable. Poverty is often the result of corruption, debt and mismanagement of the economy that filters down from the macro-economic structure to the ground level. However, social

organisation also plays a part in plunging poor people into a cycle of poverty and environmental destruction. Many people are plunged into poverty in the course of a few generations as a result of practices such as subdivision of farmlands among siblings, as was previously discussed. When the land can no longer sustain them, they are forced to migrate, or cultivate marginal areas that become degraded at a faster rate. Harrison (1993:127) states that: “..... *there is an unholy marriage between marginal land and marginal people marginal areas marginalise their inhabitants. At the best of times they provide poor subsistence*”.

Continuous subdivision of land over generations, corruption, unequal distribution of land and because poor subsistence farmers are often forced to sell land to survive increase landlessness among poor subsistence farmers. A lack of sufficient land forces these farmers into marginal areas where it is also difficult to make an adequate living. Farmers in India, South America, Africa – in fact all developing regions – are all potential victims of landlessness (Myers & Kent, 1995:68, 77, 82).

Farming in marginal areas may plunge these people further into a cycle of poverty and environmental degradation that may eventually force them to abandon these areas for good when soil erosion, desertification and deforestation make it impossible to live off the land anymore. Where farmers do succeed in providing bare subsistence levels, any crisis such as a drought, flood, death or illness in the family can force them into an economic crisis. Poverty also prevents farmers from applying agricultural practices and technology that might increase their yields and that at the same time might protect the environment. When the environment is unable to continue to provide for the inhabitants, their only option is to move. Many attempt to find work in cities or are forced to migrate to other, more life-sustaining areas and the cycle of overpopulation, poverty and migration is again set in motion.

5. AN OVERVIEW OF SOME ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION

This section will fall into two parts. Firstly, attention will be given to some natural phenomena responsible for inducing environmental migration. Although human activities cannot be pointed out as the cause of these phenomena, social and economic factors do play a role in the impact that natural phenomena will have on people's lives and, therefore, on environmental migration.

Secondly, attention will be devoted to some of the environmental problems resulting directly from social, political and economic factors – in other words those that are humanly induced.

5.1 Natural factors involved in environmental refugee movements

Natural disasters have always occurred. Today, however, it seems as if people are, to a much larger extent than was previously the case, influenced by natural phenomena. Although media coverage of natural disasters has played a role in highlighting the effects of disasters on people's lives, consideration must be given to the influence of social and economic factors on natural disasters. Natural human disasters are usually those not directly caused by human action such as droughts, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanoes.

The impact of natural disasters might be more severe because people are settling more frequently in disaster-prone areas. Where disasters have always occurred in these areas, the effects went largely unnoticed when the areas were not inhabited by people. Where people settled in these areas, the impact of the disasters became more noticeable due both to the damage caused to humanly created structures and to the loss of human life (Parfit, 1998:12). People also settle in certain areas because of economic and political advantages attached to the geographic area. Riverbanks and coastal areas, for instance, are popular places of habitation because of the high fertility of the ground and the easy attainability of water. Harrison (1993:198) points out that half the world's population live on the coast, while another quarter live within 60 kilometers of the sea. A significant number also lives on, or close to, riverbanks. Where people settle too close to riverbanks or on the coast, they are increasing the likelihood that they might, for instance, be in the way of a flood or a tidal wave.

Coastal areas are also especially vulnerable to the effects of global warming. One of the spin-offs of global warming is a rise in sea-levels. If sea-levels rise, as they are expected to do, some countries could experience large numbers of environmental refugees forced to migrate from coastal areas. However, some countries, although susceptible to rising sea-levels are not particularly vulnerable. Countries such as the Netherlands, where most of its land lies below sea-level, are susceptible but not vulnerable because they will be able to adapt. Countries in the developing world, such as India, Bangladesh and China are very vulnerable to rising sea-levels since they

neither have the skill-level, the technology nor the funds to deal effectively with a rise in sea-levels. Therefore, large numbers of people in these areas could become permanently displaced if sea-levels begin to rise (Myers & Kent, 1995:135).

Population growth exacerbates the problem, since population increases have made certain areas less sustainable and therefore more prone to natural environmental changes. A growing population prevents many people from exercising decision-making in terms of where they want to live because of the scarcity of available land. Some people therefore do not have a choice and have to settle below floodlines or in the path of earthquakes and volcanoes. Approximately 80% of Bangladesh's national territory is a floodplain and severe seasonal flooding occurs. While seasonal flooding is beneficial to the environment in Bangladesh, severe floods occur periodically and cause severe damage and loss of life. Due to population density and poverty, large numbers of the Bangladesh population are forced to return to the low-lying regions, mostly affected by the floods, once the waters have receded, increasing the likelihood that they will again be in the path of a flood (Middleton, 1995:275, 281).

Natural environmental factors such as floods and earthquakes usually occur sporadically and do not normally induce prolonged movements of people. The effects thereof are also diminished or increased by the measures that the inhabitants have taken to protect their lives and possessions. In developed countries, extensive preventive and aid measures are usually in place to deal with potential disasters. In many parts of America that are prone to tornadoes and hurricanes, people have storm shelters underneath their homes. In earthquake zones, bridges and high-rise buildings are strengthened to withstand the impact of an earthquake. People living in hazardous areas tend to return to these areas once the immediate danger has passed and then start rebuilding their lives. Developing regions usually do not have the same preventive and aid measures in place to deal with disasters and this might heighten the impact of the disaster on the people's lives.

Although these factors are seen as natural, human influences have played an indirect role in bringing them about. There is an interrelatedness between natural and humanly induced factors that makes it difficult to determine with certainty to what extent a certain event was influenced solely by nature, or if human actions played a role.

Floods cause much more damage in areas where agricultural practices have removed natural vegetation and this in turn leads to further environmental problems such as soil erosion. Furthermore, it is the view of many scientists that floods experienced in the recent past, and those that will be experienced in future, are a direct result of climatic changes brought about by the greenhouse effect. Floods may in future become more common and intense, as a warmer atmosphere is more likely to hold moisture. Rainfall, in areas that usually experience high rainfall, will rise (Supplee, 1998:52). Countries like India and China that are prone to seasonal flooding do not have the means to assist victims in such instances and this may in future induce prolonged migration of people, as floods become more severe.

Not only floods, but also droughts might become more severe and prolonged as a result of global warming. Droughts differ in their impact on refugee movements in the sense that droughts often cause prolonged suffering to people and to the environment. Continuous or severe droughts may render an area uninhabitable for extended periods of time and force people to move. The negative effect of prolonged droughts on the human population, although viewed as a natural disaster, may be intensified by human factors such as unsound agricultural practices and overpopulation. Especially in Africa, droughts pose a serious threat to the survival of inhabitants. Kagonge & Imvobore (1994:2) rate drought and desertification as among the most important environmental problems in Africa. During the severe drought of the early 1990's in Southern Africa, South Africa experienced an increase in cross border movements from Zimbabwe (Minnaar & Hough, 1996:121). Droughts may induce other environmental problems such as desertification and water shortages that may force people to move. These factors will be dealt with within the context of humanly induced factors.

5.2 Humanly induced environmental degradation

In terms of human conditions, attention will next be devoted to industrial pollution and disasters, global warming and climatic change, deforestation and desertification.

5.2.1 Industrial pollution and industrial disasters

The instances where industries are responsible for pollution or disasters that have a detrimental effect on the natural environment and on inhabitants' health, are numerous. In many cases, although not all, inhabitants are forced to leave their residences permanently after severe pollution.

According to Cylke (1993:2), this has become a commonplace event in human society. In many areas of the world where industry forms the backbone of the economy, the long-term effects of pollution are making it hazardous to reside in these areas. Pollution in water, in the air and on land all have the potential to create conditions where people are forced to move.

The effect of industrial practices is more visible against the backdrop of increasing urbanisation. Wood (1995:6) states in this regard that: “..... [w]ith a rapidly urbanizing world, major industrial accidents will likely become more frequent, forcing emergency evacuations of urban populations”. A well-known and often cited event that emphasises this is the Chernobyl disaster, where hundreds of thousands of people had to be permanently evacuated after a nuclear waste spill. According to the UNHCR approximately 375 000 people were temporarily or permanently displaced as a result of this incident and those in a 30 km radius will never be able to return (UNHCR, 1996:2).

Pollution is furthermore not only a localised concern that affects limited areas. In many cases, pollution affects environments not even near where the original problem is experienced. One of the most significant instances where actions of one part of society negatively affects a broader environment is in the case of global warming and climatic changes. This will now be considered in more detail.

5.2.2 Global warming and climatic change

Global warming is perhaps the environmental problem that holds the greatest potential for future mass environmental migration. In spite of debate among scientists and politicians about the seriousness of the problem and the extent to which humans have contributed to this phenomenon, it is generally accepted as a fact that the earth is getting warmer. Supplee (1998:48) states that: “..... [t]here is virtually unanimous agreement that the global average surface air temperature has risen half a degree C since the late 1800s and that 13 of the warmest years of the 20 th century have cropped up since 1980”. A rise in surface and air temperatures might have profound effects on the climate of the planet. Climatic changes will set in motion a number of environmental problems that might seriously affect forced migration.

Global warming impacts on the world's capability to supply food to a growing population. Climatic changes will mean that vegetation will have to adapt to rapidly changing climates and this

might be impossible. Many food crops will not be able to withstand the changes in temperature and precipitation. It is already feared that the grain producing regions – the so-called breadbaskets – of the United States and Canada could be in jeopardy due to unpredictable rainfall patterns caused by global warming (Linden, 2000:4). A decline in the production of grain in these breadbaskets gives rise to concern. Grains in the form of wheat, rice and corn provide 80% of food for the world population. Any significant decline in the production of either one of these sources could lead to widespread famine and induce circumstances that are conducive to environmental refugee movements (Reid, 1998:65). According to Smith & Niedermeier (1996:503), food production in Africa is already insufficient to meet the needs of the growing population. If Africa is unable to meet the needs of the growing population in terms of food, famine and forced migration could be the result.

Environmental problems such as deforestation, desertification and soil erosion already seriously affect many countries' ability to provide subsistence for themselves. Many African countries have to import most of their grain and even with the help of imported food and foreign food aid they are not able to provide adequately for their populations. Hunger, famine and environmental degradation are forcing many people across Africa to move to other areas. In countries like Somalia and Ethiopia, for instance, the interplay between political instability, poor economic circumstances and prolonged droughts on the ability of the countries to supply food, emphasise the serious impact that widespread world hunger might have on forced migration. If droughts increase, the world's grain supplies might reach dangerously low levels that could lead to widespread social and political disorganisation that will compell people to move.

5.2.3 The impact of agricultural practices

Agricultural practices might also have a serious impact on the natural environment and may influence forced migration movements. The problems associated with agriculture are twofold. Firstly, the use of technological advances in agriculture may lead to pollution and create many secondary environmental problems similar to those caused by industrial practices. These mainly include problems caused by pollution. Agricultural problems are also transboundary and may therefore affect people far from where the original problem started. This is especially significant for developing nations that do not have the economic means to deal with these effects and might influence forced migration in nations that cannot cope with them.

There are also, however, a number of agricultural practices in developing regions that may result in environmental problems that have the potential to create large forced migration movements. Among these problems the most serious are deforestation and desertification. Land degradation in the form of soil erosion, salinisation, acidification and topsoil loss can be added to the list. Desertification and deforestation, however, highlight the seriousness of environmental degradation in inducing refugee movements. In Africa, as in other developing regions, these environmental problems may induce forced migration and have, to a certain extent, already done so.

(i) Desertification

Current knowledge as to what produces desertification and whether or not it can be reversed, is limited. Human impact is considered by many to be the main culprit, although it is also accepted that natural drought cycles may play a role in producing desertification (Goudie, 1990:49; Middleton, 1995:45). Furthermore, deserts do not appear to be stable environments and may advance and retreat from year to year. In this regard, Harrison (1993:117) cites the desert vegetation zone on the Sudan-Chad borders that moved 200 kilometres south in 1984, only to retreat the same distance the following year. Desertification must be seen in relation to social, economic and political circumstances.

As was pointed out previously, droughts do contribute towards creating environments that are unfit for habitation and so induce forced migration. Desertification and droughts go hand in hand. Firstly, droughts may create the arid conditions conducive to desertification and secondly, droughts may heighten man's impact on his environment, since droughts produce a scarcity of natural resources, especially where population demands already outstrip the environment's capability of sustaining life. Humans may, during prolonged droughts, be forced to revert to overgrazing, overcultivation and depletion of existing vegetation and water sources, or face hunger and death. There is an irony involved, since by degrading their environment to this extent, they are inevitably bringing disaster upon themselves.

Another factor that is also associated with overgrazing, overcultivation and overpopulation is deforestation.

(ii) Deforestation

Forests are continually under threat from being destroyed through human intervention. The main reason is to clear land for agriculture, or to provide fuel for heating and cooking (Goudie, 1990:37). Removal of forests may ultimately lead to an unsustainable environment, thereby contributing to forced environmental migration.

Deforestation is not a new phenomenon, but was and is an inevitable result of human expansion and development. Goudie (1990:37) points out that landscapes changed considerably due to the removal of forests that ensued from European expansion across their own and other continents. Since deforestation in the developed world is largely coupled with development and urbanization, it is commonly accepted that nothing can be done to reverse the process in the developed world. Furthermore, most developed countries are careful to conserve their existing forests and have effectively halted any further deforestation (Middleton, 1995:28).

Attention is currently focused on deforestation in developing regions. Many parts of the developing world are characterised by an increasing rate of deforestation as a result of a growing population, unsound agricultural practices and urbanisation. As Middleton (1995:29) points out: *"..... cutting down trees is the end result of a series of motivations and driving forces which are interlinked in numerous ways"*.

Haiti serves as an example in this regard. Maternowska (1994:1) mentions that of the country's forests only two percent (2%) remains, as the growing population has increasingly had to cut down forests to yield crops. The problem of food supply has also intensified as soil erosion occurred and topsoil was lost, leading to a decline in food production. A large number of the population are either internally displaced or have had to seek refuge in other countries because of this. In Africa, a similar situation is found. Kaplan (1994:3) states that: *"[i]n Sierra Leone, as in Guinea, as in the Ivory Coast, as in Ghana, most of the primary rain forest and the secondary bush is being destroyed at an alarming rate [i]n Sierra Leone as much of 60 percent of the country was rain forest [in 1961]. Now six percent is. In the Ivory Coast the proportion has fallen from 38 percent to eight percent"*. This situation in West Africa must, however, be seen against the backdrop of political conflict which has forced many people to move to other areas and this has placed tremendous strain on the natural environment.

6. CONCLUSION

Environmental refugees are the result of certain environmental problems such as deforestation, desertification, pollution and natural disasters, among others droughts and floods. These environmental problems did, however, not develop in isolation. A complex array of social, economic and political factors conspired to produce these environmental problems into being. Environmental factors can, therefore, seldom be separated from the existing social, political and economic situations in the areas from where these movements take place. It is impossible to consider forced environmental migration outside of the socio-economic and socio-political contexts. Eventually, the interplay between the different negative social, political and economic factors will create environments so severely degraded that the occurrence of environmental refugee movements becomes highly possible.

These environmental refugees, forced out of their home countries due to severe environmental degradation, in turn, find their way towards areas where they perceive their chances of survival to be better. Their migration can be internal, but many environmental refugees are forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. In the following chapter, the impact that these migration movements have and will have on host countries and on international relations will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES ON HOST COUNTRIES AND ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental refugees are already affecting host areas and international relations and their impact is likely to increase as more and more people are forced out of their homelands by environmental destruction. However, due to their undocumented and unrecognised nature, it is at this stage difficult to determine with certainty the impact that environmental refugees are having, and will have, on host areas and on international relations. Much of the impact of environmental refugees on host areas and international relations stems from the fact that they are not properly categorised and are disregarded in terms of policy decisions¹. Policy options will be dealt with separately in the following chapter, but it is, at this stage, necessary to point out that there is a correlation between lack of proper categorisations and policy frameworks and the *current* impact of environmental refugees, since their unrecognised state allows them to be wrongfully classified as economic or undocumented migrants. To explore the impact of environmental refugees, two aspects must be taken into consideration.

Firstly, the impact must be explored within the context of their undocumented nature. Environmental refugees are often wrongfully classified as undocumented migrants in the current void of proper categorisations and policy frameworks. Most environmental refugees enter host countries as illegal or economic migrants because most governments do not regard environmental destruction as a legitimate reason for migration (Vlachos, 1996:130). The impact that they have is, therefore, similar to that experienced with undocumented migrants, merely because the current lack of proper categorisations forces them to be treated as such.

¹ Due to the unrecognised nature of environmental refugees it is extremely difficult to determine with certainty the impact that they, as a distinct group of forced migrants, is likely to have on host areas and the international community. As a result of their unrecognised nature the impact that they are having becomes blurred with the impact that political refugees and other undocumented migrants are having on host areas and the international community. For a more detailed discussion on the blurred distinctions between environmental refugees and other categories of migrants see Chapter 1, paragraph 2.2.

Among the problems experienced with undocumented migrants, some are specifically significant regarding environmental refugees. Undocumented migrants are not legally entitled to stay in a host country and large amounts of money are spent annually on returning them to their countries of origin. Many environmental refugees, due to their unrecognised status, are also returned under the perception that they fall into the same category. Apart from the financial burden placed on host areas by unnecessary repatriations, relationships between sender and receiver states are negatively affected; especially where sender states perceive the migration to be a relief due to, among other problems, environmental degradation, poverty and population pressure (Swain, 1996:969). The presence of undocumented migrants may further invoke strong antagonistic feelings from people in host areas as the former are perceived to threaten economic stability, contribute to resource scarcities, place strain on health and welfare services and contribute to crime rates (Minnaar & Hough, 1996:18). Jackson (1986:2) emphasises in this regard that: “..... migration [in this instance forced migration¹] be correctly perceived as an agent of change in that it implies a threat posed by the migrant to the stability of a form of social organisation that is complete and comprehensive of all its members”.

Secondly, in spite of their undocumented nature, undocumented migrants essentially remain refugees and when their impact is considered, this has to be taken into consideration too; especially since the large numbers of environmental refugees expected in future is likely to influence the acknowledgement of their refugee status. Refugees, while also contributing to some of the above-mentioned problems, place a demand on host environments and international organisations in terms of the provision of aid and by a heightened use of resources in the areas where they settle. The areas surrounding refugee settlements are often negatively affected by the large influx of people and the environment usually suffers under the strain. In Kenya, for instance, Somali refugees added to the pressure placed on scarce water resources, pasture and firewood (Shields, 1992:28). Furthermore, the mere presence of large numbers of refugees can invoke aggression from local people, especially where there is a scarcity of resources and where political antagonism already exists. For example, attacks on Rwandan refugees in a refugee camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) because of political differences during the 1990's highlight this aspect (The Economist, 1996(b):53). This has the potential for inducing large-scale conflicts among nations and will make the involvement of the international community unavoidable.

¹ Own addition to quotation

To understand the impact of environmental refugees on a host area, and on the international community, it is necessary to take into account the undocumented nature of such refugees and the fact that they are forced migrants. Again, the impact will be explored mainly within the developing world and the specific situation in Southern Africa will receive attention at a later stage.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES WITHIN THE CURRENT SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Undocumented migrants are, in general, a cause for concern, since their presence undoubtedly influences host societies in a profound way. Issues that arise from the influx of migrants into a host country are political, social, economic and environmental in nature. Each of these impacts will be discussed briefly. While migrants – this includes forced migrants and undocumented migrants – may also have latent positive impacts on a country, here the focus will be explicitly on the negative impacts. Attention will first be devoted to exploring the political impacts of environmental refugees on host areas and the global community.

2.1 The political impact of environmental refugees

Political problems include conflicts between sender and receiver states as a result of the flow of migrants, ethnic clashes between local inhabitants and migrants and also conflicts over resources in those areas affected by the presence of unwanted migrants. At the international level the conflicts generated among sender and receiver states often lead to the involvement of the international community. Host countries and sender states often expect international institutions to become involved in these conflicts since they are unable to cope with it themselves, but, on the other hand, see their involvement as exposing their inability to cope with the problem themselves.

Where people move from one country to another, the potential for political conflict between the nations and groups involved is great. Swain (1996:967) distinguishes between state *versus* state conflicts, state *versus* group conflicts and group *versus* group conflicts in this regard. Most of these potential conflicts are fuelled by underlying concerns on the part of host populations and migrants, some of which are relevant and others that are merely based on invalidated assumptions.

Environmental refugees commonly follow the same routes as undocumented migrants to enter host countries and are indiscriminately treated as undocumented migrants by local people and by host

governments. Some of the methods used by undocumented migrants to gain access to a host country include crossing borders clandestinely, using fraudulent travel documents, or entering legally and then overstaying their residence permits (Hough, 1995:9). The unrecognised state of environmental refugees is a potential source of conflict with many facets, each of which will be considered briefly.

2.1.1 Group versus group conflict

Nations bordering countries where there are severe economic instability, social and political turmoil and poor development prospects are often at the receiving end of unwanted migration. Since the areas where poor economic, political and social circumstances prevail are likely to experience environmental degradation as a result of these circumstances, they are also potential generators of environmental refugees. Environmental refugees are forced to make use of the same access and survival routes to neighbouring countries as undocumented migrants, and are therefore brought into contact with local people on the same level as undocumented migrants. Their undocumented and unrecognised status creates the perception among local people that these people are here for the same reasons as other unwanted migrants. It must be pointed out that local people are often not in a position to distinguish between legal and undocumented migrants when they form their perceptions on migrants and have been known to treat most foreigners as undesirable. Environmental refugees are not protected from actions resulting from these perceptions by a legitimate and recognised refugee status.

While negative perceptions among local people play an important role in creating potential conflict situations, there are some real grounds for concern. Firstly, the fact that more people have to rely on a limited resource base necessarily entails that scarcities will be experienced. Natural resources such as water, land and wood become depleted more quickly when more people have to rely on them. In the face of limited employment opportunities, poverty and of limited health care facilities, more people will mean that local people have to share these limited resources, which they are often not prepared to do. Struggles over these resources are, therefore, not only the result of negative perceptions, but are based on real concerns among local inhabitants.

Conflicts over natural resources such as water and land are particularly likely in the arid and semi-arid parts of Africa, where environmental decline is already threatening the sustainability of many

areas. Most of the current population movements are taking place in these arid and semi-arid places of the world, which are also the poorest places in the world and, therefore, less likely to cope with influxes of people (Vlachos, 1996:131). Obi (1998:44) emphasises that: “..... *environmental decline in Africa, if unchecked, will worsen [political] insecurity*”. Water shortages and shortages of land are aggravated by growing populations and further pressure is added by the presence of migrants, be they economic or forced. Swain (1996:969) states that an influx of people into an area may, especially in developing regions, be damaging to the survival of the whole area. The struggle over resources may be a strong facilitating factor for conflict among these groups.

In Africa, water is one of the natural resources that is particularly scarce and where this resource has to be shared among local inhabitants and forced migrants conflicts are very likely. Obi (1998:44) states that conflicts over water sources are present all across the African continent. For instance, there are conflicts among pastoralists and farmers over access to aquifers in the Sahel and also conflicts among Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan over the waters of the Nile. These struggles over resources, although environmental in nature, are often combined with ethnic and historical issues among the competing groups (Kaplan, 1994:8). Solomon (1993:20) elaborates on this and states that: “..... *[w]herever there is a scarcity of resources, one can expect competition for them. In this context, mobilization along religious, ideological, ethnic or cultural lines are not unique*”.

Ethnic sentiments between political refugees and their hosts have in the past resulted in conflict, as was the case between local inhabitants in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwandan refugees where strong antagonistic feelings were present among groups. These perceptions among local inhabitants contribute to antagonism, xenophobia and aggression towards many groups of foreigners, which, in turn, may develop into full-scale conflicts among foreigners and local people. In many Western European countries, xenophobic perceptions have led to the growth in popularity of right-wing parties who take an extremely anti-migration stance (Solomon, 1993:18). In countries where strong anti-foreigner feelings prevail, foreigners are often the victims of attacks from locals. In South Africa xenophobia is rising in the light of the current economic climate with its limited employment opportunities, high crime rates and rising concerns over health and welfare services (Carim, 1995:221).

2.1.2 Group versus state conflicts

In situations as mentioned above where resident groups and migrants have antagonistic feelings toward each other and where conflict situations might occur, there is also the possibility of conflict between local groups and their governments. Local people might feel that the government is not doing enough to prevent the influx of people and their reactions could range from passive protest against the government to outward aggression directed at the government. The public might place pressure on the government to act more aggressively towards unwanted migrants. For many governments, their stance towards immigration can determine how long they stay in power. During the run-up to the parliamentary elections in France in 1996, the government was extremely worried about the gain in popularity of the anti-immigrant National Front. A poll suggested that this party enjoyed the support of 16% of the voters and the government reacted by proposing severe measures to curtail unwanted immigration in order to regain their support (The Economist, 1996(a):31).

Local people's perceptions are often formed and intensified by political interest groups that spread anti-foreigner sentiments for their own political gain. Undocumented migrants are often accused of contributing to the social and financial difficulties in host countries. While there is truth in some of these claims, the impact is often blown up out of proportion by, among others, political parties and trade unions. These groups blame undocumented migrants for contributing to crime, poor economic conditions, the spread of diseases and overpopulation (Christie, 1997:45; The Economist, 1995:46). When they can link undocumented migrants to the social and economic problems in a country, it is easier to propagate a solution, namely if the entry of unwanted migrants is stopped, the problems will stop. The spread of anti-foreigner sentiments greatly contributes to a negative perception of foreigners among local people, that will make conflict more likely, especially where local people experience problems with poverty, crime, overpopulation and poor health conditions.

2.1.3 Conflicts between states

Conflicts induced by the presence of environmental refugees have serious consequences for regional political stability. Environmental refugees, like other forced migrants, often have no choice but to cross an international boundary in their migration. Their own countries might view their migration to a neighbouring state as a relief, since it takes pressure off the sender state to provide assistance to them. On the other hand, host countries often do not want these people inside their territories, since it places pressure on their economy and on society in general.

This is especially true in the case of environmental refugees, since they are not eligible for assistance from any international aid organisations. Host countries might experience pressure from their own people to send the unwanted migrants back if the citizens perceive them to be a threat to their survival. In many instances, previous alliances between states, or a moral, political and social responsibility towards sender states will make it difficult, even impossible, for host countries to send these people back indiscriminately (Christie, 1997:46). Conflicts and open hostility between sender states, who view the migration as a relief, and receiver states, who view the influx of people as a burden, might be the end result of this situation (Swain, 1996:968).

The situation with refugees in South Africa reflects the dilemma of host countries outlined above. As has already been pointed out, a large number of South Africans feel that foreigners are a burden to the country and they are placing pressure on the government to send them back. The South African government, on the other hand, have strong ties with neighbouring states who provided shelter and aid to political activists during the Apartheid years. This makes decisions in terms of handling forced migrants from neighbouring states extremely difficult (Klotz, 1997:38). Any decisions made regarding forced migrants might affect a country's relationship with its neighbours and may cause conflict and negativity between these states if the matter is not handled correctly.

The issue of responsibility for the cause of the refugee movement is especially problematic where environmental factors have led to their migration. It is easy to determine the onset of and the role players involved in a political conflict. In the case of environmental factors, determining exactly who was responsible for the ensuing migration and when it started, is more problematic. Hugo (1996:109) states in this regard that: "*..... [a] political refugee movement is often an uncomplicated response to fear of persecution, [while] environmental migration is often the result of a complex set of multiple pressures of which an environmental event is only the proximate cause*".

The possible and highly likely environmental refugee movements that are going to take place as a result of global warming are a case in point. Rising sea levels will displace large numbers of people from low-lying regions of the world such as Bangladesh and the Maldivian islands. Although these low-lying countries will be severely affected by rising sea levels, they will not have been instrumental in bringing this destruction on themselves. The blame for global warming and the

ensuing rise in sea levels is placed mostly at the door of the developed world. Many developed countries, which were primarily responsible for global warming may suddenly be faced with countries which are swamped by an influx of refugees and who will demand help from the 'culprits'.

Where international organisations intervene in a local country's refugee problems, there is always the possibility of conflict. Local governments might feel that their presence puts the spotlight on the government's inability to deal with the problem on their own. Refugee migration, in general, is not only a local or regional problem, but has far wider political and social repercussions. Refugees are the charge of the international community and countries are expected to treat them in accordance with international conventions regarding refugee migration. The involvement of other countries and international bodies such as the United Nations, therefore, becomes unavoidable where refugees are involved. Certain situations, such as escalating conflicts between refugee groups and local people and the issue of responsibility necessitates the heightened involvement of the international community, often without the consent of the countries involved.

Furthermore, where many different interest groups participate in an endeavour to help, the conflicting interests between these groups must also be taken into consideration. In some cases, helping a certain country with their migration problem might create economic and political problems for another involved country. For example, it might be in a country's best interest to propose and promote settlement of refugees in a third country to safeguard themselves, which will bring them into direct conflict with this chosen third country.

2.2 The economic impact of environmental refugees

Not only do undocumented migrants place political pressure on host countries and international systems, but the economy is also affected. Aspects that must receive attention here are firstly, the pressure placed on the local area's ability to supply infrastructure, employment, and health and welfare services. Furthermore, huge amounts of money are spent to manage the influx of unwanted people by returning unwanted people to their country of origin and by providing policing and security in the host country.

The international community is influenced since many developing countries that are faced with the problem of influxes of people are also dependent on loans from other countries, the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. A percentage of these funds inevitably finds its way to the assistance of unwanted migrants, since it is normally invested in development practices such as housing, health and welfare which undocumented migrants also benefit from. Refugee migration places a financial burden on international institutions, the countries involved and on the local host areas. While the refugee population of the world is increasing, funding has not increased proportionately. The UNHCR's budget, for instance, was \$1.3 billion in 1994, but with these funds they were able to provide assistance to only 20 million refugees (Wood & Potts, 1998:255).

Any influx of people into a specific area will result in financial implications for local inhabitants and the local government. The impact of undocumented migrants is probably most felt in the economic sector of a country. To many local inhabitants the threat to local employment opportunities is the most obvious and visible effect of an influx of foreigners. Although the real threat is sometimes over-exaggerated by political interest groups and trade unions to increase their support, it cannot be denied that more people place more economic demands on the area in terms of employment opportunities and providing infrastructure and services. In many cases, undocumented migrants will attempt to become economically active as soon as possible to sustain themselves financially. They are often prepared to work for much lower wages than local inhabitants do and in the process push wages down, since local people are then also expected to work for less (Desai, 1994:34). Foreigners who do not have a legal right to employment are in a very vulnerable state and are often exploited by employers who take advantage of the situation. Some foreigners join the informal trade sector where they sustain themselves mainly by selling homemade goods, fruit and other commodities, or by supplying services such as tailoring and shoe repairs. Trade unions and businesspeople have in the past accused street-vendors of having a negative impact on local business in the sense that they undercut local traders' prices.

Another facet of the economic impact is the use and distribution of resources among inhabitants. The conflict potential in this has already been dealt with, but the economic implications must also receive attention here. A growing number of people use more natural resources such as land, water and food. Inevitably, the local area's capacity to supply this demand is tested. When the area cannot fulfill the physical needs of the people, poverty, environmental degradation and related

social problems are experienced. Some of the former homeland areas in South Africa became severely overcrowded with Mozambicans during the 1980's and early 1990's. The influxes of people had a severe impact not only on the environment, but also on the economic viability of these areas (Solomon, 1993:17).

The burden placed on resources is, however, not the only aspect that is troublesome. Host areas also suffer in terms of a heightened demand placed on health and welfare services. Increasing numbers of undocumented migrants may, therefore, place pressure on the country's ability to supply these services. Every country only has a limited budget for health and welfare services. When the funds allocated towards health and welfare for the population have to be shared with more people, some people may not receive adequate services.

Local governments are lastly influenced economically by the financial implications of resettlement and repatriation, in that these place a demand on the country's security and policing structures and by overburden already pressurised government departments dealing with migration. Most developed countries in the Western world and wealthier countries neighbouring on poor developing nations are constantly faced with influxes of undocumented migrants. This places demands on these wealthier countries to protect their borders, which is not only a political problem, but may also put financial strain on host countries.

Large numbers of Mexican migrants leaving their home country for the United States because of extreme poverty and population pressures led the American government to adopt Operation Gatekeeper in 1994 in an attempt to discourage further attempts of migration from Mexico (Parfit, 1998:13). Likewise, the European Union has been plagued by large numbers of foreigners entering the Union illegally. This has forced the Union to step up their border protection and increase their measures to seek out illegal immigrants (Nelán, 1993:27). While political conflict and economic pressure might be the main reasons for migration in many of these cases, it is possible that environmental degradation has played a role in the migration of many Mexicans to the United States and of North Africans and Eastern Europeans to Western Europe. In the light of environmental degradation and estimated refugee flows as a result of this environmental degradation, countries may in future be threatened even more by influxes of people, which would place demands on them to cope financially with protecting their borders.

In the case of European countries and the United States of America the financial implication of border protection might not be so severe. Countries in the developing world that are financially better off than their neighbours may be financially drained by attempts to protect their borders and may not be in a position to do so adequately. This, in conjunction with other financial implications caused by influxes of undocumented migrants, might place these countries under severe economic pressure. For many people coming from environmentally degraded and economically impoverished areas these neighbouring states seem like their only option for survival and they will do anything in their power to reach these countries. But as one reporter puts it: "*[n]o country that is a relative oasis of prosperity next door to great poverty can afford to prop its door wide open*" (The Economist, 1995:48). Neighbouring states must, therefore, exercise some form of control over who enters their borders. Many environmental refugees are forced to enter countries illegally adding to the number of illegal migrants.

Not only does the protection of borders create problems for host countries, but dealing with undocumented migrants that are already inside their borders also create financial difficulties. The reasons for wanting to locate and deal with undocumented migrants are very clear from a financial perspective. The effect of migrants on employment opportunities and the distribution of services has been discussed already. In the case of developing countries, the financial burden created by these migrants might hamper the host country's own development prospects. Therefore, dealing with the problem of an influx of migrants is crucial for developing countries with good development prospects (Carim, 1995:221).

In order to repatriate unwanted migrants, costs have to be incurred to locate these people. The police and the defense force are commonly used to locate these foreigners and sustaining these operations are extremely costly, since it requires manpower and equipment to reach their goal successfully. The creation or restructuring of appropriate government departments to deal with the problem creates further financial difficulties for host countries.

Lastly, at the international level, the increasing number of people in need of assistance is placing economic pressure on the international community. The UNHCR's budget for providing assistance to refugees is not adequate to assist the increasing number of refugees. Shortfalls in donor money will force the UNHCR to coordinate efforts with other UN agencies and NGO's to continue to

provide the needed assistance to refugees. In spite of this, Wood & Potts (1998:259) argue that increasing pressure will be placed on donor states to handle refugee problems themselves.

2.3 Social impact of environmental refugees

Undocumented migrants are commonly associated with the worsening of social problems such as rising crime rates and increases in serious health problems. In this regard influxes of migrants have a serious impact in developing nations where adequate housing is a problem due to a lack of financial resources and the overall poverty of the countries. Furthermore, differences in terms of culture and ethnicity may not only lead to potential conflict situations, but since migrants bring with them particular social and cultural practices they can have a profound effect on the host area's social and cultural practices. While some of these cultural practices can be positive, many negative practices are also brought into the host area. Significant in this regard is the transfer of practices that are socially, economically and environmentally harmful in the new social environment.

Wherever migrants settle, be it legally or illegally, they bring with them a whole set of social and cultural practices and ideas that can either negatively or positively alter the natural and social environment to which they migrate. Assimilation of cultural practices between groups who are in close contact is not rare, although there are some disadvantages to this, especially where there are environmentally destructive practices that are also taken up in the assimilation process. While changes in cultural and social practices are significant, it is the social problems arising from an influx of people into a host country that has the biggest social impact. Social problems that might arise usually stem from the impoverished nature of these migrants and would include problems associated with crime, housing and health. Each of these problems will be dealt with briefly.

2.3.1 *The impact on health services*

Since environmental refugees often leave undesirable and unlivable conditions in their home countries, they often, but not always, arrive in their new habitat in a very poor physical condition. Providing medical services proves to be burdensome to the host country, but it is not the only problem that the host area has to deal with. These migrants, in some cases, also bring with them dangerous illnesses that are transferred to the local area. In the case of South Africa the influx of migrants from neighbouring states have been linked with the spread of diseases such as yellow

fever, cholera, AIDS and other tropical diseases such as the Ebola fever (Schutte, 1993:8). The spread of diseases poses a serious threat to the receiving country where the people normally do not have immunity against these diseases. Attempting to control the spread of diseases and providing medical assistance to both foreigners and local populations in the light of increased health risks can be very challenging for host areas.

Currently, it is especially the spread of AIDS through migration that generates serious concerns. The World Health Organisation estimated in 1996 that approximately 22,6 million people worldwide were infected with HIV, of which 14 million were in sub-Saharan Africa (Fransen, 1998:1). With such a large number of people infected with HIV in the sub-Saharan region, the possibility of forced migrants who are HIV positive entering host countries is very likely. This holds implications in terms of the spread of the disease through migration and pressure placed on health authorities to deal with increasing numbers of infected people. Fransen (1998:8) emphasises that the forces fuelling the AIDS epidemic are, among others, are mobility and migration.

2.3.2 The impact on housing

The fact that these forced migrants were in a poverty-ridden state when they migrated add to the social problems experienced in their new residence. In many instances undocumented migrants are extremely poor and are not in a position to sustain themselves once they arrive in the host country. Many migrants have also used the funds that they had available to reach their new destination, for instance, by paying people to help them across the border. A lack of money forces these migrants to settle in squatter camps, erecting houses from what they can find in the surrounding environment. An influx of poor, homeless people adds to a country's housing problems.

2.3.3 The impact on rising crime rates

Poor economic conditions are commonly linked to a rise in crime rates and the general deterioration of the social welfare of people. Poor economic circumstances, together with a lack of employment, may force some people into crime. Reports of increases in crime during periods where poverty-stricken people have settled in a host area are common. During the political crisis in Somalia, Kenya and especially the capital Nairobi, experienced a rise in crime due to the large numbers of refugees settling in Kenya (Shields, 1992:28).

The increase in crimes linked to foreigners must not, however, be seen solely as being caused by forced migrants. A distinction between economic migrants, who migrate to an area because of opportunities for illegal activities, and forced migrants who get involved in crime merely to survive should be drawn. Many developing countries provide criminals with lucrative business opportunities and in this sense their migration is purely due to economic reasons. South Africa is, for instance, used by drug smugglers as a transit point for drugs to Europe and the United States since it is perceived to have lax custom control at its international airports¹ (Van Niekerk, 1995:7). To blame all migrants, especially forced migrants that they contribute to crime is, therefore, invalidated.

2.3.4 The impact on social welfare

While crime is a serious consequence of an influx of illegal migrants, poor circumstances of these people may also lead to problems such as family violence, abuse and alcoholism. These problems do not only affect the households in which they occur, but can have a very negative effect on the functioning of the society as a whole. Furthermore, the presence of these social welfare problems adds to the burden of already overburdened welfare services (Reitzes, 1994:8).

2.4 The environmental threat of forced migration

Lastly, forced migrants may have a severe impact on the natural environment in host areas which must also be considered. These impacts include the destruction of the natural environment in the host area, depletion of natural resources such as water, loss of bio-diversity and pollution. Each of these impacts are mainly the result of population pressure and the transfer of unsustainable environmental practices to the host area. A destructive cycle is set in motion where people migrate due to unsustainable living conditions in their homelands, but, by overburdening a host area by their presence the area's survival might be compromised and eventually all the inhabitants are forced to migrate again. The conflict potential of competition over limited resources between host populations and migrants has already been discussed. Here, attention will briefly be given to the specific environmental impact that influxes of people have on an area.

¹ For a more detailed discussion on crime associated with migrants see Chapter 5, paragraph 3.3.3.

Deforestation, water pollution and depletion of water sources are viewed as the most common and serious environmental impacts resulting from the influx of migrants (Lohrman, 1996:337; UNHCR, 1998:6). Other serious environmental concerns are the pressure placed on natural resources such as land, vegetation and wild life. These environmental impacts have an indirect impact on the economic viability of the area and is also a potential generator of conflict, as was already discussed. The UNHCR views the impact that an influx of people has on a host area in a very serious light and emphasises that: "*..... where the hosting environment is already under stress, as it is, for instance, in many arid regions of Africa and Asia, an influx of refugees can seriously threaten the integrity of local ecosystems and the economic activities dependent on them*" (UNHCR, 1998:6).

Akokpari (1999:88) indicates that Rwandan refugees in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo poached large numbers of animals ranging from rats to antelope. Similarly, Rwandan refugees and local people in Kagera, Tanzania poached so many animals from surrounding game reserves that wild life resources were severely depleted and it resulted in a loss of income of US\$ 100 000 per year due to a decline in tourism and private hunting ventures (UNHCR, 1998:16). An increased amount of firewood and water is also used where large numbers of people settle in an area. Harrison (1993:109) emphasises that numerous studies have indicated a strong negative relationship between deforestation and population – more people mean less forest cover. This deforestation is the result of added demand for firewood, a demand for agricultural land and an increase in the demand for living space.

Referring to the environmental impact of refugees on host environments Kibreab (1997:24) states that the responsibility to provide alternative resources for refugees rests with relief organisation. If resources are not provided the impact on the environment can be very severe, as the above examples emphasise. One of the key considerations of the UNHCR is to meet the needs of refugee populations in terms of supplying fuel, building materials and food in order to prevent environmental degradation and conflicts with local people (UNHCR, 1998:8).

However, environmental refugees cannot rely on aid from relief organisations and are, therefore, forced to rely solely on the host environment for their survival. Furthermore, since environmental refugees are not considered to be legitimate refugees, the impact that they are having on the

environment cannot be managed and controlled in the same way as with political refugees. The UNHCR attempts to prevent environmental degradation by political refugees and where situations have gotten out of hand have rectified the situation by carefully implemented environmental programmes. With environmental refugees not being the concern of the UNHCR, or other relief organisations at this stage, these organisations will not accept responsibility for looking after environments affected by environmental refugees in the same way as they look after environments impacted by political refugees. Therefore, the impact that environmental refugees will have on host environments will be more severe than the impact placed on host environments by political refugees.

3. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the possible effects that influxes of migrants have on host areas and the international community were discussed. Environmental refugees have, without doubt, a serious impact on the social, political and economic sectors of host societies and also impact the larger global society in a profound way. Due to their undocumented nature it is very difficult to determine their impact without referring to their undocumented nature. Their unrecognised status and lack of recognition prevents them from being regarded as legitimate refugees and, therefore, they essentially remain undocumented migrants at this stage, preventing an exploration of their impact outside of the context of their undocumented nature.

In the following chapter the focus will fall specifically on the problem of environmental refugees in Southern Africa.

CHAPTER 5

THE ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEE PROBLEM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent decade, numerous environmental disasters occurring in Southern Africa have emphasised the fact that forced environmental migration is a very real and serious issue in the region. Southern Africa is constantly under threat from the negative impacts brought about by droughts, floods, land degradation, deforestation and pollution, to name but a few.

The floods of February/March 2000 that hit Mozambique particularly hard, for instance, led to the displacement of large numbers of people. In the aftermath of the flood, serious food shortages occurred and are likely to continue for some time due to the ongoing impact of the floods on agriculture (BBC News, 2000). In the beginning of the 1990's a devastating and prolonged drought exacerbated already serious environmental degradation in the region and led indirectly to the displacement of large numbers of people due to the impact of the drought on the region's economy. Minnaar & Hough (1996:121) indicated that during the drought at the beginning of the 1990's, there was a sharp increase in the numbers of illegal migrants from Zimbabwe being caught by the South African police due to the worsening of the drought.

As was pointed out in previous chapters, all the environmental problems and disasters that lead to the displacement of people develop in a specific socio-economic and socio-political context¹. This is also the case in Southern Africa. Many of the serious environmental problems occurring in the region are fuelled by factors such as population pressure, poverty, corruption, resource distribution and political instability. The UNHCR states in this regard that: "*[t]here are,.... clear links between environmental degradation and refugee flows. The deterioration of the natural resource base, coupled with demographic pressure and chronic poverty, can lead to or exacerbate political, ethnic, social and economic tensions, which in turn result in conflicts that force people to flee. It is no coincidence that those parts of the continent that are most affected by soil*

¹ See, for example, chapter 3, paragraph 2-4.

erosion, drought and other environmental problems are also the main theatres of armed conflicts, recurrent famine and consequent refugee movements" (UNHCR cited in Minnaar & Hough, 1996:8).

Since environmental refugees are viewed mainly as undocumented migrants, due to the disregard showed to them in policy and categorisations, their impact must again be assessed from the perspective of their undocumented state¹. Undocumented migrants are, firstly, a serious source of conflict in Southern Africa and it is also thought that they are responsible for the worsening of a large number of social and economic problems ranging from housing problems to contributing to unemployment in host countries. It is important to assess the impact of undocumented migrants and refugees, especially on South Africa, since this country is one of the main destinations for refugees and undocumented migrants from all over Africa. South Africa is regarded as the economic giant of the region and due to the stable political situation in the country, it is assumed that South Africa will be the first choice of a host country for many migrants whether forced or voluntary migrants. The poor economic, political, social and environmental conditions in many of South Africa's neighbours, as opposed to the presumed wealth and stability of South Africa, are already forcing many people across the country's borders.

The current and potential influx of environmental refugees into South Africa holds serious implications for the country in terms of dealing effectively with the problem. The different impacts range from those on the economy in terms of unemployment and rendering of services to political impacts such as conflicts between groups and states and even further to social impacts such as the impact on health and welfare, housing and crime.

In this chapter, the focus, therefore, turns to Southern Africa. An assessment is made of the nature and extent of environmental refugee movements in the region and the impact on South Africa as a host country. When referring to Southern Africa it will mean the member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Mbendi Information for Africa, 2000:1). However, the Southern African region does not only receive environmental refugees from

¹ For a more detailed discussion on the blurred distinctions between different categories of migrants see Chapter 1, paragraph 2.2.

within the region, but also from as far as West African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana. This chapter will deal mainly with environmental refugees from the perspective of South Africa being the main receiver state of these refugees.

2. THE NATURE OF FORCED ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

Africa as a whole is one of the continents where serious environmental degradation is threatening to displace large numbers of people in the twenty-first century. What is, however, more significant than the actual environmental degradation is the fact that these environmental conditions are brought about, or exacerbated by negative social, economic and political factors at work on the continent. The social factors involved include, among others, population pressure, unsustainable agricultural practices and urbanisation. Among the most serious economic problems are poverty, corruption and unmanageable foreign debt, while the political factors include inequalities in resource distribution and political conflict. An interplay between these factors eventually leads to severely degraded environments that are unable to sustain their populations. In this section, the different socio-political and economic factors relevant to the region will be explored in order to come to terms with the issue of forced environmental migration in the region. Since the broad spectrum of factors were discussed in depth in chapter 3, here attention will only be devoted to how some of these factors feature in the Southern African context.

Firstly, attention will be given to the specific environmental factors influencing forced migration in the region. The social, political and environmental factors that exacerbate and influence these environmental conditions will be discussed when the environmental factors leading to forced migration have been dealt with.

2.1 Environmental conditions responsible for forced environmental migration in the region

In Southern Africa a number of environmental problems are especially troublesome and are likely to contribute to the generation of environmental refugees. Among these problems, droughts and water scarcity, floods and land degradation give rise to concern in terms of their potential to generate environmental refugee movements. Each of these problems will be considered separately.

2.1.1 Drought and water scarcity

Southern Africa regularly experiences severe and prolonged periods of drought. Vogel *et al.* (2000:348) indicate that since 1961 there have been nine seasons where the rainfall in South Africa has been less than 80% of the normal fall. Benson & Clay (2000:287) suggest that at least 60 % of sub-Saharan Africa is vulnerable to droughts. Droughts impact the agricultural sector first and this impact then filters through to other sectors of a society.

In sub-Saharan Africa agricultural production is unable to keep abreast of the growing population. While the population is growing at 3% per year, overall agricultural production is increasing by only 2.5% per year (Myers & Kent, 1995:69). If this is weighed up against the fact that this is also one of the driest regions in the world, with low and unstable rainfall patterns, it is doubtful whether the region will be able to supply the population with enough food. Myers & Kent (1995:69) emphasise in this regard that: "*[b]ecause of unpromising baseline conditions generally, and particularly with respect to harsh climate, together with widespread environmental degradation and poor agricultural policies, it is widely supposed that continuing adverse weather conditions could quickly trigger further onsets of broadscale famine. If these adverse conditions persist, the enfamished multitudes that totaled 30 million in 1985 could well have reached 50 million by the early 1990's and exceed 100 million by the year 2000*".

The large proportion of the population in Southern Africa making a living from subsistence farming, together with uncontrolled population growth, increase these subsistence farmers' vulnerability to drought. Many subsistence farmers are unable to sustain their growing families on their small plots of land. In an attempt to supply more food they overcultivate the land and, in the process, cause severe environmental degradation. Furthermore, many subsistence farmers, faced with decreasing yields from their plots, move their farming activities onto other available – usually marginal areas where the risk of serious environmental degradation is even more.

Under normal circumstances this situation already increases the likelihood of forced environmental migration. When a serious and prolonged drought hits these overcultivated and degraded areas, the negative impact on the environment is further increased. Pelser & Kerehloa (2000:27) state with regard to marginal lands' vulnerability to droughts that: "*[n]ewly cultivated lands [marginal lands] are at high risk in the long run for rain-fed agricultural activities – high risk as measured*

by soil fertility, reduced fallow time and their susceptibility to the adverse effects of prolonged droughts". A drought in areas where there is already severe environmental degradation can lead to such a dramatic decline in the sustainability of these areas that the risk of environmental migration is further increased.

Droughts may further worsen existing environmental degradation and social problems such as poverty, malnutrition and unemployment among people in the region. People who, as a result of population pressure and poverty, are forced to farm on marginal lands are especially vulnerable to the impacts of drought (Benson & Clay, 2000:300; Vogel *et al.*, 2000:356). These areas become degraded quickly, forcing people to migrate since they cannot any longer sustain themselves.

2.1.2 Floods

The negative impact of floods on the people in Southern Africa is illustrated by the February/March 2000 flood disaster in the region. Not only did the flood lead to loss of life, loss of infrastructure and food shortages in the short term, but it still has an impact on the region months after the flood. Many crops were damaged and some agricultural areas are still difficult to cultivate as a result of the flood. During the flood, South Africa expected an increase in refugee numbers from Mozambique and Zimbabwe because of the devastating impact of the floods (BBC News, 2000). Beneke (senior superintendent, Border Police) is of the opinion that the floods will have an effect on migration to South Africa now that the flood waters have receded enough to allow people to cross the borders to South Africa. Food shortages in the aftermath of the flood will most likely have an impact on people coming to South Africa in the near future (Personal interview: 26 September 2000).

Urban areas are especially vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters, due to the concentration of people in a relatively small area. Poor communities in urban areas are particularly at risk from disasters such as fires and floods. During the floods of February/March 2000 in the region, many poor urban settlements became disaster areas due to population density, lack of infrastructure and poor quality housing. In the Alexandra squatter settlement near Johannesburg and in Soweto, streets were so flooded they resembled rivers and large numbers of houses were swept away by the floodwaters (Batha, 2000:2).

2.1.3 Land degradation

Land degradation is defined by Harrison (1993:116) as: “..... a significant reduction in the capacity of land to support biological production”. Degradation of land assumes many forms, most notably desertification, deforestation, soil erosion, topsoil loss and salinisation. Referring to the problem of land degradation in sub-Saharan Africa, Myers & Kent (1995:68) state that: “[l]and degradation is so significant and widespread that, together with droughts, it's the prime reason why, as long ago as 1985, 30 million people faced almost constant threat of famine and starvation”.

One of the prime causes of land degradation is unsustainable agricultural practices (Yeld, 1997:48). Soil erosion, for instance, is a problem in most African countries and is the result of farmers removing vegetation in fragile areas and by farming on marginal land (Kagonge & Imvobore, 1994:3). Farmers who are responsible for land degradation often do not do so intentionally, but are compelled to use the land in an unsustainable way due to socio-economic pressures such as poverty and population growth. Land degradation is, therefore, often the result of an interplay between different social factors, most notably poverty and population growth which will be discussed in-depth later in this chapter.

As a result of population growth, more and more areas must be cultivated to supply enough food for the growing population. This pressurises people to move their farming activities into marginal areas as a result of a decrease in cultivable land. These marginal lands are areas with poor soil quality, steep slopes and areas with very low rainfall (Pelser & Khrehloa, 2000:26). In Zimbabwe large areas of communal farmland are subject to moderate to severe soil erosion because farmers continuously have to clear more marginal lands to keep up with population growth. Large parts of these marginal lands are infertile and consist of sandy soils and steep slopes that are not suitable for cultivation in the first place. The problem of land degradation is worsened by the inability of the poverty-stricken farmers to buy fertilizers and to manage the land sustainably (Zinyama, 1995:219). Agricultural practice in South Africa further highlights the issue. Approximately 85% of South Africa's surface area is utilised for agriculture and forestry. However, only 45% of the country receives the 500mm minimum annual rainfall necessary for dryland crop production, while only 12% of the country is actually suitable for agriculture. Another factor contributing to land degradation in the region is overgrazing. Areas such as the Karoo, and the Northern Province

Bushveld in South Africa are extremely degraded as a result of overgrazing (Pelser & Kherehloa, 2000:30).

Land degradation in the form of deforestation is also linked to the socio-economic factors of poverty and population growth. In South Africa people are clearing forests in their search for timber and fuel wood. Pelser & Kherehloa (2000:27) indicate that poverty is an important contributing factor to deforestation since poor people are highly dependent on firewood as the sole source of energy for cooking and heating. In Zimbabwe poverty moves people to not only take fuelwood for their own consumption, but to cut extra wood to sell to tourists in the form of firewood and wood crafts. This places an even higher demand on wood resources in the country. By clearing woodlands for fuelwood, and also for cultivation, important supplementary sources of food, such as wild fruit, berries, roots and leaves are lost as a result of deforestation. This reduces the overall food supplies and general nutrition of the population (Zinyama, 1995:220).

Land degradation often becomes so severe that it significantly decreases the overall sustainability of the areas in which it occurs. When people cannot sustain themselves any longer as a result of the impact of land degradation on food production, they are forced to locate to other areas.

2.2 Social factors

In practice, it is often difficult to separate the different social, political and economic factors, but in order to thoroughly explore the issue of environmental refugees, a theoretical distinction must be drawn between the different factors. The first social factor influencing environmental migration in Southern Africa is population pressure.

2.2.1 Population Pressure

Although Southern Africa is considered a sparsely populated region when available land is measured against the number of people, the environment is not able to sustain the number of people living here. When, for instance, Southern African countries are compared to the densities of some developed European countries, some of the latter countries are far more densely populated than the former. However, when population density is weighed up against a region's level of economic development, the levels of technology and the nature of the natural environment, it reflects the region's ability to deal with a dense population. In developed countries with stable economies, high

levels of technology and development, population density holds considerably less threat to the environmental and economic sustainability of the area. Countries such as the Netherlands, with a population density of 390 people per sq. km and Belgium with a population density of 283 people per sq. km, have the technological means to sustain these numbers of people in a small area. In comparison, Southern African countries, although not as densely populated, are victim to large-scale environmental degradation and resultant poor economic development. Table 5.1 gives an indication of the populations of the different Southern African countries measured against the amount of surface area of these countries. This table reflects the vast differences between different countries in terms of people per sq. km although these figures are not in themselves indicative of an overpopulation problem. These figures must be viewed in relation to the consumption levels, levels of technology and the affluence of the different countries to make proper conclusions regarding the carrying capacity of different countries. Population density must furthermore be seen against the backdrop of the suitability of the environment to sustain the number of people living there. Lesotho, for instance, consists mainly of mountainous areas that reduces available farmland and increasing the risk of environmental degradation in the form of soil erosion due to the relatively large number of people per sq. km.

TABLE 5.1: POPULATION SIZE AND DENSITY OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

	Population (millions) 1995	Surface area (thousands of sq. km)	People per sq. km
Angola	10.8	1247	8.66
Botswana	1.5	582	2.58
Lesotho	2.0	30	66.67
Namibia	1.5	824	1.82
Mozambique	16.2	802	20.20
South Africa	41.5	1221	33.99
Zambia	9.0	753	11.95
Zimbabwe	11.0	391	28.13

Source: World Development Report 1997

People per sq. km was calculated by the researcher.

Southern Africa's environment ranges from semi-arid to arid, with little suitable agricultural land and limited water resources. These scarcities in terms of suitable agricultural land and water already threaten the survival of people. This makes it difficult to sustain the growing number of people in the region, especially in some ecologically vulnerable areas. Furthermore, the region is prone to droughts and floods. This makes it even more difficult to sustain large numbers of people. Even the number of people living in the region now is placing pressure on the natural environment and if the current predicted population growth rates for the region materialise, the impact on the environment can only get worse. In table 5.2 population growth rates for the region are outlined. These growth rates give an indication of the potential impact that population growth will have on the future environmental sustainability of the region. If current growth rates are maintained and population projections for the next decade bare out pressure on the natural resource base could increase rapidly. Smith & Niedermeier (1996:504) state that sub-Saharan Africa had the slowest growth in food production and the fastest growing population between 1965 and 1985. They emphasise that: "*..... it is the only region in the world where food production is losing the race with population growth*". In an attempt to supply the growing population with food, pressure is placed on the environment to supply more agricultural land. Since available agricultural land is already stretched to the maximum, soil erosion, deforestation, desertification and increased vulnerability to natural disasters are the result. In the face of increasing environmental degradation, sustaining the growing population of the region is extremely difficult and the impact on the environment will be so severe that large numbers of people are likely to be forced to migrate.

TABLE 5.2: POPULATION GROWTH RATES FOR THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

	Population (millions) 1995	Annual growth rate (%)	Population projections 2010	Population projections 2025
Angola	10.8	3.1	17.2	25.5
Botswana	1.5	2.6	1.6	1.6
Lesotho	2.0	2.6	2.4	2.8
Namibia	1.5	2.6	2.5	3.7
Mozambique	16.2	2.7	25.1	33.8
South Africa	41.5	1.5	45.7	45.5
Swaziland	--	3.2	1.6	2.5
Zambia	9.0	2.1	11.5	14.1
Zimbabwe	11.0	2.7	11.9	11.3

Sources: World Development Report 1997; Population Reference Bureau, 1997.

One factor that might lead to a decline in current population growth rates is AIDS. Population growth rates with AIDS and without AIDS are given in table 5.3 since AIDS will probably have a profound effect on population numbers in future. However, although AIDS may lead to a decline in population growth, the benefits of a declining population due to AIDS cannot be weighed up against the impact that a large population infected with the HIV virus and AIDS will have on a country in terms both of loss of manpower and of an increased demand on health and welfare services¹.

¹ A more detailed discussion of the impact of an increase in AIDS-affected people on South Africa follows in paragraph 3.3.1.

**TABLE 5.3: POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR SELECTED SUB SAHARAN COUNTRIES:
WITH AND WITHOUT AIDS**

	Without AIDS			With AIDS		
	1990	2010	2025	1990	2010	2025
Burundi	5.5	10.1	15.0	5.5	9.3	13.4
Kenya	23.6	46.0	68.1	23.6	44.4	63.8
Malawi	9.6	18.3	28.8	9.6	16.5	24.9
Zambia	8.2	15.9	24.4	8.1	13.9	21.0
Zimbabwe	10.0	18.0	25.4	9.9	16.8	22.9
Dem Rep. Of Congo	37.5	73.9	117.2	37.4	68.6	104.5

Source: Fransen, 1998:7

Another serious environmental concern resulting from population pressure is the availability of water. The fresh water sources of the region are already under pressure from the increased demands of agriculture and industry. A growing population could worsen the current scarcities. Table 5.4 indicates the proportion of the population of some countries in Southern Africa that have access to safe water. From this table, it can be deduced that large numbers of people in Southern Africa do not have access to safe water. Some do not have access to water at all. It is estimated that there are already 2 billion people in the developing world who are experiencing chronic water shortages. One of the main factors responsible for these shortages is population growth and Africa is one of the regions especially at risk. Two thirds of the continent's projected population in 2025 could be at risk from water scarcities (Myers & Kent, 1995:42; Smith & Niedermeier, 1996:508).

TABLE 5.4: PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER IN SELECTED SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES (1995)

Country	Population with access (as % of country's population)
Angola	32
Botswana	70
Lesotho	57
Namibia	57
Mozambique	28
Zambia	47
Zimbabwe	74

Source: World Development Report 1997

In most of the countries in Southern Africa up to 60 % of the people do not have access to safe water. When the decline in water sources and increase in population are taken into account, water shortages will have serious implications for the sustainability of the region. Myers & Kent (1995:42) indicate that water shortages have serious implications for health, agriculture and industry. Ninety percent (90%) of diseases in developing countries are the result of a lack of clean water. Disease, in turn, increases the likelihood of environmental refugees as people migrate to escape disease-ridden areas.

Population pressure cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be viewed against the backdrop of economic development, available infrastructure, distribution of resources and political stability. The interplay between population pressure and serious environmental degradation is aptly illustrated by the environmentally degraded former homelands. The former self-governing area of Qwa Qwa's population, for example, was estimated to be 24 000 in 1970 and rose to 500 000 in the mid-1980's. The area was found to be already overcrowded during the First World War when the population was five times less than it was in 1970 (Klugman, 1991:72). Overcrowding, lack of infrastructure and poverty all contributed to the destruction of the natural environment in Qwa Qwa. Soil erosion, water shortages, deforestation and pollution, among others, were the result of the influx of large numbers of people into the area. In other former homelands such as Kangwane, Kwa'Ndebele and Transkei similar environmental destruction was found. This was attributable mainly to the influx of people into areas that could not sustain such large numbers of people.

Serious environmental destruction in a country often leads to an increase in urbanisation. While overpopulation is not the sole factor responsible for urbanisation, there is a strong correlation between the negative impacts of overpopulation and subsequent urbanisation.

2.2.2 Urbanisation

Poverty and environmental decline in rural areas are two of the factors that eventually compel people to migrate to urban areas. Influxes of people into urban areas, to the extent that the phenomenon is experienced in the developing world, exacerbate living conditions in urban areas. Table 5.5 illustrates the proportion of the population of some countries in Southern Africa that are living in urban areas and the average annual growth rate of these urban populations. While a large percentage of these growth rates can be attributed to the fact that urbanites have children, a significant percentage of urban growth, however, is still attributed to migration.

TABLE 5.5: URBAN POPULATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION AND THE AVERAGE ANNUAL URBAN GROWTH RATE IN SELECTED SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Country	Urban population as % of total population (1995)	Average annual urban growth rate (1980-1995)
Angola	32	5.9
Botswana	31	8.4
Lesotho	23	6.5
Namibia	38	6.2
Mozambique	38	8.5
South Africa	51	2.7
Zambia	45	4
Zimbabwe	32	5.7

Source: World Development Report 1997

Although increasing urbanisation is experienced across the region, Southern Africa's population remains largely rural. In most of the large urban centres in the region, difficulties are experienced in terms of supplying infrastructure, public services and employment. Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are all struggling to supply housing to the growing urban population. Smith &

Niedermeier (1996:503) state that in Zimbabwe 660 000 houses are needed to house the country's homeless, while Namibia's housing backlog in 1991 was 40 000 houses. The South African government is currently struggling to deliver the proposed one million houses it set out to build in 1994 as part of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP), although the Minister of Housing believes that the government would have reached their target by March 2000 (South Africa Survey, 1998:316). However, the 1 million houses are not sufficient to meet the actual housing demands of the current population. Botes (1999:92) is of the opinion that the current housing backlog in South Africa could grow if the government does not continue to build 200 000 houses a year. Population increases could lead to an increase in the number of people without adequate shelter.

As a result, most of the poor urban populations find themselves living in growing squatter settlements with little or no infrastructure. Currently, more than 8 million South Africans live in informal dwellings (Botes, 1999:91). People, in an attempt to obtain shelter, often turn to the natural environment and construct shelters using natural resources such as wood which leads to a decline in these resources. Furthermore, the fact that these people are without shelter also supposes that they do not have access to services such as running tap water, sewerage systems and electricity which further heightens their impact on the environment. These people, due to their poor economic position, also place an added burden on the environment by cutting down trees for firewood and overexploiting water sources thereby contributing to the likelihood of environmental refugee movements.

2.3 Economic factors

Two economic processes are at work in developing regions. Firstly, macro-economic social processes that are fuelled by debt servicing, corruption, and mismanagement of funds and secondly, economic processes at the ground-level, fuelled by the poverty of local populations which forces them to degrade their environments.

Most countries in Southern Africa have loans from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund or from developed countries. The foreign debt load of the different countries in Southern Africa is outlined in table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6: TOTAL EXTERNAL DEBT AND EXTERNAL DEBT AS A PROPORTION OF THE GNP OF SELECTED SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

	Total external debt (million USD) (1995)	External debt as percentage of GNP (1995)
Angola	11 482	274.9
Botswana	699	16.3
Lesotho	659	44.6
Mozambique	5781	443.6
Zambia	6853	191.3
Zimbabwe	4885	78.9

Source: World Development Report 1997

Southern Africa is carrying a large and unmanageable foreign debt load. Since large amounts of these countries' budgets are allocated to servicing these debts, less money is available for other vitally important expenditure such as creating and maintaining sustainable environments. South Africa, for instance, allocated 39.6 million rand for debt servicing in the 1997/98 budget and this comprised 20.8% of the total government expenditure. The total allocated expenditure for social services – housing, education, health and social security – were 88.6 million rand in total and this comprised 46% of the total government expenditure (South Africa Survey, 1998:431). When comparing the budget allocations for debt servicing and social expenditure it is clear that debt servicing takes up a disproportionate amount of the national budget in South Africa. The purpose of loans to developing countries is to aid in much needed development. Unfortunately, most developing countries are trapped in a debt cycle as a result that does not benefit development at all.

Large sums of foreign money and local revenue are mismanaged, again taking money away from the local communities where it is needed. In a recent incident, the European Community gave R100 million for economic upliftment in the Free State Province. Until May 2000, only R2 million of this money had been used for upliftment projects. Reasons given for the provincial government's lack of action ranged from bureaucratic red tape, a lack of appropriate project proposals and the provincial government's financial crisis (Smith, 2000:3). Opposition parties are criticising the provincial government's lack of action, emphasising that local communities are disadvantaged by this delay of action. Mismanagement of development funds such as these could have a serious

impact on the overall development of communities. This could result in worsening the socio-economic situation of many communities. When they cannot rely on outside help in the form of development funding, they are often plunged further into poverty, most often with a resultant negative impact on the natural environment.

Poverty among a country's population is a crucial factor in environmental degradation, while degraded environments at the same time lead to more poverty. Poor subsistence farming communities contribute to environmental degradation due to the fact that they often have to sustain large families on small plots of land, and, as a result, often do not have money to employ sustainable agricultural practices. In the case of the urban poor, they have to rely heavily on the natural environment for their survival in terms of their need for shelter, energy and food. Harrison (1993:133) cites the case of Lesotho where poverty has forced people to take more from the environment than is sustainable. He sums up the results of poverty in Lesotho as follows: "*Lesotho is a marginal area peopled by marginal people..... [It]almost totally bare of trees. All dung is burned as fuel.Nothing of what is taken out of the land is returned to it*". One of the main reasons for environmental degradation in Lesotho is the general poverty of the country, especially of the rural subsistence farmers.

In war-torn countries such as Angola and Mozambique, large sums of money were also spent on military expenses, to the detriment both of the countries' people and of the natural environment. In Angola the national budget allocation for social service fell from 31% in 1992 to 12% in 1996, while the share allocated to defense and public order reached a high of 48% in 1993. The government reduced the defense budget to 19% in 1996, but hid their actual expenses on the military by increasing their non-classified expense budget from 1% in 1995 to 32% in 1996 (Munslow, 1999:554).

2.4 Political factors

Political factors play a significant role in bringing about environmental destruction in Southern Africa. The political conflicts of the 1980's of Mozambique and Angola are cases in point. Furthermore, the distribution of resources such as water and land has also played a role in bringing about environmental destruction, especially in South Africa. The influence of political conflicts and

resource distribution on environmental degradation will now be considered in the Southern African context.

2.4.1 Political conflicts

In the recent conflicts in the region, environmentally destructive practices were employed on a regular basis by opposing forces. The environmental destruction caused during these conflicts was, however; not limited to the duration of the conflicts. Years after the initial destruction, the impact on the environment is still severe. Landmines used in the Angolan civil war and the Mozambican civil war still have an impact on the sustainability of these environments. As a result of the conflict in Mozambique the two opposing forces - Frelimo and Renamo - planted landmines all over the country, and on their borders with Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe to prevent rebel attacks from across these borders. In return, the Zimbabwean government planted landmines on its border with Mozambique to protect itself from attacks (Meldrum, 1994:56). It is estimated that in 1994 at least seven towns in Angola were completely surrounded by landmines - the reasons for this being: "*.... to prevent crops being cultivated and to stop scavengers going out for food*" (Baynham, 1994:26). Landmines are considered to be the: "*..... most serious obstacle to the resettlement of Mozambique and to restarting rural agriculture, the country's main economic activity*" (Meldrum, 1994:56).

More recently, landmines also became a threat to South Africa. During the January to March 2000 floods in the region, the Limpopo river flooded and unearthed a number of landmines on the Zimbabwean side of the South Africa/ Zimbabwe border. It was feared that these landmines might cause losses among cattle in the region and also make farming and ranching on the South African side a dangerous activity.

2.4.2 The politics of resource distribution

As was explained earlier, some environmental degradation is the result of an initial unequal distribution of natural resources. This is the case both between countries and also between different groups in a specific country. South Africa is a case in point.

As a result of South Africa's colonial heritage and former Apartheid policies, South Africa developed a distinct disparity between different racial groups in terms of access to wealth and

resources. South Africa is commonly referred to as having a developed and a developing component, divided in terms of race. The developed component of the South African society is characterised by industrialisation, apparent wealth, overconsumption by a small number of consumers and environmental problems such as pollution. The developing sector is characterised by rural subsistence lifestyles, overpopulation and poverty, with resultant environmental problems such as soil erosion, and loss of vegetation and wildlife (Yeld, 1997:15).

During the Apartheid years different ethnic groups were placed in homelands according to their ethnic background. Most of the homeland areas had inadequate water supply and not enough arable land and grazing fields for cattle in proportion to the number of people who settled there. The former homelands were in a disadvantaged position in terms of infrastructure and adequate resources. Apart from this, the sheer numbers of people forced to relocate to the homelands made these areas severely overpopulated, in terms both of people and of livestock. Consequently, the natural environment in the homelands suffered severely and this reduced the sustainability of these areas (Cock, 1991:2; Klugman, 1991:72; Yeld 1997:15). The unequal distribution of resources in South Africa has resulted in some areas becoming severely degraded and thus unable further to support their inhabitants.

3. THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Since environmental refugees are not categorised as such, their impact in Southern Africa will be explored from the context of their undocumented nature. Environmental refugees are, however, not solely responsible for the impacts discussed below. Other categories of refugees and undocumented migrants also contribute to social, political and economic problems in host countries. Yet, the focus will fall here on environmental refugees within the context of their undocumented nature.

South Africa, due to its relatively stable political and economic condition, is one of the main receiver states of unwanted migration in the region. Vorster emphasises that: "*..... we [South Africa] are the receiver state in Africa. Our neighbours are to a great extent countries of origin*"¹ (Personal interview: 1 February 2000). The researcher does not want to suggest that other

¹The original interview was conducted in Afrikaans.

countries in the region do not have a problem with undocumented migration. However, due to the fact that South Africa is regarded as one of the favourable destinations for migrants from the region, this section will concentrate on the South African situation when the likely impact of environmental refugees is explored. Firstly, the political impact will be discussed.

3.1 The political impact of environmental refugees

From a political perspective, undocumented migrants have the potential to generate a wide range of conflicts due to their presence in host nations. Furthermore, the fact that a country has a problem with undocumented migration has implications for security and border protection by the host state. Conflicts generated by undocumented migrants include conflicts between different ethnic groups at the ground level, conflicts between host populations and host governments and conflicts between sender and receiver states. In the case of Southern Africa, there are no definite conflict situations as a result of migration flows. However, as will be explained, many current tensions over undocumented migration exist at all levels and when projections of environmental refugee movements materialise, these existing tensions could be the beginning of serious conflicts between the parties involved. Since these different types of conflict were dealt with extensively in chapter 3, attention will only be devoted to how these conflicts transpire in the South African situation.

3.1.1 Conflicts between groups

At the ground-level, antagonism is often displayed by host populations confronted with undocumented migrants. Undocumented migrants are often treated with antagonism by host populations since they are viewed as a threat to the natural resources, to employment opportunities and to the availability of health and welfare sources in the area. Although there is a distinct difference between undocumented economic migrants and environmental refugees based on their reasons for migration, host populations seldom consider this difference. Minnaar & Hough (1996:18) emphasise that: “[f]or many South Africans, the distinction between refugees and illegal aliens is immaterial, since foreigners are often perceived to be taking away houses and jobs while bringing crime and drugs to the country”. In one incident spurred by antagonism towards foreigners, residents of the Alexandra township in Johannesburg attempted to forcefully

evict residents whom they thought were illegal immigrants. Roggerson (1997:266) cites: “..... in the ensuing wave of xenophobia [following the attack], armed groups evicted migrants from their homes and threatened to burn their possessions”. It did not make any difference to the local people whether these migrants had relevant claims for being in South Africa or not.

Existing scarcities of land and water might lead to more pronounced antagonisms against undocumented migrants, since local people are unlikely to share these scarce resources easily with other groups. Conflicts over these resources might become a real possibility in future. Water, for instance, is one of the resources in the region that is under pressure from an increased demand. If current predictions of water scarcity become a reality, more conflicts over this resource will result.

3.1.2 Conflicts between local populations and the host government

In South Africa, many citizens feel that undocumented migrants are the source of our economic and social problems and would like to see the government deal more sternly with them. Isserow *et al.* (1998:9) point out that in a study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the number of people in South Africa who thought the government should take stronger action against undocumented migrants rose from 56% in 1994 to 72% in 1995. Strong anti-foreigner sentiments like this could influence local people to direct their anger towards the host government in an attempt to protect themselves from the threat of unwanted migrants. In South Africa, the undocumented migrant issue is often raised by different political interest groups to gain support from people. According to Minnaar & Hough (1996:184), the Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP) was one of the first parties who, after the 1994 elections, publicly opposed the presence of illegal migrants in the country. The IFP called on the Government of National Unity to take stricter action against people who do not belong here.

The use of the undocumented migrant issue for own political gain is displayed in the varying estimates of the number of illegal migrants in the country. Estimates range from 2 million to as high as 8 million (Bernstein *et al.*, 1999:199). These estimates either play up or play down the number of alleged undocumented migrants, depending on what purpose the interest group wants to achieve with this. Crush (1996:13) emphasises that: “[w]ithin South Africa, immigration discussions seem obsessed with the question of determining how many undocumented migrants are in the country. The danger is that, in the absence of reliable statistics, officials,

politicians and members of the general public feel free to invoke whatever figure they like to whip up anti-immigrant sentiment”.

3.1.3 Conflicts between sender and receiver states

Lastly, conflicts or tensions between states in the region might also ensue in the face of the undocumented migrant problem. South Africa is in a particularly vulnerable situation because of the support neighbouring countries have given their exiles during the struggle against Apartheid. Vorster emphasises that: “..... *there is always some sort of a feeling between us and other African countries about the whole [undocumented migrant] issue. Sometimes even an [antagonism]..... Our neighbouring states always have something to say about the way in which we handle their people and send them back*”.¹ He further states that neighbouring states often use South Africa’s ‘moral responsibility’ towards them as an excuse not to receive their people back. South Africa’s neighbours often perceive the migration of their citizens as a relief and as Vorster explains, they often fail to identify their citizens in the hope that they can keep some people from returning to the sender state and adding to their burden. This is a potential source of tension and conflict between South Africa and its neighbouring states (Personal interview: 1 February 2000).

3.2 Economic impact

For most people at the ground level the most serious threat presented by undocumented migrants is an economic threat. Host populations realise that their income, job opportunities and livelihood can be compromised by influxes of people. Although these concerns are often blown out of proportion by political interest groups, influxes of people do nevertheless have a decided impact on employment opportunities and wages in the host country. A broader impact on the economic viability of areas is also experienced due to the added pressure placed on resources. Undocumented migrants furthermore add to the burden on health and welfare services, challenge a country’s ability to supply infrastructure and increase the need for both border protection and management of the problem.

¹ Original interview conducted in Afrikaans

3.2.1 The impact of undocumented migrants on employment

At the ground-level, many local inhabitants feel threatened by undocumented migrants because they are perceived to take their jobs and push wages down. Many migrants coming in from across our borders are being employed in different sectors. Farmers in the Northern Province are regularly accused of employing undocumented migrants instead of local people due to the fact that the migrants are not unionised and are prepared to work for lower wages than local people. Minnaar & Hough (1996:195) point out that on some farms in the Messina area undocumented migrants worked for between R1,20 and R4,00 a day, while local people were not prepared to work for less than R5,00 a day. Locals could not compete with the undocumented migrants in terms of wages, emphasising the fact that these migrants have an impact on the employment of local people. In another incident, SACCAWU union organisers found that a restaurant in Hillbrow had actually fired South Africans to employ undocumented migrants because the latter were prepared to work only for tips. Another area where South Africans' employment opportunities are threatened is in the hawking industry. Many undocumented migrants establish themselves as hawkers and South Africans feel that they undermine prices and therefore impact on the money earned by South African hawkers. These strong feelings among local hawkers have resulted in hawkers attacking immigrant traders in the Johannesburg city centre at random, regardless of whether they are legal migrants or not (Reitzes, 1994:7; Roggerson, 1997:266).

Undocumented migrants also place added pressure on host areas due to an increase in population. Increased farming and cattle rearing in rural areas could, over a period of time, lead to a decline in the overall productivity of the region. This was the case in areas such as Kangwane where overcrowding and increased agriculture, due to the influx of Mozambican refugees during the 1980's, into an already impoverished area, led to severe environmental degradation and an eventual decline in agricultural productivity (Solomon, 1993:17).

3.2.2 The impact of undocumented migrants on services and infrastructure

The increased demand placed on the host country in terms of providing health and welfare services, housing and infrastructure is in most cases a financial burden to host countries. Reitzes (1994:7) indicates that in 1994, R210 million would have been spent on providing health care, housing, education and policing for illegal Mozambicans. Many Mozambicans, although classified as

undocumented immigrants, can in fact be viewed as environmental refugees due to the environmental destruction caused by the war which makes their country uninhabitable (Klotz, 1997:43). Furthermore, South Africa is at present spending large amounts of time and money in an attempt to control the problem of unwanted migration. It is estimated that the repatriation of undocumented migrants is costing South Africa approximately 120 million rand (Carim, 1995:221). Manser, of the Department of Home Affairs, mentions that the costs of holding an undocumented migrant in custody is estimated at approximately R22 per day, while it costs around R25 to send an undocumented migrant back to Zimbabwe and Mozambique by train (Personal interview: 27 September 2000). The number of undocumented migrants being repatriated yearly from South Africa is in the region of 180 000. Table 5.7 gives the number of repatriations from South Africa for the last ten years.

TABLE 5.7: REPATRIATION OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA 1990 – 1999

Year	Number of repatriations
1990	53 418
1991	61 345
1992	82 575
1993	96 600
1994	90 692
1995	157 084
1996	180 714
1997	176 351
1998	181 286
1999	183 861

Sources: Department of Home Affairs in Bernstein *et al.* (1999:194); South Africa Survey (1998:111); South Africa Survey (2000:24) and statistics supplied by the Department of Home Affairs, 1 February 2000.

Most of these repatriations are to neighbouring states, with most coming from Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. If the cost of finding and repatriating undocumented migrants is weighed up against the increasing numbers of undocumented migrants repatriated yearly, the burden to the South African economy becomes clear. To make matters worse, many of these repatriated migrants return as soon as possible, since they perceive their chances of survival in

their home country as slim. Beneke points out that some of the undocumented migrants are arrested numerous times by the police in their attempts to cross the borders but in spite of this they always return to South Africa as soon as they can. He states that: *"..... you do not know how many times you repatriate an illegal migrant because you repatriate him today and he is back tomorrow and is arrested again..... It happens on a regular basis that somebody is arrested three, four, five, six times. He keeps coming and if he wants to come through [the border] he will"*¹ (Personal interview: 26 September 2000). This applies especially to Mozambicans who, due to a combination of economic instability and environmental degradation caused by the civil war, are unable to sustain themselves in their home country.

Increasing environmental degradation, poverty and political instability across the African continent force many from other African nations to find refuge in South Africa. However, as Vorster points out: *"..... you have to be humane on the one hand, but on the other hand one must also be practical and realistic. Funding is at this stage a limitation our economy must remain as strong as possible, otherwise we cannot make a difference to the rest of Africa If we do not do something [about the illegal alien problem] we will reduce our country to a [lower] level and then people will have nowhere to go"*² (Personal interview: 1 February 2000). In this regard, it makes sense not to open its borders indiscriminately to unwanted migrants. However, many undocumented migrants who add to the financial burden of border protection, policing and repatriation could be dealt with differently due to the fact that they are not economic migrants but refugees and must therefore be dealt with from a completely different viewpoint.

3.3 Social impact

Influxes of people impact the host society at the social level in a number of ways. Problems experienced with health and welfare, housing, crime and general social decay are among the most serious. In the case of South Africa, the presence of Mozambican refugees was interpreted by some observers to be an important factor that hampered the successful implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (Carim, 1995:221). The RDP aimed at improving the general quality of life of South Africans by putting necessary infrastructure in place, providing

¹ Original interview conducted in Afrikaans

² Original interview conducted in Afrikaans

housing and general social services. Since many undocumented migrants also benefited from the advantages of the programme, available funds had to be divided among more recipients than was originally planned for. However, this does not imply that the presence of Mozambican refugees was the sole contributor to the demise of the RDP. Each social aspect will now be discussed.

3.3.1 Health and welfare

Undocumented migrants might contribute to health and welfare problems in the host country by bringing diseases into the country and by overburdening health services by their presence.

One issue that illustrates the impact of migration on the health of the country's population is AIDS. It is estimated that 63% of all persons with AIDS are living in Sub-Saharan Africa, while, AIDS is increasing alarmingly in most of the SADC countries (Fransen, 1998:3). AIDS has a severe socio-economic impact, since most of the people affected with AIDS are those in their productive years who should contribute to the economy, and those who are responsible for child rearing (Myers & Kent, 1995:71). When more people are infected with the disease, the impact on the economy is great, due to a loss of productive manpower and an increased demand on health care services. Welfare services are also affected due to a rise in the number of dependent people, most notably children left orphaned and people who become unemployed and dependent on welfare services.

Since more and more people are infected daily, it is likely that large numbers of infected people will find their way into South Africa through migration. Table 5.8 outlines the number of AIDS cases for selected countries compared with the size of the populations. The increase of the disease through migration adds to the burden on health services already overburdened by the existing AIDS cases in the country. Furthermore, it is not only the spread of AIDS that raises concern, but also the spread of secondary diseases AIDS victims are affected with, such as tuberculosis. An increase in the numbers of people affected with diseases requiring extensive and long-term treatment, such as tuberculosis, will further affect the provision of health services in the country.

TABLE 5.8: REPORTED AIDS CASES COMPARED WITH POPULATION SIZE

	Reported AIDS cases	AIDS per 10 000 of the population	Population size (million)
Angola	*895	0.78	11
Botswana	**3451	22.75	1
Lesotho	*936	4.53	2
Malawi	*44 775	42.56	10
Mozambique	*3118	1.74	17
Namibia	***5101	33.08	1
South Africa	**10 351	2.49	41
Swaziland	**590	5.23	1
Zambia	*34 000	35.52	9
Zimbabwe	*54 744	46.23	11

Source: Loewensen & Whiteside, 1998:16

* Last report of AIDS cases in these countries 1996; **Last report on AIDS cases in these countries 1995; *** Last report on AIDS cases in these countries 1993

Other diseases entering the country through migration that are a serious threat to the health and welfare of the population include diseases such as yellow fever, cholera and malaria. Increased numbers of forced migrants may spread infectious diseases more rapidly, due to an increase in the number of infected people. This could have a detrimental effect on the general health of the population and also increase the burden of the country to treat these diseases.

3.3.2 Housing

As many as 80 percent of illegal aliens in South Africa are estimated to live in informal squatter settlements. Funds provided to upgrade the housing of South Africans in these informal housing areas are inevitably also distributed to undocumented migrants (Schutte, 1993:9). Minnaar & Hough (1996:207) indicate in this regard that: "... the influx of illegal aliens into squatter settlements has [had] a serious negative impact on the RDP in terms of the provisions of additional land and housing". It is especially in urban areas where housing presents a problem.

According to Selabe (1997:8), where Mozambican migrants have settled in rural areas they were able to build their own houses by making a living from herding livestock, farming, selling vegetables and working in the building industry. In large urban centres, undocumented migrants tend to settle in run-down areas and squatter settlements. Vorster (Personal interview: 1 February 2000) mentioned that some squatter areas are, for instance, comprised solely of Zimbabweans, while Hillbrow houses mostly Nigerians and other West Africans. Some areas in Johannesburg, such as Joubert Park and Hillbrow, have definite pockets of migrants from a specific country. Sometimes a whole block of flats is occupied by one nationality. An inner city housing specialist suggested that the undocumented nature of many of these inhabitants prevent them from complaining about high rent and the degraded state of some of the flats in Johannesburg's inner city. This housing specialist was concerned that this could hamper the regeneration of run down urban slum areas. The presence of undocumented migrants in inner city accommodation effectively contributed to the decay of the inner city areas (Minnaar & Hough, 1996:203).

3.3.3 Crime

Undocumented migrants are often linked to crime. Undocumented migrants not only get involved in crime to sustain themselves financially in the host country, but also use illegal measures to help them to gain access to the country. Swartz is of the opinion that most of the people that come to South Africa want to better their situation and do not have crime as their main objective. However, many of the undocumented migrants who settle here use hawking and their small businesses as a front for illegal trade in, for instance, drugs (Personal interview: 1 February 2000). It appears that many of these undocumented migrants get involved in crime after they have settled in the country. Table 5.9 outlines the general crimes undocumented migrants from different countries are arrested for in South Africa.

TABLE 5.9: UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS INVOLVED IN CRIMES

Nationality	Crime
Nigerians	Drug-trafficking and money laundering
Nationals of the DRC	Diamond smuggling
Taiwanese/ Chinese	Smuggling of abalone and crayfish
Thai/ Russian	Prostitution
Angolans	Smuggling of fire arms
Zimbabweans	Vehicle theft and game poaching
Mozambicans	Smuggling of fire arms, car theft and game poaching

Source: Adapted from Van Niekerk (1995:7)

There are also instances where undocumented migrants were caught because they were involved in robberies and it later transpired that they were also hawkers. Beneke (Personal interview: 26 September 2000) mentions that most of the people caught with stolen vehicles at the Kosi Bay border post are undocumented migrants. Many Mozambicans have been involved in serious crimes and are, among other crimes, linked to the sale of firearms (Schutte, 1993:9). Beneke states that Mozambicans frequently exchange firearms for food, clothes and money because they have to obtain money from somewhere to sustain themselves in the country (Personal interview: 26 September 2000).

4. CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of environmental refugees is a reality in Southern Africa. Important social, economic and political factors contribute to the degradation of natural environments in the region and force many people to flee to other regions and neighbouring states. South Africa is one of the countries in the region that attracts many of these forced migrants because of its neighbours' inability to deal with the environmental degradation in their own countries. The fact that South Africa is an important receiver state necessarily holds serious implications for the economic and political stability of the country as well as impacting on the social conditions in the country. This category of forced migrants is, however, not acknowledged as legitimate refugees. The lack of recognition does not mean that they do not exist. It has been shown throughout this chapter that environmental refugees do cross South Africa's borders. They are, however, currently treated as

undocumented migrants. Ignoring their status only raises the number of undocumented migrants in the country and burdens the system with unnecessarily high numbers of undocumented migrants.

South Africa's status as a preferred host country holds serious implications for the structuring of an appropriate policy framework to deal adequately with the challenges posed by migration to the country. This issue, as well as the international refugee policy framework, will be dealt with in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

THE CURRENT REFUGEE POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

All refugee issues are governed by an international refugee regime revolving around the United Nations conventions on the protection and treatment of refugees. These are the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol. In Africa, refugee issues are also governed by a regional convention, namely the OAU Convention on Refugees in Africa, 1969. These conventions protect refugees by placing certain legal and moral obligations on individual countries in terms of the treatment of refugees (Shurke & Zolberg, 1999:143). Although the international conventions form the backbone of refugee treatment, they are at present completely outdated and wholly inadequate to deal effectively with refugee problems in the current socio-political climate. There are mainly three reasons why the current conventions are ineffective and will become even more so in the near future.

Firstly, although refugee protection is based mainly on the above-mentioned international statutes, not all countries are signatories to these conventions. Generally, all countries are subject to international refugee law which places limited obligations on all countries in terms of refugee protection, but only countries that are signatories to the international conventions can be held accountable to fulfil their obligations in terms of these conventions. Shurke & Zolberg (1999:143) state in this regard that the only obligation that international refugee law places on countries is that the countries are not allowed to return a refugee to a country where he is likely to be persecuted (the *non-refoulement* principle). This means that all countries must ensure that a refugee ends up in a country of asylum, not necessarily the first receiver country. Countries who are signatories to the international conventions have the added obligation of providing asylum and of establishing procedures to determine the legitimacy of asylum claims. Since not all countries can be held accountable towards refugees in terms of international conventions, protecting refugees is not always possible.

Secondly, many countries who are signatories to the international conventions and who are faced with refugee flows interpret the conventions in ways to protect their own interests instead of those

of the refugees. Since the protection of refugees is based, in principle, on the international refugee regime set out in the conventions, it flows from this that individual countries' policy will be guided and impacted by the principles set out in these conventions. However, although the international conventions place certain legal and moral obligations on countries, many countries choose to interpret these conventions to their own benefit. The issues of temporary asylum and the *non-refoulement* principle are cases in point. Both these obligations are currently interpreted to protect host countries instead of refugees (Chowdbury, 1995:103; Marx, 1995:390). Both these issues will be discussed in depth further on, therefore, only a brief explanation will be given here. *Non-refoulement* refers to the obligation of host countries not to return refugees to a situation where their lives will be in danger, while temporary asylum refers to the fact that most host countries prefer to provide asylum only for a limited time and do not see asylum as a permanent arrangement.

While these shortcomings cause numerous problems and influence the international conventions' ability to live up to their intentions in terms of the protection of refugees, there is another, crucial shortcoming that has the greatest significance for the protection of environmental refugees. The most important deficiency in the current international conventions is the exclusion of all other categories of forced migrants, except political refugees. When the 1951 Convention was formulated, political issues were the most influential in generating refugees. In the last twenty years there were considerable changes in the conditions under which people become refugees. Currently international conventions are geared solely towards providing assistance and protection to people fleeing political persecution, while many refugees - or forced migrants - are generated by environmental, economic and social factors. Referring specifically to the exclusion of environmental refugees in policy-making, Hugo (1996:111) emphasises that: "*..... researchers and policymakers have neglected the significance (both in numerical terms and human suffering terms) of environmentally forced migrations*".

The aim of this chapter is, therefore, firstly, to outline the necessity for changes to current international statutes in order to allow for the incorporation of other categories of forced migrants into the current international refugee policy framework. Furthermore, insight must be obtained into the options that are available to policy-makers and people concerned with decision-making regarding new categories of refugees, such as environmental refugees. Policy decisions such as the

granting of asylum, when and how to repatriate and resettle refugees, therefore, need to be seen in the context of new refugee trends. Before these options can be discussed, it is imperative that the current international statutes and policy frameworks concerning refugees be taken into consideration. After these policy frameworks have been outlined, an assessment can be made as to where the shortcomings lie and how to deal with them. Furthermore, when policy decisions are made, certain key issues have to be dealt with that are complicating the inclusion of environmental refugees in current international conventions and also in local policy frameworks. This must be done specifically with the aim of suggesting possible solutions to the inclusion of environmental refugees in the current refugee regime. Lastly, the policy framework in South Africa needs to receive attention in order to assess their ability to deal successfully with new and emerging forced migration issues, such as environmental refugees. Firstly an overview of current policy frameworks will be given.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

The problem of refugees is essentially a problem with international consequences and can, therefore, not be dealt with by individual countries alone. Throughout history the issue of refugees has been one of the negative spin-offs of political conflict, and more recently of environmental degradation. Before the twentieth century these refugee problems were generally localised and confined to civil and political conflicts in specific areas. With the two world wars the situation changed dramatically and refugee movements suddenly spanned the whole European continent. Early in the 1920's the first international statutes relating to the categorisation of refugees were adopted (Blavo, 1999:13). Only after World War II did the United Nations, as the international community's executive vehicle, formally adopt a Convention to protect the interests of people uprooted as a result of the war, namely the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

At the same time, the UNHCR was established as the principle United Nations agency for dealing with the refugee problems of that time. Shurke & Zolberg (1999:146) point out that the UNHCR from its inception in 1950, had a mandate to act globally, although it initially only aided refugees displaced as a result of World War II. Wood & Potts (1998:255) emphasise that when the UNHCR was formed, it was envisioned to be a temporary arrangement to aid people displaced during World

War II. It became involved in global refugee problems only in the late 1950's, after the adoption of the 1951 Convention. The expansion of the UNHCR's responsibilities and the adoption of the 1951 Convention led to the development of: "..... *an international refugee regime [that] developed a differentiated capacity to respond to refugee problems on a global scale*" (Shurke & Zolberg, 1999:145).

Since the 1951 Convention applied only to people uprooted before 1951, it was confined to conflicts occurring in Europe. Large numbers of people displaced after this time, and in other parts of the globe, did not benefit from this Convention. These shortcomings were dealt with in the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. The Protocol emphasises that the changes in this statute were brought about by the changes in refugee situations that led to some refugees falling beyond the scope of the 1951 Convention (Blavo, 1999:112). There is a time-span of sixteen years between the first Conventions and the 1967 Protocol, which indicates that the United Nations acknowledged a change in refugee problems during this time period.

Aside from the two above-mentioned international conventions, there are also regional instruments to deal with specific refugee problems that arise in certain regions. The two most significant regional instruments are the Organisation for African Unity's Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969 and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. The first relates to refugee problems in Africa and the latter deals with refugees in Latin America (Chowdbury, 1995:101; Shurke & Zolberg 1999:145). Both these instruments are less restrictive than the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which again indicates an acknowledgement of the changes in refugee issues since the 1951 Convention. The OAU Convention, for instance, allows for the inclusion of refugees fleeing general political persecution and public disorder, but generally still excludes people displaced as a result of environmental degradation.

For the purposes of this discussion, attention will specifically be devoted to the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the OAU Convention since these instruments guide refugee policy in a significant way. Emphasis will be placed on the way in which these statutes define refugees and the most important principles outlined in them concerning the treatment of refugees.

2.1 The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol

One of the most important contributions of international conventions, such as the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, is that it provides an internationally accepted conceptualisation of the term *refugee*, explicitly outlines the conditions under which a person becomes a refugee and ensures a distinction between refugees and other categories of migrants (Hough, 1995:2). The proper conceptualisation of what constitutes a refugee is integral to establishing the mandate of the UNHCR and also for host governments, since it provides them with specific criteria for providing assistance to legitimate refugees. In personal interviews with the Department of Home Affairs and the UNHCR, both have indicated that they use the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol as the final authority in determining refugee status and for rendering assistance to legitimate refugees. Bart Leerschool, a protection officer at the UNHCR, referring to the status of environmental refugees stated that: *"[i]ndeed it is not contained as a qualified ground for refugee status as for the criteria incorporated with the 51 UN Convention....so indeed by the letter of the law - the international instrument - these people are not normally covered by the international conventions.....The system is not geared towards migrants [that] do not qualify as refugees according to the international refugee convention"* (Personal interview: 4 February 2000). His sentiments were echoed by Willem Vorster, deputy director Alien Control at the Department of Home Affairs. He states that: *"..... when we speak about refugees, we think of people who are covered by the 28 July 1951 Convention on refugees..."*¹ (Personal interview: 1 February 2000)

The 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees firstly defines a refugee as any person who was recognised as a refugee under previous arrangements, namely conventions ranging from 1926 to 1939 and the Constitution of the International Refugee Organisation. Furthermore, a refugee is defined specifically as any person who:

As a result of events occurring before 1st January 1951 and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former

¹ Original interview conducted in Afrikaans

habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to return to it (Blavo, 1999:94; Lawson, 1991:295).

The 1967 Protocol amended the 1951 Convention by omitting the words “*as a result of events occurring before 1951*”, to also include other refugees displaced after this period, but maintained the conditions for determining refugee status as in the 1951 Convention. While there is only a slight difference between the two conventions, it is significant that the United Nations acknowledged a change in the nature of refugee problems between 1951 and 1967. Both these conventions were influential in the sense that they established an important foundation for establishing the status of refugees and laid the foundation for the humane treatment of refugees.

The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol established two important principles in refugee protection. Firstly, that people have a right to asylum in the face of political, ethnic, religious or social persecution and, secondly, these conventions established the *non-refoulement* principle. Each of these principles will be discussed briefly.

2.1.1 The principle of the right to asylum

Chowdbury (1995:102) emphasises the right to asylum accorded by these Conventions is the: “..... *pith and substance of international protection to victims of persecution and violence*”. Significantly, according to these conventions the right to asylum was not envisioned to be a temporary measure, but it was accepted that refugees must be integrated into the country of first asylum, or resettled in another country (Chowdbury, 1995:103). The 1951 Convention establishes the obligation of host countries to provide long-term asylum as follows in article 34 of the Convention:

“The contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees” (Blavo, 1999:106; Lawson, 1991:298).

After the Second World War and during the Cold War, individual countries were quite prepared to align their refugee policies with the obligations set out in the international conventions. Most countries readily accepted refugees from the Second World War and those fleeing oppressive socialist regimes during the Cold War, on a long-term basis. It was only during the late 1970’s and especially after the end of the Cold War that countries adopted a more restrictive stance towards

refugees (Shurke & Zolberg, 1999:144). Chowdbury (1995:103) attributes the change of attitude to the *depoliticization* of refugee issues after the end of the Cold War. The depoliticisation of refugee issues entails that after the end of the Cold War, refugee movements became less political in nature. Continuous social, economic and environmental problems in developing countries have precipitated large population movements not attributable to the political climate induced by the Cold War. Significantly, although refugee problems have become more permanent, most countries no longer interpret their responsibility to provide asylum as a permanent arrangement. Most countries will provide asylum for only a limited time and will place an emphasis on repatriation as "*the preferred durable solution*" (Keely, 1996:1058).

The reasons for host countries' reluctance to provide long term assistance are mostly financial and political. Increases in the number of refugees have placed large financial burdens on host countries and have raised serious political concerns. The UNCHR acknowledges that host governments often no longer adhere to this article in the 1951 Convention literally and it ascribes this to a number of reasons. Firstly, not all host countries who are signatories to the 1951 Convention are signatories to other instrumental UN conventions, such as the Conventions on Civil Rights and the Convention on Socio-economic Rights and are therefore not compelled to ensure these rights to refugees. This is so mainly because many host countries in the developing world are unable to provide socio-economic rights such as the right to employment. Leerschool states in this regard that: "*[w]here people are gaining access to the country and where the UNHCR has all the access to protect them and assist them.... The government cannot really afford to grant them the social rights to enable them to be totally integrated in society... There local integration is obviously not an objective to pursue*" (Personal interview: 4 February 2000).

Secondly, many developing countries are forced to accept international aid to cope with the financial burden of large numbers of refugees (Jacobsen, 1996:663). Thus, they are often at the mercy of international aid organisations and developed countries that might force them to accept crucial changes to their refugee policies. These therefore interfere in the local political situation. By limiting refugee inflows, host countries can keep other countries and international organisations out of their domestic affairs. Furthermore, the UNHCR are also increasingly being subjected to the political agendas of donor states. Many donor states earmark their contributions to the UNHCR for

specific problems only, preventing them from distributing donor money where the need is most dire (Leerschool, Personal interview: 4 February 2000).

2.1.2 The principle of non-refoulement

The second obligation of importance that the international conventions place on individual countries is the principle of *non-refoulement*. This obligation is set out as follows in article 33 of the 1951 Convention:

“No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Blavo, 1999:106; Lawson, 1991:298).

This principle protects refugees from being expelled from a country of refuge when it is no longer convenient for the host country to provide protection. Marx (1995:386) emphasises that the principle of *non-refoulement* is an: “..... *essential component of States' human rights obligations*” and it is accepted in the 1951 Convention that states must adhere to this principle. However, as Leerschool points out, the principle of *non-refoulement* is just one of the many principles of international refugee law that is not explicitly outlined in the conventions. Yet it is: “..... *a principle of international law which governments are expected to adhere to, also those who have not signed the 1951 Convention*” (Personal interview: 4 February 2000).

In recent years individual countries have increasingly found ways to evade their responsibility to refugees in this regard. The United States, for instance, deemed this obligation only to apply to refugees who are already inside their borders and thus they attempted to repatriate Haitian refugees before they set foot on United States soil. In this way, they maintained they were not violating the *non-refoulement* principle, since the refugees were not technically inside their territory (Marx, 1995:391).

Most countries that ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol maintain that they will fulfil their obligations towards refugees and in principle accept the obligations placed on them by the international conventions. In principle, most countries do fulfil their obligations towards refugees, but will understandably not do so at all costs. Many individual countries do, as a means

of protecting themselves, interpret these conventions to suit their situation. Unfortunately, the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol are arbitrary and lend themselves to varying interpretation.

While the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol explicitly place certain obligations on states to assist refugees, these conventions are increasingly being questioned by individual countries, not directly, but by the way in which the responsibilities and obligations are interpreted. For individual states the obligations placed on them by these conventions are becoming difficult to fulfil. Furthermore, the fact that refugee issues have changed considerably since the last changes to the international statutes in 1967 increases the likelihood that countries might find ways to evade their responsibility. Most countries readily accept political refugees, but will be very strict in their application of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol. The current conceptualisation of refugees in these international instruments makes it possible for countries not to provide assistance to forced migrants, those covered by the conventions, but also those not covered under the conventions. As a case in point, the 1951 convention stipulates that refugees should not be penalised for entering a host country illegally and for not declaring their need for asylum at the border. However, most countries will treat all people entering the country illegally as illegal immigrants, unless they can prove otherwise (Leerschool, personal interview: 4 February 2000). In many cases refugees' rights are violated by this and, in essence, the host country does not properly adhere to the convention in this regard.

Before attending specifically to the implications of current international conventions on policy in the current socio-political and socio-economic climate, attention must be devoted to the OAU conventions on refugees.

2.2 The Organisation of African Unity Convention on Refugees

For states in Africa, another important convention guides refugee policy, namely the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969. Only states that are part of the OAU can become signatories to this convention, thereby limiting the obligations set out therein to African countries (Blavo, 1999:122). This convention replaces neither the 1951 Convention nor the 1967 Protocol, but merely attempts to deal more specifically with refugee issues in Africa. The preamble to the OAU convention states in this regard:

“recognising that the United Nations Convention . . . , as modified by the Protocol of . . . 1967, constitutes the basic and universal instrument relating to the status of refugees and reflects the deep concern of States for refugees and their desire to establish common standards of their treatment” (Blavo, 1999:117; Lawson, 1991:20).

One of the most important additions to this convention is the fact that it considerably broadens the definition of what constitutes a refugee. The OAU convention defines a refugee firstly as set out in the 1951 Convention, but adds the following:

“The term ‘refugee’ shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality” (Blavo, 1999:118; Lawson, 1991:20).

A broader definition does, however, place added responsibilities on individual countries to provide asylum to people who would otherwise not have been eligible for assistance. Not all countries in Africa that are part of the OAU are signatories to the OAU Convention and therefore, although added demands are placed on countries by the Convention, not all countries are affected by this Convention. In 1987, for instance, only 34 African nations were signatories to this Convention. Today 55 countries are member states of the OAU. The Convention also makes the provision that a country can, at any time, choose to withdraw from it (as set out in article XIII of the Convention) and only adhere to the obligations set out in the 1951 Convention (Blavo, 1999:123). It is therefore very difficult to hold countries accountable for refugees in terms of this convention

It is clear that although there are currently international conventions guiding the treatment of refugees, much debate is going on as to the ways in which individual countries choose to interpret these Conventions. As a result, refugee policy in individual countries is riddled with problems. Shurke & Zolberg (1999:153) point out the three most pressing issues in formulating refugee policy, namely, the issue of asylum, the relationship between national refugee policy and regional and international co-operation, as well as the relationship between refugee policy and foreign policy. Refugee issues are already proving to be extremely problematic to many nations without even considering other categories of refugees.

The next subsection will deal specifically with the influence of international and regional conventions on policy decisions that countries make regarding refugees.

3. POLICY DECISIONS IN TERMS OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

Shurke & Zolberg (1999:145) point out that the statutory definition of a *refugee* has widened over time. A generally less restrictive view of what constitutes refugee migration has, however, not influenced countries to be less restrictive in their refugee policies. According to Kibreab (1997:21), the fact that more and more categories of refugees are demanding assistance has led to a hardened attitude amongst policy-makers concerning assistance to refugees. Since it is their obligation in terms of international refugee law to offer some assistance to refugees, countries have to make certain policy decisions concerning the conceptualisation of refugees, the right to asylum, and resettlement and repatriation strategies, among others. All these decisions will be influenced by the way in which individual countries interpret their obligations in terms of the international refugee regime. This aspect is also emphasised by Shurke & Zolberg (1999:144) who state that countries have to develop a refugee policy that marries their international obligations with strategies to reduce large refugee flows.

The UNHCR's role in this regard is very important. They have to ensure that countries formulate their policies in accordance with international instruments and that refugees' rights are protected in terms both of individual countries' policies and of international regulations. Leerschool indicates that: "[t]he UNHCR is basically co-operating with governments to set up structures..... provide training to government officials in refugee law....." but maintains that "..... the UNHCR does not have [a] direct say in the state legal process" (Personal interview: 4 February 2000). In other words, although the UNCHR fulfils a consultative and administrative role, the way in which host governments actually apply their refugee policies is still mostly the prerogative of the host government.

While the international conventions certainly influence policy to a large extent, financial and political considerations play an important role in the way that countries will interpret their obligations towards refugees. Therefore, countries faced with large refugee flows, such as South Africa, attempt to control the problem by either following a restrictive policy to prevent people

from gaining access, or attempt to absorb a certain number of refugees, or lastly, attempt to develop intervention and prevention strategies towards countries generating large refugee flows (Weiner & Munz, 1997:26). Since most receiving countries do not want to lose face in the international community they will follow a middle-of-the-road approach in their refugee policies (Jacobsen, 1996:658). Very few countries are entirely restrictive, or entirely generous in their approach towards refugees. This means that their refugee policies will be characterised by both positive responses towards refugees, such as the right to asylum, coupled with some restrictive elements, such as a screening process for potential asylum seekers. Some of these decisions will now be discussed.

3.1 Policy options regarding asylum

Policy decisions regarding asylum will form the backbone of a country's refugee policy. It will, for instance, determine whether asylum will be granted only temporarily, or if refugees have a chance of becoming permanent residents and, lastly, whether refugees will be granted freedom of movement or be put up in refugee settlements.

As was pointed out earlier, the 1951 Convention saw the right to asylum as allowing refugees to settle on a relatively permanent basis in their host countries and becoming assimilated into the general population. Currently, the right to asylum is viewed by most countries as a temporary arrangement. According to Weiner & Munz (1997:35), most industrial countries see asylum as allowing refugees temporary residence in the host country and, after this period has expired, repatriating them to their country of origin, or resettling them in a third country. This does not mean, however, that host governments will generally be open to receiving refugees, even on a temporary basis. Host countries tend to respond very differently to influxes of refugees.

Jacobsen (1996:655) states that while some governments welcome refugees and provide them with protection and assistance, other governments have tried to prevent refugees from entering and have treated them harshly. South Africa has, for instance, for many years denied the right of asylum to Mozambican refugees and has treated them as illegal migrants. It was only in 1993 that Mozambicans could formally apply for asylum and receive international aid given to refugees (Klotz, 1997:43). After a period of relative generosity towards Mozambican refugees, the South

African government withdrew this right again as of 1 January 1997 based on the end of the civil war in Mozambique.

While the right to asylum is seen as a basic human right, most countries do not indiscriminately apply this in their migration policies (Marx, 1995:387). Chowdbury (1995:102) remarks in this regard that: "..... *the institution [of asylum] itself is passing through a critical phase because of, firstly abusive recourse to it by economic migrants and secondly, the difficulty faced by the host countries in absorbing the huge influx of refugees in recent years*". This is echoed by Leerschool who states that misuse of the asylum system: "..... *challenges the credibility of the whole asylum system and has a detrimental effect on the status of general asylum seekers and refugees*" (Personal interview: 4 February 2000). Most countries have, in order to protect themselves from large influxes of refugees, developed a process through which a person can apply for the status of a refugee. Definite conditions under which a person can claim this right are usually set out in a country's refugee policy. It would be unfair to expect any country to allow influxes of people without a screening process. However, the process through which a person must go in order to obtain refugee status is, in many cases, designed to deter migrants from seeking refuge in a specific country, which defeats the whole purpose of the international right to asylum.

3.2 Repatriation in policy decisions

Since most countries currently interpret the right to asylum as a temporary arrangement, alternative arrangements have to be made for refugees who are within their borders after the desired period has elapsed. Repatriation is currently the "*preferred durable solution*" and is regarded as more desirable than settlement in the country of first asylum or resettlement in a third country (Keely, 1996:1058; Zeager & Bascom, 1996:460). Repatriation entails, briefly, that refugees be returned to their country of origin and settled there once the situation has stabilised enough to allow for migrants to return. Jacobsen (1996:658) points out that there are some difficulties in respect of the implementation of a repatriation policy. Among others it can again set in motion the factors that led to the refugee movement in the first place and it is often difficult to determine when the situation has stabilised to such an extent as to allow refugees to be sent home.

The UNHCR plays a particularly instrumental role in repatriation operations. Their aim with any repatriation programme is to ensure that people who are repatriated can return in safety and

dignity. With a repatriation programme the UNHCR will, for a period of six months, cater to the needs of the people being repatriated and they will do so in conjunction with other UN agencies such as the UNDEP. In spite of these efforts, repatriation is not always successful. In one case, the UNHCR have repatriated some 1200 refugees living in Botswana back to their home region in the Caprivi Strip. However, due to the political instability in this region since the beginning of this year (2000), many of these people are again crossing the border to Botswana. This has seriously hampered the repatriation programme for this region since the UNHCR envisioned to repatriate 2500 refugees in 1999, but have only succeeded in repatriating 1200 until now (Leerschool, personal interview: 4 February 2000).

It is furthermore assumed that repatriation should be a voluntary action undertaken by refugees wanting to return home and should be according to UNHCR guidelines. Repatriation is, however, not always voluntary in practice. In some cases, host countries set deadlines for people to return home once they feel that they have fulfilled their obligations towards the refugees. In December 1996, 450 000 Rwandan refugees returned home from refugee camps in Tanzania in the face of such a deadline (Parfit, 1998:10). South Africa set a similar deadline for the repatriation of Mozambican refugees. At the end of 1996 the government lifted the refugee status of Mozambican refugees only three years after it was granted, thus forcing them to be repatriated or to become illegal aliens in the country (Klotz, 1997:43; Ryan Sinclair, 1996:15). Repatriation should ideally be a controlled movement of people aided by reintegration assistance and return incentives from Non-governmental organisations from the UNHCR and from host governments. According to Jacobsen (1996:658), it is, in the end, the host government's decision when and how strongly to encourage refugees to return home. Refugees must, however, never be forced to return. In Africa, many people are forced to return home without the necessary assistance and without any guarantee of their safety.

3.3 Resettlement in a third country as a policy decision

Third country resettlement entails that refugees be transferred to another safe country instead of being repatriated to their home country. In some instances, host governments have resettled refugees in a third country after a period of asylum has elapsed, but in other instances host governments use this policy option to prevent refugees from gaining access to a host country. Resettlement in a third country usually takes place after an agreement was reached between the

country of first asylum and the third country and is a way in which a host government can alleviate some of the pressures placed on them by a large influx of refugees. However, resettlement again places a burden on the third country that may, perhaps also not be able to deal with the influx of people. This might in the long run and in an unforeseen way seriously affect the relationship between the two countries.

Host countries can also refuse asylum to refugees, but in order not to violate the *non-refoulement* principle, immediately place them under the care of a third country. Marx (1995:392) indicates that European states have attempted to shift their responsibility for providing asylum to neighbouring countries although there is no basis for this in international refugee law. These countries have argued that the *non-refoulement* principle only prevents them from sending refugees back to the sending country, but allows them to find refuge for them in another country. Countries such as Germany and the United States have signed agreements with neighbouring states in this regard. Germany has such agreements with Poland and the Czech Republic in the light of the large number of asylum applicants to Germany from Eastern European countries (Weiner & Munz, 1997:40).

Where third country resettlement agreements are reached in accordance with international refugee law, and is not applied forcibly to refugees, it is a viable option for countries dealing with unmanageable refugee influxes. Care should, however, be taken not to violate the international refugee conventions and that such decisions do not negatively affect relationships between neighbouring states.

The UNHCR views resettlement as a viable option in cases where the threats that have forced refugees to leave their home countries are also present in the host country and where there is a lack of legal protection for refugees in a host country. In special cases such as in the case of family reunification, single mothers with children, handicapped refugees and refugees with serious medical conditions resettlement is also promoted by the UNHCR (Leerschool, personal interview: 4 February 2000; UNHCR, 1997). The UNHCR would prefer that resettlements be conducted with their input and not only as part of an agreement between two countries.

3.4 Policy decisions regarding the treatment and rights of refugees

Host governments' responsibility in protecting refugees extends far wider than providing initial asylum. Once they accept refugees into the country, there is also a legal and moral responsibility placed on them to ensure the protection of basic human and civil rights. This responsibility is laid down in the international conventions. Specific human rights that are applicable to refugees, as encapsulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, include the right to asylum, the right to freedom and dignity, and the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Added to these basic rights are certain civil and socio-economic rights such as the right to earn a living, rights pertaining to the freedom of movement, property rights and the right to normal life activities (Chowdbury, 1995; Keely, 1996:1061; Leerschool, personal interview: 4 February 2000).

Host governments, therefore, have to structure refugee policies with these rights in mind. Due to a number of factors, however, many host governments are unable or unwilling to provide the protection of refugees' basic human rights. Many host governments' inability to provide these rights stem from political reasons, but also from financial concerns. Giving refugees the right to freedom of movement, for instance, might ignite conflicts between refugees and local people and, therefore, a government might decide to limit their right to the freedom of movement, since it is in the best interest of peace and stability in the country. Providing refugees with rights to property ownership and employment opportunities might be equally troublesome, especially where host countries have limited resources available and high unemployment rates.

The United Nations have a number of conventions dealing with the protection of some of these rights, such as the Convention on Civil Rights and the Convention on Socio-economic Rights, but, as was pointed out earlier, not all countries have signed these conventions and can, therefore, not be held accountable to uphold the rights set out in these conventions. Furthermore, as Leerschool points out, although some countries have signed these conventions, many of these countries are unable to guarantee these rights in practice, due to the factors mentioned above (Personal interview: 4 February 2000).

The UNHCR is one of the key players in protecting the rights of refugees. According to Keely (1996:1061): "*..... a fundamental mandate of High Commissioners for Refugees, has been to*

provide state-like protection to refugees who are outside their country and unable or unwilling to seek their state's protection". To exercise their mandate in protecting refugees, the UNHCR, however, has to rely on individual states to recognise this mandate. The UNHCR acts as a watchdog to ensure that certain rights of refugees are not violated. They are aided in this by other humanitarian organisations such as the Organisation for the Protection of Human Rights and NGO's working with refugees. Where they feel that a refugee's, or group of refugees' rights have been violated, they can follow the situation up with the government to ensure the protection of the refugees' rights. Where their efforts fail, one option is to attempt resettlement of the refugees in question to a safe third country (Leerschool, personal interview: 4 February 2000).

In the following section, international conventions and policy decisions will be analysed in terms of their applicability to the environmental refugee problem.

4. AN ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND POLICIES REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES

The conventions outlined above have laid down important principles regarding the treatment and protection of refugees. These conventions are, however, inadequate to deal successfully with the new forced migration trends of the twenty-first century. All of these conventions were structured at a time when political circumstances were generating large numbers of refugees and were sufficient to provide protection to forced migrants. Since the last changes to the 1951 Conventions, in the 1967 Protocol, major changes in the socio-political climate of the world have taken place. These changes, namely worldwide environmental degradation and socio-economic deterioration in the developing world now place new demands on the international community in terms of refugees. Since this study concerns itself specifically with environmental refugees, the focus will fall on the exclusion of this category of forced migrants in the international refugee regime, although the researcher acknowledges that there are other categories of forced migrants that are also excluded from international conventions.

A number of issues have to be dealt with in order to analyse the incorporation of environmental refugees within the current refugee regime. Firstly, because of the current international conventions, certain ideas surrounding the nature of forced migration and the criteria for

determining refugee status have become entrenched in the minds of people dealing with the issue of forced migration. Flowing from these existing paradigms, problems arise concerning the interpretation of refugee situations and views on the necessity to deal with the problem of environmental refugees. Other problems complicating policy decisions regarding environmental refugees are issues relating to permanency, the absorption capacity of host countries and the impact of policy decisions on international relations.

4.1 Existing paradigms concerning refugees

The way in which refugees are perceived by international organisations and local governments has a direct impact on organisations' and governments' willingness to incorporate other categories of forced migrants into policy decisions. Current conceptualisations and categorisations of refugees have established the notion that refugee movements are always political in nature. This is evident in the commonly accepted definition of the 1951 UN Convention that defines refugees in terms of political conditions only. While a proper categorisation and conceptualisation of what constitutes refugees is extremely important in terms of identifying people in need of assistance, the current conceptualisations exclude large numbers of people from receiving much needed aid from international institutions and local host governments. Swain (1996:964) emphasises that the: "*..... legal limitation to the term 'refugee' makes it inadequate for absorbing types of forced migration other than those stemming from persecution*". To change these existing paradigms concerning the nature of refugees is at present problematic, both for the UNHCR and host governments, since it would entail making profound changes to their statutes and policies. These changes can be likened to the changes proposed by environmental sociologists, Catton & Dunlap from a dominantly western worldview to a new ecological paradigm as was discussed in Chapter Two. Both are equally difficult since it requires a long-term change to long-established ideas.

Among the most important changes is, firstly, an acknowledgement of the existence of environmental refugees as a legitimate category of refugees who, as a result of their destitute and life-threatening situation, are in need of humanitarian assistance. It is imperative that changes in conceptualisation take place at the international level, since it is these instruments that have the most influence on individual countries to restructure their policies and outlooks. Regional instruments, such as the OAU convention, have attempted to broaden the conceptualisation of the

term refugee, but it is arguable whether the broadened conceptualisation is honoured in practice by member states.

Secondly, a clear conceptualisation is needed of the term environmental refugee to guide policy decisions regarding this category of forced migrants. Numerous authors have already pointed out that there is a definite lack of conceptual clarity concerning environmental refugees (Hugo, 1996; Kibreab, 1997; Richmond, 1994). As a guideline, when categorising a person as an environmental refugee, there must be a strong indication that his migration was in fact a forced and not a voluntary action (Swain, 1996:965). Therefore, an international guideline as to what constitutes forced environmental migration, and what does not, needs to be established. For instance, a person forced to migrate due to environmental factors will be one whose sustainability is severely compromised by continuing to live in a specific area. This would include people fleeing natural disasters, people whose water sources have been entirely depleted and people who cannot make a living due to factors such as desertification.

4.2 The issue of permanency

For the most part, providing asylum is currently accepted by host governments to be a temporary arrangement. Host governments, sending states and refugees accept that the right to asylum in a host country will be retracted once the political situation in the sending country has sufficiently stabilised. Although temporary asylum can entail any period from a few weeks to as much as thirty, forty years, it is still regarded as a temporary arrangement and repatriation will be the preferred end result of any political refugee situation.

However, in the case of environmental refugees, two problems regarding temporary asylum arise. Firstly, environmental refugees complicate policy decisions since this type of migrant will be a more permanent asylum seeker. Where political conflicts usually end after a certain time allowing for repatriation and resettlement to commence, environmental degradation is usually of a long-term nature with no foreseeable return for migrants envisioned. Arms (1994:155) emphasises that: "*..... most of these people can never return to their homes because the carrying capacity of the land will take hundreds of years to recover – if it ever does*". This will make receiving governments extremely wary of allowing environmental refugees into a country in the first place. However,

providing asylum to people is any host country's humanitarian obligation and host countries will therefore have to incorporate environmental refugees into their policy decisions.

Secondly, with political problems it is fairly easy to determine the onset of the situation that has led to the refugee situation and it is therefore possible to limit the number of asylum seekers to those fleeing the country after the political situation has reached a life-threatening stage. With environmental factors leading to forced migration a specific event has not always triggered the refugee movement. In many instances, the environmental situation has deteriorated over a long time and therefore, establishing a specific period for the generation of these refugees is not possible.

4.3 The absorption capacity of the host country

Host countries' willingness and ability to accommodate refugees are central to their policy decisions regarding forced migration. Jacobsen (1996:667) indicates that factors such as land availability, employment opportunities and infrastructure will determine whether a host country will be able to deal with refugee flows and will affect their policy decisions regarding refugees.

For developing countries that are in future going to be influenced by large numbers of environmental refugees, their absorption capacity will affect their tolerance towards more categories of forced migrants. In turn, policy decisions regarding environmental refugees will be influenced by the host country's ability to absorb these migrants in their country. It is not expected that host countries in the developing world will be able to accept the numbers of environmental refugees expected to need assistance in future due to the economic and demographic problems that they are likely to experience.

4.4 The impact of policy decisions on international relations

Individual countries are, for numerous reasons, and not all of them humanitarian, quite prepared to fulfil their obligations towards refugees. For some countries fulfilling their international obligations in this regard helps them to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of their neighbours, while others do so out of a sense of obligation to certain sectors of their population (Shurke & Zolberg, 1999:144). After the Second World War, for instance, the United States government welcomed Jewish refugees from Europe to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the large Jewish American population.

South Africa also eagerly accepted refugees from Mozambique in order to strengthen ties with the Mozambican government, but also because Mozambique harboured political activists during the struggle against Apartheid. However, most countries are not prepared to fulfil their obligations towards refugees at all costs. Meissner (1992:68) states that refugee migration challenges governments to protect their sovereignty because they fear a loss of control over who enters the country. Currently, many countries faced with large refugee flows will rather aim to prevent refugee migration than to allow more refugees in (Weiner & Munz, 1997:26).

In view of the current large numbers of forced migrants seeking refuge in countries where the conditions are perceived to be better, the fears of individual countries are understandable. These fears do not leave much room for the inclusion of yet another category of forced migrants seeking refuge. As Kibreab (1997:21) points out, the notion of environmental refugees as a separate category of forced migration is giving governments an excuse to evade their responsibilities towards all other involuntary migrants except political refugees.

In order to deal successfully with environmental refugees it is imperative that current policy frameworks be taken under consideration and be radically reworked to accommodate other categories of forced migrants, not only environmental refugees. The researcher by no means suggests that policy to deal reactively with the refugee problem resulting from environmental degradation is the only option. As the UNHCR points out, environmental refugees do need assistance but they do not necessarily require the same assistance as political refugees (Hough, 1995:4).

5. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXISTING POLICY FRAMEWORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African context it is important to briefly refer to the historical origins of the country's current migration policy framework and specifically its previous policies regarding undocumented migration and refugees.

5.1 An historical overview of South Africa's migration policy framework

During the years of Apartheid, South Africa's migration policy framework was built mainly around the Nationalist Government's aim of increasing the white population of the country, while keeping all *undesirable* ethnic groups out. According to Ryan Sinclair (1996:15), official policy during this time was based: "..... on a racially biased ethic of differential welcome. Prospective European migrants were evaluated on a consistently more favourable level by officialdom than were their African counterparts". The first official Aliens Act, passed in 1937, for instance, had as its goal the prevention of migration from German Jews escaping Nazi persecution. Later amendments to this Act increasingly tightened controls, increased police powers and extended the range of people whom the South African government wanted to keep out of the country (Crush, 1996:13).

From 1991 onward, South Africa dealt with migration issues primarily within the context of the Alien Control Act, 96 of 1991. The aim of the Act was to control migration through an immigration system and various permits such as work, study and visiting permits. Another function of the Act was the control of undocumented migration in the country (Bernstein *et al.*, 1999:188). Due to the problems experienced with the influx of undocumented migrants into the country and the inability of the Act to control unwanted migration effectively, this Act was amended by the Aliens Control Amendment Act, 76 of 1995 (Minnaar & Hough, 1996:26). The Amendment Act increased the state's capacity to curb the undocumented migration problem. As Bernstein *et al.* (1999:190) point out: ".... the Aliens Control Act was amended in 1995 in order to tighten controls over entry and broaden the scope of sanctions on offenders". Therefore, South Africa's migration policy framework has until now focused mainly on the prevention of undesirable migration.

Furthermore, before 1998 South Africa had no refugee legislation and, therefore, had no legal framework to deal with refugees and asylum seekers. In the absence of any refugee act, the South African government did not give any rights to refugees availing themselves of the protection of the country, specifically Mozambicans fleeing the civil war there. Only in 1993 did South Africa reach an agreement with the UNHCR to provide refugee status to Mozambican refugees, thereby changing their status from illegal migrants to refugees. This meant that these refugees could obtain

the aid and rights normally accorded to refugees under international law (Klotz, 1997:43; Minnaar & Hough, 1996:20). In 1996, South Africa ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, thereby adhering to international protocol governing the rights of and obligations towards refugees. During 1994, South Africa began with the process of formulating a Refugee Act in order to deal sufficiently with present and future refugee flows.

This past policy framework for dealing with migration has been accused of being inadequate in dealing with the migration issues of the Southern African region, of being incoherent, of lacking direction and of promoting racism (Bernstein *et al.*, 1999:196; Crush, 1996:12). Currently, South Africa is attempting to rectify the problem of an inadequate migration policy framework. Two important advances have been made concerning South Africa's migration policy framework. South Africa's new emerging policy framework will now be evaluated within the context of these advances.

5.2 South Africa's newly emerging policy framework

South Africa's new policy framework is built mainly on the newly drafted Refugees Act of 1998 and the proposed International Migration Act.

5.2.1 The Refugees Act of 1998

In 1998 the Refugees Act was accepted and deals with the rights and obligations of refugees and the process of asylum (South Africa Survey, 2000:4). With the acceptance of the Refugee Act of 1998, South Africa institutionalised its adherence to the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the OAU Convention on Refugees. Leerschool (Personal interview: 4 February 2000) emphasises the importance of this Act in terms of its ability to assist asylum seekers and refugees as follows: *"South Africa is a country that has developed an asylum system..... It [the Refugees Act] has not been implemented yet, but the act has been in circulation since 1998. At least there is a legal framework in place to deal with asylum cases in the countries, unlike some other countries who basically do not accept any asylum applications"*. The fact that South Africa has put a policy in place to deal with the refugee issue is crucial in terms of actual refugee numbers. Leerschool estimates that for the whole Southern African region there have been approximately 80 000 asylum applicants since 1994, of which 59 500 have applied for asylum in South Africa. The

large number of asylum seekers in South Africa is indicative of the country's importance in the region in terms of its perceived ability to absorb refugees.

The Refugees Act fulfils an important role in protecting the rights of refugees and putting a system in place to deal with refugees. However, this Act acknowledges only political factors as being legitimate reasons for refugee migration. The Act takes the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, as well as the OAU Convention, as its main points of departure in determining refugee status. It outlines the country's position concerning the conceptualisation of the term refugee as follows:

"The UN definition should be understood to include any person genuinely at risk of serious human rights violations in his or her country of origin, who both needs and deserves protection. There must be a heightened risk to human rights on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group... It must moreover be determined that the government in the country of origin either cannot or will not effectively counter the risk to fundamental human rights, in consequence of which there is a need for surrogate protection in South Africa." (Refugee White Paper, 1998:8).

Concerning South Africa's adherence to the OAU definition, the Refugee White Paper (1998:8) outlines the government's position as follows:

"This should be interpreted to include those who have come to South Africa because their lives, safety or freedom are threatened by external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, generalised violence, internal conflict, massive violation of human rights, or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order either in part or the whole of their country of origin."

This means that only people fleeing political persecution are accepted as legitimate refugees into the country. Environmental factors leading to forced migration are not taken into consideration when asylum applications are being considered in the country. Ryan Sinclair (1996:15), referring to the Working Draft of the Refugee Act of 1994, found the emphasis of the Act on political causes

of refugee flows, while ignoring factors such as environmental degradation and economic disaster as causes of refugee flows, as a weakness of South Africa's proposed refugee legislation. Despite recent evidence confirming the importance of acknowledging causes of forced migration, other than political factors, the emphasis on political factors has unfortunately remained in the new Refugee Act.

5.2.2 The proposed International Migration Act

Environmental refugees will therefore still be treated as undocumented migrants in South Africa. This will entail that they will currently be dealt with according to the Aliens Control Act and later within the framework of the proposed Act on International Migration. The White Paper on International Migration is currently in circulation and emphasises the importance of keeping people from poverty-stricken countries and countries in social and political turmoil out. The White Paper outlines the country's position in this regard as follows:

" Persistent economic disparity, poverty and political and social turmoil are likely to continue to force or induce people to migrate from the rest of the continent towards Southern Africa..... This White Paper has accepted the hard fact of the matter: an immigration system for South Africa cannot rely heavily on effective border control. Under the present circumstances people will continue to take enormous risks and endure personal anguish to enter South Africa illegally because of the attraction of 'pull' factors. Therefore, policy emphasis should be given to reducing the 'pull' factors which make South Africa attractive to them (White Paper on International Migration, 1999:23,24).

The White Paper on International Migration shows a disregard for the impact of environmental factors in influencing migration, although it acknowledges the presence of poverty, economic disparity and social conditions as important influences on undocumented migration to South Africa. While it is not expected of the International Migration Policy to deal specifically with the issue of forced migration, since this is the concern of the Refugees Act, the current White Paper does highlight how South Africa views its role in terms of accepting migrants from other countries, specifically its neighbours. The White Paper emphasises that South Africa does not see itself in a position to deal with migrants in another way as in terms of the existing distinctions between legal

migrants, illegal migrants and refugees and are therefore not prepared to accept reasons for undocumented migration other than the fact that such migration is caused by economic *push* factors in the country of origin.

Since South Africa has only recently begun to change its migration policy framework actively, it was in the ideal position to formulate a creative policy framework that would have dealt successfully with the migration issues of the region. However, South Africa chose to follow the generally accepted guidelines in formulating its new migration policies. The Refugees Act is still strictly in accordance with the international conventions regarding refugees, without attempting to address other forced migration issues such as environmental refugees. This is understandable in the sense that South Africa must adhere to international conventions in order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. More importantly, however, South Africa cannot deal with the challenges of forced environmental migration in the region on its own due to economic constraints and the negative political and social impact that this would have on the country. The most important paradigm shift, therefore, still needs to be made at the international level with individual countries following changes in the international guidelines.

6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter an overview was given of current international conventions and local policy options were given. An assessment of their applicability to environmental refugees was also made and some problems regarding changes to international conventions and local policy were addressed. As was pointed out in previous chapters, environmental factors are becoming increasingly significant in generating forced migrants. Current and predicted numbers indicate that forced environmental migration is set to far surpass political refugee migration in future. The sheer magnitude of the problem warrants considerable changes in policy and international conventions. Increases in the number of forced environmental migrants will place severe strain on host countries and international institutions. If these refugees are not dealt with effectively in terms of policy and international convention, several negative consequences will arise.

None of the above conventions acknowledges that environmental factors constitute grounds for people becoming refugees. However, it is evident from recent developments in migration trends that other categories of forced migrants are becoming increasingly significant. Firstly, and most

importantly, many people who should receive assistance will not be eligible for any assistance if current conceptualisations are persisted with. The fact that people are not eligible for assistance will, however, not deter them from migrating. This will leave international institutions and individual countries with large numbers of people who cannot be dealt with efficiently in current policy frameworks. For most countries, the only appropriate way to deal with migrants of this type is to send them back as they are thought to put strain on the political, social and economic environment in the host country. However, since environmental refugees are not voluntary illegal migrants, this mode of treatment is not only cruel, but also ineffective. Therefore, there is a need to consider different options in dealing with environmental refugees within refugee policy framework.

South Africa is in the unique position that it is currently in the process of reformulating its past migration policies to bring itself in line with its new democratic outlook, giving policy-makers the opportunity to formulate policies reflecting the migration issues and needs posed to South Africa by the region. However, current advances in policy formulation have not risen to the challenge of successfully dealing with South Africa's migration problems. The current Refugees Act and the proposed International Migration Act both stuck to existing and accepted ways to deal with migration. Forced environmental migration, although gaining more recognition in migration literature and being a serious migration issue in the region, is not dealt with adequately in the new migration policy framework. The current lack of recognition could seriously impact South Africa in future as the environmental and economic situation in its neighbouring states deteriorates. If environmental refugees were incorporated into policy now such inclusion could lessen the problems likely to be experienced with this category of migrants in future. At present and in the foreseeable future, however, there is little hope that environmental refugees will gain legitimate status as refugees in the country.

THE WAY FORWARD

In this study, attention was devoted to the issue of environmental refugees. In conclusion, it is necessary to reflect on what can be done now, and in the future, in terms of addressing the problem of environmental refugees. In order to deal effectively with the growing problem of environmental refugees, particularly in the Southern African region, some critical issues will need to be addressed. Possible strategies for dealing with the most important issues surrounding environmental refugee movements are discussed here. These strategies are based on the most important conclusions drawn from this study. It must be pointed out that the different strategies form part of a comprehensive policy guideline for dealing with environmental refugees and the different strategies discussed below must, therefore, not be seen in isolation, but must be viewed as an integrated whole. These strategies range from general, global actions to more specific and localised actions. Each strategy will now be discussed separately.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY 1:

Gathering detailed and accurate information on environmental refugees

In order to deal effectively with the problem of environmental refugees, it is essential that detailed and accurate information be obtained. It is especially important in terms of making the right policy decisions that these decisions reflect the real situation and are not based on unfounded assumptions. Some aspects that need to be addressed are more accurate estimates on the actual number of environmental refugees; more detailed analysis of the likely flows of environmental refugee movements, and specifically from where they originate and where are they migrating to; and a better understanding of the driving forces behind environmental refugee movements. Ryan Synclair (1996:4), referring to the need for accurate migration data states that: "*..... migration data remains central to the final resolution of the issue. To proceed with any chance of developing a fair and effective migration policy, it is imperative that migration data be pursued and that pains be taken to validate and qualify whatever information is forthcoming*". Gathering of accurate information need to be pursued at a global, a regional and a local level.

One factor that will seriously strain efforts to collect reliable and accurate data on environmental refugees is the fact that they are not recognised as a legitimate category of refugees. In this regard Vlachos (1996:129) state that: “[t]here are obviously great difficulties in obtaining exact estimates, not only because of the remoteness of many regions and the haphazard data collection techniques, but more because of the difficulty of interpreting the term ‘refugee’....”. Following from this another area of concern would be the need for international recognition of environmental refugees as a legitimate category of forced migration.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY 2:

The need for international recognition of the problem of environmental refugees

Environmental refugees cannot any longer be ignored and marginalised in the international political arena. Myers & Kent (1995:154) emphasise that: “[w]e cannot continue to ignore environmental refugees simply because there is no established mode of dealing with the problem they represent”. In terms of recognition, it is a matter of urgency to accept a workable and internationally accepted definition of environmental refugees. To come to a generally accepted definition, two paths can be taken. Firstly, environmental refugees could be conceptualised and defined as a separate category of forced migration that would distinguish this type of forced migrant from political refugees. Another option would be to broaden the current conceptualisations of what constitutes a refugee to encompass all people forced to flee their home countries, not only as a result of specific environmental and political factors. In this regard, Myers (1997:176) feels that we: “..... need to expand our approach to refugees in general in order to encompass environmental refugees in particular”. The need for an expanded approach to the conceptualisation of forced migration flows from the fact that environmental refugee movements are often only the end result of the deeper social, political and economic dynamics in a sender country.

A step in the right direction would be a long overdue change to the current Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol to include environmental refugees as a legitimate category of refugees in need of and deserving the assistance of the international community and host countries. Most host countries negate responsibility to environmental refugees by falling back on the conceptualisation of a refugee in these conventions as denoting a political refugee. This situation is created by the

restrictive position taken by the international conventions. This, therefore, will have to be the most important change in conceptualisation and recognition and it will need to be at the international level, from where it will filter down to policy decisions of national governments.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY 3:

The need to address the driving forces behind environmental degradation

It is not sufficient to deal with environmental refugees in a reactive way – by focusing only on the problem of environmental refugees instead of addressing the factors leading to and exacerbating the environmental conditions responsible for environmental refugee movements. Lohrman (1996:335) emphasises that: “..... *environmentally induced displacements stem from both natural resource deterioration and social, political and economic turmoil*”. Therefore, many environmental refugee movements can be prevented if factors such as uncontrolled population growth, poverty, the debt burden of developing countries and political conflicts are brought under control. In order to prevent more people from becoming environmental refugees attention must, therefore, be given to the social, economic and political conditions that might influence environmental degradation.

Hugo (1996:124) is of the opinion that the one answer to the problem of environmental degradation in developing nations would be, firstly, to eradicate poverty. He states that: “..... *successfully tackling many of the environmental problems of [the developing world] will require a global approach, and central to this is the pressing need to eradicate poverty so that people will have access to the resources to live sustainably*”. Another pressing issue is population growth. Many environmental problems, such as land degradation resulting from farmers trying to feed their growing families on small plots of land, are associated with uncontrolled population growth. Harrison (1993:284) is of the opinion that slower population growth can be a very important factor in slowing down deforestation, land degradation and loss of bio-diversity.

In Southern Africa, population growth and poverty together with urbanisation, political instability and inequalities in resource distribution play an important part in environmental degradation. The positive results of dealing with these driving forces are numerous and the protection of the environment is only one of the positive spin-offs of addressing these social, political and economic factors. Referring to the current population growth rates in South Africa, Yeld (1997:57) indicates

that South Africa's population growth is not compatible with the goal of sustainable living. Among the most important measures that can be taken to decrease the current population growth rates are the education and empowerment of women (Smith, 1995:65; Yeld 1997:57). Eradicating poverty will diminish the need to use the environment in an unsustainable way. If an improvement in the quality of life of the population in terms of access to clean water, sanitation, housing, education, employment and natural resources such as land and energy resources can be ensured, people will be in an economic position to use the environment in a sustainable way (Yeld, 1997:20). It is therefore a regional and a local responsibility to ensure a better quality of life for Southern Africa's population.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY 4:

Promoting sustainable development practices

Lastly, and following from the previous strategy is the promotion of sustainable development, both globally and in the Southern African region in particular. Sustainable development entails that the current generation meet its needs without hampering the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This definition is based on the generally accepted definition of sustainable development popularised in the Bruntland Report of 1987 on achieving sustainable development (Yeld, 1997:12). While sustainable development would entail that factors such as population growth, poverty and political instability be brought under control – as was discussed as part of Suggested Strategy 3 – addressing some specific environmental problems are also necessary in order to reduce the impact of humans on the environment.

At the global level issues such as the emission of carbon fossil fuels and unsustainable technologies that lead to pollution need to be addressed, while in Southern Africa, problems such as lack of infrastructure and unsustainable agricultural practices must receive attention.

Kagonge & Imvobore (1994) identify five factors hampering sustainable development in Africa, namely population growth, poverty, political instability, soil erosion, and drought & desertification. If environmental degradation such as soil erosion and desertification can be sufficiently brought under control, the likelihood of environmental migration due to unsustainable environments would decrease. Some ways in which sustainable development could be achieved would include the

promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and actions that address existing environmental degradation such as reforestation plans, anti-desertification plans and effective drought and flood action plans.

While the above-mentioned suggestions for addressing the issue of environmental refugees are by no means conclusive or exhaustive, the researcher feels that these suggested strategies encompass the most critical issues that need to be addressed in terms of decreasing the number of environmental refugees. To conclude: the problem of environmental refugees is one problem that currently has, and will in future have, a profound impact on human society. Therefore, it is imperative to be proactive and deal with the issue at hand now.

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ANNEXURE A

Baseline questions used during interviews

Baseline questions: UNHCR

- 1 Africa is the continent with the highest refugee flows in the world, according to some recent statistics. Is Africa a serious area of concern for the UNHCR in terms of refugee flows?
 - 1.1 *What are the main causes of these refugee movements?*
 - 1.2 *Do you think environmental factors such as drought, desertification, deforestation, natural disasters, floods, play a role in the refugee movements in Africa?*
 - 1.3 *To what extent do you consider environmental factors to influence refugee movements?*

- 2 Your framework for assisting refugees is provided by the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol. Do you apply this guideline in the strictest sense of the word or is there room for interpretation in practice?
 - 2.1 *Could you explain the process through which a person obtains refugee status according to your guidelines.*
 - 2.2 *Does this decision rest with you or with the host government?*
 - 2.3 *Could you explain how you get involved in a refugee situation – the process?*
 - 2.4 *What are the feelings of the countries involved, how do they react to your presence?*
 - 2.5 *What is the role of the national government in this process?*
 - 2.6 *What is the role of the international community?*
 - 2.7 *You provide humanitarian assistance to people displaced as a result of political conflicts, what are the ideal outcomes of such an endeavor – short term, resettlement etc.?*
 - 2.8 *Some options for dealing with refugees are extremely problematic in practice, for instance resettlement? How many people do you think actually return to the host country illegally after a failed resettlement attempt? (some statistics on refugee repatriation, resettlement etc.)*
 - 2.9 *To what do you ascribe failed repatriation attempts?*

2.10 How do you attempt to prevent recurrent migration in practice?

2.11 How are you assisted in aiding refugees by NGO's ?

2.12 Who are the NGO's that generally assist you?

2.13 How is the UNHCR involved in refugee situations in Southern Africa at the moment?

3 In the light of current changes in refugee compositions, do you consider any changes to the international conventions to include other categories of forced migrants, such as environmental refugees, to be an option in the near future?

3.1 Do you have any suggestions for dealing with the problem of environmental refugees?

3.2 Do you think environmental factors are legitimate grounds for people claiming refugee status?

3.3 Do you consider the term environmental refugee to adequately reflect the plight of people forced to migrate due to environmental degradation?

3.4 If not, why do you think so?

Baseline questions: Department of Home Affairs

1. We know that there is a lot of migration, specifically illegal and forced, taking place in Africa. How serious do you consider the problem to be?

1.1 Could you provide some statistics? From where and how many?

1.2 What do you think are the main causes of these migration movements?

1.3 Do you think environmental factors such as drought, desertification, deforestation, natural disasters, floods, play a role in people coming to South Africa?

1.4 To what extent do you consider this to be a problem?

- 1.5 *What is the Department of Home Affairs role in managing migration – illegal migrants, refugees, legal migrants?*
- 1.6 *Could you give me an idea of the process involved in someone coming to South Africa as a migrant to determine his status?*
- 1.7 *According to which laws/policy are illegal migrants dealt with?*
- 1.8 *On what basis is a person classified as an illegal migrant?*
- 1.9 *How are these people dealt with – sending them back etc?.*
- 1.10 *Repatriating migrants is an expensive exercise – do you have any bilateral agreements with neighbouring states to help carry some of the costs of repatriation?*
- 1.11 *Could you explain the process through which a person obtains refugee status or asylum according to your guidelines?*
- 1.12 *According to which laws/policy are refugees dealt with?*
- 1.13 *Since January 1996 South Africa also adopted the UN definitions concerning the status of refugees. Is this your main authority in determining refugee status?*
- 1.14 *How does the OAU Convention on refugees influence your decisions regarding refugees?*
- 1.15 *How is the UNHCR involved in refugee situations in Southern Africa at the moment?*
- 1.16 *How does South Africa's relationship with its neighbours affect decisions concerning migration?*
2. *In the light of current changes in refugee compositions, do you consider any changes to South Africa's perspective on refugees to include other categories of migrants as refugees?*
- 2.1 *Do you consider environmental refugees to be a concept that adequately reflects the migration of these people?*

Baseline questions: South African Police Service

- 1.1 *How is the police department involved in dealing with illegal migration?*
- 1.2 *Do you trace the people, send them back etc?*
- 1.3 *Could you describe the process involved in tracing and catching illegal migrants?*
- 1.4 *What do you think the main reasons are for people migrating illegally to South Africa?*
- 1.5 *Why South Africa?*
- 1.6 *Is it a relatively easy option for illegal migrants?*
- 1.7 *How many illegal migrants do you estimate are in the country?*
- 1.8 *From where do they come?*
- 1.9 *Do you have some statistics on the number of migrants caught and repatriated?*
- 1.10 *Your role is to trace them and catch them, how are you involved in the actual repatriation process?*
- 1.11 *Do you think illegal migrants are a threat to the country?*
- 1.12 *What are the main threats that illegal migrants pose?*
- 1.13 *What is your success rate in terms of effectively sending these people back – how many return after a time period?*
- 1.14 *Why do they not stay, why do they return to South Africa?*
- 1.15 *Is there a possibility that environmental factors such as drought, desertification, deforestation can play a role in their attempts to settle elsewhere?*

ANNEXURE B

Transcription of interview with superintendent D. Beneke, SAP

Onderhoud: Senior Superintendent D. Beneke Grenspolisie
26 September 2000.
10H00 – 10H30

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Ons is besig met 'n studie oor migrasie en dan spesifiek die rol van omgewingsfaktore in migrasie. Wat ek eerste wil weet is wat is julle werksaamhede?*

RESPONDENT: Dis Suid-Afrikaanse polisie diens – grenspolisie. Onder ons beheer is die grensposte. En dan het ons interne opsporingseenhede gehad en dan het ons die landsgrense en die seegrense. En uit die lug uit is dan nou die lughawens, seegrense is maar die hawens en landsgrense is maar die grensposte. Ons werksaamhede is maar polisiëring van dit.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Goed, polisiëring, wat behels dit?*

RESPONDENT: Ag, allerhande dinge. Soos misdaadvoorkoming, alle polisie funksies eintlik en dan op party grensposte vervul ons vir die ander departemente sekere funksies.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *En dan onwettige migrasie, hoe betrokke is julle daarby? Hoe spoor julle hulle op, hoe stuur julle hulle terug?*

RESPONDENT: Kyk ons is betrokke daarby. Ons is verantwoordelik vir die grensposte as sulks. Dan is daar 'n samewerkingsooreenkoms tussen ons en die Suid Afrikaanse weermag wat die grenslyn patroleer tussen die grensposte. Maar nog steeds bly dit grenspolisie se verantwoordelikheid. Verbode migrante is merendeels ook dan nou Binnelandse sake se verantwoordelikheid. Ons is uit en uit verantwoordelik vir gewone migrante en vir die arrestasies van dit.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Het die vloede in Mosambiek 'n groot invloed op die invloed van onwettige migrante gehad?*

RESPONDENT: Ja, die vloede het 'n effek op dit. Mosambiek se vloede het nie 'n effek gehad terwyl die vloed aan die gang was nie want hulle kon nie uitkom nie. Maar ons vermoed dat daar dalk nou mense gaan begin oorspoel soos wat daar nie kos is nie.... Op hierdie stadium is die grootste probleem wat ons het maar Mosamiekers en Zimbabweers, né? Dit is maar die grootste probleem wat ons het met verbode migrante. Wat gebeur het terwyl die vloed aan die gang was kon hulle nie deur die rivier kom nie want die rivier was te groot. Kyk hulle gaan maar gewone roetes deur die rivier. Nou dat die rivier weer afgeloop het sal daar waarskynlik weer 'n toename wees maar dis die normale een wat nou net gestop was daar is nie 'n ander faktor wat hom nou ewe skiekik dwing nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *As julle sê julle hanteer die grenspolisiering tel julle dan basies die mense op wat deur die grense probeer kom.*

RESPONDENT: Dis nou moeilik dat ons nie vir jou statistiek kan gee nie. Ons arresteer nogal redelik baie onwettige migrante. Ons arresteer nie net op die grensposte nie, maar ook dan nou buite in die gebied wat ons verantwoordelik is voor. Soos die grenslyn en die paaie naby die grensposte. Ons suksesse is baie goed en dit bly styg. Wat natuurlik ook 'n probleem is is mens kan nie regtig sê nie want jy arresteer 'n ou nou en more is hy terug. Die weermag ondervind presies dieselfde probleem, jy weet nie hoeveel keer jy 'n verbode immigrant repatrieer nie want jy arresteer hom vandag, hy word gerepatrieer en more is hy terug en word weer gearresteer. So dis 'n groot probleem die ouens wat

herhaaldelik deurkom. Dit is dan ook nou 'n wanindruk van statistiek wat jy kry. Jy kry byvoorbeeld statistieke van 'n x aantal verbode migrante wat die land binnegekom het en gerepatrieer is maar jy kan nie bepaal hoeveel van hulle weer ingekom het nie en dit gebeur nogal redelik baie dat 'n ou drie, vier, vyf, ses maal gearresteer word. Hy bly kom as hy wil deurkom sal hy kom. Wat nogal redelik interessant is is baie van die verbode migrante werk in Suid Afrika en dan hier oor Desember maande repatrieer hulle vrywillig en dan sit ons met aansienlike probleme met groot getalle wat dan by die grensposte wil uit en dan teruggaan na hulle land vir die vakansie en dan kom hulle later weer terug. So elke Desember en paasnaweke het jy 'n verskriklike groot toename in verbode migrante wat teruggaan.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

So hulle het onwettig ingekom en nou as hulle wil teruggaan tel julle op dat hulle onwettige migrante is?

RESPONDENT:

Dis reg ja, en dan kom hulle weer op 'n onwettige manier binne. As jy vat ons grenslyn is omtrent 3500km landsgrense en op daardie grens is daar maar 52 landsgrense..... En 'n ander probleem wat ons het in SA is die feit dat jy nie werklik 'n grenslyn het nie wat bepaal dat hier niks wat mense uithou nie. Ek dink as jy praat van Norex heining die geëlektrifiseerde draad by Beitbrug en by Lebombo dan is dit so 150 km. So dit is eintlik die enigste plek in SA waar daar 'n fisiese grenslyn loop. Die res is riviere en berge en jy ken ons riviere. Meeste is nie-standhoudend en het 'n droe loop. Met Lesotho is daar glad nie 'n heining nie en met Kwa Zulu Natal sit jy met die probleem dat daar geen lyndraad is wat SA split met Lesotho, Mosambiek of Swaziland nie. So die toegang is bitter maklik en wat verder die beheer oor verbode immigrante bemoeilik is dat tradisioneel in die ou dae het die landsgrens by families gesplit in twee en daar is 'n oor en weer gekuery en dis moeilik om te beheer want hulle bly eintlik direk langs mekaar. Met ander woorde, om nou van daardie een persoon te verwag om na die grens te loop, wat so twee, driehonderd km is, Suid Afrika binne te kom en weer twee/driehonderd km te stap is bitter moeilik en dit bemoeilik beheer oor verbode immigrante op die grenslyn

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

En wat nou van die Free Movement of People Protocol wat hulle van praat met die SADEK lande

RESPONDENT:

Ek glo nie dit sal 'n effek op grensbeheer he nie. Ek dink net miskien sal dit dit makliker maak in terme van visums wat wegval maar jy sal nog steeds jou paspoort moet he. Dit sal nie polisiering stop nie dit sal bly. Dit is onmoontlik om polisiering te stop want mens praat van smokkelware, drugs en so aan.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

En die grootste redes wat julle vind hoekom die mense deurkom?

RESPONDENT:

Seker sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede in hul eie lande. Te min kos, te min werk daai klas van dinge. Suid Afrika word seker ook maar gesien as die spens van Afrika want hier is werksgeleenthede, hier is kos en hier is geld. As jy vat Mosambiekers. As ek miskien vir jou die grensomstandighede kan verduidelik. Tot en met 1992 was die polisie verantwoordelik om al die grensfunksies te vervul. Maar die polisie was grotendeels verantwoordelik vir alle grensbeheer en ons het ou grensbasisse gehad maar dit was totaal 'n ander fokus gewees. Dit was teen-insurgensie gewees. Met ander woorde dit was ter beskerming van ons land. En toe hier in 1992 het alles verander met die nuwe regering en ons het nie meer gekonsentreer op insurgensie en terrorisme nie maar gewone grensbeweging gewees. Dit het toe gebeur dat die polisie

in totaliteit ontrek het van die grense af en vanaf 1994/1995 is grenspolisie gestig en ons het toe weer begin terugbeweeg na die grensposte toe maar net vir 'n poliseringsfunksie. Ons doen nie binnelandse sake se werk nie, ons doen nie doane en aksyns se werk nie, so ons doen uit en uit poliseringswerk behalwe op 14 grensposte is daar geen ander departemente daar nie, daar is net polisie. Dit is waar dit nie koste-effektief sal wees om al drie departemente op daardie grenspos te he nie en die verkeer is van so aard dat die polisie al die funksies sal kan verrig. Maar jou groter grensposte. Daar is drie kategoriee. A kategorie waar Binnelandse Sake, Doane en Aksyns en Polise by betrokke is. Dan B kategorie waar daar net binnelandse sake en polisie is en C kategorie waar daar net polisie is. En van die grensposte is dan nou geïdentifiseer vir vrag en daar is 19 so alle vrag moet deur die 19 geïdentifiseerde grensposte gaan.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Is SA 'n maklike opsie vir mense om na toe te kom?

Ja ek dink definitief SA is 'n maklike opsie omdat SA redelik ekonomies sterk is in Afrika is SA maklik om in te kom en omdat ons nie 'n grenslyn het nie en om totale beheer oor 3500km te he is 'n onbegonne taak

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

En as julle nou iemand vang, 'n onwettige migrant hoe werk die proses?

As ons 'n onwettige immigrant arresteer oorhandig ons hom aan binnelandse sake, hulle is verantwoordelik vir die proses. Tensy daar 'n werklike kriminele oortreding is soos 'n vervalste paspoort dan arresteer ons hom en hy word in die polisie selle aangehou en dan is dit deportasie

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Wat is die gunsteling manier waarop mense inkom

Daar is veskeie maniere. Hoofsaaklik die belangrikste is maar deurloop. Hulle kom meestal met 'n Taxi tot naby die grenspos en word afgelaai en stap dan om die grenspos en stap dan deur en word dan aan die ander kant weer opgetel. Ons het al baie gekry wat met trokke deur die grens gesmokkel word veral nogal deur Botswana grenspos. Trein het ons al 'n klomp afgehaal. Die maklikste manier is om deur te loop. Veral in die Mahamba gebied sit hulle 'n hopie klippe langs die pad dan tel die Taxi hulle op en in Transkei en Lesotho bind hulle sommer 'n plastiëksak aan 'n boom vas.....

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:
RESPONDENT:

So eintlik is daar 'n infrastruktuur

As jy praat van die georganiseerde smokkel van mense verseker. Dit hang ook af van waar hy gaan werk ook. Die een wat Gauteng toe gaan hy sal meer georganiseerd gaan maar die wat gaan werk op die plase daar in die Oos Transvaal meeste van hulle loop net oor. Maar meeste wat Gauteng toe gaan gaan georganiseerd. Ons het 'n outjie wat padblokade staan en hy haal hope en hope van Taxis af. Die wat deur die grensposte kom is normaalweg die met vervalste dokumentasie.Maar in party gebiede is dit bv te warm om te loop so hulle vat die Taxi klim af en word op 'n sekere tyd anderkant die grenspos opgepik. Hoe hulle die taxis optel is daar is gewoonlik meer klere in die taxi as wat mense is en so aan maar dit is bitter min dat hulle in 'n vrag deur die grens sal beweeg.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Stap hulle een een?

Nee, hulle stap in redelike groepe. As jy vat dit vat 16 mense om 'n taxi vol te maak.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Wat is die beleidsbasis waarvolgens julle werk?

Binnelandse sake wetgewing ten opsigte van verbode immigrante en al die artikels rondom dit. So ons hanteer dit volgens daai wetgewing en ook volgens die strafproses wet en enige ander wette wat betrokke is.Enige wette van die land

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

In terme van misdaad, hoe betrokke is die mense wat oorkom daarby?

Ja ek glo so want die goed moet die land inkom en gesteelde voertuie gaan die land uit. Interessant in Kosi-baai, die meeste mense wat ons daar arresteer met gesteelde motors is verbode immigrante. Op hierdie stadium is daar weereens – dit gaan weer oor statistieke - 'n probleem om te bepaal hoeveel onwettige migrante wel by misdaad betrokke is maar dit is definitief 'n probleem... 'n mens lees gereeld in die koerante van mense wat geroof word deur onwettige migrante

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

En wapens en dwelms wat inkom?

Van Lesotho af het ons 'n groot probleem met dagga. Dieselfde met Mosambiek, hulle wapens word geruil vir kos en klere en geld. Want hy moet geld kry erens.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Het die hoeveelheid mense afgeneem

Ek dink vanaf die vorige termyn toe dit nog insurgensie was het dit volgens my mening definitief toeneem maar dit is nou definitief konstant.....

ANNEXURE C

Transcription of interview with mr. B. Leerschool, UNHCR

Interview: Bart Leerschool, UNHCR Protection Officer
4/2/2000, 10h00, 60 minutes

INTERVIEWER: I just want to tell you about this study, it is about environmental refugees and I know you do not really acknowledge that in the United Nations Convention, defining environmental refugees as such. It is more of a political thing, but we think that maybe there are a lot of people that are being displaced as a result of environmental factors. So in order to deal with that we also have to look at current status of refugees and also illegal migrants and that is why I am here. And also talk to you about refugees in general.

RESPONDENT: Maybe I should make statement of admission, before I go to refugees. Indeed it is not contained as a qualified ground for refugee status as for the criteria incorporated with 51 UN Convention. Of course, the 1969 OAU convention on refugees in Africa, or more specifically as the Convention was called, 1969 OAU Convention on specific problems related to Africa refugees, that has a broader definition to take account of other situations not only individual persecution alone. It also talks about situations where you have acts of aggression We normally take account of civil war situations or where at least people insist on exit these countries. Indeed also the OAU professionals have not taken into account environmental refugees with a professional approach, so indeed by the letter of the law the international instrument these people are not normally covered by the international conventions

INTERVIEWER: It is more political factors leading to refugees, leading to forced migration.

RESPONDENT: Exactly. Although we do recognise that to exclude people from status on the context of being economic migrants. The root causes often for these people can be, well at least serious enough. I can appreciate the reason for these people coming together around the border. It's just a matter of international acceptance. In South Africa, of course, to legalise their status we can only make use of the existing channels and so where the reasons for them to fled the country may be different from those generally accepted we know that there is a situation existing in Africa, as elsewhere, where people believe that they are forced to leave the country and to seek a betterment in third countries. In South Africa we have among those who apply for asylum substantial numbers of people from West Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, those from Europe - Eastern Europe - Bulgaria, Romania. I would say perhaps even 80% of these immigrants is immigrants who could have left the countries for other than refugee related reasons

INTERVIEWER: And they try doing it within the system, some make misuse of the system

RESPONDENT: Absolutely. Home Affairs uses the term abuse of the system. OK, it is generally misuse since the system is not geared towards migrants who do not qualify as refugees according to the International Refugee Convention. It is a serious problem. It also challenges the credibility of the whole asylum system. It also impacts legally on the general asylum seekers I think the misuse of the asylum system also has a detrimental effect on the status of general asylum seekers and refugees.

INTERVIEWER: How many people do you provide assistance to in Southern Africa, at the moment

RESPONDENT: First, I would like to say that we are responsible for 9 countries. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, the Ocean Islands - Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles -, Lesotho and Swaziland. In most of the countries, the objective, especially South Africa, is to create a conducive environment to facilitate the possibilities for operations for assisting refugees in the country. South Africa is a country that has developed and asylum system. It has not been implemented yet, but the act has been in circulation since 1998. At least there is a legal framework in place to deal with asylum cases in the country. Unlike some other countries, the Indian Ocean islands, who basically do not accept any asylum applications. There is no legal system in place that can deal with asylum cases. From a political dimension, of course, they are simply not interested in establishing a system to deal with refugees. Anyway, for the whole region we estimate about 80 000 people in Southern Africa, of whom since 1994, 59 000 have applied for asylum in South Africa alone. Among these people, up to the end of 1999, 40 500 have been granted asylum in

South Africa which already is quite indicative of potential number of non-refugees inside the country andwho has been rejected by the Home Affairs Department on the grounds of not being able to have established a well founded fear of persecutionand who are basically economic migrants.

INTERVIEWER: Most of them from Mozambique that come to South Africa?

RESPONDENT: Not anymore, of course that was what we experienced in the past. I would say that most of the asylum seekers come from countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Senegal, Ivory Coast (but not that many). I think that genuine asylum seekers these days predominantly originate from the Great Lakes region, and Somalia and Angola. Also Burundi and Rwanda are main countries of origin. Numbers as I have said about 80% originate from countries which could be defined as countries that do not necessarily have a good political situation, which urge people to leave but the people do still come in but they are believed, sort of, to be absorbed into the illegal system. They would not necessarily apply for asylum. People who do apply for asylum are primarily out of their country for reasons other than refugee related reasons. So we have been involved in the repatriation of 1.3 million Mozambican If you would like I can check the numbers for other countries. Pakistan 1300, good number from Ethiopia 800 cases, Rwanda about 170, Burundi 500, Bangladesh 300, About 17 000 (70 000) cases that the government has decided upon. About 59 000 that have gone through the asylum court

INTERVIEWER: So these people apply to you ... How does the process work?

RESPONDENT: The UNHCR does not have direct say in the state legal process. If the government, lets say,deal with asylum cases, we can on an occasional basis interfere where we believe that a persons rights to asylum has been grocely violated, we can also act on behalf of the individual person. We have a standing agreement with the government who is primarily responsible for processing asylum applications. Then of course there is the possibility of appeal where and asylum application has been rejected and then goes to the appeal board. At the appeal board is the biggest reason for the number of pending cases. The appeal board only consists of one person and he has to deal with more than 4000 appeal applications. That is really a tremendous job. The new refugee act, or rather the regulations that are being drawn now and the implementation of the refugee act, we also provide for increased human resource capacity, not only at the appeal board, but in dealing with applications. The UNHCR is basically co-operating with governments to set up the structures. We have been quite actively involved with the drafting process of the new refugee act. Now we can be involved in the implementation of the new refugee act. As a general purpose we provide training to government officials in refugee law, how they should play a role in the process

INTERVIEWER: Consultative, administrative, you help them with implementation. And also to see that it is in accordance with the conventions?

RESPONDENT: Absolutely, that is our concern of course. We want to ensure that the rights and obligations of the asylum system are met. I would say the government, the country at large, in terms of having developed a refugee act is quite liberal, more liberal in fact than some of the ones you find in Europe. So at least on paper there is good hope that the instrument is in accordance with the international conventions. It is yet to see how it materialises

INTERVIEWER: A lot of the countries that you have mentioned have environmental problems. So a lot of the people that come in do not really qualify for asylum. Would you say that environmental factors actually do play a role in the fact that they apply?

RESPONDENT: Absolutely, environmental factors are possible reasons that cause flows of people to leave a country. There seems is a direct link between environmental factors and people leaving. That is why I say we can appreciate the reasons why people who may not qualify as refugees also feel an urge to leave the country. Because of the economic state or where people cannot sustain themselves anymore. Environmental refugees although there is no legal basis to qualify them as such at least to recognise them.

INTERVIEWER: Conceptualisation is a big problem in international refugee ... at the moment?

RESPONDENT: Conceptualisation. There is discussions going on at the United Nations in New York as to whether the UNHCR should take responsibility for displaced persons. The UNHCR is mandated to protect people who cross international borders. We have the situation in Angola where you find more than 1 million internally displaced persons . The UNHCR usually can take responsibility for them if they cross borders. Now discussions are going on whether we should also take responsibility for these displaced people. We have ... in the past like Bosnia, where we have been specifically requested by the Secretary General to assume responsibility, but then normally our authority is only subject to a specific request. But now discussions are going on as to whether UNHCR should assume responsibility for the whole global number of displaced persons. Because we also feel that should we get such a responsibility our present mandate would be insufficient because it does not cater for displaced persons. We would have to reflect on the refugee conventions because there it is not only UNHCR but also state departments that are affected. Who may also have to accept the UNHCR in their own countries to assume responsibility so they might not necessarily cater for situations of internally displaced persons. That is very challenging. Would also require more in terms of human resources.

INTERVIEWER: And also financially

RESPONDENT: Definitely. Where we already feel that some of the donors are getting increasingly tired to pledge. Like the situation in Burundi. We made an urgent appeal on donors not to loose interest. So where you already see a situation where donors are not pledging the same as they did in the past. Then we have to look for other sources. We could also go into partnerships with other UN agencies like the UNDEP, World Health Organisation and so on. Where there is a conflict the UNHCR can then draw from these organisations. So it is not that we do the job alone. But yes, it would have an effect definitely on the requirements for sources.

INTERVIEWER: Because even the number of refugees now according to the literature that I have read is challenging the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to provide assistance. I mean you cannot provide the services that you would like to provide with the funds that you have, although the refugee numbers apparently came down?

RESPONDENT: Well yes, in absolute terms I think it has come down. I'm not quite sure of the actual situation in the early 90's. Although I am not exactly sure, it has come down, but at the same time I think the level of contributions has probably gone down faster than the number of refugees. We have calculated once that the financial sources available is about 50 \$ cents per refugee per day, which is hardly sufficient. Also I think there is the problem of donor states increasingly earmarking their contributions for specific programmes where the UNHCR would like to allocate the funds where it is required.

INTERVIEWER: So there is politics involved

RESPONDENT: Absolutely, although the amount of donations are also a problem. Which makes it more difficult because the funds may be available for certain programmes but because of the earmarking it affects our regular implementation of programmes. And in areas where we are present for many years already it is definitely and area of concern whether we can still maintain the level of assistance

INTERVIEWER: That is shocking

RESPONDENT: Yes but if you turn on your television and see the same humanitarian disasters everyday, it is in the human character to build some kind of immunity

INTERVIEWER: What is your ideal outcome with a refugee situation?

RESPONDENT: The official policy in finding solutions for the refugees is threefold. The most preferred solution is still voluntary repatriation if the conditions in the country are of course conducive for return. And by conducive we mean people should be able to return in safety and dignity. We also often enter into tripartate agreements between the country of asylum, country of origin and the UNHCR so as to establish a legal framework by which people are expected to return. To put it into more plain language, we expect from countries of origin to implement laws and regulations to

provide amnesty to people who would have been persecuted in the past. That is one aspect of the legal framework, but also we would assure that for a period of six months we would cater for the immediate needs of people who are repatriated by the repatriation programmes which again are being implemented in co-operation with UN sister agencies. So, voluntary repatriation is the most preferable solution, obviously. Secondly, we believe that if voluntary repatriation is not foreseeable, or feasible in the foreseeable future we put instruments in place which would make it possible for people to go through immigration into the country.

INTERVIEWER: How does countries involved feel about that?

RESPONDENT: Let me take South Africa as an example. Where people come from the great lakes and do not expected to return in the near future, maybe the ones from the DRC where peace negotiations. Even where you have an agreement in place at the political level who knows what can happen. According to the constitution in South Africa people have the right to, even as asylum seekers, to work and study. But obviously in practice the government cannot guarantee the ability to practice it. So we cannot just demand from the government to implement the rights without UNHCR also offering our co-operation in terms of programmes which cater for the needs of refugees who are expected to remain in the country for a longer period of time. So, in that respect we would co-operate with other agencies to enter into programmes to cater for the needs of refugees. Such as schooling at primary school level, but also to provide scholarships to people who would further their studies. Also to cater for the needs of people who would like to become self-sufficient. Income generating programmes are being developed which we would then support financially. So all these programmes are geared towards the integration of people who are expected to remain in the country. Also deal with the legal status where we are co-operating with the government to ensure that those people who are genuine asylum seekers that in the first place to ensure their legal security. On an individual basis we have not much capacity to ensure that people whom we believe are immigrants should get status. But at a more global level we try to, through training, through capacity building to ensure that the people who deserve protection should get. That being said where local integration would not be feasible, in certain cases where governments cannot accept for a longer term due to various reasons. Let's take the situation in Kenya where in the early 1990's we were confronted with some 400 000 refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia alone. Where people are gaining access to the country and where the UNHCR has all the access to protect them and assist them, but the government cannot really afford to grant them the social rights to enable them to be totally integrated in society. Where they will be allowed access to the country from the moment they enter from the country of origin. There local integration is obviously not an objective to pursue. There we either aim at voluntary repatriation, where the situation allows, but where that is not possible we come to the third possible solution which is settlement in a third country. In many countries large groups of refugees never resettle. Let's take the example of Kenya again where over the last 4 years on average of 3000 refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia have been resettled. In the case of South Africa we are more likely to apply for resettlement. Because you do have a legal system basically expected to be able to deal with the status of refugees and programmes to cater for the needs of refugees. Although they are very limited in terms of financial resources. We expect people in South Africa to work and study and at some point become self-sufficient. We encourage people to become self-sufficient. And at the same time we have people who are very desperate and have no skills, we also provide assistance to those people. To take an example, a refugee from Uganda who we believe may have strong refugee claims who has been rejected by the government where we think might be the wrong reasons. At the same time we have no opportunities to reverse the decisions of the country. Then we can only promote resettlement of such a case to a third country. So first of all for the lack of legal protection. And then a second category where we have promoted resettlement for is those people who are even experience persecution in a country of asylum. And then thirdly people with no integration prospects in the country due to war situations, single mothers with children, Such cases may also form a category for the UNHCR. In terms of numbers it is quite low. I think for the last two years we have

been submitting some 130 cases for the whole region actually for resettlement in third countries. So it is a possibility but not one of the main objectives.....

INTERVIEWER: It is interesting to me that the 1951 Convention, there is one article, I think article 31 or 34 that promotes assimilation of people into the country, but most countries don't see it like that anymore

RESPONDENT: Countries respect the provisions of the 1951 Convention but there are many countries who have not yet signed the UN Convention on Civil Rights, and especially the one on Socio-economic Rights because they are just not capable of applying them because of certain factors in the country. So it is also not a legal obligation. It is rather that governments are encouraged to ensure socio-economic rights where possible. In South Africa with all the problems in the country for refugees to find employment to ensure their socio economic rights. The legal framework provides for the opportunity at least, provides for the environment where asylum seekers can work. So despite serious concerns of the government regarding the misuse of the asylum system, that rights are still in tact. So I think that compared to other countries, but also the European countries even when people are granted amnesty they are not allowed to exercise their socio-economic rights. So I think the system is quite good, it is quite liberal. But obviously there are other dimensions that play a role.

INTERVIEWER: But what worries me is the fact that governments, most governments seem to interpret the conventions to suite them, don't you find that a problem? That you deal a lot with technical aspects of the convention and also of international refugee law. I am thinking about the non-refoulement principle, that they misuse the law system?

RESPONDENT: Most of the rights and obligations of international refugee law deal with status of refugees and their rights. Many of these principles are just principles of international customary law but is not put down in writing. The principle of non-refoulement is not mentioned in any of the conventions. Actually, it is a principle of international law which governments are expected to adhere to, also those who have not signed the 1951 Convention. But at the same time it can also form an excuse for governments not to. Another case I can think of is the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. That is basically not spelled out in the conventions and governments may misuse the situation in the sense that, for instance when people arrive in a country illegally, among those asylum seekers. There is a stipulation in the conventions that I remember well that says people should not be penalised for having entered the country illegally. But in most countries everybody who has entered the country is seen per definition as an illegal immigrant, unless he can prove otherwise. He has to formally submit his claim.

INTERVIEWER: And it is an individual claim?

RESPONDENT: It is not a desirable situation. We are also concerned about the treatment of such people in detention. People who have been in detention for many months and many years without any guarantee of protection. There are definitely situations where either the provisions of the conventions are not necessarily respected, or where they are not properly stipulated and governments may feel that they are not obliged to adhere to them.

INTERVIEWER: Isn't there a way in which to stop the governments from not fulfilling their obligations? Say a refugee comes to you and says my human rights are not protected, I was treated badly. How do you deal with that?

RESPONDENT: We are definitely quite active in this. Again we co-operate with some local organisations such as the Organisation for human rights here in Pretoria, who are responsible for following up with the government's individual cases where rights are violated. And that ranges from cases of getting access to procedures, where people are classified as illegal immigrants. We may follow up with the governments through these organisations or sometimes directly to ensure the rights of people. Indeed where people are being detained beyond a period of thirty days which asylum applications have been refused. So we, those people who have expressed their desire to apply for asylum, if we get to know of such people we also follow it through with the government. So yes, we have ways at the micro- level if you like to ensure that the

governments protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. But I think at a more global level it is not just to criticise governments for not protecting the rights of people.

INTERVIEWER: No, because there are definitely reasons why governments do not protect people's rights

RESPONDENT: But where there is obvious violation of human rights we can act against the government to remind them about their obligations. But I think we also need to understand the reasons why, apart from them having to deal with large numbers of people, here are definitely many political dimensions involved. So I think UNHCR is somehow limited in addressing the real core problems as to why the governments ability of dealing with refugees has been reduced. And I think trying to tackle the root causes of refugee movements I need to indeed look at the situation of human rights in the country of origin and to try and aid that government's to put structures in place, providing training in human rights law and so on. But I think also in terms of environmental refugees. Programmes to tackle certain issues which would all in the end potentially prevent refugee flows from happening. And I think that is where the real core problem lies. And it is not easy, especially where the political dimensions come in, where it is really difficult where all the political factors play a role to reverse the situation and to come to a situation of peace, refugee situations would not occur, but it is easy to say to tackle the root causes.

INTERVIEWER: But it is also uncertain because you never know what the governments are going to do in the end. It is always a precarious situation

RESPONDENT: Exactly. We have repatriated some people from Botswana, well people who were in Botswana who came from Caprivi. We repatriated some 1200 people but now we see some people coming back.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, because there are problems again.

RESPONDENT: There is problems inside Caprivi related to continuous harassment, discrimination, sometimes direct persecution of people who are believed to be in support of cessation movement. And at the same time, due to the situation in Angola, where people specifically from the Caprivi region have fled to Botswana again after they have been refugees in Botswana. And we have the people from Angola coming into Botswana and Namibia. The situation is also fairly difficult because of the spread of Angolan troops. That is a clear example. I would not say that it is a failed repatriation programme.

INTERVIEWER: The failure is not on your part but due to the fact that the situation has changed

RESPONDENT: And this causes some more hesitation on the remaining case load in Botswana from going back. We have all hoped that we could repatriate some 2500 people in a period of 1999 but now only ... have been repatriated. We are sometimes running after the political developments. That is sometimes frustrating. That is not to say that we are not involved at all. We have an important role to play in the countries of origin in terms of human rights. So we have first hand information which we will share with other appropriate UN agencies like the UN Commission on Human Rights and other organisations. That is actually an important role in knowing what is going on and be able to address the problems at another level which we cannot do because we are not mandated.

INTERVIEWER: Just two things more. There is a lot of Mozambicans who have been repatriated and now they come back as illegal migrants. How do you deal with a situation like that? There must be something there that prevents them from staying ... so does that not make your work difficult?

RESPONDENT: It does not make our work difficult because they are then not of concern to the UNHCR.

INTERVIEWER: So they have been repatriated and now are not your concern anymore?

RESPONDENT: Well that is one thing. They have been repatriated as a result of the changes in the country. The UNHCR fully supports the political process in the country and we

believe that there are no reasons for large numbers of people, because of political reasons, to flee the country. So we are not saying that all the Mozambicans who are now coming into the country are not refugees. We never say that, but there is a presumption of their status as being conventional migrants. But still there is a possibility of many individuals who still come. So basically it comes down to if large numbers of people are coming into the country again they are of no concern to the UNHCR. Then again I don't think that there are many asylum cases from Mozambique in this country anymore. Only 23 people in the last four years have applied for asylum from Mozambique.

INTERVIEWER: Then they go straight through Home Affairs?

RESPONDENT: We have been approached on account of a group of people from Mozambique who are still in the country and have never returned but then again we have to comply with the local government of South Africa's clause that states that refugee status for Mozambicans have been terminated. They have been given the opportunity to evacuate with the aid of the UNHCR. They chose not to make use of that. And at some point these people, with regards to the cessation clause were officially regarded as of no concern to UNHCR.

INTERVIEWER: Then the role of the international community, other countries in your efforts. How does your donor system work?

RESPONDENT: Well we have yearly pledging conferences where the UNHCR sort of represents its global appeal regarding ongoing refugee problems and this is shared with the donor community who then convenes and then pledges are made to the UNHCR. It is on a yearly basis, not like UNDEP who has a five year cycle of donations. We have to do it on a yearly basis because of the changes in refugee situations and to enable the donor community better understand and prepare themselves for pledging.

INTERVIEWER: The donors, mainly organisations, mainly countries?

RESPONDENT: The top 5 if you like is at the moment the US, nr 1, European Union, I cannot remember who nr 3 is but my own country, the Netherlands is fourth. But yes, the main donors are countries and it is purely voluntary. We get a minor percentage of the UN General Assembly budget which goes mainly for administration and overheads and it covers only about one percent of our total costs. But of course the employment profile of the UNHCR, most people come from the states, we also have a lot of Europeans. South Africa has also become a member now and we try to provide governments with programmes to train people for employment opportunities. We are involved in helping the government clearing the backlog of asylum applications. For that purpose maybe 40, 50 lawyers will be hired by the government and trained by the UNHCR. I hope for the purposes of your study that this was helpful.

INTERVIEWER: As I have said, environmental refugees are not recognised so we have to work from existing structures to determine what the problem is and if there in fact is a problem.

ANNEXURE D

Transcription of interview with detective B. Swartz, AIU

Onderhoud: Kaptein Swartz, Aliens Investigation Unit

1 Februarie 2000.

14h00 tot 14h45

- ONDERHOUDVOERDER:* *Ons is besig om 'n studie te doen op te oomblik, maar eintlik gaan eintlik oor omgewings vlugteling, maar dit is maar 'n baie wye konsep en mense weet nie eintlik regtig wat dit is nie en wat ons vermoed wat gebeur is dat die mense eintlik deurkom as onwettige immigrante en nou wil ons net die studie 'n bietjie uitbrei en 'n bietjie meer inligting rondom onwettige immigrante kry om dan op die ou einde te bepaal hoe omgewings faktore onwettige immigrasie beïnvloed. Hoe is die polisie departement of die Aliens Investigation Unit (as deel van die polisie) betrokke by die beheer en hanteer van onwettige immigrasie?*
- RESPONDENT:* Okay, laat ek jou sê. Het jy al met iemand anders as met die polisie gepraat?
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER:* *Nee*
- RESPONDENT:* Nog niemand nie? Okay, laat ek jou wys wat ek hier het. Basies moet jy net sê daar is die afdeling, hulle is grenspolisie hulle doen die lughawens, soos Kaapstad, Johannesburg, Durban en dan het hulle interne eenhede ook in die nege provinsies. Hulle is die interne ITU's, Internal Tracing Unit .. en ons sit dan by speurdiens hoofkantoor en ons doen daai sindikate en die enkel sake
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER:* *Goed so julle is dan meer betrokke meer by die misdaad.*
- RESPONDENT:* Basies uit 'n polisie oogpunt is dit ons en hulle wat dit doen. Hang af wat jy bedoel by omgewingsvlugteling.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER:* *Eintlik wil ek weet oor onwettige immigrante.*
- RESPONDENT:* Soos wat?
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER:* *Hulle kom nou in die land in onwettig deur verskillende maniere, nou hoe spoor julle hulle op, hoe raak julle nou op die ou einde van hulle ontslae wat is die proses daarby betrokke, wie is verantwoordelik vir dit? Dit is wat ek wil weet.*
- RESPONDENT:* Okay, hulle baklei nou nog oor wie is verantwoordelik tot waar. Eintlik se hulle daar is nou 'n interdepartementele ding soos polisie, binnelandse sake, revenue, SARS en almal het nou hulle se daarin. Dit gaan eintlik oor waar is die lyn, wanneer is die polisie aan die gang wanneer is dit binnelandse sake. Binnelandse sake dit is basies hulle werk, hulle soek die immigrante, maar die immigrante is by misdaad betrokke. Daar is twee artikels betrokke oor die vlugteling wet of vier artikesl 26, 32, 57 en 58 krimenele handeling daarvan. Binnelandse sake kan nie dit ondersoek nie. As hulle jou vang en jy is van Mosambiek en jy is hier en jy werk onder vals ID. Of hulle kan jou ID kanselleer en jou terug stuur of hulle kan jou vir die polisie gee en jou aankla so daar is nie 'n "set way" waar jy se dit moet gevolg word of dit nie. Hulle vang baie vir 'n vals ID en kanselleer die ou en stuur dit terug of hulle stop jou by die lughawe. Jy kom in van Belgie af en jy het 'n valse verblyfpermit. Jy kom in en hulle stop jou by die lughawe en se dit is 'n valse ding en hulle stuur jou terug. Anders kom jy in die interne kyk, byvoorbeeld hierdie Technikon, wat nou onlangs in die nuus was wat die mense daar gewerk het, Nigeriers, jy kan sien, byvoorbeeld die rypermitte ne dit is nou hy is 'n lektor by die universiteit met 'n valse permit. Hy is nie geregtig daar nie so binnelandse sake kan hom vang, die kantoor wat dit byvoorbeeld uitgereik het hulle het die hofbevel so hulle kan net hier neerskryf dit is 'n valse ding en hulle kan hom terugstuur, maar ons kla hom

nou aan, want daar is nou bedrog wat daar werk so daar is 'n miskien dat die sindikaat daarby betrokke is so ons sal hom aankla so om te se wie het hom dan opgespoor polisie of binnelandse sake dit is die probleem wat ons het. Hulle kies 'n prokureur nou om 'n ondersoek hy of sy as 'n student, maar hy is aangestel as 'n lector by die teknikon, maar hy studeer nog self. Sulke tipe goed. Ek kan nie vir jou se wat presies hierdie, basies as jy die boeke gaan is binnelandse sake verantwoordelik vir die opsporings taak en sodra daar misdaad betrokke is kom die polisie by.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Nou as julle 'n ou kry wat misdaad pleeg kla julle hom aan volgens Suid-Afrikaanse wette?

RESPONDENT:

Ons kla hom spesifiek net aan onder die Vreemdelingwet, maar in die algemeen as hulle betrokke is by 'n roof of daai goed word hulle gewoonweg aangekla.....

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Nou goed, wat gebeur nou met hulle?

RESPONDENT:

Okay, basies waar die ou ek dink jy weet die ou bylae 1 misdrywe oor verkragting, bedrog daai bylae 1, as jy daarvoor skuldig kom, dit is deporteerbaar. So jy moet verstaan, jy weet seker wat is die verskil tussen repatriasie en deportasie. ...Binnelandse sake repatrieer baie mense dit is nie eintlik deporteer nie Deporteer kan jy net gedeporteer word as jy skuldig is oor bylae 1 nie gewone crimine injuria kan jou nie deporteer nie. So jy moet daaraan skuldig wees en daar is 7 artikels wat die Minister jou ook wat hy by magte is om jou as persoon te deporteer. Dit is al waar jy gedeporteer kan word. Ons werk is as hy skuldig kom is dit deporteerbaar. Kom hy skuldig se nou hy werk sonder 'n werkspermit kom hy skuldig oorhandig ons hom aan binnelandse sake wat hom dan repatrieer. Hy is dan 'n vreemdeling. Hy sit in die tronk en ons sê vir binnelandse sake, man gooi hom uit.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

So, die hele proses werk dan so, as dit repatriasie is gaan dit na Binnelandse sake toe

RESPONDENT:

Ja, met alle verwyderings, deportasies ook. Alle verwyderings in die land word deur binnelandse sake gedoen. As jy wil omskryf wat is verwydering.... Hy kry 'n R 2000 boete en moet nou verwyder word. Ek ry saam met hom lughawe toe, dis nie my werk nie maar ek sien toe dat hy die land verlaat..... maar dit gaan definitief alles deur binnelandse sake.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Nou is Suid-Afrika 'n groot aantrekkingskrag vir mense wat wil misdade pleeg? Is hier mense wat spesifiek na Suid-Afrika toe kom met die doel om misdade te pleeg

RESPONDENT:

Ja, baie maar Binnelandse sake maak nie onderskeid in hulle statistieke tussen die persone wat net verwyder word en die wat by misdaad betrokke was nie. Maar daar is statistieke wat byvoorbeeld sê hoeveel Mosambiekers by misdaad betrokke was maar ek weet nie wie werk nou daarmee nie. Ons statistieke werk anders. Ons kla byvoorbeeld net een ou aan wat 20 mense hiernatoe gebring het. In die jaar het ons 40 mense aangekla maar hulle was by 20 000 sake betrokke. Die aanklagte is nie so baie by ons nie, ons kla miskien 10 'n maand aan maar dit is byvoorbeeld ouens wat bordele run. Hulle bring vrouens van die Ooste af, tot 30 op 'n slag en dan is dit 'n Suid-Afrikaner. Hy is dan nie 'n vreemdeling nie maar het vreemdeling hiernatoe gebring. Die meisies val dan onder repatriasies. Dit is dus basies onmoontlik om vir jou te sê presies hoeveel is betrokke by misdaad. By ons is almal want ons vang hulle onder die vreemdeling wet. Die ouens wat ons aankla.....

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Een van die dinge wat op die mandaat van julle is, is die korrupsie van staatsamptenare. Is daar baie staatsamptenare wat betrokke is by vervalste paspoorte, vervalste id dokumente

RESPONDENT:

Korrupsie, sien daar is 'n artikel in die vreemdelingwet. Waar ons verskil met korrupsie in ons werk is dit half onmoontlik om the bewys. Sê jy het R100 ontvang om iemand te help. Ons werk eintlik met artikel 51E van die Vreemdelingwet. Ons hele mandaat is gebou op 51E. Dit is korrupsie. As jy iemand help om onwettig die land binne te kom. Sê jy werk by 'n grenspos en laat iemand toe sonder 'n visum. As jy by 'n grenspos werk doen jy dit georganiseerd. Jy kan nie net een help nie. Ons kla hulle aan omdat hulle vreemdelinge help om die land onwettig binne te kom eerder as korrupsie..... Dit kan baie tegnies raak. Ons kla so 10 amptenare 'n jaar aan, dis nie baie nie maar as jy die potensiaal vat van een ou by 'n grenspos soos Beitbrug waar 20 000 mense 'n dag deurgaan dan raak dit die moeite werd. As jy een ou toesluit daar keer jy 2000 mense. Maar ons het nie regtig statistiek nie.....Ek kan vir jou statistiek gee oor die hoeveelheid Aliens, waarvoor is hulle toegesluit, waardes van paspoorte. Ons waardes is baie hoog want hulle betaal \$20 000 vir 'n pas en dan kry jy in 'n jaar tussen 10 en 20 terug. Vreemdelinge heg nogal 'n hoë waarde daaran. Chinese bv betaal R20 000 vir 'n pas terwyl Mosambiekers R200 betaal.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Hoekom kies die mense Suid-Afrika of dink jy dis 'n probleem in die res van die wêreld ook?

RESPONDENT:

Dis nou my opinie maar ek dink Suid-Afrika was maklik vir misdadigers. Ons het nou eers daai wet op organised crime, daai wet op beslaglegging, daai wet as jy meer as R10 000 in jou bankrekening inbetaal moet hulle dit rapporteer. Tot en met laas jaar, die hele wêreld het geldwassery, money laundering wette gehad ons het dit nou eers. So natuurlik die ouens wat bedrog pleeg kom hiernatoe en ons kry hulle nie uit die land uit nie. ... So daar was ruimte, maar nou is dit toe, ek kan nie dink hoe sal jy dit nou meer doen nie want nou lê hulle beslag op jou goed. Maar Suid-Afrika, ek dink dis maar ekonomiese toestande, as mens kyk na die res van Afrika hoekom mense hier kom. As ons kyk na die Vreemdelingwet is daar nie baie wat Suid-Afrika toe kom om misdaad te pleeg nie. Oor die algemeen kom die mense hiernatoe vir 'n beter lewe. Soos die Zimbabwers, hulle kom hiernatoe om te kom bou nie om misdaad te pleeg nie. Natuurlik sal hulle 'n vals paspoort of ID soek en sal betaal daarvoor. Maar gewoonlik bly hulle tot 15 jaar sonder om moeilikheid te kry. Soos China, hulle is kommunisties. Dis maar soos enige ander land se aantrekkingskrag om hiernatoe te kom. Dis net makliker om hulle uit te ken as byvoorbeeld mense van Afrika wat swart is. Ons ken hulle op sig uit so dis hoekom hulle meer betrokke is by ons goed want ons kan makliker vir hulle vra waar is jou pas want hulle staan uit.en die buurlande se mense kan nog die taal ook praat..... Ek weet nie of Willem Vorster vir jou gesê het van die stelsel van laat registrasies nie. Jy kan jou geboorte in die land registreer tot jy dood is. Jy kry net 'n skoolsertifikaat en iemand as getuie, dis baie maklik.Maar ek dink nou is dit besig om te verander. Ek dink nie meer dis so maklik om te sê jy is nie geregistreer nie want daar is mobiele kantore wat in die afleë gebiede ingaan, pensioen uitbetalings doen en waar die mense kan registreer.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Sou jy sê onwettige immigrante is 'n bedreiging vir Suid-Afrika? Ek weet vir julle spesifiek is dit 'n probleem want julle werk met die misdadigers maar in die algemeen?

RESPONDENT:

Ja, uit 'n ekonomiese oogpunt is dit 'n probleem want hulle geld kom nie hiernatoe nie. Geld wat hulle hier maak is belastingvry. Sê hy het 'n skoewinkel, hy het nie 'n ID nie en is dus nie geregistreer nie. Al sy geld gaan uit vir sy familie, hy het nie 'n bankrekening nie. Of hulle koop Dollars op die swartmark, veral Nigeriërs, stuur dit uit of hou dit hier. Vluchteling moet werk om hulle self te onderhou maar as jy kyk na die tipe werk, informeel, hulle sit op die straat en verkoop skoene, dis werk wat Suid-Afrikaners kan doen. En as jy na klein plekkies toe gaan soos Vryheid, niemand kan die klere maak vir wat hulle dit voor invoer nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Is hulle 'n probleem in die sin van misdaad of is dit maar meer 'n ekonomiese probleem

RESPONDENT:

Behalwe dat hulle Suid-Afrikaners se werk vat is hulle nie eintik 'n groot probleem nie. Jy moet tog lewe. Maar van hulle het winkels wat by misdaad betrokke is, van hulle verkoop op straat. Dit is 'n dekking.... Dan sal hy byvoorbeeld dwelms verkoop. So ek sal nie sê hulle is misdaad vry nie. Baie van die ouens wat mense roof op straat verkoop self belde en skoene. ... Dis moeilik om te sê.....

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Watter mense kan ek nog mee gaan praat wat vir my meer inligting het?

RESPONDENT:

Ek kan vir jou baie gee.....

ANNEXURE E

Transcription of interview with mr A. Manser, Department of Home Affairs

Onderhoud: A Manser, Departement Binnelandse Sake
27 September, 2000.
8H00 – 8H30

- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Ons is besig met 'n studie rondom migrasie en dan spesifiek die redes hoekom mense migreer en veral in watter mate omgewingsfaktore bydrae tot migrasie.*
- RESPONDENT: So julle is geïntreseed in [onwettige migrasie] die mense wat inkom?
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Ja*
- RESPONDENT: Jy weet, wat ons kan aflei is die mense wat immigrer – daar is verskeie faktore soos *crime*
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Wat is julle werksaamhede hier presies?*
- RESPONDENT: Ons werk spesifiek met onwettige immigrante, ons arresteer hulle, verwyder hulle.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Nou hoe sal dit nou werk, hoe spoor julle hulle op?*
- RESPONDENT: Verskillende maniere. Mense wat kla sy buurman is 'n vreemdeling, of hy weet van 'n besigheid waar vreemdelinge werk.... 'n Ander manier, ons gaan daagliks uit na persele toe soos boupersele en arresteer hulle daar, die wat ons kry. Dan kry ons natuurlik van hoofkantoor af. As jy die land inkom gee hulle jou 'n sekere tydperk en as jou tydperk verstreke is dan kom dit op ons rekenaarsstelsels. Hoofkantoor stuur dan vir ons 'n memo wat sê die ou het die land ingekom en sy tyd is verstreke.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *In hoe mate speel omgewingsfaktore 'n rol in onwettige migrasie na SA toe?*
- RESPONDENT: Redelik want ons is ekonomies bietjie sterker as die res van Afrika. Dit gaan met ons 'n bietjie beter. 'n Dokter van Zaire het eenkeer vir ons gesê as mense besef hulle moet belê in ander Afrika state gaan dit die toevloei na ons toe stop want dan het hy geen rede om hierna toe te kom nie. Maak dit vir hulle beter daarso dan kom hulle nie hierna toe nie.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *En nou met die vloede wat ons in Mosambiek gehad het, was daar 'n toename in onwettige migrasie van daar af?*
- RESPONDENT: Ag nee nie so vreeslik nie. In Mpumalanga en daar by die grens rond miskien.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *As jy nou iemand kry wat onwettig is, hoe repatrieer jy hom, hoe werk dit?*
- RESPONDENT: Ons arresteer hom dan bring ons hom kantoor toe en dan maak ons so leër vir hom oop en bepaal van watter land hy kom. As hy van Mosambiek af kom dan vul ons die vorms in ... dan gaan hy na Lindela toe en in groepe van so 1500 aangehou. Een keer per week is daar dan 'n trein Zimbabwe toe en Mosambiek toe en hy word op die trein gelaai en terugeneem. Partykeer hardloop die trokke dan kan die trein nie hardloop nie. Daar is so 1000 'n week wat terugestuur word.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Koste daaraan verbonde om die mense te verwyder?*
- RESPONDENT: Die koste om iemand aan te hou is ongeveer R22 per dag en om hom te verwyder 'n treinkaartjie kos omtrent R25. Ons kantoor stuur bv tussen

100 en 200 'n week om teruggestuur te word. Maar nou kom hulle reg oor die land hiernatoe.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

En as julle nou die mense verwyder, hoe voel die buurstade daaroor? Help hulle?

RESPONDENT:

Baie is helpvol. Vir Zimbabwe bv. gaan hulle daar na 'n polisiestasie toe en word verhoor en kry 'n boete. Baie lande vat dit nogal redelik ernstig op.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

En soos vir die Mosambiekers, is dit nie partykeer vir die mense 'n verligting om van die mense ontslae te raak nie?

RESPONDENT:

Ja nee. Kyk jy kry die mense op boupersale waar die locals sing en juig daaroor. Jy weet hulle vat hulle werk.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Watter beleidraamwerk werk julle mee?

RESPONDENT:

Die vreemdelingwet en die konstitusionele wet. Veral die konstitusionele wet het 'n groot uitwerking op wat ons deesdae doen. Jy weet om ouens te arresteer, oor verblyfstatus in die land. Soos die hofsak wat ons gehad het in die Kaap waar hulle getroud is. Almal trou nou links en regs. En dan die Arbeidswet maar nie soseer nie. Ek dink die vreemdelingwet is maar basies die een wat ons op werk. Veral die konstitusionele wet [gee probleme]. Ons het 'n baie sterk wet. Baie van die prokureurs sê dan wat ons doen is onkonstitusioneel en dan wen die [migrante] die saak. Die huwelike is bv 'n groot probleem. Hoe kan jy 'n ou stop wat wil trou? Maar ons sê dis 'n geleentheidshuwelik maar dan draai hy om en sê hoe kan jy bewys dis 'n geleentheidshuwelik.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

Nou wat doen julle in so geval, kan julle hom nog steeds verwyder?
As hy skuldig is aan 'n misdaad maar dan draai hulle om en sê as julle hom verwyder dan vat julle my konstitusionele reg weg, ek is dan nou met hom getroud.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

Kry julle baie mense wat al jare in die land is? Wie se kinders al groot is en nou moet hulle verwyder word.

Daar is baie gevalle van ouens wat ingekom het so rondom 1992 en dan het hy nou al so 3 klein besighede hier. En dan om een of ander rede dan weier die departement om vir hom 'n verblyfpermit verder te gee en se pak jou goedjies. Sulke gevalle is vir my partykeer 'n probleem

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

Watter lande is vir julle 'n probleem?

Mosambiek, Zimbabwe, Lesotho en Malawie is maar jou 4 basiese lande want dis naby. Deesdae 'n probleem is Angola. Hulle kom in en kom studeer hier en verander so van een kollege na 'n ander maar ons probeer hulle nou in toom hou.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

En van verder, soos die ou Oos Europa?

Oos-Europa kry ons baie, veral vroue wat ingevoer word, China, Pakistan, Indië.... Maar die grootste probleem maar die lande om ons. Hulle kom vir werk want daar is nie werk nie en al is daar werk is die geld wat hulle hier kry baie beter.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

Het jy dalk vir my statistieke oor die verwyderings?

In 1998 is daar bv. so 184 000 verwyder maar al die statistieke gaan hoofkantoor toe hulle sal jou beter kan help

ANNEXURE F

Transcription of interview with mr W. Vorster, Department of Home Affairs

Onderhoud: Willem Vorster, Vreemdelinge Beheer
 Departement Binnelandse Sake
 1 Februarie, 2000, 11h00 – 12h30

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Die studie gaan basies oor die beleid rondom van vlugteling, maar ons wil ook probeer bepaal wat is die idee is wat mense het rondom omgewingsvlugteling en of daar regtig 'n behoefte is vir omgewingsvlugteling as 'n nuwe kategorie van migrasie.

RESPONDENT:

Kom ek se vir jou so, terminologie in die hele migrasie veld is altyd 'n probleem en daarom is dit belangrik dat ons eers kyk waarvan praat ons. Intern in die departement as ons praat van vlugteling dan dink ons aan mense wat gedek word deur die 28 Julie 1951 Konvensie vir vlugteling... en ook as jy nou gaan na die AOU se kosep wat bietjie breër is. So, wanneer ons praat primêr van vlugteling dink ons aan daardie ou. Andersyds ...word daar ook dikwels gepraat in die rigting van *economic migrants*. Mense wat migreer omdat hulle primêr beter weivelde soek. So dit is 'n ander konsep. As ons dan ook nou kyk na migrasie, of as ons nou kyk na onwettige of ongedokumenteerde migrasie - wat dit ook somtyds genoem word -... as ons na ons *illegal aliens* probleem kyk in sy breë en die komplikasies wat daarmee saamgaan dan sit ons migrasiegewys in Suid-Afrika in twee situasies. In die eerste instansie, hy is 'n transito-area vir migrasie, omgewingsmigrasie, ekonomiese migrasie noem dit wat jy wil, dit is een faktor. Suid-Afrika vanweë van sy infrastruktuur en sy kommunikasieskakel, sy lugvervoer het tot 'n baie groot mate 'n transito-area geword.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

So die mense kom hierna toe om dan nou na 'n ander plek toe te gaan...

RESPONDENT:

....eintlik na 'n ander plek te gaan, maar hy gebruik Suid-Afrika as die transito roete. Bloot as 'n roete in die eerste instansie en dan in die tweede instansie as 'n land waarin hy dokumentasie kan bekom wat aanvaarbaar sal wees vir die plek waarheen hy nou migreer. Dit is die eenkant van die pakkie wat ons dra. Die ander kant is dan mense wat Suid-Afrika as 'n eindestinasie sien. So wanneer al hierdie goed bespreek word in Afrika en wêreldforums dan sit ons in 'n onbeneidenswaardige posisie. In Afrika is ons, wel nie heeltemal nie, maar by uitstek, die ontvangersland.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Ja, so oor voorhandliggende redes?

RESPONDENT:

Ons is die ontvangersland in Afrika. Ons Afrika bure, en die res van Afrika, sien nie die probleem op dieselfde manier as wat ons dit sien nie. Tot 'n groot mate is hulle almal *countries of origin*. Hulle genereer ekonomiese migrasie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Sou u sê dat dit vir hulle 'n voordelige stand van sake.

RESPONDENT:

Ons kan nou daarby kom, dit is 'n belangrike feit wat jy daarna verwys. So, dit is primêr as jy die ding nou na daardie kant toe kyk. So 'n mens moet wanneer die onderwerp ter sprake kom is daar altyd tussen ons en ons ander Afrika lande effens van 'n gevoel te oor die hele....

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

... 'n Antagonisme?

RESPONDENT:

Somtyds selfs sover, want jy sien om jou net 'n idee te gee. Al ons buurlande is gereeld vol baie storiëtjies oor hoe ons hulle mense hanteer wat ons terugstuur. Dit lê op ons koste, hulle wil vereistes stel oor hoe die mense moet gehanteer word terwyl hulle teruggestuur word, maar hulle maak geen bedrae tot die terugkeer nie.

- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Is daar enige bilaterale ooreenkomste met die buurlande in verband hiermee?*
- RESPONDENT: Tot 'n sekere mate ja. As jy nou vat ons het 'n ooreenkoms of 'n reëling met Mosambiek waarbyons nie nodig het om burgers van daardie lande wat ons repatrieer eers laat identifiseer deur die ... plaaslike ambassade voordat ons hulle uitvat nie. Ons is besig tans met 'n soortgelyke situasie hopelik, dit het van hulle kant ook gekom, ons moet nou net die prosedures deurkry uiteindelik met Lesotho.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *So dit maak die proses 'n bietjie vinniger.*
- RESPONDENT: Dit maak die proses baie vinniger. Veral as jy nou kyk na die aantal, want Mosambiek en Lesotho bly ons grootste in getalle, ons grootste probleem en ... die identifikasie bly 'n probleem. Ons sal 'n bietjie later daarvoor gesels. As 'n mens nou kyk na die werklike vlugteling is dit vir ons as vreemdeling beheer nie regtig 'n probleem nie, want as hy regtig 'n vlugteling is dan word hy deur die sisteem gehelp, geabsorbeer en aangehou.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *En daar is wetgewing rondom dit?*
- RESPONDENT: Ja al hoe wel die wetgewing kyk daardie gedeelte berus uit en uit op 28 Julie 1951 se konvensie en die protokolle en AOU en al daai goed. Daar is tans, of laas jaar, ... 'n wet aangeneem vir die hantering - wat dan ook bepaal tot watter mate ons die konvensie implimenteer en hoe ons dit implimenteer, maar hy is nog nie inwerking nie en ons hoop dit sal een of ander tyd in hierdie jaar in werking tree. Op die oomblik ... werk daardie gedeelte op soort van 'n ooreenkoms wat ons met die UNHCR het.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Ja dit is wat ek ook verstaan. Daar is op die oomblik nie regtig beleid rondom vlugteling, wat ons kan sê daar is 'n definitiewe beleid nie. Alles is nog hangende. Internasionale migrasie beleid is mos nou geformuleer en dit is mos nou in die proses dat dit nou beter geimplimenteer word as vlugteling. Dit is bietjie voor in die proses.*
- RESPONDENT: Ja ... nou sit ons met die vlugteling. Ons was verplig, by gebrek aan plaaslike wetgewing, is ons verplig om die konvensie uit te voer en dan ook in samewerking met die UNHCR. Ons het met hulle ook sekere ooreenkomste gemaak oor hoe die konvensie geimplimenteer sal word inn die tussen tyd en hulle assesteer ons met baie dinge, inligting en al so aan. Dit is die vlugtelingkant as ons nou weg kyk van die vlugtelingkant en ons kyk na die illegal aliens die mense, ... vreemdelinge, wat in die RSA onwettig is. Daar is 'n groot persentasie van hulle wat van die vlugtelingstelsel gebruik maak om hulself hier te kan vestig vir 'n tyd lank, omdat die stelsel om die oomblik totaal oorstok is en hoe meer ouens daarvan onwettig gebruik maak hoe grootter is die oorstok van die stelsel. Dit is nou maar een van daardie dinge. Dus 'n oneindige spiral waarmee ons sit. Nou is daar allerhande pogings wat aan die gang is van hulle kant af om die ding nou so 'n bietjie kort te knip. As ons nou kyk na die onwettige vreemdelinge dan moet ons nou kyk na -onwettige vreemdelinge is hier omdat hulle wettig ingekom het en dan onwettig hier gebly het nadat hulle permitte verval het. Dit is die een lot. Die ander lot is dan die mense wat onwettig die RSA binnekom dit wil sê en ons praat van klandestien. Of hy kruip in 'n lorrie weg en hy gaan deur die grenspos of daar is roetetjies oor die grenspos. Ons grens is 3000km so iets.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Ek het nou die dag gelees 7000 km.*

RESPONDENT: Ek sal my nie uitgee, dit is ongelooflik en as jy nou op my ouderdom kan ek byvoorbeeld as jy kyk na die draad tussen ons en die grens tussen ons en Botswana kan ek op my ouderdom bo-oor hom spring. En as ek nou te moeg is daarvoor kan ek die paaltjie omtrap en bo-oor hom loop, so dit is eenkant. Die ander kant is vir baie groot afstande is of bergreeks of riviere, dis die grens. Die riviere is nie standhoudend in Suid-Afrika nie en die bergreekse, hoewel hulle redelik onherbergsaam is, is hulle nie ondeurdringbaar nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Dit is nie soos die Alpe nie.*

RESPONDENT: As jy selfs kom rondom Lesotho ek meen binne skree afstand van die grenspos af kan jy sien hoe loop die ouens oor die grens, maar hy is so onherbergsaam dat patrolering absoluut onmoontlik is.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Dit is nou die ander kant van die saak.*

RESPONDENT: Die paadjie self so oor is begaanbaar, maar so patrolering is nie moontlik nie so daar is 'n verskeidenheid van probleme in die geval en dan ook ons sê altyd as jy nou regtig kyk na grens dan was daar twee plekke in die geskiedenis van die wereld waar die ouens probeer het om 'n muur te bou om vreemdelinge uit te hou. En nie een van die twee was suksesvol nie. Die een was die ou groot muur van China..... En die ander is dan natuurlik die Berlynse muur en nie een van die twee was ooit effektief nie, nie op sy hoogtepunt nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Ja en self as jy vat ek het nou die dag gekyk na 'n program oor mense wat oor die grens oor die Berlynse muur dat 6000 mense wat probeer oorkom en net 'n 1000 is doodgeskiet. 5000 het nogsteeds oorgekom.*

RESPONDENT: Ten minste. Dit is nou maar die waarvan 'n mens weet en dit was oor 'n klein afstand dus groot koste, ongelooflike kostes. Dit is net nie altyd prakties moontlik nie. Nie dat 'n mens dit moet opgee nie, maar om algehele grensbeheer toe te pas is baie, baie moeilik. Dankie vader dit is die polisie en die weermag se taak so dus nie ons skuld nie, maar ek het begrip vir dit dat dit absoluut 'n onbegonne taak is.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Nou is daar ook sprake van meer oop grense. Dink u dit sal regtig in die nabye toekoms realiseer? Ek weet daar is sulke sprake.*

RESPONDENT: As jy nou praat van die OAU en ook Sadek in terme van die Movement Protocol - Free Movement of People Protocol en die Tourism Protocol. Ons kan 'n bietjie netnou daarvoor ook gesels. As 'n mens nou dan kyk na die klomp wat nou onwettig na Suid-Afrika toe kom, die wat onwettig hier raak is gewoonlik die wat 'n bietjie meer op 'n hoër vlak is. Hy het in die eerste instansie met 'n behoorlike paspoort en visum, en tien teen een met 'n vliegtuig hier aangekom of tien teen een met sy eie motorkar, waar met uitsondering van die Zimbabweers in die Noordelike Provinsie wat 'n ander probleme is. Maar hulle word onwettig hier, omdat hy hier 'n betrekking of 'n besigheid aan die gang sit of wat ook al en hy strek daardie kategorie strek reg oor die wêreld. Hulle, uit die aard van die saak, die groep is almal werklik ekonomies gemotiveerd. Selfs in die lande buite Afrika, binne Afrika is dit verstaanbaar want ek meen al dink party van ons mense dit gaan sleg hier gaan dit maar verdomp goed hier by ons.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Veral as jy kyk na die Bruto Nasionale Produk in vergelyking met Mosambiek.*

- RESPONDENT: En al daai klas van dinge en selfs oorsee en jy sien dit ook in die mense wat nou weer terug kom. Als gebeur nou maar.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Daar is maar orals probleme*
RESPONDENT: Dit gaan eintlik goed en die groot rede vir verskuiwing van mense in die verband is dan ook die verskil, die 'discrepansy' tussen ons vlak van die ekonomiese aktiwiteite, lewensmoontlikhede, ens. en die lande waar die mense vandaan kom. En nou praat jy Oos-Europa, jy praat Sentraal Asia jy praat Suidelike Middellandse see, jy praat die hele Afrika eintlik. So, jy praat van plekke soos Thailand en dies meer wat stadig aan - hulle het 'n spesifieke probleem met die storie van die dames wat vir ons 'n groot probleem is. Ons het seker in die laaste jaar seker 'n 100 Thai meisies verwyder wat hier in prostitusie en naglewe.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Dit word nou weer gekoppel aan misdaad.*
RESPONDENT: Jy moet ook onthou dat prostitusie as 'n misdaad word tans glad nie bekamp nie en hy word nie werklik as 'n misdaad 'getackel' nie. So die dames wat ons dan so trap is nie omdat hulle prostitute is nie dis omdat hulle, ...of hulle is onwettig hier of hulle het op vakansie permitte ingekom en dan beoefen hulle, hulle beroepe. Dit is ons probleem dit is 'n groot probleem. Hulle en dan ook tot 'n mate van die ander Chinese, Hong Kong, meestal die Chinese, vaste land Chinese is op hierdie stadium 'n groot aantrekkingskrag, waarskynlik as gevolg van die vigs. Omdat die vigs in Afrika so verskriklik groot is. Nou hoe lank hulle nou olraait bly weet ek nou ook nie. Dit is nou maar die kans wat daardie ouens vat wat nou maar 'n bietjie rof aan die gang is. Dit gaan daarvoor dat daardie meisies as jy nou teruggaan daar waar hulle vandaan kom, hulle het geen heenkome waar hulle vandaan kom nie absoluut niks.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *So u sê die grootste oorsig van onwettige immigrasie is maar ekonomies.*
RESPONDENT: Is ekonomies en selfs ons sit ook selfs by die groepe wat klandestien inkom sit ons met mense wat kom en gaan. Spesifiek uit Mosambiek.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Hulle het nou basies families daar en hulle onderhou hulle.*
RESPONDENT: Mosambiek, Lesotho als. Hulle kom werk hier stuur geld terug, Kersfees gaan hy huis toe.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Dit is eintlik so maklik.*
RESPONDENT: As jy nou kyk na ekonomiese migrasie dan kyk ons na twee stelle faktore wat ons noem die 'push' en die 'pull factors'. Die stootfaktore synde dan nou die swak omstandighede in sy eie land van herkoms, werkseleenthede, beskikbaarheid van lewensmiddele al daardie dinge vorm dan 'n rede hoekom hy sy eie land wil verlaat en dan nou aan ons kant die moontlikheid dat hy hier 'n werk gaan kry, die moontlikheid dat hy hier op 'n ander manier 'n ekonomiese bestaan kan maak en dat hy dan hier lewensmiddele aankoop en terug gaan na sy land van herkoms. As jy nou by Beitebrug en Lebombo staan dan is dit baie maklik om 'n vrou met 'n totale bad bo-op haar kop te sien loop.
- ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Dit was vir my ongelooflik by Beithrug om te sien die mense wat daar deur loop en hulle loop absoluut deur die grens.*
RESPONDENT: Dit is ongelooflik wat hulle als met hulle saamdra. As jy na die kombi's kyk wat daar aankom en die busse wat daar is. Die vragte is ongelooflik, maar dit gaan alles daarom om die lewensbestaan aan daardie kant te verbeter.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

In Afrika sal u sê dat omgewingsfaktore soos byvoorbeeld die droogte in Zimbabwe 'n invloed het op onwettige migrasie?

RESPONDENT:

Zimbabwe het 'n slegte situasie, want hy het 'n langdurige droogte gehad en daarmee saam het - die droogte is blykbaar nie meer so erg soos dit was nie - maar daarmee saam het sy werkseleenthede verminder en het die Zimbabwe se dollar het geval. Nou die laaste keer wat ek in Zimbabwe was, was 2 Zim dollars was 'n Rand nou is dit minder as 15 sent. 50 van ons sente het vir jou 'n Zim dollar gegee nou is dit iets soos 10/12 sente. Nou daai val in die laaste paar jaar het uit die aard van die saak die druk veroorsaak. Saam met die ekonomiese die monetêre situasie wat so versleg het kry jy dat normale lewensmiddele wat ek sou kon bekostig is nie eers beskikbaar is in die land nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Maar eintlik is dit op die ou einde 'n bouse kringloop, want dus droogte en dan kry die mense swaar en die ekonomie val en dan maak die droogte dit nog moeiliker en dan op die ou einde.

RESPONDENT:

Ek glo natuurlik dat daar 'n groot deel van *mismanagement* ook betrokke.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Ja natuurlik altyd by omgewingsfaktore

RESPONDENT:

Veral Robert Mugabe is redelik besig om baie droog te maak hy het nie geld om sy mense kos te gee nie, maar hy het geld om 'n army in die Kongo in te stuur. Dit is bietjie grootheidswaan wat my betref so dit is 'n faktor. Dan daai goeters is dan ook hoofsaaklik ekonomies en dan ook somtyds nie net ekonomies nie, maar jy kan ook se dat die soort beroepe wat van die mense wil volg of sou wou volg is nie beskikbaar in sy land van herkoms nie. So die reikwyte van sy eie vermoëns word beperk deur die plaaslike omstandighede. So hy mag miskien met dit wat hy het 'n lewe kan maak, maar met wat hy het sou hy 'n ander tipe beroep kon beoefen wat hy dan nou nie tuis kon beoefen. Al daai tipe dinge wat dan nou 'n faktor speel. Die ander ding wat baie belangrik is as jy nou veral kyk na die plekke waar die gevegtery so lank aan gehou het, veral in Angola en Mosambiek wat redelike bloeiende ekonomieë gehad het, wat berus het op 'n goeie landbou situasie. Met die vlug van die Poras en half Poras uit daardie lande uit het die boerdery geslag heeltemal uitgesterf en dit verskaf 'n probleem. Nou moet 'n mens as jy nou kyk na die trekfaktore dan is dit nou maar werkseleenthede hierdie kant, die feit dat hier meer ekonomiese aktiwiteite is en derhalwe kan my klein ekonomiese aktiwiteit maklik daarby inpas, straatverkopery en al daardie klas van dinge. D ie interessante ding wat nou aan die gang is nou Ons nou werk op die basis dat ons prioriteite met ons gebrek aan *resources* moet ons, ons prioriteite regkry. Nou sit ons met die kwessie dat verwydering van vreemdelinge, ons verwyder nou al oor die laaste paar jaar so gemiddeld 180,000 mense per jaar Ddit klink baie *impressive*, maar as jy dit vat teen die aantal wat geskat word wat hier is. Dis maar 'n skatting, want geen vreemdeling gaan staan met sy handjie in die lug en se tel my nie. Dan sit 'n mens met die situasie dat dit ons ten minste 26 jaar sal neem as daar geen nuwes bykom nie om hulle almal te verwyder. Dan as jy daarna begin kyk dan begin dit lelik lyk. Aan die ander kant sê ons dat daar twee dinge is wat gedoen moet word een waarmee die departement niks mee kan doen nie, maar wat van staatsweë kan help en dit is opvoeding en opleiding in land van herkoms en dan ook ondersteunende programme in daardie lande van herkoms soos wat hulle nou met daardie boere gedoen het wat nou daar gaan, ens.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Hoe suksesvol is sulke programme?

Baie van hierdie goed hang nou maar ook af van persoonlikhede en van houdings en verhoudings. Sommige van die ouens wat so in gaan in die res van Afrika in, want orals in Afrika is daar sulke komponente van Suid-Afrikaners wat nou terugtrek in Afrika, boerdery gewys veral. Sommige van hulle is baie suksesvol, maar nou hang dit ook van wedersydse houdings en verhoudings sommige van die plaaslike gemeenskap is die mense ten goede en besef dat dit hom nou goed bied wat daar nie tevore was nie. Ander is nog steeds naganig oor die voorspoed wat kom, omdat hy dit nie tenvolle syne kan maak nie en dan leen hy hom oor en dan val dit weer terug na waar dit was. En dan die ou wat uitgaan om dit te gaan doen dit hang ook nou van sy houding af of hy net gaan – en dit iss iets waaroor Afrika redelik sensitief is – dit is die ou koloniale gedagte van ons gaan om te gaan skep. Ons skep die room af en ons los net die wy agter wat in baie gevalle wel waar was en daarvoor is Afrika dan sensitief. En die land wat die hulp gee is sensitief. Hulle het baie hulp gegee as jy na Mosambiek gaan ek weet nie of jy daardie program gesien het van die splinternuwe trekkers en kombines wat daar staan opgeroes hy is nog nie een keer op die land gewees nie, want hulle het fantastiese masjienerie gegee, maar daar was nie 'n bestaande bedryf om dit te benut nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Dit kom ook by opleiding in, en opvoeding.

Ja, dit is 'n lang proses. Want as jy dit vat na al hierdie jare se oorlog, ek meen Mosambiek het florerende besighede gehad die Chinese ens. Die Portugese het goed gelewe, maar nou ja daardie geslag is nou weg. Daardie programme moet van staatsweë en van internasionale kant af kom. Ons as departement kan nie daardie programme loots nie dus nie binne ons bestek van praktyk nie en ons kan dus nie daai probleme oplos nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Ons sit met 'n dilemma, want ons het probleme in ons eie land werkloosheid wat ons moet hanteer opvoeding hier en nou moet ons nog ander lande se probleme ook nog hanteer.

RESPONDENT:

Nou sit jy ook met die *catch 22* situasie nl. dat hoe meer van hulle hier inkom hoe groter word ons probleem. So jy kan dit nie toelaat nie en jy sit met 'n dilemma daarso.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

En jy het ook maar beperkte fondse.

Fondse is en bly ook op hierdie stadium natuurlik 'n baie groot beperking. Ek stem daarmee saam in 'n sekere mate, want dit is belangrik dat die Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie se sterk as moontlik bly, want as ons ekonomie sou val kan ons geen invloed in die res van Afrika hê nie. En daarom filosofies is ek tevrede met die werk wat ek doen. Party mense sê haai siestog die arme mense, dit is so, maar as ons nie iets daaraan doen nie dan kan ons, ons eie land reduseer tot so 'n vlak en dan is daar nêrens heen om te gaan nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Dit is maar eintlik die redingspootjie effek. 'n Mens kan nie 20 mense in 'n boodjie laai wat net 10 kan vat nie, want al 20 gaan verdrink.

RESPONDENT:

Dit is nou presies wat ons in gedagte moet hou. So, 'n mens moet aan die eenkant menslik wees, maar aan die ander kant moet jy ook prakties/realisties wees in terme van die feit dat ons aan hulle lande 'n verskil kan maak as ons sterk bly. Dit bly 'n faktor daar. Van ons kant af, die blote verwydering is nie iets waarmee ons kan stop nie, maar dit is nie vir ons 'n prioriteit nie. Ons voel as ons die mense wat die trekpleisters veroorsaak as ons hulle kan stop dan kan ons 'n baie verder paadjie loop. Ons het gevind dat onwettige

vreemdelinge baie oulik is hulle is glad nie plekgebonde nie. Hulle loop soos water na die kant toe waar die minste weerstand is, amen oor en uit. Ons het nou al 'n paar keer gesien as 'n bepaalde kantoor op en wakker is dan raak daai distrik so gou skoon dit is net nie waar nie en die oomblik wat die distrik skoon is en die manne begin op hulle louere sit dan word dit weer meer. Of jy moet dan die manne verskuif na 'n volgende distrik of wat ook al. Hulle is glad nie gepla met tyd of plek nie. Waar hy die minste gesteur word en waar hy die meeste ekonomiese voordeel kan verkry is waarheen hy gaan. So as ons die ekonomiese voordeel wat hy hierdie kant kan verkry kan afsny, dan voel ons dat dit 'n radikale verskil sou maak. Ek gaan nie 'n 1000 km met my kaalvoete deur die bos loop om te gaan na 'n plek toe waar ek in elk geval niks kan kry nie. Dan bly ek nou maar eerder onder my eie trap se bak sit.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Of jy gaan na 'n ander land toe.

Of jy gaan soek 'n plek waar jy weet waar ek beter as is en dit bly en is vir ons die faktor. Daar is natuurlik vir ons 'n ander faktor wat ons baie bekommer en dit is dat die hoër klas van die onwettige vlugtelinge die feit dat hulle 'n totale breindrein op hulle eie land veroorsaak het is 'n baie, baie groot faktor.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Dit gebeur met Zimbabwe het ek gesien daar is Universiteite toe maak as gevolg daarvan.

RESPONDENT:

As jy nou vat wettig of onwettig hoeveel Nigeriese dokters werk in Suid-Afrika en dan sê 'n mens dit kom nie uit 'n oorvloed nie. Hulle kom nie Suid-Afrika toe omdat daar te veel dokters in Nigerië is nie, hulle kom bloot hierna toe omdat die fooie hoer is. Die feit dat daardie mense hul land verlaat, verlaag uiteraard die plaaslike mense se lewensverwagtinge en dan word hulle onrustig en dan verskuif hulle. So jy begin 'n bouse kringloop. So jy moet die kringloop stop iewers en ons reken die beste kans wat 'n mens het om hom te stop is dan om die trekpleister van hierdie kant af vas te slaan.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Hoe gaan 'n mens dit doen?

Die wet maak voorsiening vir 'n verskeidenheid van maatreëls jy sal sien ons praat daar van employers sanctions.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Ja, ek het 'n bietjie hier gelees hier by die witskrif op International Migration.

RESPONDENT:

Die witpapier. Hy is nog nie vas gemaak nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Ek dink nie dit sal 'n goeie ding wees om hom nou al vas te maak nie. Daar kort so 'n bietjie werk.

RESPONDENT:

Daar is ongelooflike binne gevegte wat aan die gang is in die politiek oor die hele situasie en ons stem nie saam met die wesenlike finale produk wat die witpapier nou op hierdie stadium is nie en wat ons betref is dit nie die finale produk nie. Die ANC sê ook dit is nie die finale produk nie, maar die minister se dit is die finale produk. Hy sê dit is omdat hy 'n raadgever het wie se ideaal dit is om die witpapier deur te druk en hom in wetgewing te kry. Ons is nou besig met 'n gespartel ek is nie ANC politiek geïnteresseerd nie, in teendeel, daarvoor sal my familie in hulle grafte omdraai. Dit is in elk geval nie hoe ek die wêreld sien nie, maar ek stem met hulle heelhartiglik saam oor die primêre gedagte wat tans in hulle geledere rondgaan oor vreemdelinge. Ek het geen twis met my hoofdirekteur oor hoe hy vreemdeling beheer sien en

hoe ek dit sien nie. In teendeel hy is miskien nog sterker vreemdelingbeheer georiënteerd as ek.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Want soos ek die nuwe migrasie die witpapier sien is dat daar baie ruimte geskep word vir mense om onwettig in die land te bly. Hulle kan wettig inkom, maar op die ou einde studiepermitte, werkspermitte, mense wat tydelik hier kan werk kan terug gaan. Skep dit vir my 'n effens probleem in terme van onwettige migrasie.

RESPONDENT:

En dan ook die hele struktuur wat hulle in gedagte het. Dit klink baie maklik om iets soos dit op papier te sit, maar die praktiese implikasie daarvan, die administrasie om dit te bewerkstellig is nie 'n grap nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

En die geld. Ek luister vanmore oor die nuus in verband met die nuwe ID kaartjie. As ek dink ons nou onlans almal nuwe ID dokumente gekry, of baie van ons het, en nou moet weer verander die koste daaraan verbonde, die implimentering daarvan.

RESPONDENT:

Die ding wat ek op my skerm op sit toe jy die kantoor nou binne gekom het is juis dat ek besig is om oor die ID sisteem uit te druk, want dit is vir my belangrik dat die volgende stap as ons nou oorgaan tot die [hane] dat die mense wat oorgaan [hannes] toe moet regtig Suid-Afrikaanse burgers wees, want die persentasie mense wat valse toegang tot die stelsel het is ongelooflik. Ek sit hier met 'n geval/gevalle wat soortvan een geval is, wat uit julle wereld Bloemfontein uit kom. Skepsel wat van Malawi afgekem het in 1984 toe speel hy vir Bloemfontein Celtic sokker toe neem hy die van aan van die mense van Bloemfontein Celtic Molamela en hy gaan registreer homself, maak 'n laat registrasie van geboorte, toender tyd al en sedert hy nou dit gedoen het, het daar nou al drie mense gebruik gemaak van daardie identiteit wat hy geskep het en al drie van hulle Malawiers.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

Sal 'n mens dit ooit alles kan uitroei?

'n Mens sal dit seker nooit alles kan uitroei nie, maar my filosofie is natuurlik net dat jy verloor as jy ophou baklei. En as jy nie goeie sukses op een manier het nie dan moet jy goeie sukses op 'n ander manier begin soek of dan is jy te dom om na 'n ander manier te gaan soek. Ons is stadig maar seker besig om nogal 'n redelike geveg op te sit. Daar is een gedeelte van my afdeling wat spesifiek daarop konsentreer op hierdie stadium. Ons het al snaakse mense uitgegooi, ons het al 'n direkteur van Atoomenergie Korperasie uitgegooi ek het een van die personeel van die Amnesty International uitgegooi, ek die Direkteur van die South African Institute of Chartered Accountants uitgegooi en seker so by 10/15 middelbestuur van Eskom.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

RESPONDENT:

Ek glo natuurlik die hele beleid van affirmative action speel 'n baie groot rol in die hele ding, want die mense verkies om mense van die buiteland te verkry wat beter opgelei is.

Nee, weet jy wat is dit? Die mense was so gretig om affirmative action toe te pas dat hulle nie gekyk het waarmee hulle besig was nie. Die klomp waarvan ek nou gepraat het, het almal Suid-Afrikaanse dokumente gehad - valslik bekom - maar hulle het Suid-Afrikaanse dokumente gehad. Op die oog af as jy nou nie tussen die lyne begin lees nie, ek meen party van hierdie ouens, op sy CV skryf hy gebore in Lagos, Nigerie, maar hy wys vir jou 'n Suid-Afrikaanse ID gebore in Johannesburg. Dit is ons probleem. Daar is baie probleme daaraan verbonde, maar stadig, maar seker is ding besig om te gaan. Jy sien wat nou gebeur is, waar dit voorkom die plaaslike bevolking die mense, wat redelik intiem die plaaslike

bevolking ken en deel is daarvan. Hulle weet wie hoort nie hier nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Daar is baie antagonisme by die plaalike mense.

Want daardie mense neem hulle werk. Wat nou aan die gebeur is as ek weet hierdie ou wat die job, ek soek daardie job en die ou wat in daardie job sit is 'n vreemdeling dan kry ek 'n naamlose oproep dan ondersoek ons hom en ons werk daaraan. Ek sal niemand uitgooi op 'n naamlose oproep nie uit die aard van die saak, maar dit is 'n begin punt waar ek begin soek dan. As die inligting korek is dan tree ons op en as dit verkeerd is, uit die aard van die saak nie, maar dit is interressant dat van die inligting wat ons hierdie jaar gehad het laas jaar gehad het in daai afdeling was ongeveer 0,01 % nie korrek nie. En dan word dit interressant. Dit bly 'n kwessie dat hierdie mense is nie gebonde aan 'n plek nie, hulle is ook nie gebonde aan die plaaslike bevolking nie. Hulle gebruik net die plaaslike bevolking tot die mate wat hulle kan inpas daar om weg te kruip, maar hy skakel nooit in by die plaaslike bevolking ten volle nie en hy vorm nooit deel van die plaaslike bevolking nie. Dieseflde situasie wat jy in Engeland kry as jy na Heathrow lughawe toe gaan sal sy vind dat meeste beampte wat op Heathrow lughawe werk as gewone sekuriteitsbeamptes as gewone werkers op die lughawe almal een of ander vorme van Indiër, hulle het almal tulbande op. Die voorstede rondom Heathrow is feitlik in totaal klein Asië.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

'n Mens kry definitief sulke 'pockets'.

En hulle bly bymekaar. Hulle skakel nooit regtig werklik in. Hier is van die plakkerskampe wat in hul geheel byvoorbeeld Zimbabweers is veral hier rondom Johannesburg. Hillbrow is weer hoofsaaklik Nigeriërs en so bietjie van hulle verwante Wes-Afrika stories. So dit 'n probleem.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Ek wil 'n bietjie teruggaan na die hele kwessie van ons verhouding met ons buurstate, want daar is 'n verskeidenheid betrokke in die literatuur wat ek bestudeer het, want Suid-Afrika voel 'n morele verpligting teenoor sy buurstate, omdat hulle hulp verleen het gedurende apartheid. Hoe affekteer dit nou ons migrasie beleid?

RESPONDENT:

Kom ek se vir jou wat my hoofdirekteur Dr. Matlou gesê het. Dit is so, ons Suid-Afrikaners wat terug gekom het wat in exile was is gehelp deur Afrika. Dan se Dr. Matlou vir jou dat die hoeveelheid Suid-Afrikaners wat in exile in Afrika was of in exile in die wêreld was, was maar 30 000/40 000 mense. Die hoeveelheid Afrika mense wat nou in Suid-Afrika sit is 'n paar miljoen dit is 'n redelike verskil, punt no.1. Punt no.2 toe hulle in exilse in Afrika was het die res van die wêreld hulle gehelp om vir die Suid-Afrikaanse exiles te sorg. Daar is nie een van daardie lande wat dit op hul eie koste gedoen het nie. Hulle het dit gedoen op koste van westerse werelde. Punt no.3 die Dr. Matlou van ons hyself het in Kenia, hyself in 'n kamp gesit as 'n vlugteling, nie as 'n potensiele vlugteling nie, as 'n reeds verklaarde vlugteling, politieke vlugteling. Het hy asiel gekry en asiel beteken hy sit in 'n kamp en hy mag nie werk in daardie land nie en as hy van die kamp af na die winkel toe wil loop moet hy toestemming vra. En dan sê ek ja dit is waarna ons moet kyk. En dit is wat toenemend besig is om na vore te kom in ons situasie en wat ook pertinent gesê is vir die buurlande.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Hoe sien die buurlande dit?

Wat hulle betref is dit 'n doodgewone verskoning en dit kom terug na een van jou oorspronklike vra van hoe sien hulle die hele migrasie proses. Ons sit met 'n geweldige probleem hierdie ouens weier om die vreemdelinge wat ons hier vang te identifiseer. Hulle wil hom nie terughê nie. Nie omdat hulle hom nie erken as hulle burger nie, maar as hy terugkom is dit nog 'n ou wat werkloos is aan daai kant.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

En dan is dit vir hulle weer 'n las.

Ja, so elkeen van hulle, en ons kry hoewel dit moeilik is om dit absoluut te bewys, maar die gevoel is besig om pos te vat by ons immigrasie beamptes wat direk met die ambassade te doen het en so aan. En self op ander vlakke is dit baie duidelik dat van hierdie lande is besig om hulle mense aan te moedig om Suid-Afrika toe te gaan, omdat hulle weet die mense werk hier en hulle stuur geld huis toe. Dit help hulle. So, en hulle hoewel hulle op die oppervlak nie die terugstuur van hulle mense kan teenstaan nie, is hulle glad nie gelukkig daarmee nie en lê hulle elke moontlike struikel blok in ons pad. Ons moes nou sover gaan ons het nou via buitelandse sake vir 'n sekere aantal van die ambasades geskryf en gesê dat as hulle nie ophou met die speletjies nie, want wat hulle nou doen bv. as jy nou kyk hier in Wes-Afrika dan tel ons die ou op en al die inligting wat hy vir ons gee dui daarop se nou maar hy is 'n Nigeriër. Dan gaan ons na die Nigeriese ambassade toe hulle praat met hom vlot in sy eie taal en as hulle klaar met hom gepraat het dan se hulle vir jou hy is nie 'n Nigeriër nie, maar hy is eintlik dan 'n Ghanees en dan gaan jy na die Ghaneese toe en dan praat hulle vlot met hom en sy eie taal en dan as hulle klaar gepraat het dan se hulle hy is nie eintlik 'n Ghanees nie, maar 'n Ivoorkus, so hardloop dit nou al in die ronte.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Tien teen een was hy in al daardie lande gewees.

Hulle ken mekaar se tale verstaan en ons weet ook nou al as ek 'n van sien dan kan ek vir jou se dit is tien teen een 'n Nigeriese van of dit is tien teen een 'n Ghaneese van. Die klank van die ding maak nou al vir ons sense en as jy nou 'n ou kry soos Dr. Matlou wat deur die hele Afrika was, 'n regte intelligente ou, hy ken amper al die Afrika-tale. Amper die enigste taal wat hy nie ken nie is Afrikaans en dan spot ek hom daaroor. Die feit van die saak is, Bangladesh, Pakistan en India doen met ons presies dieselfde. Dit is vir ons onmoontlik om te sê hierdie ambassade is regtig besig om ons te bedrieg.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Hulle doen dit nie pertinent nie, dit is alles subtiel.

Ja, dit is alles in hulle taal. Ons het nie 'n idee wat sê hulle vir mekaar nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

En om nou 'n vertaler te kry dit is ook nou weer probleem.

Ja, en dan weet jy ook nie, want hy is ook maar een van hulle. Die vertalings is nie noodwendig korek nie. Dit bly 'n probleem en ons het nou byvoorbeeld van die vasteland Chinese, DROC, het ons nou onlangs 'n probleem gehad dat ons 'n klomp Chinese moes verwyder, maar uit die aard van die saak kan jy nie 'n persoon verwyder as jy nie 'n dokument het nie. Nou vernietig hulle, hulle dokumente of hulle steek dit weg nou kan ek hulle nie verwyder nie. Nou gaan ek na die ambassade toe om hulle te identifiseer. Hulle moet hom identifiseer en aanvaar en dan 'n dokument uitreik waarmee ons hom nou verder kan repatrieer. Dit is waar die ooreenkoms met Lesotho en Mosambiek vir ons baie belangrik is,

maar die Chinese het eintlik blatant vir ons gesê hulle gaan nie hierdie mense identifiseer nie, tensy ons nie aan sekere voorwaardes sal voldoen nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Die voorwaardes maak dit op die ou einde baie moeilik.

Dit maak dit vir ons baie moeilik, want ons kon op die ou einde hulle nie verwyder na Beijing nie ons moes hulle toe verwyder na die absolute uithoek van China toe. Ons het ander gevalle gehad byvoorbeeld wat in dieselfde lyn val van lande bv. Bulgarye hulle het 'n scheme op 'n stadium gehad en dan gaan die ouens wat onwettig hier is gaan ambassade toe en sê vir die ambassade hy wil nie meer 'n Bulgaar wees nie dan aanvaar hulle dit en hulle sê jy het nou jou burgerskap van Bulgarye verloor. Nou is hy staatsloos en nou probeer hulle ons op daardie manier ons forseer om hom te aanvaar. Ek het daardie geveg met die Bulgare gewen. Ek het hulle gedruk in 'n blik totdat hul oë begin traan het. Dit is die probleme wat ontstaan en wat hulle werklik probeer. Goed daar is ander dinge. Ons het gister gekyk na 'n soortgelyke geval. Die Chinese is verskriklik ontsteld en ons kry die een verbale nota via die diplomatieke kanale na die ander een, omdat ons vir hulle mense vir 'n deposito vra as ons vir hulle 'n visum laat nitreik om te verseker dat hy sal terug keer na sy land van herkoms. Ons is verskriklik onregverdig en ons beperk die mense se beweging en dit is teen die konstitusie en ek weet nie wat so goed nog nie. Dit is en bly vir ons 'n krisis daardie tipe van houding, maar ons het nou 'n hele aksie geloots via die nuus. Die Chinese, ek weet nie watter land dit was wat nou die Amerikaners wat die boodskap gekry het dat die Amerikaners vereis 'n 10 000 pond deposito. Die is 10 000 pond en dit is in ons term R100 000 deposito, maar China moan omdat ons R10 000 vra.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Die meeste lande werk maar in elk geval met so 'n stelsel.

Jy kan nie anders nie en daar is nou baie mense wat vir jou se ja maar die wêreld moet vryer raak, maar Europa het gewys dat daardie vryheid nie besig is om te werk nie.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Ten spyte van die feit dat hulle nou een basies is hou baie ouens nogsteeds hulle grense vas.

Ja en op 'n stadium was die grense heeltemal weggeneem en nou stadig kruip hierdie een terug en dan daardie een en die wat dit nog nie terug het nie, het 'n werklike probleem. Want en kan nou in Madrid en Spanje 'n bank beroof en ek kan binne 'n kwessie van 'n paar uur kan ek in Pole wees en niemand gaan weet waar ek is nie. Dit maak dit verskriklik moeilik. Dit bring my basies by die ander gedagte en dit is hierdie hele gedagte van Free Movement of People. In die SADEK streek die Suidelike-Afrika streek vir 'n begin en dan wyer ook en so-aan. Daar is nog nie in werklikheid beleid daarvoor geformuleer nie, maar die wyse waarop ons daarna begin kyk het is dat ons besig is om te onderhandel met die OAU om te kyk of ons nie 'n projek kan loots veral tussen ons, Mosambiek en Swaziland rondom die Maputo Corridor en daardie hele begrip van die aaneenskakeling van wildsparke en toeriste aantreklighede. Waarmee jy veronderstel 'n seker visum vrystel. Die gehele gedagte is as 'n mens daarna kyk soos ons die ding sien. As jy nou drie of vier lande het dan sit jy nou met die probleem as jy nou die hekke tussen die lande heeltemal wegvat dan gaan hierdie oorstroming onder verskillende vlakke dan kry jy die wat hulle noem die ou vatsindroom; maak nie saak hoe die sporte van die ou vat lyk nie die water gaan altyd by die laagste een uitgaan. Die kan hoog wees aan die eenkant, maar dit loop altyd by die

laagste kant uit en hy probeer dit altyd gelyk maak en dit is die primêre beginsel van hierdie ekonomiese/omgewingsmigrasie dat dit amper is soos die osmotiese proses wat soek na 'n gelykstelling. Uit die aard van die saak is grense in daardie situasie dan dit wat probeer voorkom dat gelykstelling plaasvind, want die gelykstelling is altyd na die negatiewe kant toe. Niemand *score* uiteindelik van die gelykstelling nie. As jy nou die hekke wegvat dan gaan dit nou 'n probleem wees, maar nou sê ons ek wil toerisme bevorder. Nou is ons gedagte dat net ons stelsel en die uitbreiding van ons stelsel, met sekere sekuriteit voorbehoude, maar met die uitbreiding van ons basiese stelsel kan jy die situasie so hanteer dat 'n persoon kry 'n visum vir hierdie 4 lande. Soos 'n Shengen visum, maar Shengen vir jou algehele vrye binnekoms in daardie lande kon gee, gee hierdie visum ek land hier op hierdie lughawe en ek kry daar my toerismeverblyf permit. Die grenspos vanweë die normale beweging van mense van die twee lande kan ek nie heeltemal tot nuut maak nie – punt no.1. Punt no.2 hierdie ou word nou nie beperk nie hy kan nou met daardie visum en tydelike verblyf permit kan hy in al vier hierdie lande gaan kuier.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

So hy kan dus basies deur al die grense inkom?

Al wat ons doen as ons stelsel reg is en die ding word reg gehanteer dan gaan hy uit hierdie land uit en daar het ons ook die gedagte dat ons in die toekoms kyk na die moontlikheid om by 'n grens, sê jy het een grenspos daai kant is net 'n binnekoms as ek ingaan in die land in is daar net 'n binnekoms en as ek inkom in hierdie land is hier 'n binnekoms so daar is geen vertrekke nie. My binnekoms registreer 'n vertrek, daai binnekoms registreer 'n vertrek.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:
RESPONDENT:

Op die oomblik is daar inkom en vertrek.

Nou stop jy eenkeer en daai binnekoms wat hy registreer, registreer by my 'n vertrek. Dit is rekenaarmatig dit is so eenvoudig as van 'n wa afval. Dit is een van die groot dinge wat hulle teen ons hou, hulle se ons belemmer die beweging. Wat my betref, nou kry hy 'n permit en soos ons stelsel nou werk as jy dit op dieselfde basis werk as jy nou met daardie permit by die grens kom al wat hulle doen hulle lees die *barcode* en hy registreer op die stelsel. Hy is nie nou meer in land A nie, hy is nou in land B. En uiteindelik vertrek hy weer van land D af na sy land van herkoms en daar registreer hy sy finale vertrek en ons weet hierdie man is nie meer in een van hierdie vier lande nie. Jy fasiliteer sy beweging, hy het geen ekstra drama nie, een visum, een permit en hy ry rond soos hy wil in hierdie area. Wat toerismegewys baie voordele inhou en wat jy werklik dan fasilitering het van beweging in stede van totale vernietiging van enige beheer, want as hierdie ou nou daar 'n misdaad pleeg en as hy deur die grens gaan dan weet ons hy het nou probeer vlug. Nou kom jy as jy in dieselfde situasie die plaaslike bevolking sien dan is hulle ook in dieselfde situasie dat hy kan vir toerisme doeleindes vrylik beweeg van die een van die ander deur te lees. Hulle lees die *barcode* en hy ry. So hy kry eenkeer 'n permit om uitegaan en hy lees verder deur afhange wat die onderlinge ooreenkoms is. Die ou wat hier by B wil werk en hy kom van A af hy moet doodeenvoudig voor die tyd aansoek doen vir 'n werkspermit en verder lees ons net sy beweging as hy 'n werkspermit het vir B dan kom werk hy hier en hy word gelees in en hy word gelees uit hy gaan kuier hier en hy gaan kuier daar en hy gaan werk weer terug daar.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER:

Dit is nou waar internasionale migrasie met die hele ding van permitte in kom.

RESPONDENT: So jy kan wat my betref, ek mag verkeerd wees, en dit mag miskien nie wees wat baie van die ouens in gedagte het nie, maar van uit ons migrasie oogpunt uit sit ons met die kwessie ons glo totale afskaffing van beheer is nie werklik voordelig nie, in teendeel ons kry baie ondersteuning selfs van plekke soos die Afrika Ontwikkelingsbank. Die oomblik wat jy beheer afskaf dan het hulle geen basiese beplanningstatistiek waarop hulle kan werk om hulle ekonomiese faktore te bepaal nie. As jy jou beheer behou, maar jy fasiliteer dit op hierdie manier het jy die minimum probleme sonder dat jy jou beheer totaal prysgee.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: *Op die ou einde moet jy tog jou soewereiniteit tog in 'n mate beskerm.*

RESPONDENT: En dit is wat nou in Europa besig is om hulle te pla en as jy kyk na Afrika is Afrika permanernt besig om te baklei oor daai ding van grense, grondgebied, myne-myne, joun-joune. As 'n mens dit aanvaar dat ek bly baas oor my gronde en die mate waartoe ek my plek ontwikkel gaan veroorsaak of die toeris na my toe gaan kom of na my buurman toe.

ONDERHOUDVOERDER: Kan u my dalk na nog persone toe verwys wat vir my sal kan inligting gee?

ANNEXURE G

**Published article: Environmental refugees in developing nations: exploring
the causes and impact**

Nola Redelinghuys & Andre Pelser

Environmental refugees in developing nations: exploring the causes and impact

Summary

The phenomenon of environmental refugees is a little recognised and largely undefined migration trend that is expected to show dramatic acceleration in the near future as environmental degradation renders large areas uninhabitable. This article explores the phenomenon, arguing that current conceptualisations concerning migration are too narrow to deal adequately with this type of forced migration. A re-assessment of current categorisations and policy frameworks — concerning forced migration in general, and forced environmental migration in particular — is therefore necessary. Furthermore, the social factors fueling environmental degradation, which in its turn leads to environmental refugee movements, are discussed. Attention is also paid to the impact that these forced migrants may have on host countries.

Omgewingsvlugtelinge in ontwikkelende nasies: oorsake en impak

Omgewingsvlugtelinge is 'n grootliks ongedefinieerde verskynsel wat nie genoegsame erkenning geniet nie, alhoewel hierdie tipe migrasie ongekend sal toeneem soos omgewingsverval in die toekoms groot areas onbewoonbaar maak. Hierdie artikel ondersoek die verskynsel van omgewingsvlugtelinge. Daar word geredeneer dat huidige konseptualiserings te eng is om hierdie vorm van gedwonge migrasie bevredigend te hanteer. 'n Herevaluering van huidige kategoriserings en beleidsraamwerke — gedwonge migrasie in die algemeen, en gedwonge omgewingsmigrasie in besonder — is derhalwe noodsaaklik. Verder word die sosiale faktore wat omgewingsagteruitgang bevorder, en gevolglike omgewingsvlugtelingsbewegings ontken, bespreek. Aandag word ook gegee aan die impak wat hierdie gedwonge migrasie op gasheerlande het.

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In the past thirty years environmental pressures have gained considerable momentum. Before this time, many of the environmental problems now perceived to threaten human survival were not even considered to be problematic. As knowledge of environmental problems grew, concern about the effect of environmental degradation on human life also increased. The occurrence of a number of serious environmental disasters in the 1960s and 1970s greatly contributed towards creating an awareness of the impact that the human race has on the environment (Cock 1994: 16; Laska 1993: 4). Today, the severity and extent of environmental degradation worldwide is leading to widespread concern about the state of the natural environment, especially since it might have a profound impact on human beings themselves.

A phenomenon that highlights the impact that environmental degradation currently has on the human race is the issue of environmental refugees. A growing number of people are being forced by environmental pressures to leave their former habitats, due to the life-threatening and unsustainable environments they create. Environmental degradation has led to the displacement of approximately 25 million people over the past two or three decades, compared with 22 million people displaced by political factors (Myers 1997: 167). This number is expected to increase significantly as the natural environment deteriorates further, especially due to climatic changes brought about by global warming. Most of the current environmental refugees are found in the developing regions of the world such as sub-Saharan Africa and South America. Due to serious environmental degradation in these regions, most of the future environmental refugees are also likely to be generated in these areas. Africa already contributes most to the rising number of refugees in the world, and environmental degradation contributes significantly to the escalation of these numbers (Kagonge & Imbore 1994: 1).

In spite of the growing number of people being displaced by environmental degradation, little attention has been devoted to this phenomenon until now. The phenomenon of the environmental refugee is therefore a new, largely unrecognised and undefined migration trend.

The lack of recognition of environmental refugees is reflected in the lack of relevant research into and literature on this issue. The current literature focuses mainly on political issues as the cause of forced migration, and the effects that this has on host countries and the international community. Thus there is currently very limited literature dealing with environmental refugees. In turn, and from a political point of view, this has influenced much of the policy decision-making and international treatment of forced migrants, while very little cognisance has been taken of environmental pressures.

Against this background, this article aims to provide some clarity on the relatively new and undefined category of environmental refugees. Specific attention is devoted to placing environmental refugees within the broader context of migration. Furthermore, factors that may influence forced environmental migration, as well as its potential effects on host areas, receive attention, and mainly from the perspective of developing nations. Explicit attention is paid to the situation in Southern Africa, as South Africa is currently a popular destination for migrants from the rest of Africa, due to its relatively stable political situation and its perceived economic prosperity.

1. Environmental refugees: towards a clarification of the concept

One way of explaining migration is to place it on a continuum of volition ranging from people exercising a choice in migrating, at the one extreme to people who have no choice at all in migrating. While extreme cases of forced and voluntary migration do occur, most migration can be placed somewhere along the continuum (Hugo 1996: 107). As a result, drawing simple distinctions between categories of migrants becomes very complicated. However, most migration tends to lean either to one end of the continuum or to the other.

Broadly speaking, two distinct stages of migration can be identified during the course of the twentieth century. Prior to World War II migration tended towards the voluntary end of the

continuum. Until World War II migration was largely viewed as desirable and necessary to the population of sparsely inhabited colonial territories. Migration was mostly voluntary, undertaken by people in search of better economic opportunities (Harper 1996: 163). Since World War II, major political, social and economic changes have altered the nature of migration patterns. These changes, such as the independence of former colonies, rapid industrialisation and increasing environmental degradation, have resulted in a totally different migration trend. Migration has taken place mainly from poorer former colonies to developed and wealthier countries. In contrast to pre-war migration, many people currently migrating are forced to do so by factors that they did not create and cannot control (Jackson 1986: 1; Harper 1996: 163).

Forced migration refers to a movement of people compelled to relocate due to life-threatening circumstances beyond their control. Political, economic, social and environmental factors all create conditions that force people to migrate. These factors and circumstances are complex, diverse and interconnected. Often, an interplay between various factors eventually shapes the circumstances under which people have to migrate. In this regard, Richmond (1994: 53) points out that a refugee movement is only an "extreme case of the constraints that are placed upon the choices available to an individual in particular social circumstances".

In spite of the complexity and diversity of the factors involved, the international community treats forced migration as a relatively simple phenomenon. The concepts of the forced migrant and the refugee are considered synonymous with, and used almost exclusively to refer to people fleeing political persecution. As Richmond (1994: 72) points out, not all forced migrants are recognised as refugees by the international community. Only people who can claim a threat to their survival due to political circumstances are at present recognised and protected as refugees. Determining a person's refugee status on the basis of political factors is relatively easy since the framework provided by both the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the 1967 Protocol adequately define and demarcate this category.

Determining refugee status based on environmental pressures is much more troublesome since it involves a complex set of factors of

which environmental pressure is only the visible effect (Hugo 1996: 109). In many cases, the complex nature and interplay of various factors makes identifying the exact cause of migration difficult, if not impossible. Drawing a clear distinction between those forced to flee environmental degradation and other categories of migrants is thus problematic.

To complicate matters further, it is not only the drawing of a distinction between political and environmental refugees that is problematic. There is no consensus on conceptualising environmental refugees either. Some writers feel that the term environmental refugee is too narrow to deal adequately with the issue of environmental migration. Interchangeable concepts, such as ecological refugees, resource refugees, environmental migrants and eco-migrants, have been proposed instead (Richmond 1994: 75; Wood 1995: 4). However, while environmental factors play a role in many migration movements, not all migration in which such factors play a role can be considered forced.

A conceptualisation of forced migration due to environmental factors has to include three important criteria. These criteria are also present in the United Nations conceptualisation of political refugees. First it must indicate the fact that the migrants did not exercise a choice in migrating, but were forced out by circumstances beyond their control. Arms (1994: 155) refers to environmental refugees as "people driven from their homes by severe environmental damage". Secondly, it must refer to people having to leave their homelands with no hope of returning in the near future (Myers 1994: 7). Lastly, the extent of environmental damage must be shown to be life-threatening, thus that those who do not migrate will face death. In this regard, Jacobsen (1989: 30) points out that for most environmental refugees migration is a last resort, since people will tolerate a wide range of threats to their health and well-being rather than leave their homes.

A definition drawing upon the above criteria may thus be proposed. Environmental refugees are classified as people who, in the face of imminent death, have no other choice but to leave their homelands. The primary cause for their migration is severe environmental degradation — whether caused by anthropogenic or

natural factors — which renders the area uninhabitable for an extended period of time.

Conceptualisation is only the first step in dealing with the issue of environmental refugees. Any application of the concept can be expected to be problematic due to the undocumented nature of this type of refugee.

2. Coming to terms with current classifications

Current classifications of migration distinguish voluntary, forced, internal and international migration. Voluntary migrants can be legal or illegal, while the term forced migrants usually refers to political refugees and asylum-seekers (Wood & Potts 1998: 253). Legal voluntary migrants and traditional political refugees are well defined. It is with the distinction between illegal voluntary migrants and forced migrants other than political refugees that problems arise. Migrants who do not fit the current classifications of legal voluntary migrants or refugees are indiscriminately categorised as illegal migrants, without any attempt being made to determine whether factors such as environmental degradation influenced their decision to migrate. Any form of migration other than 'legally' recognised voluntary or forced migration falls outside the scope of current classifications. The current classification is unfortunately also the basis on which international policy regarding migration is based. This has very serious consequences concerning environmental refugees as a legitimate category of forced migrants.

Since the factors which result in forced migration are multiple and interlinked, it is often difficult to determine the exact cause of migration (Hough 1995: 7). In a certain setting, economic instability, political conflict and environmental degradation may all be present, thus complicating any definite categorisation. In Somalia, for instance, political instability, in conjunction with poor economic circumstances and a severe drought, drove large numbers of people to leave the country in the early 1990s (Shields 1992: 28). Environmental, political and economic circumstances were all involved here and produced political refugees, environmental refugees, and illegal economic migrants. Another indication of the

difficulties involved in this issue is the effect of a prolonged drought in Zimbabwe on migration to South Africa. During the drought of the early 1990s, South Africa experienced an increase in the numbers of illegal Zimbabweans who were being repatriated. Minnaar & Hough (1996: 121) indicate that the figure rose from an average of 600 per month during 1991 to an average of 1000 a month in 1992 as the drought intensified. While some of these illegal migrants entered South Africa due to this country's better economic climate, many were forced to migrate as the drought made their homelands unsustainable.

Many environmental refugees are wrongfully categorised as illegal migrants. One reason for this is that people fleeing environmental degradation will generally use the same means to enter a safe country as illegal migrants. Since environmental refugees know that their claim to refugee status will be disregarded, they enter countries clandestinely in order to avoid detection and repatriation. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, people fleeing life-threatening circumstances in their own countries may be uncertain whether their claims will be recognised and will therefore want to avoid the bureaucratic procedures attached to the process of seeking asylum (Hough 1995: 6). In such cases, people forced out of their country of origin by environmental factors are often assimilated into the population. Once such migrants have 'disappeared' into the general population, detection is difficult. If they are caught at a later stage, it is difficult to prove that they were forced to migrate and are not merely voluntary economic migrants.

Many forced migrants excluded from aid due to their unrecognised status are compelled by their situation to become economic migrants. In order to survive, many of those forced out of their countries of origin for reasons as life-threatening as political conflict attempt to earn a living in their host countries. In so doing, however, they are apt to be regarded as economic migrants, and to be deported as illegal immigrants if caught.

Environmental refugees therefore have two options: they can either attempt to be recognised as political refugees, or they can enter a host country illegally and run the risk of being deported as illegal

immigrants. Devising strategies with which to deal with this category of forced migration may represent a far better solution, especially since environmental degradation is expected to generate more refugees in future.

Determining whether a person qualifies as an environmental refugee is, however, very problematic, since social, political and economical factors work together to create severely degraded environments. This process may be better understood by means of a focus on the factors influencing environmental degradation than on the degradation itself.

3. Social, political and economic factors influencing the movement of environmental refugees

Environmental refugees leave their homelands as a result of serious, life-threatening environmental degradation. The causes range from natural disasters such as earthquakes, droughts and floods to man-made problems such as deforestation, industrial disasters and rising sea-levels brought about by global warming. While specific environmental problems induce environmental refugee movement, these problems seldom develop in isolation. Environmental problems are the result of a complex range of social, political and economic factors (Fell 1998: 4). Therefore, the focus of this discussion will fall on providing an insight into the conditions under which environmental problems develop, rather than on the nature of the problems themselves. The conditions fuelling environmental degradation in developing regions will also receive specific attention. In developed countries different factors are involved. These will not be considered in this article. First, attention will be paid to the social issues involved.

3.1 Social factors fostering the movement of environmental refugees

The most important social factors involved in the creation of degraded environments are population pressure, social organisation and urbanisation.

3.1.1 Population pressure

Population growth currently occurs mainly in the developing world. The United Nations estimates that 93% of current population growth takes place in developing regions, with Africa contributing 20% (United Nations 1994: 95). Due to current growth rates and the poor economic conditions in developing countries, these areas are most likely to experience environmental degradation brought about and intensified by population pressure.

Although forced migration is not a direct result of population growth, population pressure contributes to serious environmental degradation, which may in turn lead to population displacement. Where a growing number of people place demands on their environment, depletion of resources and environmental degradation often results. Over time, environmental degradation becomes so severe that the inhabitants' survival is threatened and they are forced to migrate (Raven *et al* 1993: 161). Kagonge & Imbvoire (1994: 3) state that population pressure has led to serious environmental pressure in a number of African countries such as Somalia, Kenya and Nigeria. In developing regions people seldom consider the implications of population growth for their future survival. This is mainly because large families are, for a number of reasons, seen as necessary and desirable (Seitz 1995: 35).

Uncontrolled population growth in Southern Africa is responsible for some serious shortages in terms of land, water and infrastructure. Simply in terms of supplying food to the growing population, it is estimated that developing countries will have to increase their agricultural land by 50 % in the next thirty years (Smith & Niedermeier 1996: 504). Increases in agriculture will inevitably result in the generation of soil-related environmental degradation which will eventually decrease yields from agriculture. This will plunge already impoverished countries into even greater poverty, which will in turn exacerbate poverty-related environmental problems.

3.1.2 Traditional social structures

Both the traditional family and societal structuring also contribute to environmental degradation. Early subsistence farming

communities consisted of small groups of people living in close proximity to one another. Each family provided for its own needs on a small plot of land. When parents died or became dependent on their children, the plots were divided, generally among male siblings. While population growth was slow, plots remained large enough to sustain the inhabitants. After numerous divisions, however, plots became so small that this became impossible. Where population growth rates are high, families can lose all their land in two generations as a result of this system (Harrison 1993: 130).

The likelihood of serious environmental degradation is increased when farmers, facing poor yields from small, exhausted plots of land, move their farming activities into marginal areas. Steep slopes, semi-arid areas and fragile rainforest areas are then cultivated. This increases land degradation in the form of soil erosion and desertification (Kagonge & Imbore 1994: 3). Cattle farming also contributes to problems such as desertification, deforestation and soil erosion due to overgrazing. Farmers forced to move their farming activities into marginal areas are seldom viewed as forced migrants. However, Jacobsen (1989: 31) states that this is what they are, since the degraded state of their environment has forced them to move into marginal land.

In the face of starvation, impoverished farmers find it increasingly difficult to sustain families on their degraded lands and they move away — many to settle in sprawling urban areas.

3.1.3 Urbanisation

Apart from the fact that most of the population growth occurs in impoverished developing regions, most urban growth currently also occurs in the developing world. According to Jacobsen (1989: 31) this trend is indicative of rural the impact of land degradation on people's lives and can therefore be linked to increasing environmental degradation in developing regions.

Most cities in the developing world are experiencing such uncontrollable growth rates that it is virtually impossible to provide the necessary infrastructure. Poverty and the inability to deal with the influx of people into urban areas result in the growth of slum settlements. Smith & Niedermeier (1996: 502) estimate that 92 out

of 100 new houses being erected in urban areas in Africa are located in slums or shantytowns.

Cities are environments of high population density. This places a demand on the natural resources of the surrounding area, in particular wood, water and food. The natural environments surrounding cities, especially where poor economic circumstances prevail, are usually degraded by impoverished people (Harrison 1993: 175). Furthermore, cities generate high concentrations of waste to be disposed of and, without adequate infrastructure, pollution can in the long run seriously affect the habitability of urban environments.

Since cities are centres of industrial activity, urban environments are under threat from both industrial pollution and industrial disasters. Rapid urbanisation may increase the likelihood of industrial accidents, which in turn may induce forced population movements (Wood 1995: 6). Cylke (1993: 2) states that severe pollution, causing people to leave their residences permanently, has become a commonplace event in human society. One well-known example of the effects of industrial practices is the Chernobyl disaster which displaced approximately 375 000 people, most of whom will never be able to return (United Nations 1998: 2).

3.2 Political factors influencing environmental degradation

Political factors such as conflicts and wars are responsible for forcefully displacing large numbers of people. In conflict or war situations, fighting forces often employ environmentally destructive methods to achieve victory. Destruction of the environment by opposing forces has long-term effects on the habitability of the areas concerned.

For instance, the pollution of water sources or the use of landmines may make it impossible to inhabit an area even once the conflict has been resolved. This is the case in Mozambique where approximately two million landmines were left after the end of the war and are now making farming a life-threatening activity (Klotz 1997: 43; Meldrum 1994: 55). Africa is considered to be the most

mined region in the world, making the resettlement of political refugees very difficult indeed. In Sudan, the scorched earth policy adopted by all opposing factions involved poisoning wells and burning villages and fields, thereby forcefully displacing large numbers of people from certain areas (Prendergast & Bickel 1994: 38). The impact of these methods on the environment threatens the habitability of such areas for long periods after the actual destruction.

Conflict over the distribution of resources or the existence of an unequal distribution system may also influence forced environmental migration. A diminishing resource base in certain areas compels many people to resettle in areas where resources are more abundant. This brings migrating people into conflict with resident groups over natural resources (Kaplan 1994: 8). In Africa's arid conditions, conflict over water sources generates particular concern.

Obi (1998: 44) states that conflict over water is to be found throughout the African continent. Such conflicts may well become even more pronounced as the already overburdened water sources are depleted. In this regard Smith & Niedermeier (1996: 507) state that water consumption doubled twice in the twentieth century and is likely to double again in the next ten years. Water shortages at present hamper the development prospects of 88 developing countries. In such countries, water shortages may well induce forced population movement, since these countries are less likely to be able to deal effectively with shortages, due to their poor economic conditions. Many people living in semi-arid and arid regions in the developing world may therefore face serious water shortages which will render it impossible to live in these areas.

All over Africa, water resources are often the subject of conflict among groups. Such conflict is generally fuelled by scarcities and may lead to strife over the control of and access to diminishing water resources. For instance, 97% of Egypt's water comes from the Nile, which flows through Ethiopia and the Sudan before reaching Egypt. As the water needs of Ethiopia and the Sudan increase, existing conflicts between these states and Egypt over water could worsen. Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists over aquifers in the Sahel also threaten political stability in Africa (Harrison 1993: 52; Obi 1998: 44). In South Africa, conflicts over access to water arise

between wealthy land owners and poor rural people water. Singh (1998: 118) states that there are only approximately 250 dams in South Africa, many of them severely silted, and that there is only a limited supply of ground water. Wealthy commercial farmers have the financial means to extract the ground water by means of boreholes, while poor rural farmers are denied access to this source of water by financial constraints. Particularly during periods of prolonged droughts poor farmers with no access to groundwater have to rely on the diminishing sources of surface waters for their needs, while wealthy farmers still have access to groundwater.

Since certain groups had unequal access to resources such as land, water and energy, environmental destruction may have been the result of historical inequalities (Raven *et al* 1993: 159). The fact that such groups have limited resources forces them to take more from their environment than is available. While inequalities in resources are undeniably part of society, political factors may have been instrumental in establishing or exacerbating these inequalities. Inequalities in the distribution of and access to land in Brazil and Malaysia are significant in this regard. In Brazil valuable land in the Amazon rain forests is leased to large forestry corporations and cattle ranchers at the expense of the indigenous people, while government-sponsored roads make these areas accessible (Wood 1995: 9). Governments in Brazil and Malaysia have even sponsored resettlement programmes in rain forest areas to relieve the population pressure in urban areas (Harrison 1993: 101). This occurs at the expense of indigenous people who must compete for resources and are forced into marginal areas by these government-approved actions.

Nowhere are the politics of resource distribution more apparent than in South Africa. Here, inequalities between the various race groups have led to degraded environments in homelands where many black people were forced to settle during the Apartheid era. Klugman (1991: 73) cites the former homeland of Qwa Qwa as an example. Since 1950 thousands of people were resettled there, severely affecting the area's ability to provide for its inhabitants. High population density and a lack of infrastructure have led to the

destruction of natural resources, soil erosion, deforestation, water shortages and pollution.

3.3 Economic factors influencing environmental degradation

Two sets of economic factors influence environmental destruction. At the macro-level, economic processes such as foreign debt loads, corruption, the distribution of development funding and the exploitation of developing nations by large corporations in the developed world are significant. At the micro-level, poor economic circumstances induced by traditional social organisation and population growth encourage people to degrade their environments.

Most developing countries have unmanageable foreign debt, which means that a large proportion of their budgets is used to pay interest on these debts. Debt repayments use up more and more of the combined GDP of the Southern African region. In 1974, 30% of the region's GDP was used for debt repayments, while the figure for 1984 is 50% (Gelinis 1998: 41; Klugman 1991: 69). To repay their foreign debt, many developing countries exploit their environments. Export farming and environmentally destructive industrial production are among the practices resorted to in order to repay foreign debt, often leading to severely degraded environments. Since developing countries are already impoverished, measures to prevent or curtail environmental damage cannot be implemented. Such measures further exacerbate the problem.

However, it is not only the repayment of debt that facilitates environmental degradation. Many nations in Africa are experiencing financial difficulties and are thus unable to compete in world markets. These countries need to earn profits from foreign investment and from the exportation of their resources in order to survive. Many African countries have consequently resorted to large agricultural schemes and unsustainable irrigation. In the process they have destroyed vast areas of arable farmland and forced large numbers of people to move from these farmlands into marginal areas (Obi 1998: 44).

The mismanagement of development funding and corruption are other facets of this problem. Government officials have in countless cases sought to enrich themselves rather than to use the funds for much needed developmental practices which would improve the economic position of the people. Often the positive effects of developmental projects have not been noticed at the 'grassroots' level (Kagonge & Imbore 1994: 4). Along with corruption, the mismanagement of funds must also bear some of the blame for creating poor economic circumstances. Many African countries allocate unnecessarily large amounts of their budgets to military expenditure while neglecting environmental protection, health care and education (Kagonge & Imbore 1994: 4; Hansen 1994: 332).

At the 'grassroots' level, poor economic circumstances may force people into degrading their environments. Poor people do not often have a choice in their use of the environment, since they have to use whatever is available to survive. Poverty and low yields from small plots force the inhabitants to sell and move or to take their farming activities into marginal areas. Continuous farming on small plots and in marginal areas leads to soil erosion, desertification and deforestation, which render it impossible to make a living from the land any more (Harrison 1993: 127). Where farmers still manage to provide bare subsistence, any crisis such as a drought, flood, death or illness will force them to exploit their environments to such an extent that these will no longer be able to sustain them.

The above social, political and economical factors, especially in developing regions such as Southern Africa, may also create conditions where environmental destruction becomes unavoidable. It is, however, still the environmental conditions created by these factors that will force people to move. Environmental refugees cause numerous problems for the international community and host countries, which must also be considered.

4. The impact of environmental refugees

The undocumented nature of environmental refugees makes it difficult to determine with certainty the impact that they have on host areas. The problems experienced with environmental refugees

must therefore be explored from their undocumented nature. In this section, attention will be given to the strain placed on host areas by influxes of undocumented, destitute people.

4.1 The political impact of environmental refugees

Influxes of people into an area lead to conflict over resources, ethnic differences between local people and refugees and conflict between sender and receiver states.

Environmental refugees cannot rely on organisations for aid, due to their undocumented nature. In order to survive, they therefore have to rely on the same resources as local inhabitants. This may induce conflict over scarce resources such as water. Particularly in Africa, where severe water problems are experienced, tension over water resources may increase, as has been pointed out. However, not only the scarcity of water but also the availability of land and food sources give rise to concern.

When more people have to rely on an environment for survival, the environment is placed under tremendous strain. People fleeing environmental degradation may also make more demands of their new environment due to their destitute condition, and implement the same environmentally destructive practices that led to their migration in the first place. Influxes of people can therefore be damaging to the survival of the whole area. A contest for resources may lead to open conflict among these groups.

Often contests for scarce resources are fuelled by ethnic antagonism between resident and refugee groups. In future, the scarcity of resources combined with ethnic and historical issues may result in conflict among groups. Many of these conflicts will be environmental in nature but some will also be linked to ethnic and historical issues between groups (Kaplan 1994: 8). Solomon (1993: 20) emphasises that:

[w]herever there is a scarcity of resources, one can expect competition for them. In this context, mobilization along religious, ideological, ethnic or cultural lines is not unique.

Conflict among groups has serious consequences for the stability of regions and nation states. A rise in refugee numbers may induce open conflict between sender and receiver states. Host countries are

often pressurised by their own people to send refugees back, since they are perceived to place pressure on socio-economic structures. Sender states, on the other hand, may be powerless to care for the refugees and may view their migration as a relief. Sending the refugees back, especially in the light of better economic and environmental conditions in the host country, can lead to hostility between the sender and receiver states (Swain 1996: 968).

The situation in South Africa emphasises the dilemma faced by host countries in dealing with strong anti-foreigner sentiments, on the one hand, and an obligation towards neighbouring countries, on the other. Foreigners, whether legally or illegally here, generate strong feelings among South African citizens, many of whom consider that they should be sent back whence they came. However, the South African government does have strong political ties with neighbouring states which provided shelter and aid to political activists during the struggle against Apartheid (Klotz 1997: 38). Rogerson (1997: 265) remarks in this regard that "trans-border migration is a critical policy issue in South Africa today" since South Africa's relationships with its neighbours will be affected by its policy on migration.

4.2 The economic implications of environmental refugees

The economy is the area in which pressure from environmental refugees is probably most palpable. No country can afford an uncontrolled influx of people across its borders, because of the financial strain it may cause. At the local level, the impact of undocumented migrants on employment opportunities and the distribution of resources and services is especially problematic. At a higher governmental level, pressure is felt in terms of resettlement, repatriation and policing.

Many of those currently fleeing environmental degradation are forced to fend for themselves when they arrive in a host country, as they are not entitled to any governmental or international aid. They must therefore be prepared to work for less money than the locals, thereby forcing wages down. Since most of the people fleeing environmental degradation are not recognised as legitimate refugees, they are branded as illegal immigrants and exploited by employers

who take advantage of their undocumented status. Some undocumented migrants, many of them in fact environmental refugees, join the informal trading sector, which brings them into conflict with local business people and trade unions. They are accused of "undermining local incentive and competition" (Reitzes 1994: 7).

Due to this perception, undocumented migrants are often at the receiving end of xenophobic attacks from locals. In one such attack, residents of Alexandra township forcefully evicted migrants from their homes and threatened to burn their possessions. In another incident in August 1997, local hawkers, with the support of a local hawkers' association, attacked foreign traders and destroyed their stalls (Rogerson 1997: 266). While it would be unfair to assume that most of the undocumented migrants are environmental refugees, the strong link between poverty and environmental degradation in Southern Africa suggests that many of them are, in fact, environmental refugees and that they should therefore receive better treatment.

Governments in host countries are placed under continuous pressure to supply health and welfare services to undocumented migrants. Reitzes (1994: 7) indicates that in 1994 some R 210 million must have been spent on providing health care, housing, education and policing for Mozambicans illegally in South Africa. Many of these so-called illegal migrants are people who were forced by their environments to seek refuge in South Africa (Klotz 1997: 43). Government's attempts to supply services such as these to a growing number of people with limited funds, may mean that many local people receive inadequate services while extra strain is placed on the economy.

Protecting borders is another issue that calls for consideration. Due to the political and economic issues involved, it is generally accepted that no country should be forced to open its borders indiscriminately (*The Economist* 1995: 48). This is especially true where, as in the case of South Africa, a relatively prosperous country has poverty-stricken nations across its borders. However, there is a financial implication to excluding people who should in fact qualify for refugee status. Many people who should be able to proceed

through the correct channels, now follow the route of illegal migration to enter countries.

Repatriating illegal migrants who were forced out of their own countries also costs money: it costs South Africa millions of rands every year. During 1997 alone 176 351 illegal migrants were repatriated, 83% having originated from Mozambique (SAIRR 1998: 111). Many, however, return as soon as they can, since their chances of survival in their own countries are slim. This is a hopeless cycle of events which costs the governments of host countries unnecessary money. Naturally, illegal migrants should be sent home. However, large sums of money are at present wasted in indiscriminately repatriating undocumented migrants, many of whom should actually receive the assistance to which they are entitled as refugees.

4.3 The social implications of environmental refugees

Any form of migration is an important agent of change in society. Migration leads to a flow of ideas, languages and cultures across borders (Solomon 1993: 18). In the case of forced migration, a host area is suddenly confronted with people who have their own unique customs and ideas. When these cultural ideas clash with those of the local people, tension between those people — who feel their identity is being threatened — and the migrants may develop. Since forced migrants are mostly destitute and impoverished, problems with health, welfare, poverty and crime are experienced in the host area.

The provision of health and welfare services does not only have an economic impact on host countries. Most people forced to leave their former homelands due to environmental destruction arrive in their host country in a very poor physical condition. Serious illnesses are brought into the new area and local residents do not always have immunity to these foreign diseases. In the case of South Africa, the influx of undocumented migrants from neighbouring states has been linked to the spread of diseases such as yellow fever, cholera and the Ebola virus (Schutte 1993: 8). In particular, the suggested causal link between undocumented migrants and the spread of the HIV virus and/or AIDS in both South Africa and the sub-region has recently become a matter of growing concern.

By late 1996, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that more than 90% of all adult HIV infections were situated in developing countries. Of the roughly 23 million people living with HIV/AIDS around the world, almost two thirds, or approximately 14 million, are in sub-Saharan Africa (Fransen 1998: 1-3). Clearly, sub-Saharan Africa is the region most affected by the epidemic. Of further importance is the fact that, according to the WHO, only one in every four cases of HIV/AIDS is reported in developing countries (Loewenson & Whiteside 1998: 16). The situation is aggravated by the fact that the majority of newly infected adults are under 25 years old — the age group most likely to migrate. Many undocumented immigrants end up in urban areas without their families; sexual services are thus often purchased. Some of these migrants also find themselves in situations where prostitution becomes their only source of income. Given the incubation period between infection and illness and death, the impact of AIDS via undocumented migrants is therefore bound to increase in the years ahead. As Fransen (1998: 8) puts it:

The demographic impact of AIDS will continue to gain momentum into the next century, as the epidemic continues to spread and mature despite all efforts implemented to minimise [its] effect. Important forces in the meantime fuelling the epidemic in several regions are mobility, migration and instability within the populations concerned.

South Africa borders on six other countries and since the government has very little control over illegal influxes, it has virtually no control over the spread of HIV/AIDS within South Africa or the region (Pelser 1998: 11).

Forced environmental migrants arrive without, or with limited funds, and usually settle in informal settlements due to their poverty-stricken state. Projects aiming at improving the state of local residents' housing in these settlements inevitably also benefit these people, although they are not entitled to such assistance (Schutte 1993: 9). In South Africa the presence of illegal Mozambicans was seen as an important factor hampering the successful implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Poor economic circumstances influence the general welfare of the people involved. More household violence, alcohol abuse and crime are experienced in poorer communities. When these problems are seen in relation to an increase in the number of destitute people in a specific area, it is clear that welfare services cannot cope with the added burden (Reitzes 1994: 8).

Lastly, strong anti-foreigner sentiments may develop among groups, which may lead to serious conflict between foreigners and their hosts. Western Europe has experienced some serious racial attacks against foreigners as a result of rising xenophobia (Nelán 1993: 26). In South Africa strong anti-foreigner feelings are developing, especially in the light of the poor economic climate, high crime rate and concern over the provision of health and welfare (Carim 1995: 221).

5. Conclusion: the need for policy

South Africa, as a relatively prosperous and developed nation in Southern Africa, is a very attractive prospect for people fleeing environmental degradation in their home countries. Many of the Mozambicans streaming across the border almost certainly fall into the category of environmental refugees. Prolonged war and internal conflict have left the environment in Mozambique in an utterly degraded state, making it impossible for inhabitants to survive. In many instances their only hope of survival is to migrate to South Africa. However, it is not only Mozambicans who flee to South Africa. People from Zimbabwe, Angola and countries as distant as Ethiopia and Nigeria come to South Africa in an attempt to escape environmental degradation, among other problems.

South Africa and the rest of the world will not be able to ignore this current migration trend for too long. The indiscriminate repatriation of undocumented migrants without determining the cause of migration is not the best way of dealing with the problem. Decisive action will have to be taken in order to deal with this issue before it gets out of control.

The first issue that has to receive attention is agreement on an acceptable definition of environmental refugees, or a definition of

refugees that encompasses the complexity of factors forcing people to migrate. A more inclusive conceptualisation of forced migration has already been advocated in recent literature (Hugo 1996; Richmond 1994; Wood 1995). This is essential in terms of developing policy and strategies dealing with new forms of forced migration such as environmental refugees. Myers (1997: 177) emphasises that "we need to expand our approach to refugees in general in order to encompass environmental refugees in particular".

Secondly, it is imperative that an international protocol as well as national policy regarding environmental refugees be developed. The current international statutes dealing with refugees are far too narrow, as has been pointed out. A comprehensive international policy including environmental factors in the determination of refugee status will prevent people from being classed as illegal immigrants and will ensure that they are treated in a humane manner by host countries and by international aid organisations. Wood & Potts (1998: 254) point out in this regard that the United Nations have the task of providing for the basic needs of people uprooted from their home countries, thereby easing the burden of host countries. It is also their task to ensure that individual countries treat people seeking refuge in accordance with basic human rights. As more and more people are displaced by environmental degradation, these international structures will play a key role in laying down ground rules for the treatment of such people. This, however, is currently impossible, given the lack of appropriate categorisation.

Lastly, it is impossible to deal only with the symptom of environmental degradation, without attempting to eliminate the cause of the problem. Sustainable development practices, environmental protection and economic upliftment in developing regions are crucial if the current flow of refugee is to be stemmed. It has already been pointed out that most environmental refugee movement takes place from poor, developing regions where a host of social, economic and political factors exacerbate environmental degradation.

The phenomenon of environmental refugees is an unavoidable issue likely to shape migration trends in future. Acknowledging the seriousness of the problem and working towards a viable solution is

essential, since individual countries and international relations will be profoundly affected by the issue in the future. Myers (1997: 181) concludes that

by far the best way to deal with the problem is to preempt it: to recognize it, to comprehend it [...] the key to this difficult prospect is understanding — probably the resource in shortest supply right now.

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SUMMARY/OPSOMMING

SUMMARY

The phenomenon of environmental refugees is currently a largely unrecognised and relatively unstudied trend in forced migration. Much of the current literature and research on forced migration has focused almost exclusively on political factors causing refugee movements and the impact that political refugees are having on host areas and the international community. Likewise, much of the policy decisions and international treatment of forced migration are approached solely from the perspective of political circumstances, with little or no cognisance taken of environmental factors. Environmental degradation is, however, setting the scene for the displacement of millions of people in the near future.

The aim of the study was to determine the nature and extent of environmental refugee movements, both globally and in the Southern African region. Due to the relatively unexplored nature of environmental refugees the study was mainly exploratory and descriptive.

Firstly, the study explored the nature of environmental refugees and specifically focused on the factors that influence people to become environmental refugees. While environmental refugees leave their homelands as a result of serious and life-threatening environmental degradation, these environmental problems seldom developed in isolation. They are the result of a complex range of social, political and economic factors. These factors, ranging from population growth, urbanisation and poverty to political instability were each explored to determine the role they play in bringing about the environmental degradation that eventually leads to forced environmental migration. These driving forces were explored and described generally and specifically within the Southern African context. The impact that environmental refugees are having on host countries and the international community were also explored. Environmental refugees, due to their undocumented nature, add to the social, political and economic problems in host countries. These problems range from conflicts between host populations and refugees, economic pressure placed on health and welfare services, to social problems such as rising crime rates and housing problems. Again the impact was explored generally and specifically in the Southern African context.

Attention was also given to the international and local policy framework surrounding refugee issues. It was determined that the current international policy framework is insufficient in dealing

with new categories of forced migration, such as environmental refugees. As a result, most host countries have refugee policies that are unsuitable for the inclusion of environmental refugees. Issues that must be taken into consideration when including environmental refugees into policy decisions are explored and lastly, some strategies to deal with forced environmental migration are suggested.

It is proposed that reliable and accurate data on environmental refugees be gathered so that informed policy decisions can be made. Furthermore, it is proposed that the international instruments guiding refugee policy are adapted to include environmental factors in determining refugee status. More importantly, however, is the prevention of further environmental degradation and it is proposed that this be addressed by giving attention to the social, political and economic forces that lead to environmental degradation, while at the same time promoting sustainable development practices.

Key words: environmental refugees, environmental refugee movements, forced migration, refugees, migration, forced migration, refugee policy, UNHCR.

OPSOMMING

Omgewingsvlugteling is tans 'n neiging in gedwonge migrasie wat grootliks misken en relatief onbestudeerd is. 'n Groot hoeveelheid van die huidige literatuur en navorsing oor gedwonge migrasie fokus byna eksklusief op politieke faktore as die oorsaak van vlugtelingbewegings, asook op die impak wat politieke vlugteling op gasheerlande en die internasionale gemeenskap het. Meeste beleidsbesluite en die behandeling van gedwonge migrante word voorts benader vanuit die perspektief van politieke omstandighede, terwyl min of geen aandag gegee word aan omgewingsfaktore as 'n oorsaak van gedwonge migrasie nie. Omgewingsverval is, ten spyte hiervan, daarop gerig om miljoene mense in die nabye toekoms te ontwortel.

Die doel van die studie was om te bepaal wat die aard en omvang van omgewingsvlugtelingbewegings, beide globaal en spesifiek in die Suider-Afrika streek, is. As gevolg van die relatief onverkende aard van omgewingsvlugteling was die studie grootliks verkennend en beskrywend.

Eerstens is die aard van omgewingsvlugteling ondersoek en daar is meer spesifiek gefokus op die faktore wat mense beïnvloed om omgewingsvlugteling te word. Alhoewel omgewingsvlugteling hulle tuislande verlaat as gevolg van spesifieke en lewensgevaarlike omgewingsverval ontwikkel hierdie omgewingsprobleme selde in isolasie. Omgewingsprobleme is die gevolg van 'n komplekse reeks sosiale, politieke en ekonomiese faktore. Hierdie faktore sluit ondermeer bevolkingsgroei, verstedeliking, armoede en politieke onrus in. Elke faktor is ondersoek om te bepaal watter rol dit speel in die omgewingsverval wat uiteindelik tot omgewingsvlugtelingbewegings lei. Hierdie dryfkragte is in die algemeen en spesifiek in die Suider-Afrikaanse konteks ondersoek. Die impak wat omgewingsvlugteling op gasheerlande en die internasionale gemeenskap het, is verder ondersoek. Omgewingsvlugteling dra by tot die sosiale, politieke en ekonomiese probleme in gasheerlande as gevolg van hul ongedokumenteerde aard. Hierdie impakte sluit konflik tussen die gasheerbevolking en vlugteling, ekonomiese druk op gesondheids- en welsynsisteme en sosiale probleme soos stygende misdaad en behuisingsprobleme in. Weereens is die impak ondersoek vanuit 'n algemene en 'n spesifiek Suider-Afrikaanse perspektief.

Aandag is voorts gegee aan die internasionale en plaaslike beleidsraamwerk waarvolgens vlugteling hanteer word. Dit is bepaal dat die huidige internasionale beleidsraamwerk onvoldoende is om nuwe kategorieë van gedwonge migrante, soos omgewingsvlugteling, te hanteer. Die resultaat is dat meeste gasheerlande se vlugtelingbeleide onvoldoende is om omgewingsvlugteling in hul bestaande beleidsraamwerke in te sluit. Aspekte waaraan aandag gegee moet word wanneer omgewingsvlugteling in beleidsbesluite ingesluit word, is ondersoek en laastens is 'n paar strategieë voorgestel om die probleem van omgewingsvlugteling te hanteer.

Dit is voorgestel dat betroubare en akkurate data oor omgewingsvlugteling ingesamel word ten einde ingeligte beleidsbesluite te kan neem. Verder word voorgestel dat die internasionale instrumente wat vlugtelingbeleid reguleer aangepas word om omgewingsfaktore as 'n oorsaak van vlugtelingbewegings in te sluit wanneer vlugtelingstatus oorweeg word. Meer belangrik as die aanpassings aan internasionale instrumente is egter die voorkoming van verdere omgewingsverval. Op grond hiervan word voorgestel dat omgewingsverval aangespreek word deur aandag te gee aan die sosiale, politieke en ekonomiese faktore wat bydrae tot omgewingsverval, terwyl ook aandag gegee word aan die bevordering van volhoubare ontwikkelingspraktyke.

U.O.V.S. BIBLIOTEK