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Resettling minority groups : the case of the Somali Bantu

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RESETTLING MINORITY GROUPS: THE CASE OF THE SOMALI BANTU

by

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A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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RESETTLING MINORITY GROUPS: THE CASE OF THE SOMALI BANTU

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Master of Arts
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Abstract

This paper argues that possession of formal education is essential for successful settlement in a western country. Using the Somali Bantu resettlement experience as a case study, this paper highlights the extent to which a lack of basic information can hamper a smooth transition into a western community. It is contended that a long history of social exclusion and intentional discrimination and abuse of the Somali Bantu resulted in their state of illiteracy and or lack of preliteracy skills, which made their resettlement experience that much more difficult than usual. I will seek to support my argument by use of narrations and case studies obtained from refugee supporting agencies and settlement providing organization reports and the media.

Key words:

Somali Bantu; Importance of Education; Illiteracy; Exclusion; Resettlement;

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In memory of my Mum Helen Kukubo

Who filled our lives with joy and laughter

and loved us unconditionally

Mum, it was too soon!

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Introduction

This research paper will discuss the Somali Bantu journey to the United States of America. It will highlight by use of examples, the lived experiences of the Somali Bantu during their resettlement process. It will focus on their lack of formal education as one of the critical “integration” challenges they faced when settling in the United States of America. In more than one way, this paper will make a connection from the initial social exclusion they faced in Somalia that led to their pre-literate and illiterate status to the challenges faced by the Somali Bantu in their journey to the United States. For purposes of this paper, Walker and Walker (as cited in Saloojee, 2003) define social exclusion as the “dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society”. In this paper, the Somali Bantu will appear as a racialized minority group who have experienced intentional discrimination. Two hundred years of existence in Somalia (Besteman & Cassanelli, 1996) only served to “other” the Somali Bantu in Somalia. Their ‘otherness” was made “official” when the United States of America decided to extricate all ten thousand plus Somali Bantu from the midst of the Somali in the Kenyan Refugee camps, by resettling them to the United States of America.

The lack of social integration of the Somali Bantu into the mainstream Somali society is a form of social exclusion that has promoted “ inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power” (Room as cited in Saloojee, 2003) due to their continued isolation by the Somali. Marginalized groups such as the Somali Bantu group may not always recognize that they are victims of exclusion because over time and

within their “confined” locale, they come to accept their “separate status” as conventional. In this case therefore, Saloojee (2003) points out that the “marginalized and victimized” can use the concept of social exclusion to table their experiences on processes such as globalization and correlate it to the norm. Freiler’s (as cited in Saloojee, 2003) explanation of the origin of exclusion being “deep, historical and continually reproduced in both old and new ways is contemporary society” gives a picture of the experiences of the Somali Bantu from their entry into Somalia as slaves in the 19th century to their resettlement into the United States two centuries later. The Somali Bantu’s denied access to formal education (Eno, 2008) fits into the concept of social exclusion which takes account of denied access to valued goods and services due to their ‘race’, gender, religion etc (Saloojee, 2003). The issue of racism in the case of the Somali Bantu brings up a complicated issue due to differing discourses of what race or racism is. Using the taxonomic definition of race or racism does not fit into this discussion, therefore, for purposes of this paper and as shall briefly be discussed in the section, “Who are the Somali Bantu” we shall define race as “ethnicity” (<http://thesaurus.reference.com>) or clan. At best, the term “racialization” should be used when it comes to discussing the Somali Bantu in Somalia. Denying the Somali Bantu education and other useful services such as access to useful employment, medical services just to name a few, hampered their contribution to society, hindering them from being equal participation in society. Racial discrimination or racialization with an intention to undervalue the rights, recognition and participation in society is a form of exclusion (Saloojee, 2003).

The continued exclusion of the Somali Bantu from the common Somali society including participation in the social, economic and political arena led the Somali Bantu to be left out from everyday development. According to Mohamed Eno (2008), education has been a “crucially scarce commodity” for the Somali Bantu. Even where schools were available in the rural areas where Somali Bantus dwelled, stereotyping, names and epithets by some teachers damaged the motivation and self esteem of the Somali Bantu pupils leading to early drop out from school (Eno, 2008). This constitutes one of the critical forms of exclusion faced by the Somali Bantu and one that would have a deep impact on their ability to integrate into North American society. The collapse of the nation-state of Somalia, ironically, enabled a group of Somali Bantu exiled in Kenyan refugee camps to get a platform to address their predicament and to also inform the world of a community who had been isolated from the world for centuries.

This paper will bring to light simple yet key accounts that will highlight how illiteracy can be a barrier to immigrant settlement in a Western country. As will be discussed briefly in the paper, learning of the host language, culture and way of life is expected of new immigrants. (Bixler, 2004). Acquiring knowledge of these will require a basic level of literacy. In Canada for example, knowledge of one of the official languages – English or French – including an understanding of Canadian social and history, politics, physical and political geography are a requirement to becoming a Canadian citizen (<http://www.cic.gc.ca>). By use of narratives, the experiences of the Somali Bantu during various stages of their resettlement process, exposes the difficulties they encountered, thereby allowing the reader to come to grips

with what it means to be illiterate in a western world. The paper will enable us to ponder important issues including whether resettlement of pre-literate and illiterate groups out of third world countries to western countries is the moral thing to do and secondly why a minority group of people such as the Somali Bantu dwelling in the midst of Somalia did not integrate into mainstream Somalia after two centuries (Mburu, 2004)? By documenting the Somali Bantu resettlement experience, this study will also contribute to on-going discussions about resettlement of marginalized minority groups.

This paper will begin with an overview of the importance of education and the Somali Bantu's experience with formal education. Notably, the Somali Bantu became refugees after the breakdown of the Somali Government; this paper will also briefly look at the global refugee crisis that led to the discovery of the Somali Bantu and their eventual resettlement to the United States of America.

Methodology

This project involves a multi-method case study of the challenges the Somali Bantu experienced while being resettled to the United States of America. These include textual analysis of articles, settlement providing organization reports, mainstream media texts and internet websites of the Somali Bantu community in different US states. More than once I watched documentaries produced by settlement providing organizations that documented the Somali Bantu personal experiences in order to capture the subtle opinions that only the Bantu themselves can attest to. This methodology will perhaps elucidate actual occurrences in relation to what is already accounted for in texts and mainstream media. The mainstream media also has a vital

job in revealing what I can only assume to be first hand stances from the Somali Bantu, verifiers and the host community. Through examining media articles and clips, we can see how the media worked to prepare the host community for the Bantus arrival.

By analyzing Refugee Resettlement Agencies and Service Providing Organizations' reports on the settlement of the Bantu, the challenges and outcomes of the resettling of the Bantu will be uncovered. My methodology aids in demonstrating the inextricable relationship between successful resettlement and integration into a foreign community for immigrants and possession of a formal education. For example, it will explicate how a lack of formal education including a lack of exposure to simple modernity's made the journey of the Bantu uniquely complex.

Global Refugee crisis

Natural disasters and an almost unending human strife has led to growing numbers of involuntary immigrants, refugees and internally displaced people around the globe. Under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, a refugee is a person who 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 their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country (Ishay, 2007). This definition was later expanded to include persons fleeing from war and violence in their home country (OHCHR, 1996). With our current world slowly getting “converted” into a refugee world, this definition of a refugee is getting irrelevant and outdated as we are seeing an influx in economic immigrants into the current scene being unable to return home due to “un-livable conditions (BBC, 2009). Internally displaced persons are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border” (Deng, 1998).

Every day, large numbers of people are being displaced (made refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPS) due to invasion, oppression, persecution and natural disasters (Office of Refugee Resettlement Annual Report, 2004). Millions are driven from their homes within their countries and sometimes across borders.

Colossal numbers of weapons of destruction have been used against populations in the 20th and 21st centuries displacing them from their homes, leading to a huge refugee phenomenon unique to the history of refugees. The past ten years has seen a doubling in the number of displaced persons globally, and these numbers are expected to increase (CIA, 2009).

Throughout history, immigrants have made up an important component of the United States population. The US population demographics continue to undergo a change as a result of a rise in immigration levels. Successive waves of immigrants have increased the population of North America and changed its ethnic composition. These immigrants have provided labour, capital and creativity thereby contributing to the social and economic development. The number of immigrants entering the United States of America and their characteristics are partly determined by government policies controlling admissions (McLaughlin & McLaughlin, 2003) and partly by the attractiveness of North America for immigration as well as the socio-economic and political climate in the sending countries.

According to the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (2007), between 1983 and 2004 the US received over 2 million refugees. The Cultural Orientation Resource Centre (2009) reports that the US will currently receive 80,000 refugees, of whom 12,000 are African refugees in 2009. Some of these refugees have been displaced several times whereas others have been confined to refugee camps for decades (ACF, 2009). According to statistics from the US Department of Homeland Security (2006), approximately 11% of the population of the United States of America is immigrants. About 7% of this population – approximately 2.3 million - is made up

of refugees or internally displaced persons who have been resettled into the United States (CAL, 2009). The Refugee Survey by the United States committee on Refugees (2004) stated that over 8 million refugees globally are living or have lived in protracted situations for more than 10 years. The internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee situation in Africa is poignant. Many Africans have been killed, disabled and left homeless. 75% of the refugees in Africa are living in protracted situations (UNHCR, 2001). UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as 'one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile' (UNHCR, 2006). The UNHCR's principal objective is to protect the rights and well-being of refugees. They work towards finding a durable solution that will allow refugees live their lives in dignity and peace. They endeavor to accomplish this through three solutions namely voluntary repatriation; local integration; or resettlement to a third country in situations where it is impossible for a person to go back home or remain in the host country. Voluntary repatriation refers to when UNHCR works with the country of origin and host countries to help refugees return home (UNHCR, 2002). This is usually the best durable solution because the old saying by Walter Kelly (1861) goes, "East or west home is best". However, if the country of origin is still facing unstable situations, this solution cannot succeed.

The other type of durable solution which can only be achieved if the host country is able and willing (both socially and economically)– is the local integration of refugees. Local integration refers to the assimilation of refugees in the host community (UNHCR,

2002). Lastly, resettlement as a durable solution, is the last resort, when the first two durable solutions have failed. Resettlement refers to the “selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought refuge to a safe host country, which has agreed to admit them, where they are accorded permanent protection guarantees, including legal residence, allowing them to integrate in the national community” (IOM, 2002) With little or no hope of returning back to their homelands, and host countries unable to take up both the financial and social burden of absorbing the ever growing numbers of people in exile many of these refugees await to be relocated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2004).

Every year between 2001 and 2008, the United States has allocated space and money for up to 70,000 refugees and internally displaced persons to be resettled in the United States. According to the Cultural Orientation Resource Center (2009), the United States currently has a refugee admission ceiling of 80,000 refugees. By the end of July 2009, 58,618 refugees had been admitted into the United States refugee (CORC, 2009). Some of these populations are “rare” (Tribe, 2002) and unique, such that there is little or no literature focused on them or their needs. In this case therefore, discerning the needs of these populations can be difficult and can create new challenges for both the hosts and the resettled persons (Miller and Rasco, 2004). Even more difficult is when the resettled group has no exposure whatsoever to daily life in a modern world, then cultural and language barriers in this case are more magnified (Wang & Freeland, 2004). When these refugees or IDPs take up residence in resettling countries, the reception is not always positive, mostly because of lack of information of the resettled refugees and also due to prejudice and discrimination.

Successful transition and hence settlement for new immigrants can be made easier if both the host community and the new immigrant understand each other's culture and language.

Refugees of African descent often encounter more problems and difficulties than are typical for any new immigrant group as they are "triple minorities (Bryce-La-Porte, 1993, p. 34). The *triple minorities' status* refers to a situation where the new immigrant groups not only speak a language different from the host community but that they also are a different race from the majority host community (Bryce-La-Porte, 1993; Pierce & Elisme, 2000). With the increase of foreign populations in the US, it is becoming increasingly important for settlement agencies to be more adequately prepared to meet the needs of newcomer populations. These settlement agencies need to be equipped with more information on the immigration experience and the effect of these experiences on the daily lives of refugees.

Who are the Somali Bantu?

Somalis have perceived and described themselves as a homogenous society that is closer to an Arab cultural context than an African one. Looking at a Somali Bantu and how physically different they are from the typical Somali, it is apparent that the Bantu was omitted from the description, as they do not fit this description (Declich, 1995). The Bantus are made up of many different peoples with diverse histories and differing levels of integration into Somali society. According to the CIA World Fact Book (2009), the estimated total population of the non Somali who include the Somali Bantu, Arabs, Indians, Italians to name a few is about 589,921 which is approximately 6% of the total population of Somalia. However, according to Lehman & Eno (2002), the entire Somali Bantu population in Southern Somalia is estimated at 600,000. The last official census in Somali was taken in 1975 by the Somali government (CIA, 2009). Because of the large numbers of nomads and forced migration due to civil war and famine, counting the population to estimate the number of people in a country like Somalia can be complicated.

The Somali Bantu consists of three groups: i) runaway slaves ii) emancipated slaves and iii) indigenous population (Eno & Eno, 2008). The Somali Bantus have – for as long as they can remember – been considered of a lower social status among the Somalis, possibly because of their so called Negroid look (Eno, 2008). Unfortunately, these three groups have been grouped as a single entity. The indigenous Somali's first Bantu people arrived as migratory agriculturalist thousands of years ago from South and Central Africa and settled in farmable rainfall and river regions. They are

believed to be the remnants of the Shungwaya Kingdom and residents of the Shebelle River while the first two groups were communities formed from runaway slaves and emancipated slaves (Cerulli, 1957). It is believed that the indigenous Bantu group and remnants of the Mjikenda people who migrated to Tana River in modern Kenya after being driven from Ethiopia by Oromo fighters in the 15th and 16th centuries. They reside mainly along the banks of the Shabelle River in Southern Somali (Eno, 2008). According to Cerulli (1957), the Mjikendas could be the natives and descendants of the ancient and controversial Kingdom of Shungwaya, located in Buur Gaabo. Shungwaya is known to be an ancient kingdom and headquarters of the then King Mzee Sagawambe Mkamwa of the Bantu people in Southern Somalia (Shungwaya, 2009). Several theories explain how the second Bantu group came to Somalia. One theory is that the group, were initially brought to Somalia some 200 years ago, largely as slaves. They were originally from modern-day Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique (Eno, 2008). Another theory based on Bantu oral traditions is that the Bantu left their country of origin – in this case modern day Tanzania – due to several years of severe and consecutive famine and droughts in the late 18th century - because of the prospect to work on a fertile land in southern Somalia as labourers (Grotanelli, 1955). Another theory is that the Bantu might have deliberately sold their children and themselves off because of persistent droughts which affected Tanzania early in the nineteenth century. Whichever theory is upheld, the fact that they were eventually exploited and used as slave labourers in the commercially oriented plantations overseen by a combination of Arab / Swahili and Somali merchants is undisputed (Eno, 2008; Menkhaus, 1989). They grew grain and other food products to be exported to the

Omani empire in the eastern African coast and to the markets of southern Arabia and the Middle East (Luling, 1971). Many of them were also used as a means of transportation for the movement of merchandise such as ivory from the southern Somali interior to the coastal cities. The Somali often considered owning a Bantu a necessity for labour and for survival. They treated the Bantu people callously:

“....slaves were harshly treated often kept in manacles and fetters, overworked and underfed” (Hess, 1966).

The inhumane treatment was noted by colonial officers, who reported,

“Slaves and their wives, being labourers, were housed miserably in small, half-roofed huts with their usual food of parched Indian corn and fish from the river” (Lt. Christopher, 1844 as reported in World Civilizations: Volume I).

Earlier in the 20th century the Europeans abolished slavery in southern Somalia and introduced a coerced labour system, which indiscriminately conscripted the emancipated Bantu ex-slaves, the runaways and the indigenous Bantu (Hess, 1966). The Italian colonizers choice to only enroll the Bantu into hard labour activities is suggestive of Freiler’s (as cited in Saloojee, 2003) description of exclusion as “continually reproduced in both old and new ways”. In doing this, Italian authorities did not however make any effort at changing the status of the indigenous and “imported” Bantu populations as equal to that of the Somali nomads. Instead they upheld the nomadic claim of mythical nobility and contaminated the ethno-history of the distinct Bantu groups, by lumping them together and stratifying all of them as descendants from slaves (Eno, 2008). This misconception created class stratification based on nomadic “super ordinates” and Bantu “subordinates” effecting a deeply rooted

implementation of stiff marginalization by the former against the latter (Campbell, 2005). This was instrumental for the unilateral tribal manipulation of political power of an ethnically diverse population that bedevilled Somalia since its independence (Lewis, 2002). The value label attached to this festering quandary has been key in the deliberate exclusion of the Bantu people.

To date, the Somali Bantu still do not have the same rights as other Somali citizens. Being born in Somalia alone is not sufficient to qualify them for national prosperity and the full respect of “Somaliness, which came with independence” (Eno & Eno, 2009). Without access to “the national cake” that comes with being citizens in an ‘independent country’, the Somali Bantu have “incomplete citizenship, undervalued rights, undervalued recognition and undervalued participation (Saloojee, 2003) The Bantu need the magic code of a “major tribe” status with its affiliation to nomadic values, otherwise without these core parameters for gauging Somali nobility; the Bantu’s cannot fit into the framework of Somaliness (Eno, 2008).

Although a number of Bantus eventually integrated to some extent within the Somali society, a large number remained in destitution, held to menial labour and subjected to extensive discrimination. Those who integrated into the Somali society, assimilated into smaller Somali clans such as the Biamal, Garre, Jiido and Shiqaal. They even adapted the Maay Maay language, became accustomed to a new way of dressing like the local Somali mores and even though they maintained their ancestral culture and animist religious practices from their countries of origin they also took to practicing Islam (Eno, 2008).

The Bantu live in the rural areas of the middle and lower Juba regions in southern Somalia. The Somali Bantu are mainly agrarians though a good number of them are skilled technicians: masons, electricians, mechanics, carpenters and plumbers – skills acquired usually by years of apprenticeship. The tendency for the Bantu to move towards these skills and occupations, has been intensified partly due to the Somali's unwillingness to do engage in blue-collar jobs which they consider menial. Accordingly these and a variety of other occupations are not highly regarded by the nomadic culture, which approves that only non-nomadic, "low" status people should live by such "dirty" jobs (Eno, 2008). Two hundred years in Somalia and the Somali Bantu have not integrated in meaningful ways with the Somali people. Though they possess some cultural traits common to the Somalis, the Bantu have maintained many distinct cultural traditions including music, dance and community lifestyles (IOM, 2002) due to their continuous exclusion from mainstream Somalia.

Understanding the term "Somali Bantu"

There are several theories that seek to explain how the term "Somali Bantu" emerged. Previously, the Bantu were known as *adoon*, *habash* or the Italian word *ooji*, all derogative and deprecating names to identify them as slaves or persons who lack the ability to think beyond the moment (Chanoff, 2002). The Bantu had collectively referred themselves as Mshunguli, a term taken from Mzigula, the Zigua's tribe word for people. The name Mshunguli has also been used by the Somali to imply worker, foreigner or slave (Lehman & Eno, 2002). While describing the period after the 1990 civil war Chapin (2007) states that "the Somali Bantu ethnic term and identity emerged through a synergistic process between the needs of

international aid organizations and the needs of the population of southern Somali agriculturists." According to Jenkins (1996) once in the refugee camps, the Bantu groups assumed the term Somali Bantu as the new description to show a "common designation" for the amalgamated group. The Bantu felt strongly that embracing a unified front will help raise awareness to the suffering that they had and were undergoing and also present a unified voice to represent their common interests. Jenkins (1996) states that the "term designated a new unified grouping of small; formerly separate ethnicities of Bantu origin, speaking several languages".

Collapse of a Nation State

Colonization and decolonization has played a great role in the political and social instability of Somalia. The colonial occupation of Somalia affected the Somali Bantu more than it affected other Somali. According to Eno (2008), the colonialists not only appropriated Bantu land, they also forcefully exploited Bantu manpower. During this colonial time, in 1948, Ogaden was bequeathed to the Ethiopian. This decision including the north /south economic divide caused by the British's lack of investment in the north, making the north lag far behind the south economically, leading to bitterness from this state, would lead to civil war several decades later (Besteman, 1999). In 1977, Siad Barre attempted to obtain Ogaden back from the Ethiopians. In 1978, Siad Barre proved unable to return Ogaden to Somali rule thus leading to lower popularity and unrest in Somalia. In the 1980, Siad Barre unleashed terror on the opposing clans in order to secure his power by weakening opposition (Cassanelli, 1996). For the Somali Bantu, not being affiliated to one of the major Somali clans further isolated them from a share of power.

In 1991, Somalia experienced a great revolution. A combination of clan-based forces backed and armed by Ethiopia ousted President Siad Barre (BBC News, 2001). Later in the same year, Ali Mahdi Muhammad was elected by the manifesto group as an interim state president until a conference between all stakeholders was held in Djibouti to select a national leader. Unfortunately, military leaders and other leaders of various armed groups refused to recognize Ali Mahdi as President. This caused a split between the different factions and the military forces, which led to efforts to remove Siad Barre who still claimed to be the legitimate president of Somalia. This led to an escalation in violence in the south especially in Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Middle Juba. This armed conflict devastated the south including the formerly agricultural areas of Somalia, and led to the nation state of Somalia collapsing into a series of warring fiefdoms sending thousands of Somali civilians fleeing for their lives. The Somali civil war involved at least a dozen clan and regional factions. The war saw an estimated 300,000 Somalis die of starvation, close to a million were forced to flee their homes, turning Somalia into a death trap for both civilians and international peacekeepers (Samatar, 1994; Clarke & Herbst, 1997). Warring clans destroyed Somali Bantu communities, taking over farms in a fashion that would preclude the return of the Bantu to Somalia (Besteman, 1999).

Many of these Somali civilians are refugees in Kenya. Initially about 120,000 Somali civilians crossed over into Kenya in 1991 mostly on foot through Liboi, a small border town on the Kenya – Somali border before being hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Dadaab. Dadaab is a town in North Eastern Kenya. It is about 100km from the Kenya – Somali border. Among the

over 120,000 Somali Refugees, approximately 10,000 were Somali Bantu – a group whose ancestors were sold or tricked into slavery from their ancestral homelands, and who continued to be widely discriminated against and victimized in Somalia prior to the war. The Somali Bantu were considered a forgotten and at risk refugee group (<http://www.Mapendo.org>). It is this group of 10,000 Somali Bantus who were later on resettled to the United States of America.

Life in Kenya

Dadaab is set in an arid landscape north east of Kenya. Dadaab is inhabited by ethnic Somalis who are Kenyan citizens. Between 1991 and 1992 three refugee camps were set up in the Dadaab town in the Garissa District of North Eastern Kenya, to host the large influx of Somalis fleeing violence in war torn Somalia. The three camps are namely Dagahaley, Ifo and Hagadera. By 1994, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) registered 128,144 refugees from Somalia. Among them, 10,143 were identified as "Bantu Somali" (Declich, 2000). Other minority refugee groups in Dadaab included the Sudanese, Ethiopians, Eritreans and Ugandans (UNHCR, 2002). Until 2005, the UNHCR implementing agencies included Care International, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The Dadaab area is highly insecure with *shifita* (bandits) roaming the flat plains. Armed escorts are used for all transports around the camp. The security situation has been characterized as “plagued by inter-clan clashed, cattle rustling and banditry” (UNHCR Global Report 2000). Since Dadaab’s inception, the high incidence of rape directed at women collecting firewood has been a devastating

problem. Women often have to walk up to three miles into the arid bush in search of adequate firewood which puts them under high risk of attack. In the camps, the Bantu remained a minority refugee group in Dadaab. The total number of the Bantu remained at just about 8% of the total population of the Dadaab refugee population which by 1998 was about 130,000 (UNHCR, 2000). Their lack of affiliation to a Somali clan made their stay in Dadaab very risky as they endured excessively high amount of discrimination and bandit attacks (Lehman, 1993).

Importance of Formal Education

It is possible that education and schooling are in fact one of the means by which cultures are created and transmitted. Every day we observe the significance formal schooling plays for the contemporary society. Formal education continues to contribute to human resource development, productivity and skill training, which are all turning out to be keystones to the public and private sector's guiding principles with the western world's aggressive and dynamic position in international commerce. The world today which has been described in various ways including a knowledge age, information society and credential society (Webster, 2002; Weert, 2004; Neckerman, 2004) , continually depends heavily on formal education to sustain it. Having more than a basic formal education is fundamental as more than ever before, both individual and community success depends upon effectively applying learned knowledge to create ground-breaking resolutions to all manner of situations. Schooling is progressively perceived as a strategic course of action for both the individual and the nation.

The emergent significance of formal edification is ingrained behind two cohesive ideas. First, according to Winkleby, Jatulis, Frank and Fortmann (1992), as the idea that knowledge is indispensable to production gains acceptance; societies continue to appreciate the obligation to secure training and education. A budding aggressiveness toward global trade has concentrated interest on human resource development, productivity enhancement and skill training. Secondly, today's world recognizes the need for citizenship training, as formal education plays a central part in raising awareness of ethical, political and moral issues. Schools help to mould the

lives of individuals thus shaping the society's structure. Formal education can help to reinforce the significance of important concepts of human rights, environmentalism and multiculturalism. Formal education can play an important role in providing equal opportunity in the society. Formal education has also been shown to be the best predictor of better health (Winkleby et al, 1992). In countries where female secondary enrolment is low, it has been observed that women who have at least secondary level education, experience a reduced infant mortality and fertility rates. (Raney & Subbarao, 1993). A higher level of a mother's education translates into higher levels of contraceptive use among their children (Coelho, Teixeira., Cruz., Gonzaga., Arrais., Luchini., Vecchia., & Tognoni, 1994). Female education has been shown to increase women's participation in labour market along with their wages, improve the health and education of their families, decrease their number of pregnancies, decrease the likelihood of their contracting HIV virus, and promote better governance. In general, increased female education tends to improve a country's economic growth, along with additional benefits. (Herz & Sperling, 2004). Education for the Somali Bantu women will help to raise awareness to dangerous traditional practices affecting them and their babies including female genital mutilation, poor nutrition during and after pregnancies brought about by taboos, and outdated traditional practices. This in return will decrease child mortality and increase longevity among the Bantu.

On June 9, 1957, Nathan Pusey, the 24th President of Harvard University (1953 – 1971) stated:

"I believe the teacher's mission is to help every young person in his care to grow into the broadest, deepest, most vital person possible. And in fulfilling

himself, the student will, I am convinced, arrive at moments of heightened insight when he sees more clearly than ever before what the world is about and how he can fit into it creatively and significantly” (This Week Magazine, June 9, 1957).

Pusey’s description of education, speaks to the reality of its importance in fitting into today’s modern world. Pusey stresses the important role that education implementers play in shaping the lives of people and emphasizes education as a fundamental basic human right. He points to the responsibilities each “player” has in keeping with the human rights tradition and upholding the education rights of children as fundamental human rights. Although this statement was made over half a century ago in North America, the importance of education has not been overlooked by most nation states globally. Many nations perceive the right to education both as a right in itself and as a means of promoting peace and respect for human rights generally (UNESCO, 2000). Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - the right to education - declares that everyone has the right to education and that education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages (Roosevelt, 2000). It is at the elementary and fundamental levels of school that one learns how to read and write.

In the United States of America, schooling is so important that young people are legally required to attend formal school until the age of 16, and 18 in some states (<http://www.ed.gov>). The influence of formal education in today’s modern world, goes far beyond this minimal legal requirement, it diffuses into the fabric of our daily lives. Tens of thousands of hours are spent pursuing schooling activities, however, even when the schooling ends, our lives have been shaped immensely by what we

learned at school at every level (Pincus, 1987). North America is a schooled society. In the modern world and in North America especially, it is, important to acquire as much formal education as possible. Education has continuously been seen as important due to the transformation of the economy over the past centuries. North America's economy has evolved from an agriculturally based resource economy to a manufacturing based economy and now to a knowledge-based economy. These shifts have resulted in the continual improvement of required literacy and numeracy skills. Technological developments and increasingly competitive international trade are creating a new economic order with the resultant impact on jobs and the levels of education and skills required to be employed in those jobs. . Knowledge work is now more pivotal at the same time as the de-industrialization of the United States is proceeding apace. Service and high technology jobs will continue to replace routine and low skill occupations. Knowledge is emerging as the key resource of the next century. (Beck 1995; Bell 1973; Stehr 1994). Globalization has led to more international migration and greater deregulation.

Changing economic conditions throughout the second half of the 20th century have made the society more unequal in terms of wealth, income and employment distribution. This means schooling is increasingly seen as a way to level the playing field and as a result, educational equity has become a central issue. Koïchiro Matsuura (2002), Director General of UNESCO stated, "I have personally committed myself to making it a priority, for education is a fundamental human right, set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Human Rights Covenants, which have force of international law. To pursue the aim of education for

all is therefore an obligation for States."(Education for All: the Unfulfilled Promise", 21st Century Talks session on education for all, 2002)

The Right to Education is a fundamental human right. It occupies a central place in Human Rights and is essential and indispensable for the exercise of all other human rights and for development. "As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty, and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities"(Matsuura, 2002). None of the civil, political, economic and social rights can be exercised by individuals unless they have received a certain minimum education.

The right to education is protected in many international agreements, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Everyone has the right to education, training and information, and to other fundamental human rights dependent upon realization of the human right to education. The human right of all persons to education is explicitly set out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenants*, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and other widely adhered to international human rights treaties and Declarations – all 4 of them, powerful tools that must be put to use in realizing the human right to education for all (PDHRE, n.d.). The right to education entitles every woman, man, youth and child to: 1) The human right to free and compulsory elementary education and to readily available forms of secondary and higher education. 2) The human right to freedom from discrimination in all areas and levels of education, and to equal access to continuing education and vocational training. 3)

The human right to information about health, nutrition, reproduction and family planning (Joyce, 1978; Rehman, 2003; Dinstein and Tabory, 1990).

The human right to education is inextricably linked to other fundamental human rights - rights that are universal, indivisible, interconnected and interdependent including 1) The human right to equality between men and women and to equal partnership in the family and society. 2) The human right to work and receive wages that contribute to an adequate standard of living. 3) The human right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief. 4) The human right to an adequate standard of living and 5) The human right to participate in shaping decisions and policies affecting ones community, at the local, national and international levels. The right to education is supported by seven important freedoms including the freedom to achieve ones dreams, free will to thought and speech, the choice to have safe and respectable employment, freedom from poverty and from abuse, freedom from fear and the right to be treated fairly (OCHA, 2006).

Education is important because once educated, people can improve their lives by making well-informed decisions. In addition, everyone should be accorded the opportunity to learn, and to that effect, everyone should have a school nearby that offers good quality education. However, it should be noted that in the event that there is no school nearby, education can occur anywhere. Regrettably in spite of all the commitments made by governments under international instruments for providing education for all, especially free and compulsory quality basic education, millions of children still remain deprived of educational opportunities, many of them on account of poverty. Achieving the right to basic education for all is thus one of the biggest

moral challenges of our times. The case of the Somali Bantu is a sad reflection of how the Somali government failed to provide free elementary and foundation education to the Bantu populations in the rural settings including in urban settings on account of their being different.

A lack of basic formal education today can be socially and economically detrimental to one's survival in these times. This can be especially difficult when a group of "coloured" refugees from a third world country are resettled to a western country such as the United States. This is so because of the problems and difficulties that new African and Asian immigrant groups face due to the "triple minorities' status" (Bryce-La-Porte, 1993). The Somali Bantu are a good example of an immigrant group that experienced and continue to experience the triple minorities' status after resettling to the United States.

Education experience of the Somali Bantu

Since their arrival in Somalia, the Bantu have not experienced an easy life. Education was often out of reach for Bantu children, most worked on their parents' farms instead of attending school (UNHCR, 1999). By 1998, a formal education similar to the Kenyan formal education had only begun to be available in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps (IOM, 2002). However, the Somali Bantus having not had any schooling available to them in Somalia did not find it that important to have schooling in the refugee camps. This was coupled with the discrimination and oppression they continued to face in these camps from their Somali counterparts (Eno, 1997). On arrival to the United States, educators initially found Bantu parents reluctant or unable to participate in their children's education. However a few weeks

after their arrival into the United States, many Bantu parents wanted their children to access as much formal education as possible. They themselves also started to attend adult schools and English schools (Eno, 2008)

The educational system for Bantu children in the inter-riverine areas had been cleverly designed by Somali Bureaucrats, with the intention of maintaining illiteracy in the Bantu communities, thereby restricting their access in the institutional administration (Eno, 2008). Before Siad Barre, the Somali hegemony had set up the educational system in a way that did not favour the inter-riverine communities, since all the secondary schools as well as most intermediate schools, had been deliberately centralized in Mogadishu and other cities in southern Somalia (Eno et al, 2008). So to get their children to schools, a Bantu farmer had to send their children in to the city to learn. This was unfair because all other non-Bantu areas had easy access to schools within walking distance. This is why 98% of the young Bantu men and women are either illiterate or with a minimum of primary level education.

In 1969, Siad Barre's regime introduced a new system that would further hinder the educational advancement of Bantu and the inter-ravine people (Eno, 2008). In his book on the Somali Bantu, Eno (2008), describes how Siad Barre authorized the building of very few intermediate and secondary level schools in the inter-ravine areas ensuring that the Bantu remained unqualified to enroll in Somali universities and polytechnics. The following excerpts illustrate the challenges and difficulties the Bantus faced while attempting to access education. The first example is the firsthand experience of Mohamed A. Eno, who later on went on to complete a Doctor of philosophy in Social studies education.

“When the school headmaster Abdalla Ali Murshid announced the highest scorer in the centralized leaving exam of Casa Popolare Elementary school was “Mohamed Abdulkadir Eno”, a parent from the north could not take it. As I was passing near him to the podium to shake hands with the headmaster, I heard my left handed northerner classmate’s father saying, “Ma kan adoonka ah baa caruurteena ka badiyey?” [How is it possible that this slave one has outscored our children?]]” (Eno, 2008)

The above example conveys how academic participation is seen as a sacrosanct privilege not to be enjoyed by the Bantu. Obviously, the Somali were offended when a Bantu student excelled beyond their Somali counterparts. In another example, we see how the Bantus were methodically alienated from the schools.

“An Italian teacher one day called for his student’s parent. When the two met, the teacher advised, “Try to transfer your son to another school. In this school, he will not move to the upper grade no matter what.” The student’s father was perturbed as he was told, on confidential note, “The Somali teachers are hard on him without any valid reason. We can’t help the situation but we have to be honest with you. The boy is brilliant and active but that is his disadvantage. I am sorry!” (Eno, 2008).

This excerpt demonstrates how unpleasant it was for the Bantu to study in a Somali dominated school. The Bantu student would face harassment, stereotyping and bullying from both the students and the teachers. Those who got accepted into these institutions had to bribe authorities with large sums of money equivalent to their life savings (Eno, 1997). There were further restrictions to the Bantu getting enrolled into

special programs such as medicine, law and engineering. Bantus never benefited from academic scholarships; instead they were given scholarships to the military in the Soviet Union (Eno, 2008). A random survey conducted on 2116 Somali Bantu by Eno (2008) showed that 87% of the Somali Bantu were uneducated. Less than 2% had attained secondary level and above (p. 267). Of the 2116 Somali Bantu surveyed, 99% stated that they were treated unequally and unjustly by the Somali.

According to Eno (2008), the Bantu have forever been alienated from the circle of Somali politics. The occupants of the central region have control of Somali's treasury. They have become the sole political power. The government pledged free financing within the tribal party to ensure re-election at Somali taxpayer's expense. There was little financial stability to support a Bantu party. Statistics from the United Nations show that the most populated regions in Somalia are the inter-ravine and coastal areas, yet these areas were allocated the least number of seats in parliament. This misrepresentation is unacceptable (Eno, 1997). The Bantu are being intentionally prevented from accessing the political arena, leaving them without a political voice. With little or no representation in parliament, advocating for better services such as schools in the inter-ravine areas where the Bantu's dwell (or tend to dwell) in Somalia is closer to nil (Eno, 2008).

Representing Somalia as a homogeneous society, whose people possess a pastoral culture only, overlooks not only the rich culture and traditions of the riverine and coastal regions, but lessens the strengths of the Somali mores. The promotion of Somali's homogeneity fides the reality of there being other ethnic groups other than the 'typical' Somali in Somalia. If there is no documentation to show for the other

ethnic groups in Somalia, then there can be no accusations of discrimination on the basis of race, tribe or ethnicity. Earlier research on southern Somalia was done by Italian scholars whose publications are not widely read in the English speaking world (Eno, 2008). Only recently in the 1990s after the collapse of the nation state of Somalia, did the world learn of the Somali Bantu.

Resettlement to the United States of America

Acquiring a United States *green card* requires that the-would-be immigrant meet certain criteria and have a reason for coming which is consistent with the spirit and the letter of the immigration and nationality act (McLaughlin et al, 2003). Permanent residence in the United States is granted generally as a result of a family member filing a petition for family re-unification or a future employer filing a petition to have his foreign trained employee granted permanent residence in the United States. In addition, one can be selected in an annual immigration lottery drawing.

Finally one can also gain United States permanent resident after having been granted asylum or refugee status. In order to qualify for refugee status, an applicant must meet certain criteria. According to section 101 (a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), to be a refugee, one must be of special humanitarian concern to the United States as well as not be firmly resettled in any foreign country. The same policy declares that spouses and minor children of “qualifying refugees may derive status and also enter the United States as refugees either accompanying or following to join the principal refugee” (Farnam, 2005). Eligibility for refugee status is determined on a case-by-case basis. Applicants with criminal records or serious health problems may be determined inadmissible to the United States even if United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has determined them to be a refugee (McLaughlin et al, 2003).

In 1991, the Somali civil war broke out in the wake of the collapse of Siad Barre's regime. This was caused by and followed by clan competition for power which led to disastrous results for the civilian population and more so for the Bantu people in particular. Having no clan affiliations, the Bantu were much more vulnerable because they had no protection, whatsoever (Eno, 1997). The Bantu had been the backbone of the agricultural production south of Somalia, but when the civil society broke down, the agricultural production networks also began to cease normal operations. As the hunger among the Somali population increased due to the war, so did the cost of food. Because of the exclusion from the traditional Somali clan protection network, bandits and militias were able to attack the Bantu without redress. The bandits also robbed, raped and murdered Bantu farmers (Eno et al, 2007).

As the war progressed, control over lower Juba River valley shifted among various warlords with each inflicting havoc on the Bantu farming communities (Declich, 1995). In 1992, the Bantu began to flee southern Somalia en bloc for Kenya. In Kenya, they were hosted by the UNHCR in refugee camps located approximately 40 miles from the Somali border in North Eastern Province of Kenya which is arid and often hostile (IOM, 2002). Several other thousands of Bantus also managed to flee directly by sea from Somalia to the Marafa refugee camp near Malindi and some to Mkuyu refugee camp near Handeni in northern Tanzania (UNHCR, 2002).

Unlike their Somali counterparts who wanted to resettle to a developed nation, the Bantu refugees requested the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to specifically resettle them in their countries of (historic) origin – Tanzania, Malawi or Mozambique (UNHCR, 2002). While in the refugee camps in Kenya, the Wazigua –

one of the Bantu tribal groups—held secret meetings to discuss the possibility of returning to Handeni district in Tanzania, their ancestral land. They set up a mission of able bodied young men who were sent to Tanzania as exploring emissaries. Some of the objectives of this mission included a negotiation with the Wazigua elders in Tanzania to bless the remigration and resettlement of their kinsmen from Somalia among them (Eno & Eno, 2007). After several trips back and forth between Wazigua elders in Tanzania and their counterparts in refugee camps in Kenya, the Tanzanian government intervened by sending a fact finding mission to the Kenyan camps in 1993. The Tanzanian delegation verified that the Wazigua refugees were indeed connected genealogically, culturally, linguistically and traditionally to the Wazigua people of Tanzania (UNHCR, 2002).

In 1994, Tanzania declined to accept the Bantu because the country had its own troubles. It had recently been swamped with hundreds of thousands of other refugees fleeing the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. To add to this calamity, the El Nino weather phenomenon was battering the country's agriculture (Lehman, 1999). The decision to not take the Bantu during that time, underlined the vagaries of refugee life and dividing line which can separate a new beginning from condemnation to a lifetime of exile. This kind of desperation can be seen in the words of one of the Bantu leaders, Abdullahi Ali Mohamed,

“We felt so helpless when we heard the result. The Tanzanians looked like us. We felt like brothers. And then we were abandoned.” (Refugees, 2002)

Three years later, in 1997, the refugee agency tried again this time approaching the government of Mozambique. An official delegation spent three days in Dadaab

querying the Bantus on issues such as language, ethnic history and how the Bantus mark the occasion of a girl's maturation. Two years later, the Bantu's received Mozambique's answer. Mozambique withdrew its interest citing the acceptance of such a large number of refugees would give the wrong political signal, especially given the unresolved postwar circumstances of its own displaced population following a brutal civil war in the 1990s (IOM, 2002).

The report added that a positive decision would set an unwelcome precedent that might encourage a flood of persons of Mozambican origin wishing to return from neighbouring countries. In Africa, this is not an idle concern. In the last two centuries millions of people have been uprooted by conflict and natural disaster. Some have been assimilated, but many remain marginalized minority groups and one day may also consider trying to return to their ancestral roots. That was little consolation for the dispirited Bantu as Abdullahi was to state,

“We were rejected by the Tanzanians. Now by Mozambique. Now we feel totally adrift, homeless without any future” (Refugees, 2002)

When the UNHCR approached the United States government, the Bantu leader said,

“We didn't have much hope. Our brothers had rejected us. Why should the Americans want us? What are our ties with that country (UNHCR, 2002)

How they were selected

The United States through their US Refugee Resettlement Program (USRP) annually accepts agreed numbers of refugees for permanent resettlement, in addition to individuals or groups who may independently seek asylum. As discussed earlier in

this paper, between 2001 and 2009, the US set its refugee admission ceiling at 70,000 to 80,000 refugees per year. The main criteria for these resettlement countries are the extreme vulnerability of refugees and their inability to return safely and peacefully to their homes (UNHCR, 2002). In 2001, the US resettled about 3800 so called “Lost Boys” of the Sudan. This group of resettled *lost boys* is part of more than 27,000 boys who were displaced or orphaned during the 1983-2005 Second Sudanese Civil War that saw about 2 million people killed (Bixler, 2005).

Resettling the Somali Bantu was not anything similar to the *lost boys*’ resettlement; the Bantu resettlement was the largest African refugee group process. Resettling the Bantu was an uncertain and difficult activity. With human trafficking exploding into a global multimillion dollar business and the refugee resettlement program itself becoming a target where several scams were exposed in which officials were selling coveted places to the highest bidder. The US and UNHCR understood that another high visibility project would attract the attention of potential traffickers and untold numbers of unqualified refugees (UNHCR, 2002). To decide who was eligible for this new life on offer the UNHCR utilized its approach for the identification and processing of the Somali Bantu group for resettlement to the US. This approach is built around the 1) *Conceptualization* and 2) *Evaluation and Analysis* of certain types of information, followed by the preparation of a 3) *Group Profile and Proposal Document*, followed by the 4) *Submission*, or initial presentation of the proposed group to one or more resettlement countries and partners, and a 5) *Group Processing Plan of Action*, which details the roles and responsibilities of all partners in relation to case preparation and other procedures, as well as the fraud and

security safeguards and communication strategies developed to deter associated refugee movements. 6) *Verification* is the final ascertainment of preliminarily identified individuals who qualify for inclusion in the group, followed by 7) *Group Resettlement Processing*, which will benefit from incorporating the gains made by UNHCR in developing and implementing effective registration of refugee populations (UNHCR, 2004). This approach was useful because most refugees rarely carry original passports or identification documents due to the fear of compromising their already precarious safety. This was especially helpful in the case of the Somali Bantu as most of them had no official documents to begin with (IOM, 2002).

In December 2001, UNHCR carried out a resettlement verification exercise in Dadaab to identify all of the Somali Bantus who had indicated interest in going to Mozambique (UNHCR, 2002).

The interview process

The resettlement of the Somali Bantu refugees to the United States was not only a humanitarian act but also the creation of a modern Diaspora. They were the largest African group ever granted a non-forced migration to resettle in the United States of America as a persecuted “minority” group (Eno et al, 2008). It was observed during the verification exercise that while the men and even boys are quite vocal, the women were for the most part reserved and quiet (IOM, 2002). They often deferred to the males in the family. In some cases boys as young as 11 or 12 would answer questions for and overrule their mothers. This seems to be a male dominated society in which women will in the cases noted defer to men and even the boys (IOM, 2002).

These observations took place within the context of verification interviews and may not be the most accurate depiction of gender dynamics.

To carry out the resettlement interviews, the US government decided that security concerns involved in extricating this minority group from a vast and resentful refugee population in Dadaab dictated extraordinary measures (UNHCR, 2002). Instead of processing the Somali Bantus in Dadaab, where the Somalis might try to infiltrate eligible families, the decision was made to move them after the verification exercise, to the Kakuma refugee camp, a 900-mile, three-day road trip across bandit-ridden north eastern Kenya (IOM, 2002). As if to confirm the wisdom of this decision, gunshots ripped through the night air during the first two evenings of resettlement interviews in Dadaab. A 50 person strong verification team moved into Dadaab. Extra Kenyan police were drafted in to keep order (UNHCR, 2002). The team's first task was to sift through thousands of tattered hand written control sheets. The original Mozambique lists now consolidated into a master list had to be upgraded, newly born children added, the names of the dead deleted (IOM, 2002).

"Starting as early as 3am, an estimated 1000 persons began lining up for processing" (IOM, 2002). According to UNHCR's Andrew Hopkins who headed the project, at least half the group waiting for transportation to the verification site were clearly Somali refugees, not Bantu. Bantu's who had no inkling what the process was about and those who did not understand why US and not Tanzania or Mozambique, sold their ration cards to whoever was willing to buy them. Somalis attached family members to large Bantu groups (Chanoff, 2002). The Bantus who are not accustomed to answering formal questions were unable to explain the extra addition to their

families, later denounced the scam to officials at the first opportune moment. Anthony Hopkins reported,

“False claims were sometimes so rudimentary it was not uncommon to encounter persons who could not even remember or pronounce the name of a person they were attempting to impersonate. Interviews often ended in tears. These people were very poor liars” (UNHCR, 2002)

Kinship and family are paramount for the Somali Bantu (IOM, 2002). However, family composition is unique in that a nuclear family consists of parents, children, grandparents, co wives, uncles, aunts and other relatives (Lehman and Eno, 2003). During the verification exercise several interesting cases occurred that showed that the Bantu have a strong sense of family unity and were willing to forfeit slots or give up their possibility of US resettlement if this was in the family’s best interest. The Somali Bantu also had no exposure to resettlement beyond the Tanzania and Mozambique effort. Field workers who had worked with refugees throughout Africa were amazed at the naïveté of the Bantus regarding resettlement (UNHCR, 2002). The following cases are examples of how callow on resettlement the Bantus were.

“A woman arrived for an interview with her 25 year old daughter. It was explained that the daughter was not financially dependent and thus not eligible for US resettlement. Although she was informed that she could send for her daughter, the mother refused to proceed with the verification, stating that she would not go without her daughter”(IOM, 2002)

Not only does the above narrative show how important kinship is to the Bantu community, but it also refreshingly exposes how little the Bantu knew about the

resettlement process. The next incident illustrates the strong sense of family and sacrifice if it is in the family's best interest.

“A Bantu man brought his younger adult brother to the interview. The younger brother had recently arrived from Somalia. When it was explained that the younger brother was not financially dependent on the older brother and thus not eligible for resettlement, the older brother asked whether his brother could go in his place” (IOM, 2002).

From the above account, the naivety of the Somali Bantu is very obvious and consistent with a lack of exposure to current issues. Living in the Dadaab refugee camps where “Buufis” a term in Somali that means resettlement to a western country (Horst, 2007) - is used on daily basis, one would expect that the Bantu would have an idea of what resettlement is and what it entails. During the verification exercise, the majority of the Bantu had no clue why they had been summoned to the verification exercise. Therefore they were not “prepared” for the interviews (UNHCR, 2002). The UNHCR staff often remarked at how the Bantu's honest responses and innocence regarding resettlement was refreshing. Verifiers were struck time and again by the straight forward way in which many individuals admitted that family members appearing on the verification lists either had died, travelled away from Dadaab or even in a few cases, returned to Somalia to visit sick relatives. Many verifiers noted that this level of openness and honesty is rarely seen among resettlement populations (IOM, 2002).

Answering questions

The Somali Bantus in Dadaab are not accustomed to being interviewed and answering questions in a linear sequential way. Often seemingly simple questions would be met with inadequate responses (IOM, 2002). Only after long conversation with many follow up questions would the appropriate information be obtained. A closer look at some examples from the verification interviews held in Dadaab will illustrate the difficulties experienced by many verifiers when they conducted authentication interviews in obtaining basic information. These examples show how the lack of basic education, lack of exposure to current issues and problems with language proficiency (both their mother tongues and Af-Maay Maay) considerably complicated a simple verification exercise.

The first example illustrates responses to basic questions that results from a lack of exposure to day to day time issues. This transpired between the interviewee (A), a Bantu woman and a verifier (Q).

Q: How old are you?

A: I am 30 years old

Q: Are you 30 years old now, or were you 30 years old in 1997?

A: 1997?

Q: 1997 is during the Mozambique registration

A: They told me I was 30 then

Q: How old are you now?

A: I do not know. You can give me an age (IOM, 2002).

The second example is a scenario that had to do with the confusion that arose surrounding questions of birthplace and age of children. A lack of exposure to formal education coupled with the lack of understanding of current times can be seen in this conversation between the verifier (Q) and interviewee (B) a Bantu mother.

Q: Where was this child born?

B: In Jimaame, Somalia

Q: How old is the child

B: 6 years old

Q: And when did you come to Dadaab

B: *Daraad*. (This terminology literally means before yesterday or is also used to indicate time in the close or distant past)

Q: Daraad?

B: Yes. At the time when everyone came here (this indicates 1992)

Q: How can your child be born in Somalia when you say she is only 6 years old and yet you came to Dadaab 9 years ago? Your child must have been born here if she is only six!

B: We are from Jimaame, Somalia (IOM, 2002)

The verifier repeats B's response to when she came to Dadaab, whereby B responds with an explanation that lacks actual time but that indicates the moment when every Bantu was fleeing for safety into Kenya. Such conversations would proceed for another several minutes before an adequate resolution could be reached. Many Bantus do not place any importance on age or years. The Bantus often use weather markers or particular events as time of date signifiers. Floods, fires and disease outbreaks are

often recalled to try and convey a specific time or date in the past (Lehman and Eno, 2002).

The next example illustrates how a lack of understanding of time or place can impact or lengthen an interview. During the verification exercise, the verifiers needed to be able to understand place and time markers from the point of view of the Bantus. The verifier (Q) had the following discussion with interviewees (C) and (D) who are a married couple.

Q: Where did you enter Kenya?

C: Birta Dheer (Birta Dheer literally means “the tall metal”. It refers to the tall metal telephone transmission structure in the border town of Liboi which was a UNHCR registration point for Somalis entering Kenya.

Q: How many children do you have?

C: Seven children

Q: When did you get married?

A: Sacaad Hirgi (This literally means tying a watch to the wrist. The term is used as a time indicator referring to the 1997 UNHCR revalidation exercise when wrist bands were issued to refugees)

Q: But some of your children are born before this time.

D: These children are from my other husband

Q: Where is your other husband?

D: He died

Q: When did he die?

D: *Mardow* (literally means recently referring to any time from an hour to

several years)

Q: Mardow? Were you divorced before he died?

D: No. He died *Tirokoob*. (Tirokoob refers to any previous headcount. In this case it was the headcount before Sacaad Hirki) (IOM, 2002)

In this conversation, the lack of understanding of the terminology by the verifier does not faze the interviewee. According to the interviewee, she or he has answered the question satisfactorily and assumes that the time markers used are “globally” understandable. In a situation like this, if the verifier had not been oriented to the way of conversing of the interviewee, the verifier will assume that the interviewee is stalling for time or being dishonest.

The verification exercise that the aid workers conducted was slow and painstaking. Even though the Somali Bantu population had been estimated at between 10,000 to 12,000 (IOM, 2002), in the end nearly 14, 000 registered refugees claiming to be Somali Bantu were interviewed. Of that number, only 11, 585 people were approved for submission to the United States authorities (UNHCR, 2002). About 2000 had been excluded after their claims were examined and several hundreds were uncertain about their ultimate fate. It wasn't until seven months after the first interviews, in the gray dawn of June 2002, that the initial caravan of Somali Bantus pulled out of Dadaab and headed northeast toward Kakuma - four buses carrying 270 people flanked by carloads of armed security personnel and accompanied by a team of doctors, nurses, and other staff (IOM, 2002). Young mothers who had gone through diaper training for their children were still mesmerized at the diapers that their babies are to wear through the journey. None of these women had ever seen these strange

items. Officials accompanying this convoy were mystified to find the diapers totally unused at the end of the journey. Mothers still unfamiliar with the concept had removed the diapers to preserve their cleanliness whenever an impending “crisis” became obvious (UNHCR, 2002).

Heavily pregnant women including new mothers with their children were flown to Kakuma aboard an ancient propeller driven aircraft to avoid the long journey by road. None of these people had ever seen an aircraft up close or been a passenger on one (UNHCR, 2002). Conversations such as these took place and hour later on this flight. This conversation transpired between two Bantu women (G) and (H).

G: this vehicle is making a lot of noise but we have not started the flight.

H: We seem to still be on the ground

Q: We have taken off. We are in the air

G: you can walk around up here just like on the ground (IOM, 2002)

None of these women could relate to what was passing below them through the aircraft windows, while they were flying over hills, rivers and lakes.

Orientation by International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Once in Kakuma, the Bantu were housed in tiny structures made of mud, brick and tin roofs (UNHCR, 2002). The Bantu went through cultural orientation, to prepare them for life in the United States. The cultural orientation involved basic survival skills on how to manage in the west (IOM, 2002). The cultural orientation for the Somali Bantu was conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Mohamed Abdikadir, IOM operations manager in Kakuma noted,

“These are people who have never seen an aeroplane upfront, so everything needs to be explained, from a boarding procedure to how the social security system works over there” (UNHCR, 2002)

Somali Bantu community orientation was prepared by the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Family and community outreach for Somali Bantu refugees (O’Hara, Leon, Ahman and Ward, 2004). The objective of the community orientation was to facilitate a smooth transition for the Somali bantu into the US communities by providing at completion of orientation, an understanding of the 1) clients’ house and community in the United States, 2) the role of the resettlement agency and other service providers, 3) the rights of refugees and individual responsibilities in the United States (O’Hara et al, 2004). The Somali Bantu community orientation materials included all regular teaching topics comprising two model schedules, a classroom curriculum, descriptions of community trips, and attachments. The classroom curriculum addresses the orientation facilitator, and contains step-by-step directions on how to conduct the orientation sessions. Some of the topics covered during the orientation include services and rights, housing, financial literacy, employment, education, health, nutrition, social adjustment, and the legal system. (Please see appendix 1.1 for sample orientation sessions).

Additional topics and lessons were included for the Somali Bantu group including hands-on lessons on household appliances and a daily course on importance of dates and time (IOM, 2003). Emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills in each class was incorporated into the daily morning classes, specifically name writing and numbers every morning during their orientation period. Additional courses were

added such as a unit on food in order to expose the Bantus to forms of food beyond the beans, corn, lentils, oil and salt that they had lived on for ten years while in the camps (Stephen and Chanoff, 2003).

The cultural orientation trainers reported a low level of retention of information by the Somali Bantu in the cultural orientation classes as compared to other refugee groups (BRYCS, 2003).

“For all people planning Bantu orientation classes...take to heart one important message: please start from the beginning in all you do. Do not assume that the Bantus will know how to use a stove, turn on hot and cold water taps, use telephones, turn on light switches...The Bantus are very unexposed and this has been highlighted in every piece written about them” (Stephen et al, 2003).

Stephen and Chanoff (2003) in their report to Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS) a national technical assistance project that collaborates with service providing organizations (SPOs) the United States to strengthen services to refugee youth, children and their families.

Resettling in the United States

How well immigrants integrate into society has far-reaching implications for a country's current and future vitality. Immigrant integration is a complex process that is tied to the ongoing debate about the role of immigrants in the US society. Integrating in to the society is considered the immigrant's responsibility except in the case of refugees where the government will play a part in the initial assistance to integrate (Biles, Burnstein and Frideres 2008).

New comers become a part of the social, cultural, and institutional fabric of the host community or society while at the same time retaining their own cultural identity (Henry and Tator 2006). There are three dimensions of integration social, cultural and identity integration. Cultural integration describes the process of value orientation and beliefs of immigrants, the process of learning the cognitive abilities and knowledge of the host culture and the internalization of values, norms and changes in belief systems. Identity integration describes the subjective feelings and definitions of belonging of the person of ethnic group (Heckmann, 1997). Social integration describes the participation of immigrants in the institutions of the host country. The process of integration can last for several generations and may differ by dimension over time (O'Connor, 2003). Results from a survey conducted on host communities in the United States of America showed that to fully integrate into the American society, hosts expect immigrants to accept and go on to learn the English language. Also high on their list was for immigrants to learn the American history and culture and accept the American way of life. Immigrants are also expected to abide by American laws and become actively involved in the community (Bixler, 2004). Immigrants not only take on the "burden" to integrate into their new society, but a majority may also suffer from culture shock. Culture shock refers to the anxiety and feelings felt when people have to operate within a different and unknown cultural environment such as a foreign country (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Culture shock develops out of the difficulties in assimilating into the new culture causing difficulty in knowing what is appropriate and what is not. Culture shock can be much more intense if the immigrant does not

have a formal education or exposure as will be seen in the case of the Bantu refugees (Furnham et al, 1986).

Opposition to resettling

News that the Somali Bantu were a pre-literate group of people who were also semi-literate or illiterate raised a lot of concerns within the predetermined host communities in the United States. Very little was (is) known of the Somali Bantu as there is a scarcity of literature on them or their plight. The final destination for most of the Somali Bantus was Kansas, Maine and Massachusetts. None of these states was excited about receiving a whole group of “natives” considered to be “invading America’s towns and cities and upsetting the social structure and ethnic makeup of America” (Allen, 2002). Allen (2002) writes that the Somali Bantu would depend wholly on the government hand-outs and drain America’s economy because they were illiterate and had no exposure to modern life. Resistance to the resettling of the Bantu was not only at community level. In October 2001, Senator Sam Brownback who is the senior United States Senator from the United States of Kansas was the Senate immigration subcommittee chair announced,

“I oppose any resettlement of Somali Bantu refugees in the State of Kansas.... Our office has contacted the Department of State asking them to not resettle any Somali Bantus in Kansas.... Simply put this should not occur” (Barnett, 2003).

When asked by a local newspaper about his support for Sudanese refugees resettled in Kansas he said,

“They [Sudanese] are very pro-American. The Bantu on the other hand would not work well in Kansas (Marquis, 2002).

Such harsh statements about the Somali Bantu resettlement were followed by mass protests against the Somali Bantu resettlement in towns such as Holyoke, Massachusetts and Cayce, South Carolina which were set to receive about 120 Somali Bantus each (MTN, 2004). Over 1000 fliers were distributed in Cayce claiming that the refugees will put a strain on the school district and other social programs. Doors to previously vacant apartments at the Pinewoods Apartments where the Somali Bantu were to be housed were suddenly unavailable (WISTV, 2003). Plans to resettle the Somali Bantu in Holyoke and Cayce were later scrapped.

Challenges after arrival

In contemporary circumstances, literacy refers to reading and writing at a level adequate enough to understand and communicate ideas in a literate society so as to take part in that society (UNESCO, 2004). Illiteracy therefore, is a social problem that can only be solved by formal education. According to the Central Intelligence Agency's World fact book (2004), in 2003, the literacy rate in the United States was 99%, making the United States a literate society.

Since education was out of reach in the Bantu residential areas in Somalia, most children worked on their parents' farms instead of attending school. Without literacy skills, Somali Bantu adults were initially unable to participate in the modern economy and integrate into mainstream America society unless they get a formal education (Eno, 2008). Not only were the majority of the Somali Bantu illiterate, most of them do not speak any English (IOM, 2002). To successfully integrate in to the US,

one needs a basic understanding of English and possesses literacy skills that can enable them to integrate and contribute to the society. A closer look at some narratives from actual incidences will illustrate the difficulties experienced by the Somali Bantus when they initially resettled to the United States. The first example illustrates the negative of not having a formal education or exposure to modern basic technology. AH is a Somali Bantu who was only recently resettled in the United States:

AH and his family had been in their apartment only a day, and in the modern world not much longer, when he heard the fire alarm go off. Still he knew from the orientation class at the refugee camp in Africa, what that sound meant: Fire! AH told his family – mother, wife and seven children – they had to get out. However in panic, he could not unlock the door. He had never faced double locks before, and now he flipped both furiously, first the top, then the bottom, until he could not remember which was which. He had also been taught that a fire alarm brought fire engines. However, minutes passed and none arrived. Eventually, the family realized they were safe – and trapped in their apartment. They stayed there for five days until their case worker let herself in with a key, and explained to Abdiaziz that what he thought was the fire alarm actually had been the lobby door buzzer” (USA Today, 2006).

Traditional practices which have been phased out among many African populations, remain common among the Somali Bantu (Stephen et al 2003). One of the ways of treating ailments was administering medication or performing soft tissue manipulation on the affected areas. An example is applying a heated blunt nail or other heated

metal objects to a baby's head to reduce the swelling of an infant's head in cases where the head is unnaturally large (IOM, 2002). The next example will illustrate the lack of understanding of how modern medicine works.

When 7 month old Hassan developed an ear infection, a doctor prescribed an oral antibiotic. But his parents, unable to read their own language, let alone English, poured the pink liquid into his ear. Mohammed Hassan and his wife Timiro, both 33, often feel like fish out of water in Springfield, Massachusetts. Mohamed quit his night shift job at a doughnut factory even though his eligibility for a welfare check will expire in a few months. He wrecked his van and hurt his back after skidding on an unfamiliar surface – ice – and smashing into a highway barrier. Mohamed and his family temporarily lost their welfare benefits, including food stamps because they could not read forms that state mailed them and threw them out. Despite weekly tutoring, Timiro says she can't remember anything to say in English. Despite being in school for more than a year, the three oldest sons come home with Spanish words instead of English. That is what their classmates speak, and their English classes are taught in Spanish by teachers who do not know Somali. Now with the welfare cut-off, Mohamed says his back injury prevents him from looking for work or attending English classes. Still he says he likes life in America, except for one thing – no camel milk (USA Today, 2006).

The problems with language proficiency, in this case lack of English, considerably complicated matters. Compounding the lack of English proficiency is the lack of pre-literacy skills. Preliteracy is also known as readiness skills which include oral

language and phonological and phonemic awareness, as well as knowledge of the alphabet and an understanding of common print concepts (Kress, 2004). The Somali Bantu were also not accustomed to living with basic modern amenities such as electricity or running tap water. They had never used electric stoves to cook. Use of flush toilets or indoor bathrooms and plumbing was a new and strange phenomenon (Stephen et al, 2003). A two week crash orientation by the IOM did little to prepare some of the Bantu families to use these conveniences. The next example is the American experience of Lamungu and his wife Talaso.

“It is the simple conveniences that intrigue them the most — a kitchen stove, a mop, a toilet they thought was too clean to use. Lamungu mentions the shower, where water comes out *like rain over your head*. Before, bathing entailed pouring a container of water over their heads. There were no towels. "You take a shower, you have to use a towel," he explains. Lamungu's wife, Nurto Talaso, straightens up her kitchen, marvelling at how a sponge and mop easily clean up the mess from the morning meal. "I've never experienced this kind of life," she said. But adjusting will take time. This day, they have forgotten to put the milk in the refrigerator and, despite Arizona's summer heat, they haven't turned on the air conditioning or fans. In their past life in Somalia or in the refugee camps in Kenya, this was not an issue; there was no refrigerator, no air conditioning, no fan (National Geographic, 2003).

The case of the Somali Bantu and their resettlement in the United States poses some very interesting questions about the roles and responsibilities of both migrants and of

the state. If a state makes a conscious decision to resettle a group of refugees, then the issue of what constitutes fair terms of integration looms large. And this is particularly the case where language barriers are present.

Conclusion

“Three years after leaving an African refugee camp for a new life in Utah, Abdirahman Abdi opened a container of toilet cleanser, tasted it and told his family to use it as salt. The father of eight who cannot speak or read English -- originally thought the product was for the bathroom. But he changed his mind when he tried it and felt it didn't act like other cleansers. Hours later, Ali Abdikadir and Abdikadir Hussein, Somali Bantu caseworkers, visited and prevented a culinary disaster” (Lyon, 2009).

This is one of the experiences that this paper sought to highlight about the challenges faced by the Somali Bantu due to their illiteracy and lack of “exposure”. This paper pieces together the lived experiences of the Somali Bantu during their resettlement process to the United States while drawing attention to the consequences of hundreds of years of social exclusion. Two centuries of exclusion resulted in the Somali Bantu today, being illiterate and lacking of preliteracy skills (Eno, 2004). It cannot be denied that the Bantu are hardworking (IOM, 2002; UNHCR, 2002), but in order to survive in today’s world and especially in North America, a solid education is not an option but a requirement. With the state of the economy being discussed in every form of media it is apparent that being educated is essential and can help one to survive. Having the technical knowhow to perform even the simplest of tasks is a requirement in today’s society. No education would result in low paying jobs with basic wages and inadequate benefits. Being under-educated makes it nearly impossible to survive in today’s world with the rising costs of living (Goel, 2007). Education does not

automatically warrant higher earnings or a better life, however there is a strong correlation between education and income as well as employment.

In no way does being educated, guarantee a person an easy life but it does make the path much smoother. Basically, the educated mind is conditioned to perform better and continuously set and accomplish goals. In 1906, Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States, while advocating for some of the policies he favoured which included education stated, “A man who has never gone to school may steal from a freight car; but if he has a university education he may steal the whole railroad” (Felzenberg, 2008; Harrison, 2002). Over a century has passed and one can only agree with such proverbs.

The transition of the Somali Bantu into the United States would have been less complicated had they been more literate. It is hard to know who should take the responsibility for the Bantu’s lack of exposure and education; It can be argued that had they been more aggressive – more attentive to the changes around and about them, perhaps, they would have attained an education worthy for basic survival. On the other hand, if indeed their access to education was restricted, then the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (2004) and a human rights report by UNIFEM (2007) stating that serious human rights violations are a problem due to the unstable political situation in the Somalia since 1991 are incorrect. These reports base their observations on Somalia’s current, stateless condition, while neglecting – like earlier scholars and historians did – minority groups such as the Somali Bantu (Besteman, 1999).

This paper also succinctly describes the historical beginnings of the exclusion of the Bantu in Somalia. The Somali Bantu have lived in Somalia for over 2 centuries. For them not to integrate in a meaningful manner into the mainstream Somali society must have resulted from intentional exclusion. It was not a difficult task for the Somali to discriminate against the Somali Bantu given the Bantu's phenotypic features which are distinct from those of the Somali (Lehman et al, 2002). Some of these "Negroid" physical features that would distinguish them from the "mainstream" Somali are the Bantu's kinky hair texture, dark skin and broad nose (Montagu, 1988). It is not uncommon to find people with such features being subjected to a variety of discriminatory practices in foreign lands. They are often excluded from political, economic, and educational advancement. There was no co-mingling or intermarriage between the Somali and the Bantu (UNHCR, 2002) The Bantu, therefore, have had to settle for the lowest and most undignified occupations (Eno, 2008). When the Europeans came to Somalia, they conscripted the Bantus for forced labour on plantations. Both the British and Italian colonial administration regarded the Bantus as inferior to the Somalis. This treatment may have perpetrated the continued exclusion of the Bantu.

"While upholding the perception of Somalis as distinct from and superior to the European construct of black Africans, both British and Italian colonial administrators placed the Juba valley population in the latter category. Colonial discourse described the Juba valley as occupied by a distinct group of inferior races, delineating a separate Gosha political district called Goshaland and proposing a "native reserve" for the Gosha (Besteman, 1999).

This paper not only theorizes education, it also introduces into the discussion the refugee dilemma. Had the Somali nation – state not collapsed, the world would not have known about the Somali Bantu.

Although the primary responsibility for refugees lies with the persecutors who cause their plight (Minority Group, 1980), it is not clear what factors encourage nations to accept refugees or to assume any special responsibility. Offering asylum to refugees is intended to be both politically friendly and also as a humanitarian act (UNAUSA, 2009). It is only hoped that the end result of offering asylum to refugees benefits both the refugees and the host nations

By documenting the Somali Bantu resettlement experience, this study not only contributes to on-going discussions about resettlement of minority groups, it also questions our motives and assumptions when relocating similar populations out of their “comfort” zones without adequate preparations. The Somali Bantu initially requested to be resettled in Tanzania. However, this country did not have the “financial capability to build a social support system and a proper survival mechanism for them such as farming equipment, schools, hospitals, markets” (Eno et al, 2007). Wouldn’t it have been easier to support Tanzania or any other African country willing to receive the Somali Bantu financially to provide the necessary support system? In addition, I question why a country like Canada, which has over 20 years experience in dealing with refugees with special needs under their Private Sponsorship Program (RSTP, 2008) did not get involved in the resettling of the Somali Bantu. Under this Private Sponsorship program, sponsoring groups commit to providing basic financial support and care for the sponsored refugee for up to 12 months or until the sponsored

refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first (CIC, 2003). The sponsoring groups commit themselves to providing government-assisted refugees with special needs orientation, significant settlement assistance and emotional support.

Appendix 1.1

SESSION 2: Services and Rights

OBJECTIVES

- 1. To give an overview of the services of the resettlement agency.
- 2. To give an overview of the services of other local and national agencies.
- 3. To build an understanding of the rights of refugees in the United States.
- 4. To develop an understanding of client responsibilities.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Flip chart
- Markers
- Specific list of agency services (from welcome package)
- Specific list of other community services (from welcome package)
- Directory/contact list of local service providers (from welcome package)
- Copies of “The Rights of Refugees in the United States” (attachment 3)
- Copies of “A History of the United States and Immigration” (attachment 4)
- “Sample Client Resettlement Plan” (attachment 5)
- Paper

HOW TO DO IT

DISCUSSION

- Discuss, using the following questions:
 - What government services were available to you in Somalia?
 - What services did you receive in the camp?
 - What services do you expect to receive in the United States?
 - What concerns do you have about providing for your family in the United States?
 - What are your five-year goals?

ROLE OF AGENCY

- Using the list of agency services, explain in detail the role of the resettlement agency, and the services that the agency will provide to the clients.
- Using the list of other community services, explain in detail the services that other community or national organizations will provide.

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Glossary of terms

Bantu:	Somali Bantu
Green Card	nickname (because of the color) of the United States Permanent Resident Card, an identification document issued by the United States of America affording non-citizens of that country some of the rights its citizens enjoy, sometimes with the prospect of naturalization
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
SPO:	Settlement Providing Organizations
Scramble for Africa:	Also known as the Race for Africa was the result of conflicting European claims to African territory during the New Imperialism period, between the 1880s and the First World War in 1914.
UNIFEM:	United Nations Development Fund for Women

Used by Somali Bantu

<i>Birta Dheer:</i>	The tall metal. Refers to the tall metal telephone transmission structure in the Somali –Kenya border town of Liboi
<i>Daraad:</i>	The day before yesterday. Refers to any time in the near or distant past
<i>Mardow:</i>	Recently. Refers to any time from one hour to a few years ago
<i>Sacaad Hirki:</i>	Tying a watch to the wrist. Refers to a UNHCR revalidation exercise in 1997 when wristbands were given out
<i>Tirokoob:</i>	Counting. Refers to any previous UNHCR headcount