Will Climate Migrants Face Renewed Xenophobia?

The Case of Durban’s Structured Social Divisions

by Baruti Amisi and Patrick Bond

Centre for Civil Society Team: Nokuthula Cele, Rebecca Hinely, Faith ka Manzi, Welcome Mwelase, Orlean Naidoo, Trevor Ngwane, Samantha Shwarer, Sheperd, and others
* anticipated displacement and routes to Durban
* sites of xenophobia in Durban, 2008 (and 2010)
  * causes of xenophobia
  * uneven civil society responses
* would Basic Income Grant be a solution?

Centre for Civil Society Team:
Nokuthula Cele, Rebecca Hinely, Faith ka Manzi, Welcome Mwelase, Orlean Naidoo, Trevor Ngwane, Samantha Shwarer, Sheperd Zvavanhu
who caused climate change?
GHG/capita by country, 1950-2000
who loses from climate change? 
a ‘Climate Demography Vulnerability Index’

Central America, central South America, the Arabian Peninsula, Southeast Asia and much of Africa

Geographic disparities and moral hazards in the predicted impacts of climate change on human populations

J. Samson, D. Berteaux, B. J. McGill and M. M. Humphries
Table 4: Extreme Weather Risk: Top 20 Countries in 2015

Quantifying Vulnerability to Climate Change: Implications for Adaptation Assistance

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likely climate migrancy routes to Durban
Chatsworth – Bottlebrush
Perceptions of reasons behind attacks
‘Plus 94’ survey of 2000 people, 6/08

- Foreigners accepting cheap labour \ taking all job opportunities 32%
- Foreigners committing crime \ rape \ theft \ fraud in our country 31%
- Uncontrollable number of foreigners 18%
- Hatred \ jealously \ most foreigners own businesses 16%
- Foreigners own houses by corrupt means that are meant for South Africans 16%
- South Africans too lazy to work \ Selective in terms of jobs 11%
- Poverty \ Lack of jobs 11%
- Foreigners are selling illegal products \ pirate products \ stuffs \ drugs 11%
- Foreigners are diluting South African culture \ marrying South Africans 8%
- Ignorance \ illiterate people 5%
- SA government \ police accepting bribes from foreigners 5%
- Inflation \ Cost of living 5%
- South Africans are tribalists \ Hatred of blacks by other blacks 4%
- South Africans are greedy \ selfish 4%
- It is a political issue \ plot to unsettle South Africa 4%
- South Africans are insecure \ threatened 4%

Some core structural processes:

- Employment/jobs
- Housing
- Retail markets
- Crime (perceptions)
- Home Affairs corruption
- Socio-cultural difference & gender relations
- Subimperial pressures on regional poli-econ

Agency:
Can Durban civil society cope – then and in future? (No: scope/scale shortcomings)
Research Findings

• Albert Park:
  – Competition
    • Over trading goods
    • Space in St Georges, St Andrews, Russell St...
  – Attacks carried by people close to the Councilor
  – Street trading:
    • Some locals are not prepared to pay to Municipality
    • Fellow Africans are willing to pay; this create tension
  – Durban Service Providers:
    • Lawyers for Human Rights
    • Diakonia Council of Churches
    • Refugee Social Services
    • e-Thekwini Municipality
Research Findings (cont)

- Warwick Junction/ Avenue:
  - Competition over space: street traders
    - Hairdressing business vs fruit trading
  - Street trading:
    - Some locals are not prepared to pay to Municipality
    - Fellow Africans are willing to pay; this create tension;
  - Allegations of trading stolen goods
    - Threat by the Municipality to not renew trading permits
    - Joint activities to fight crime
    - Improvement of the situation
Research Findings (cont)

- Refugee Organisations and Individual Traders
  - KwaZulu Natal Refugee Council
    - Lobbying and advocacy
    - Refugees’ human rights
    - Two-fold partnership: (1) local community based organisations, and (2) e-Thekwini Municipality
  - Siyagunda Association
    - Membership oriented
    - Trading permits and interests of members
  - Union of Refugee Women
    - Deals with women and children related issues
    - Creche
  - Individual traders
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem/issue/context</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>• extremely high unemployment</td>
<td>A unifying local/national/regional approach to lowering (durably high) unemployment, based upon a ‘right to work’ and sufficient public works resources, especially ‘green jobs’, directed to projects needed by poor people and their communities</td>
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<td>• a tight housing market with residential stratification, and service delivery shortfalls</td>
<td>A dramatic shift of state investment resources into housing/services, for both capital/infrastructure and ongoing operating/maintenance subsidies</td>
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<td>• extreme retail business competition</td>
<td>A rising level of disposable income for low-income people – e.g. through a Basic Income Grant - to accommodate the intensified desperation in the informal sector</td>
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<td>• world-leading crime rates</td>
<td>A commitment to dramatic increases in publicly subsidised employment and in channelling investment resources into low-income areas, so as to mitigate the economic desperation that so often generates crime</td>
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<td>• Home Affairs Department corruption</td>
<td>Changes to SA state regulations that liberalise border restrictions (e.g. the Zimbabwean temporary work visa), and a very strong stance against such corruption, plus a dramatic increase in staff to accommodate the Department’s rising clientele base</td>
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<td>• cultural conflicts</td>
<td>A much greater SA state commitment to promotion of cultural diversity and the ‘melting pot’ of regional citizenries within SA</td>
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<td>• severe regional geopolitical stresses</td>
<td>A shift of SA foreign policy – driven by regional solidaristic initiatives in civil society - away from strategies which exacerbated political-economic and geopolitical tensions in Southern and Central Africa</td>
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Three Durban anti-x networks (no work on forced climate migrancy)

- Refugee Services Providers Network (RSPN)
- Durban Action Against Xenophobia (DAAX)
- Coalition Against Xenophobia, Racism, Ethnicism and Poverty (CAXREP)
Conclusion: we are not ready for climate migrancy
Danger of xenophobia remains acute

- Durban civil society has band-aided the local manifestations of xenophobia only up to a point,
- Structural terrain for renewed conflict remains relatively undisturbed
- Durable socio-economic and ‘local geopolitical’ problems remain as challenges for more visionary civil society strategists
- Chatsworth was one of Durban’s brutal sites of displacement in part because of civil society organising failures over prior years
- From Cato Manor/ Cato Crest, the CBD, and Umbilo Rd there are equally sobering lessons
- Yet, there are regional organisations which make us proud, including the solidarity expressed in the 2008-09 dockworker solidarity with Zimbabweans and Palestinians
- Can ‘Climate Justice Movement’ be the antidote to xenophobia?