

4.4. The Environmental Impact of Refugees in Africa: Suggestions for Future Actions

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Summary

Perceptions of the term environment differ from one society to another. For the vast majority of Africans, particularly the very poor, it is a question of survival. In fact it is a development tool. Environment should be viewed as consisting of three dimensions: the ecological-biological; the socio-cultural; and, the socio-economic. All the problems, issues and challenges of environment and development can be assigned to these dimensions.

One of the major problems of environment and development, which is also a most glaring indication of environmental and developmental failure in our time, is the refugee malaise in Africa. To be a refugee is to experience a particularly degrading form of poverty. A refugee typically lacks economic resources, has been deprived of national identity and his very right to exist is called into question.

There are far more internal refugees than cross-border (external) refugees in Africa. Unfortunately, excessive attention has been focused on cross-border refugees and the issue of the impact of internal refugees on the environment has not received the attention it deserves. Neither has that of large concentrations of cross-border refugees upon rural resources. Yet people forced to move find themselves in complex and intricate environmental dilemmas that are increasingly threatening to squeeze them out of existence. Perhaps no people in Africa illustrate this better than the Rwandans.

Several factors are responsible for the generation of the environmental refugee malaise in Africa. These include historical and socio-political factors; huge capital-intensive development projects; disasters such as war, drought, famine and earthquakes; desertification; floods; establishment of reserves and national parks; ill-advised economic policies and despotic regimes.

New perceptions, thinking and policies that are people-centred, anticipatory and problem-oriented, and that reflect the historical and socio-political realities in Africa are required urgently. The alternative is escalating environmental and developmental crises, despite the huge inflows of resources to redress them

This paper examines the environmental refugee malaise in Africa with specific reference to the Rwandan debacle and its impact on the environment. Problems, issues and challenges are identified including ecological stress and political conflicts, and some suggestions for action are given. It concludes that the people of Africa themselves be empowered to deal with the refugee problem, with backup assistance from the humanitarian community, as a first step towards preventing refugee impact on the environment.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Environment

Today it is inconceivable to talk or think about development without reference to the environment. In fact, environment and development are now seen as two sides of the same coin leading to progress. Environmental conservation is pursued as an aspect of the development drive. However, perceptions of the term environment (and development) differ from one society to another. For the vast majority of Africans, especially for the very poorest, it is above all a question of survival. In fact it is a development tool (Diong and Allard, 1994)

To rural African women, environment actually signifies access to drinking water and health care, possessing the means of production necessary to cultivate one's land and ensure food self-sufficiency, and being involved in the management of natural resources.

Environment should be viewed as consisting of three dimensions - the ecological-biological, the socio-economic and the socio-cultural (Oweyegha-Afunaduula, 1994). All problems, issues and challenges of environment and development can be assigned to these dimensions.

If the environment is abused, both health and development suffer; people become ill from environmental diseases such as typhoid fever, tuberculosis, dysentery and cholera, and development - which depends on the wise use of resources - fails. Poverty - the greatest of all environmental pollutants - condemns people to continued diseases, debility and early death and drives them to damage their environment further. It is this interrelationship between health, the socio-economic (development) process and environment that has precipitated the need to rethink development. The new thinking is "development without destruction"; or integrating environmental and ecological considerations in the development process.

1.2. Sustainable development

Increasing emphasis of the environmental and ecological considerations of development has made it imperative that the concepts of integrated rural development, eco-development and sustainable development predominate development theory, practice and literature. In this new environmental era, it is fashionable to include in any discussion, debate or presentation the idea of sustainable development. It is not unusual to hear or read about "environmentally and ecologically sustainable development" - development which does not adversely impact the environmental and ecological foundations of survival (Moyo and Katerere, 1994).

Indicators of sustainable development can be explained in terms of social development, economic development, political development, intellectual development and environmental development (Belghis Badri, 1994).

Unfortunately, under the influence of western-style consumerism and thinking, the application of ecologically and environmentally oriented precepts to the development process is becoming extremely problematic. This necessitates a new look at the concept of sustainable development to suit African needs (Hamida, 1994). However, the environmental debate in Africa remains weak. Yet such debate should enable all actors in it to contribute to the search for consensus as to what sustainable development is and thus make an input into the continent's sustainable development strategy.

There is a degree of consensus on the broad notion of sustainability: passing on to the future generations the resources and knowledge needed for them to pursue their own development. However, there is no consensus yet on other aspects of sustainable development such as respect for pluralism of thought; ideas, practice and information; diversity of local cultures, an integrated

and multi-disciplinary approach, social equity, justice and participation. Where such respect is absent, environmental and social collapse is likely; leading to absence of sustainable development. In Africa the absence of this respect is prevalent.

2. The Phenomenon of Environmental Refugees

When development fails or when environmentally unfriendly projects, programs, plans, political practices, etc. are imposed on the environment in either of its three dimensions, the security of people is threatened. The threatened security may be social, economic, political, cultural, nourishment, intellectual, environmental or a combination of all these. People may be forced to move and settle elsewhere. Such people who are compelled to leave their traditional environmental settings are these days referred to as environmental refugees. This term well describes more than one million "Hutu" refugees who sought sanctuary in Eastern Zaire following the invasion in 1994 of Rwanda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) forces, predominantly Batutsi from Uganda (Mamdani, 1995)

As mentioned earlier, to be a refugee is to experience a particularly degrading form of poverty. A refugee typically lacks not only economic resources, but has been deprived of national identity. One's very right to exist is called into question. As far as the refugee himself/herself is concerned, survival is brought to the very limits of nature. The new attitude to life is "let nature take its own course". Those forced to move are mainly women and children who bear the greater burden of environmental stress problems and insecurity. Unfortunately, while the problems of environmental refugees are well-documented, (e.g., Byarugaba, 1989; af Ornas, 1989; Zdenek Cervenka, 1989), the impacts of the refugees on the environment are scarcely assessed.

3. Factors Causing Environmental Refugees

As mankind continues to regard growth as the critical issue in development, the ecological and social realities in Africa are being constrained. Development practice is promoting temporary gains - political, social and economic - which is in essence "theft by one generation of the birthright of future generations." More serious is the creation of environmental conditions that constrain the foundations of survival, triggering people to move en masse to new environmental settings.

In the past, refugees in Africa were mainly internal and were generated by tribal or ethnic conflicts, soil erosion, desertification, disease outbreaks, invasion by locusts, (and other pests), persistent floods, droughts and famines. With the introduction of new agricultural and industrial techniques, including the use of artificial fertilisers to enhance fertility of the soil and chemicals to combat pests, the habitability of the landscape progressively declined, reflecting environmental and ecological collapse.

People were forced to move. In recent times, however, the volume of both internal and external refugees has grown several-fold as a consequence of the interaction of several factors, including those already mentioned. It will not be possible here to explore in detail all the factors that are responsible for causing the environmental refugee malaise in Africa. However, for the purposes of this paper, we shall select a few

3.1. Historical and socio-political factors

As we march towards the 21st century, new thinking is evolving that seeks to relate environmental degradation with political conflicts or problems. This thinking is helping to enlighten mankind about the issues which influence security (in its widest sense) for countries and individuals (af Ornas and Salih, 1989). It has, as a consequence, become fashionable in the last decade or so to link environmental or ecological stress with political problems and armed conflicts.

There is no way the environmental refugee malaise in Africa can be explained without reference to historical and socio-political factors. Indeed the overall socio-economic and environmental crisis has been considered increasingly in its historical and socio-political perspective (Byarugaba, 1989; Okwadiba Nholi, 1989). Perhaps no human disaster has attracted such consideration recently as the Rwandan refugee malaise and its origins and linkages.

Mafeje (1991) has critically summed up the entire range of literature of Rwandan pre-colonial history and has arrived at an original synthesis (see also Mamdani, 1995). He writes that in Bunyoro, "the introduction of pastoralism as an elite pursuit must be attributed to "... invaders who probably migrated from South-eastern Ethiopia and Southern Somalia with their long-horned cattle." The local inhabitants of Bunyoro who were Bantu called their invaders Bachwezi because "they spit in the faces of people and were therefore dirty," and Bahuma, because when they sang they produced a sound like that of a bee. Mafeje (1991) set the date of arrival of the Bahuma and the origins of Chwezi Kings somewhere in the 15th Century

There is, however, great secrecy as to the actual origins of the Bahuma (Chwezi). It is believed that these people could have originated somewhere in the Middle East in 700 AD and were forced to move by Islamic wars (Jihads) there. They are, therefore, Semitic in origin and thus related to the Jews and Caucasians. This is why the pattern of dancing and singing in North Western India, among Arabs, in Southern Russia, Turkey Northern Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia, etc. is uniform and similar to that of the Bahuma. The "Vitambi" dress is said to have been a traditional dress for the desert peoples (Arabs). The Bedouins of Libya (such as Maumar Gaddafi), the Hausa and Fulani of Nigeria and the Barbers of Morocco are all related in dance, song and dress to the Bahuma. Interestingly all these peoples have their own Coptic language understood by all of them wherever they are, and have developed a high level intelligence system based on this language to spy on other peoples in the world successfully. Also these peoples, although transformed biologically, retain the mentality of Jews. Their expansionist tendencies connote Semitic dominance of the Bantu (Oakley, per. comm.).

The Bachwezi (Huma) dynasty did not last long in Bunyoro. Within a few generations, the Bachwezi were expelled from the Kingdom by new invaders called Babito - Luo-like people from the North, moving in a South-westerly direction where environmental and ecological conditions were ideal for cattle keeping. They reappeared as conquering Bahima herders in Ankore in present day Uganda, Batutsi herders in Rwanda and Burundi and Bahinda herders in Tanzania. The Hwanga Kingdom which was established in the Busia area of Kenya is believed to have been established by Huma-related people. Whatever their name, these people had no clans in their culture but easily identified themselves with local clans. For example the Basita clan to which the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni says he belongs is widespread in Toro, Rwanda, Burundi, Ankore and Tanzania but is identified with low-grade Bahima, in Ankore and ruling Batutsi in Rwanda do not value the Basita (Oakley, pers. comm.).

Mamdani (1995) argues that if the Bachwezi "disappeared" on their way to Ankore, reappearing there as Bahima, then the Bahima "disappeared on the way to Rwanda, where they appeared as Batutsi. Here they conquered the local people, the Bahutu, who had numerous small kingdoms and the Batwe who sustained themselves through cultivation of the land.

Mafeje (1991) citing Maquet, writes that the Batutsi migration downwards into Rwanda was at the outset more of a peaceful than a violent affair. However, what began as a process of peaceful migration soon gave way to forcible conquests of the Bantu resulting in the creation of a Rwandan state by the Batutsi.

As the Batutsi population increased and more of them entered Rwanda, more land had to be tilled to feed them, and as cattle increased in numbers, the Bahutu were forced to move from their more fertile lands to give way to the pastoral system of the reigning Batutsi. Mafeje (1991), citing Maquet, describes the reign of the Batutsi as "a pastoral aristocracy" rather than "a Batutsi aristocracy" since the majority of the Batutsi were neither rich nor exempt from exploitation by the Rwandan state and its bureaucracy.

1. The Rwandan state: structure and function

Over time, the Kingdom of Rwanda became highly centralised, with a standing army and an official bureaucracy. The King was considered divine and was always a Mutusi. Army commanders were all Batutsi. The entire Rwandan Population (Batutsi, Bahutu, Butwa) was affiliated to the army, but only the Batutsi were the warriors. The rest were restricted to the role of herdsman who rounded up cattle during a raid or carried supplies for the warriors. "In this case, the corpse of a Mututsi was valued more than that of a Mututu or a Mutwa ... the Bahutu were deprived (of) the right to a glorious, honourable, heroic death since the Batutsi had also social monopoly on that....and there was a conscious effort to deny non-Batutsi access to cattle in general" (Mafeje, 1991).

So in essence, the Rwandan state was a creation of the Batutsi. The Bahutu only functioned at the lowest level of organisation of the state. If the Bahutu cultivators contributed materially to the rise of the Rwandan state, their fate as a subordinate category was already sealed. (Mamdani, 1995).

2. Culture of the Rwandans

Culturally, however, the Bahutu were absorbed or assimilated by the Batutsi, except for the style of dancing, singing and dress which remained linked to Semitic traditions and practices. The Batutsi had won the military battles but not the cultural battles against the Bahutu. For example, the Abiru tradition, the Imana cult and the Kalinga drum traditions of the Bahutu became thoroughly incorporated into the Batutsi-built state apparatus of Rwanda (Mafeje, 1991).

What all this means is that even if the Batutsi and Bahutu spoke the same language and had the same culture, and even lived on the same hills, they had yet to become one people (Mamdani, 1995). As stated earlier, the Batutsi still retain a Coptic language that cannot be understood by the Bahutu but can be understood by certain Ethiopians (such as President Zenari) Somalis, Fulani, Hausa, Bedouins and Berbers to mention but a few.

Moreover, while the Batutsi had more of an identification with power and a relationship to the state and, therefore, were more privileged, the Bahutu constituted a subject population politically and socially. The Batutsi formed a distinct social category, marked by marriage and ethnic taboos (Mafeje, 1991). As a foundation of their high level intelligence system, the Batutsi could allow their women to get married to the Bahutu but not vice versa. The political and social differentiation of Rwandan society was later to be the generator of social and political conflicts, as well as environmental and ecological stress, in Rwanda that promise to spill over into the 21st Century.

3. Colonial enhancement of Batutsi - Bahutu conflicts

With the onset of colonialism in Rwanda early in the 20th century, no attempt was made to diffuse the socio-political differences between the Batutsi and the Bahutu that had developed in a historical perspective. With the imposition of German colonialism and militarism on Rwanda, the Batutsi, under their King (Mwami) were instead able to expand the geographical borders of the kingdom to the northern districts of the country. In fact the Germans ruled over the Bahutu-dominated Rwanda (in terms of numbers) through the institutional reach of the Tutsi-created

state apparatus (Mamdani, 1995). They played a critical role initially in the final consolidation and ultimately in the collapse of the Batutsi-created state apparatus which occurred when the Belgians replaced the Germans as the colonial rulers.

While Germans ruled, the Batutsi and Bahutu were taken as, and came to see themselves as separate races. The Batutsi were classified as Hamitic and superior, and the Bahutu as Bantu and inferior. From 1929 to 1933 the Belgians, who ruled Rwanda on behalf of the League of Nations, turned this theory of races into the very basis of organising the administration of the colonial state and, creating demarcations amongst the colonised. The Belgians split the Rwandan population into Batutsi and Bahutu/Batwa, and introduced for the first time the idea of passes to identify each and every individual. The Belgians then introduced indirect rule based on ruling through co-operative elements in the Batutsi oligarchy - those who managed the lower rungs of the colonial administration but were at the same time also the highest rungs of the subordinate but semi-autonomous district-level state apparatus that had been the pre-colonial Rwandan state (Mamdani, 1995). This approach to the administration of Rwanda only heightened the political and social differentiation between the Batutsi and the Bahutu/Batwa, which was to play a pivotal role in the political, social and ethnic conflicts between the Batutsi and Bahutu for decades.

4. First forced migration of Rwandan out of Rwanda

The Belgians ruled Rwanda more harshly than the Germans had. They took advantage of the Batutsi chiefs to coerce the Bahutu peasantry to provide free labour, cultivate cash-crops and afforest the landscape

Mamdani (1995) describes the role of the Batutsi in the hard rule of the Belgians as "the indigenous mask of a brutal foreign domination". The Bahutu could not tolerate this inhumane rule, and in the hundreds of thousands migrated into Uganda in the decade after 1928, whereupon they provided migrant labour to the emerging cash economy in Uganda, particularly in Buganda. The departure of the Bahutu only helped to strengthen and polarise the antagonistic political relations between the Batutsi and the Bahutu that had been unfolding since the arrival of the Germans. Mamdani (1995) sums up these relations thus:

"...a political contest. ...The Batutsi identity long preceded a Bahutu identity. The Batutsi identity was forged as part of the creation of the state of Rwanda. The Batutsi consciousness was a consciousness of power: either being in power, or being near power. In contrast, the Bahutu consciousness would come to be one of lack of power, and of a struggle for power, a consciousness of a subject hood and the will to overcome."

Once in their new environment in Uganda, the Bahutu took on local names, became integrated in local clans, married or got married to local spouses and in some instances even became landed!

5. Rise of Bahutu and fall of Batutsi in Rwanda

The political contest between Batutsi and Bahutu in Rwanda assumed a new dimension when, in the 1950s, the Belgian colonial state started to plot against Tutsi domination of the politics and administration of the country. The plot involved bringing the Bahutu centre stage through the dismantling of the local state hierarchy and introduction of more direct elections. Following these changes, the Bahutu became sufficiently politically agitated to force the Batutsi into exile in 1959 through a bloody revolution. Byarugaba (1989) described the events that preceded the out flux of thousands of Batutsi from Rwanda, mainly to Uganda. Then followed the coup d'état of 25th September 1961 which ended the monarchist tendencies in Rwanda.

By 1990, the Batutsi had become so insignificant in Rwanda's civil and political society that there was only one Mututsi in President Juvenal Habyarimana's 19-member cabinet, one ambassador, two deputies in the 70-seat National Assembly and two members in the 16-member central committee of the Ruling Party (Mamdani, 1995).

6. Uganda's role in the Batutsi/Bahutu conflict

Until 1990, Uganda had just acted as the recipient of, and host to, the thousands of Rwandans forced to migrate in the mid 1920s, in 1959 and in 1961. Mamdani (1995) writes that the country had some 500,000 to 700,000 Rwandans whose ancestry could be traced to the Bahutu peasants who crossed the border in the mid-1920s and who had become assimilated culturally over time, taken local names, affiliated to the local clans, married locally and even acquired an overall identity, particularly in Buganda. The population of those who were forced to move to Uganda (the Batutsi) by the Bahutu Revolution of 1959 is estimated to have been 200,000 by 1990

While Uganda played host to such colossal numbers of Rwandan refugees, the Hutu-dominated Government of the late President Juvenal Habyarimana maintained that Rwanda was too small to absorb its citizens back into the country. Before the invasion of Rwanda by exiles in Uganda, aided by Uganda's National Resistance Army (NRA), Rwanda was said to have a human population density of 600 people per km². However, Rwandan refugees (herein referred to as "environmental refugees"), have officially remained so in Uganda whatever status they assumed in society. Their children were born refugees and remained refugees. This was unlike in Tanzania where the authorities there allowed them to take up citizenship. For example, one school of thought holds that Julius Kambarage Nyerere, Tanzania's former President, is a Tutsi born of Tutsi parents, a fact which the school thinks dictated the very flexible policy of his Government towards Rwandan refugees.

With the assumption of state power by the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in Uganda, however, the status of Rwandan refugees was set to change.

7. The rise of Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Uganda

The story of Rwandan (Tutsi) frustration in Uganda is a long one. The fact that in Uganda "*once refugee, always a refugee*" was reinforced to the refugees through the education system which reminded them that they were still refugees whatever status they assumed in Uganda. This reality compelled elite Tutsi refugees in Uganda to form the first organisation of refugees in the country which they called "*Rwandan Alliance National Unity*" (RANU) in Kampala in 1979 (Mamdani, 1995). RANU immediately set on the mission of awakening Rwandan refugees to recognise and think about their situation and organised them for this purpose. Thereafter the "*Rwanda Refugee Welfare Foundation*" was formed, again in Kampala. The formation of the two organisations was an important development in the socio-political dimension of Uganda's environment. By this time the Rwandan refugees, many of whom had assumed positions in the military, paramilitary and civil institutions of Uganda, were getting increasingly worried and conscious of the possibility of being expelled from Uganda as happened to the Kenyan Jalu in 1970 and to Asians in 1972.

This was not a far-fetched concern. In 1969 President Milton Obote had ordered that all Rwandan refugees in Uganda be registered. During the 1980 General Elections all Rwandans were ordered not to participate in the choice of leader. When in 1981 Yoweri Museveni decided, after his defeat in the General Election of 1980, to pursue his political aims in the bush of Luwero (Luwero Triangle) Obote told Ugandans that Yoweri Museveni was in fact a Rwandan refugee. In 1983, over 40,000 Rwandan refugees in South Western Uganda are said to have fled subsequently to Rwanda under state harassment, before Juvenal Habyarimana's Government in Kigali closed its side of the border. Towards the end of 1983, some 19,000 Banyarwanda were evicted from Rakai and Masaka districts but with the Rwanda border closed, many fled to Tanzania while others ran to security camps in Uganda.

Similar treatments were meted out to Banyarwanda in Teso and Lango in Eastern and Northern Uganda.

The counter-point to these expulsions was the spreading guerrilla war in the Luwero Triangle. Fred Rwigyema was named Commander of the NRA and Deputy Minister of Defence to Yoweri Museveni himself and Paul Kagame (Vice-President of Rwanda) was named Acting Chief of Military Intelligence. Mamdani (1995) writes that the 14 Senior Officers who, under the Command of Fred Rwigyema, formed the leadership of the Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A) that invaded Rwanda in 1990 were all senior NRA officers. Rwandan refugees were also believed to have been catapulted into influential positions in the economy, politics, military and paramilitary in Uganda since 1986.

It is for reasons like these that a school of thought persists in Uganda that Yoweri Museveni pushed the National Resistance Council (NRC) - the quasi-legislature of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) - to suspend articles of the 1967 Constitution spelling out that no non-citizen of Uganda should become President of Uganda and to pass what he called the Sectarian Bill - forbidding Ugandans from discrimination against anyone or any segment of Uganda's population

The same school seeks to explain why the Odoki Draft Constitution, which was the basis of discussion on a new constitution for Uganda in the Constituent Assembly (CA August 1994 to August 1995), was so equivocal about the issues of citizenship, dual citizenship and land. The school of thought was strengthened in its belief by events in 1990 when, in January of that year, NRM tried to introduce a land bill aimed at repossessing ranches originally distributed to influential bureaucrats in the 1960s, each measuring 5-10 sq miles, subdividing them into smaller plots and redistributing them to squatters (*New Vision*, July 25, 1990).

Many of the squatters were Rwandan pastoralists. At the time of the Bill, there was an escalating conflict between ranchers and squatters, the former having turned over time into landlords who rented out grazing land to the land-less squatters as rent-paying tenants. However, the ranchers, some of whom were in the NRC, portrayed the Bill as an instrument of refugee Banyarwanda interests backed by governmental and particularly military power (Mamdani, 1995)

The debate was one of the most heated debates in independent Uganda in the press, in the NRC, on the streets, and in the villages. Mamdani (1995) cites the Exposure Magazine of October, 1990 summarising the feelings of Ugandans thus:

"Most Ugandans have vowed not to allow Rwandan non-citizens to be given their land."

The decision that came out of the NRC forbade non-citizens from owning land in Uganda, Banyarwanda refugees (and their children) were expressly mentioned as non-citizens, and a certain Minister was mentioned as influencing the plot to give land to non-citizens from Rwanda. As a consequence of this debate, Major General Fred Rwigyema was removed from his position as Deputy Minister of Defence by the Chairman NRA High Command (Yoweri Museveni).

8. Exodus of Rwandan refugees from Uganda

It is not clear whether the Rwandan refugees who joined Yoweri Museveni's NRA did so to gather skills and weapons or to build an organisation so that they might move to Rwanda at the first available opportunity (Mamdani, 1995). Neither was it clear whether the move to Kigali was a result of developments that took place in Uganda after NRA assumed power in Kampala. What is clear, however, is that once the refugees emerged from the bush of the Luwero Triangle, they found that the world outside had not changed; it remained the world of citizens and refugees, and the dictum "once refugee always refugee" still held. The discrimination against refugees still continued.

One line of thought is that it was out of this discrimination and predicament of the refugees that the RPF/A was born in 1987. The leadership of the Banyarwanda refugee struggle would only come from the Rwandans in the NRA and the method of return to Rwanda would be military not political (Mamdani, 1995). However, the question whether the future of the Rwandan (Batutsi) refugees would lie on return to Rwanda or being naturalised in Uganda remained unanswered until 1990 when Batutsi refugees under the command of Fred Rwigyema attempted in October, 1990 to invade Rwanda, and in 1994 actually succeeded in overrunning the defences of Rwanda from Uganda and subsequently capturing power in Kigali.

With the fall of Kigali followed one the greatest exoduses of people in Uganda's history when thousands of Banyarwanda Batutsi trekked out from virtually every part of Uganda, with hundreds of thousands of heads of cattle, into Rwanda almost undisturbed by the Government of Uganda. The laws regarding movement of animals were not evoked against the Banyarwanda although Ugandans moving one or a few animals within their country faced stern punishment during that time (Ochen, op. cit.).

According to Katenta-Apuuli, Uganda's Ambassador to the United States, in his letter to Human Rights Watch of August 1993, the decision of the NRC to forbid non-citizens from owning land and to expressly mention Banyarwanda refugees (and their children) as non-citizens, and Yoweri Museveni's decision to relieve Fred Rwigyema of his duties as Deputy Minister of Defence combined to convince the Banyarwanda refugees that they did not have a bright future in Uganda, hence the invasion of Rwanda in 1990, and later in 1994. However, according to Katenta-Apuuli *"the invaders were declared NRA deserters (not Rwandan refugees) who had left NRA to invade Rwanda as deserters, under the operational Code of Conduct and this meant that they would be punishable by death...."* (Mamdani, 1995). The rest of Banyarwanda, many of whom had posed as Ugandans, were considered to be Rwandans returning to their country.

3.2. Unwise economic/environmental policies

Economic development in Africa has for many years been driven by policies of exogenous origin. As a result, more development failures than successes have been recorded. Huge capital-intensive schemes such as large plantations based on single crops and large irrigation schemes have led to environmental and ecological collapse which in turn has initiated forced human migration. When land has become very unproductive and water-borne diseases such as malaria, bilharzia and dysentery have multiplied, people have logically moved away to areas where they hoped that their food and environmental health security needs would be satisfied.

The numerous development failures in Africa and the accompanying decline in environmental health have ignited enormous concern about the environmental impacts of development

This notwithstanding, new policies of economic development promoted by such economically powerful institutions as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the idea of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), have been implemented in Africa and these have complicated the environmental and ecological situation in the continent even further. Prescriptions such as privatisation, cost-sharing in schools and hospitals, retrenchment of workers, enhanced taxation and the primacy of the market have been responsible for much poverty and misery in the rural areas.

One of the aspects of the African socio-cultural fabric to suffer insults from the SAPs has been the Extended Family System (EFS). This used to impart enormous social, cultural and economic security to peasant families and communities, but now it is crumbling. Much of the misery and poverty of the people of Africa is due to this calamity. People have been forced to move to other areas, mostly urban ones, in the hope that their livelihoods would improve.

People are also being retrenched to their ancestral lands where they turn out to be human pollutants (refugees) and unproductive in the environment. Ugandans believe that as many of their kinsmen are being retrenched, foreigners including Rwandan refugees still in the service of the NRM/A Government, are gaining. Rubagumya in charge of Uganda Investment Authority, Ruzindana in charge of the IGG and Mbonye - the Secretary for Defence, are often cited as Rwandan refugees in sensitive positions in the socio-political fabric of Uganda. This has caused a lot of discontent which is now expressed in various forms of rebel activity in the country.

The pursuit of industrialisation and modernisation, on the premise that traditional practices are primitive and anti-development, has also had its adverse effects on the people. For example, the construction of huge hydro-electric power plants and dams has displaced hundreds of thousands of people over the last four decades. Almost without question, the displaced have not been compensated but have been left entirely to the mercy of nature. In Uganda, known Rwandan refugees, such as Nzei and Majambele are actively involved in ensuring that SAP succeeds. Many buildings and enterprises formally publicly owned have been bought at rock bottom prices by such refugees. Others have had easy access to land. Many Ugandans claim that Museveni's Government wanted the Constituent Assembly to grant it authority to give land to such people ostensibly for industrialisation and modernisation.

Environmental policies in Africa have also taken their toll on the people. These have been based on the "exclusion principle" whereby the indigenous people have been excluded from their traditional resources in the name of conservation. Usually the conserved areas have included some of the most fertile lands, dry season feeding and watering points and most of the medicinal resources while the people have been condemned to less hospitable, ecologically inferior and resource-poor areas. Concentration of people in such areas has led to the degradation of the agro-ecosystems. In Rwanda, a country which before its invasion by RPF/A forces had a population density of 600 people per km², two National Parks (Akagera and Des Virunga) and the Mutara Forest Reserve were established by the Belgians, thereby confining the population to the less resource-rich areas. This action was bound to sharpen competition for resources among the people with dire consequences for the environment and political stability.

Recently, financial institutions, which have in the past been blamed for their role in environmental destruction, have included environmental considerations in their philosophy of development and operations. The World Bank, for example, directed, in 1993, the International Development Association (IDA)-borrowing countries to identify key environmental problems, set priorities for dealing with them and come out with a comprehensive national environmental policy (Yao Graham, 1993). Each country was expected to put in place a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). NEAPs were also expected to describe the financial and technical assistance the countries needed to address priority environmental problems.

NEAPs are most advanced in Africa which has most of the IDA-borrowing countries. However, the real aim of the NEAP-strategy seems to be to integrate the development efforts in these countries into the World Bank's vision of "development". In particular this includes the centrality of SAPs, including privatisation, and the primacy of the market (Yao Graham, 1993).

One dangerous type of thinking at the World Bank is that environmental degradation is due to market failure, which would be resolved if all resources were privately owned and prices were competitive. Flowing from this, traditional land tenure systems in Africa are condemned as primitive and anti-development, and a proposal is made for the creation of more private property (privatisation). In countries like Uganda privatisation has become like a religion. The argument is that "property rights are a necessary condition for successful environmental management." However, there is now a growing fear that NEAPs are just another strategy of imposing the North's notion of sustainable development - using unsuspecting African leaders

There is also growing concern that all the World Bank wants from NEAPs is early warning that its programmes do not create major environmental scandals over environmental damage (e.g., Yao Graham, 1993). Already some areas of conservation interest in Uganda have been passed into private hands. Chambura Game Reserve and Kabalega National Park stand out as good examples. Should privatisation of land be pursued even in environmental terms in a country like Rwanda with, until recently, the highest human population density in Africa the likely thing to happen is that more and more people will be impoverished. The impoverished will then do more damage to their environment.

Unaware of this plot, the Government of Yoweri Museveni in Uganda is keen on implementing NEAPs to the letter along with pursuing industrialisation and modernisation. Although the Government has already established the National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA), it is clear that the broad masses of Ugandans have not even heard of NEAP several years since the idea reverberated in the Uganda environment. Frantic efforts were underway in the Constituent Assembly (CA) to constitutionalise the possession of all land by the state. What this pointed to was that once government became the undisputed custodian of all land, the government would have the licence to do anything with any piece of land anywhere in the country in pursuit of its World Bank-initiated NEAP, industrialisation and modernisation strategies.

The end result would most surely be further pauperisation of the indigenous people and hence a generation of even more internal refugees with dire consequences for the environment. Fortunately, for the time being, the idea of placing all land in the hands of the Ugandan Government has been rejected in the CA. However, if the future parliament is dominated by forces calling for "all land to Government," the CA rejection of the idea will be short-lived, unless what befell the NRM/A Land Bill of 1990 repeats itself.

3.3. Despotism

Despotic regimes are those whose political manifestation is geared towards monolithisation of society through encroaching on the inalienable rights of people to associate, express themselves in organised groups or otherwise, and choose their leaders without coercion or manipulation. The end result is reduced pluralism of politics, society, ideas and information, and depletion of the human population either through state-inspired murders and terrorism or migration. For example, the refugee crisis that led to the October 1990 invasion of Rwanda by elements in the NRM/A who called themselves RPF/A was a question of despotism in both Rwanda and Uganda (Mamdani, 1995).

Quite often despotic regimes may use the poverty and illiteracy of the population as tools for social and political control. Where such control is the rule rather than the exception, political development which equips the people with the capacity to demand accountability and transparency of their leaders or rulers, and intellectual development which empowers the people to question what is happening or to resist oppression, deceit and brainwashing by leaders or rulers, is a remote possibility. People's fundamental rights of association and choice of leadership will be systematically abused. With declining intellectual development, people will be easily oppressed, brainwashed and deceived.

Rwanda is perhaps the best example of a country where despotism, ethnic animosity, insurrection and political change in another country (Uganda) have recently combined to produce one of the greatest environmental refugee problems and instances of social collapse in Africa in modern times. As pointed out earlier, one million people belonging to the Hutu ethnic group, which composed 80% of the population of Rwanda, were forced to leave their country in 1994 by the invasion of the country by a well-trained Tutsi-dominated politico-military organisation from Uganda called Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A), whose members were determined to return to their country by force.