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Discrimination and Prejudice in the Nucleus of African Society: Empirical Evidence from Somalia

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Abstract

Without conducting much analysis on the multiethnic texture of the country, colonial ethnographers and ethnohistorians obsessed with the ideology of 'Somali homogeneity', and stakeholders of the nationalist sentiments of self-same Somalia successfully demonstrated the Horn of Africa nation as an 'egalitarian' society pursuing a cultural mode of 'pastoral democracy.'[1] To break away from that erroneous diction, this essay aims at problematizing the vagueness of that notion by introducing a counter narrative that unravels not only the existence of other ethnic groups and cultures but also an enormous nature of subjugation, prejudice and discrimination-factors antithetical to the ideals of egalitarianism. For the sake of unlearning that early and enduring misinterpretation, this essay presents an account of the discrimination against the Bantu/Jareer people and their place in the Somali social and political system. It attempts at offering a realistic situation as compared to the idealistic image of the

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colonial writers' and early Somali scholarship's self-same tutelage. At another level, the revelation in the study challenges the fallacy in Prof. Lidwien Kapteijns's recently formed discourse that the Bantu Jareer people benefited significant political and economic consideration in independent Somali, an extremely mendacious concoction which, despite being absent from the available literature, Prof. Kapteijns's work shied away from producing empirically based, factual evidence to support her argument (M. Eno, 2013b:21-31). In its general scope, the study intends to contribute to the principle of "understand[ing] Somalia for what it is and not what it ought to be" (Kusow 2004: xii).

Key words: Bantu/Jareer, discrimination, ethnicity, prejudice, racism, Somalia, stereotypes,

Introduction

…many cultural critics took for granted the Somali myth, the myth-maker's explicit pronouncements, and the raw materials from which he concocted the myth.
– Ali J. Ahmed (1996:8)

Early scholarship of discrimination and social exclusion put much focus on the relationship between a dominant group and a dominated one by investigating the phenomenon mainly from a racial perspective. A substantial debate ensued where social scientists and theorists contributed to the understanding of the various processes that underlie those social evils and enterprises (Heatherton 2003; Miller 2004). Those studies were done within the paradigm of a dominant white majority race against a dominated black minority as in the US and some Western countries where black immigrants became part of the social nucleus. In another focus, it was in terms of a white minority subjugating a black majority as it endured particularly in South Africa and in other colonized African nations in general. In time, and due to waves of immigrants and new dynamics which the newcomers experienced in the host cultures, a new shift appeared in which the term 'ethnic' studies or marginalization/discrimination was added into the literature

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(McGarry and O'Leary 2013). Even in this new development, the phenomenon was observed from the difference within groups of the same white race who supposedly belonged to different countries or ethnic backgrounds but who most seemingly appeared to have the same white skin pigmentation.

In order to contribute to the argument related to the theory of heterogeneity of the Somali people rather than the untenable, old concept of homogeneity, we intend to highlight a distinct community that has been and still is the victims of persecution, prejudice and discrimination under the veil of the concept of egalitarian Somalia. The group is the Bantu Jareer ethnic community which, related to its African origin, is "permanently removed from the social boundary of *Somaliness*" (Kusow 2004:5).

Using the ethnographic paradigm of research, combined with oral history gathered from Bantu Jareer and non-Bantu interviewees, the study problematizes the stigma of racial discrimination in Somali society by triangulating several social science tools from multiple disciplines. It begins with a broader review of available literature on the elements of subjugation, prejudice, and discrimination followed by a demonstration of the people's memories, emotions and sentiments towards the persecutions they encounter as an everyday life in Somalia. The long silence of Somali studies toward what relates to prejudice, subjugation, and discrimination against the oppressed Bantu people in the country will be discussed before the conclusion finally wraps up the study with suggestions and recommendations for further research.

Exploring Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination: A Theoretical Analysis

As the Canadian Encyclopedia writes, "Prejudice refers to an unsubstantiated, negative pre-judgment of individuals or groups, usually because of ethnicity, religion or race." (www.thecanadianency clopedia.com). It also explains 'discrimination' as "the exclusion of individuals or groups from full participation in society because of prejudice," thus interlocking prejudice and discrimination as interrelated phenomena. Still in the definitional exploration, Rupert

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Brown (2010:69) enlightens that stereotypes "are embedded in the culture in which we are raised and live, and that they are conveyed and reproduced in all the usual socio-cultural ways-through socialization in the family and at school…"

Among the experts who note the complexity of the nature of prejudice is Peggy Freeman (2010) who defines it as "an attitude towards a category of certain people, usually based on a cultural factor such as ethnicity, gender, and religion." It is a practice that consists of acquired and interconnected factors related to motives, perceptions, and sentiments by a group towards another (Pincus and Ehrlich, 1999). The categorization of the groups is influenced by aspects that undergird emotional, behavioral and cognitive phenomena (Fishbein, 2002).

Sachdev and Bourhis (1987) suggest that by simply classifying humans into groups provides sufficient reason to inject stimulus for intergroup discrimination to occur. In this situation, the category perceived of a person by another, as Gamble and Gamble (2002) argue, becomes also a contributive element to the occurrence of stereotyping to take effect. Consequently, the perceptions and beliefs embedded to the classifications are represented in the irrationalities that "make human beings prejudge others on the basis of limited knowledge, especially if they are different" (Matusitz, 2012:90). These elements of prejudice and discrimination as well as other forms of exclusion are likely to take effect "immediately upon encountering information sufficient for cueing a meaningful social category" (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990:4).

Although Susan Fiske (2004) identifies the five points of 'trusting', 'belonging', 'controlling', 'understanding', and 'self- enhancing' as key elements related to human motives for social interaction, Zick et al. (2011:124) emphasize that the element '"self-enhancement' is closely associated with the need to dominate others." Therefore, the portrayal of the dominated group with negatively coded terms contributes to the normalization or rationalization of the social system which initially formulated the domination, so as to stabilize constantly the oppressive group's desire for clinging to the privileged position it occupies (Devine and Sherman, 1992; Brown, 2010). As

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Matusitz (2012:91) suggests, "[t]raditional racist stereotypes" become hard to overcome if, according to the category we internalized of the group is related to "negative attitudes and beliefs." Additionally, constructs developed on these behaviors are likely to endure and even recur whenever there is an encounter between the discriminator and the discriminated.

Critical theorists of race and ethnic studies propose that actions and behaviors of discrimination and discourse produced as a result of hate or prejudice by the dominant groups also "dictate the dominant reality for the rest of society" (Espino, 2012:41). With a comprehensive account of the codification, they subtly manipulate its articulation in order to "enable us to make sense of – to construct – our social world" (Delgado & Stefancic 1995:221). By this contextualization and control as determined by the dominators, we learn where we stand in society; our acceptance and rejection by it and our reactions as triggered by our environment. Relatively, ownership of the group we belong to potentially determines our social location in the ethnic strata as well as inculcates in us, as human agents, the very identity in which our cultural values are represented.

However, some theorists attribute the causes of exclusion to various factors including lack of sufficient information, inadequate education and knowledge about the excluded group, and limited amount of exposure to what constitutes the social and cultural values of the discriminated (Lowy, 1991); in other words what Matusitz (2012:90) elucidates as "the product of ignorance." Based on that ignorance, a section of scholars are not surprised that "stereotypes are inherently 'bad' or 'wrong' because they are illogical in origin, resistant in contradiction, and morally wrong" (Matusitz, 2012:9; see also Hewstone and Giles 1986). Writing on the relationship between knowledge, stereotypes, and prejudice in social interaction, Matusitz (2012:90) qualifies the latter two as among "the most recurrent interracial and interethnic problems." In the same line of argument, Stephen and Stephen (1984) underline that ignorance paves the way for the creation of myths about differences of the out-group; in many circumstances fabrications which may not have rationale for existence.

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Pepels and Hagendoorn (2000) state that basic cognitive biases related to ethnocentrism and stereotyping, such as nurtured by human beings, are the major psychological phenomena which influence the formation of stratification and hierarchy within a society. And from the viewpoint of social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1981), these biases are at the background of the social constructs on which status formation are cemented. In particular, those biases could be studied through the lens of the ingroup's strong adherence to the creation, maintenance and/or improvement of its distinctiveness (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), in addition to other factors that underlie personality formation as oriented by totalitarianism and/or social dominance (Snellman 2007).

In order to obtain a fundamental knowledge of how race-based prejudice works, Blumer (1958:3) advises that the phenomenon be approached from its perspective as "*a collective process*"; in other words, the method of image-making which a racial group attributes to itself as compared to another. Blumer believes that prejudice "is usually depicted as consisting of feelings such as antipathy, hostility, hatred, intolerance, and aggressiveness." He further acknowledges that a form of race related identity becomes important as a device to facilitate prejudice. With that note, Blumer warns, however, that overlooking identity as the marketplace where the crucial social trading of hatred, prejudice and marginalization interact means "to miss what is logically and actually basic."

Due to its being fluid and flexible, identity is exploited as the assessment tool for the individual so much as it is for the group s/he represents. For reasons of exploitation and domination, the identity framework becomes a cause for providing self-assurance to the dominant group as acquiring the top rung of the socio-ethnic hierarchy. Consequently, the self-positioning is then exhibited in the form of accusations and remarks of degradation (Blumer 1958); characteristics that make the marginalized communities the "social casualties" (Eno & Eno (2010:121) of the institutions of hate and prejudice.

From another side, although we concur with the sociological view of Berger and Luckmann (1966) who attribute the formation of

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identity to "social processes" which could be "maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations" (p. 159), we tend to argue that from the perspective of social domination, maintenance of ethnic identity for the sake of group loyalty offers more stakes to the dominant group in contrast to the oppressed. For that purpose, the phenomenon appears to be much stronger than both modification and reshaping could offer – that is to say, it assumes the centre point where the dominants' "internalized" inferiority status of the dominated leads to the latter's "consciousness" of their assumed social position, regardless of their disapproval of the principle and/or system of domination (p. 137).

In her discussion on the subject, Snellman (2007:7) induces "inhibition of contacts" among the various groups in a society as a factor that can show the prejudice of ingroup against outgroup, and that psychologically prejudices and hierarchies have similar methods and processes. For obvious reasons of interaction, 'contacts' becomes a relevant communication avenue through which a communicator presents the world around him into the reality of its context – "existence" -- as imagined in the implicit perceptions we build in our inner image, correspondent to the outer world (Carey1989:25). The bottom-line of the argument is to remind us that "[b]ad information is the child of ignorance and ignorance is the mother of failure to communicate effectively" (Ward 1991:92). The communication section of the discussion opens the floodgate that links society, language, and power. For, and dependent on who the interlocutors are, the nature of communication is analyzed with regard to how it defines power – the distinct positions of the interlocutors and the source of hegemony.

The observation of the discourse of hate and prejudice from the paradigmatic telescope of hegemony envisages who stands where in the social hierarchy. The use and implementation of the social discourse, when viewed from its functional standpoint, reminds us of the literary critic's analysis of the power of language in the determination and classification of social roles and classes. To that effect, Ahmed (1996:2) emphasizes that despite its utility value as conveyor of meaning and thought, language is loaded with an

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inherent potential that "formulates the socio-political and economic definitions" which characterize any given society.

Aside of that, and referring to a study by Hagendoorn (1995), Snellman (2007:8) writes, "[a] group may accept a position at a middle level of a hierarchy because it is better than a position at the lowest levels." The problem with this suggestion is that it seems to undermine core variables regarding the perspectives and emotions of those whose categorization was predetermined – not because of their willingness 'to accept a position' but contrarily due to the coercive tools of hegemony as wielded by the dominators for their own benefit. This is demonstrated in Simpson and Yinger (1972:172) who closely examine that "[p]rejudice exists because someone gains by it." Therefore, when analyzed from this angle, Stellman's statement suffers from lack of adequate analysis of the discourse which, in the Somali social reality (as in elsewhere), depicts the fact that the groups concerned do not position themselves in the "middle" or "lowest" steps by their desire to be there but by another force beyond their ability of correction – hegemony. How those who control hegemony at their behest contributes to the deprivation of the otherized, and how the latter's position is not of their making but that of a dominant section of society, is the task of the next section.

Veiling Discrimination under Egalitarianism

Racism is the breach of the ideal of egalitarianism…A society in which some members regularly are subjected to degradation because of their race hardly exemplifies this ideal.
– Richard Delgado (1982:140-141)

In colonial times, the vicious levels of discrimination, subjugation, and prejudice in Somalia reached a point where a Bantu Jareer was often a victim of profiling based on his ethnicity; an identity which was obviously recognizable from his African physical features as compared to the Somali's. For example, Xaaji Maxamed Barakaale Rooble, an elderly Bantu currently living in Sharjah, UAE, recalls:

> According to my father who is in his eighties and who still lives in Kuraari village, the Bantu in the district of Afgooye and in other Dhoobooy areas

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> were profiled in the sense that, when any one of them who was not working on a white man's farm was seen around, the *goglo* (Somali police) and the watchmen who often worked for the Italian colonialists summoned them for interrogation. The reason was that the Somalis told the colonialists that a Bantu was either a farmer on the colonial plantation or an assassin or a thug. In most cases this was not true except that the Somalis were showing loyalty to their colonial masters.

Another Bantu gentleman and a former civil servant in the Municipality of Mogadishu, Xasan Cali known as Xasan Shaacir, recounted that his father was on two occasions jailed after he had been identified "as an idler" although at one time he was "traveling to another village" and the second time he was going "to contribute his labor to his brother who had a harvesting period in another village." Shaacir explained that "arresting by physical appearance was exclusive to the Jareer because it didn't happen to members of other tribes."

During post-independence era and despite the repeated praise of the civilian regimes for democratic ideals, the Bantu Jareer (like the outcast groups) were not allowed to field their own candidate for parliament, not to think of cabinet post which was exclusively for *Somalis*. Often, bureaucratic barricades were used to shut them out at party nomination level. "The state and the SYL party feared that if a Jareer were fielded it would be difficult to defeat him in numerical terms; so they had to formulate strategies to deprive him at preliminary stages by every possible means," comments Macallin Dhaayoow of Bandhowoow area of Xamar Jab Jab in Mogadishu.[2]

Unlike some incessantly ubiquitous remarks of egalitarianism in the literature on Somalia, the Bantu would not get justice even in a law court. In the late eighties, Cabdiraxiim Cabdisalaan, a Bantu youth who at that time lived in the District of Boondheere in Mogadishu, had married a Somali girl abroad. Upon hearing the news of his return to Mogadishu, the bride's family approached a court official who ordered the imprisonment of Cabdiraxiim until he divorced his wife, despite the fact that the couple had been married and lived together in Saudi Arabia over a year and half. Remembering this particular case in a discussion, former attorney in

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the Regional Court in Mogadishu, Cabdullaahi Maxamuud Gaaboow known as Cabdullaahi Ubax, states:

> Neither Islam nor the civilian family law was approached in that case. It was a blatant injustice which no one could intervene legally or otherwise because of the people involved. The case was brought to court once for hearing and was never heard of again, but the boy was kept in custody for a considerable period of time. He was harshly tortured and his parents were sternly threatened that if they didn't solve the matter immediately they would follow him in jail."

The former attorney elaborates:

> As soon as he (Cabdiraxiim) announced the divorce from his police cell, with witnesses arranged by the court official and the officer in charge of the police station where the boy was being held, they made him sign the divorce certificate and released him immediately. He came to my office the next day thanking me for the advice I had given him at the beginning of the case.[3]

Muuse Mocoow explains an episode which reveals how it was easier to scapegoat on a Bantu than any other person. "We have had situations in which we had to pay for crimes committed by others," explains Muuse, a Bantu Jareer construction supervisor based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. "My brother and my uncle were arrested for construction materials their boss had stolen from the construction project of his ministry in order to use it for the building of his personal house in Booli-Qaran. His high ranking police kin told him that if anyone could be implicated as the culprit, then he wouldn't be taken to the National Security Court for stealing public property. Because as Bantu we did not have anyone to stand for our right, we became sacrificial lamb for the crime of every culprit from the ruling clans," adds Muuse as he gets emotional with tears rolling down his face. "This is one of the reasons why many of us [Bantu] left Somalia because there are no Muslims. The law doesn't protect us; the so-called revolution didn't protect us; nothing protects us unless we are absent from the land. That is what we did." Muuse concludes with these pitiful remarks: "We are here in Saudi Arabia, aged, and will probably die here. It is sad; but because of what has been happening in the country for the past 20 years, there is nothing to go back to.

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They (Somalis) became much wilder beasts. No human can associate with them."

The account given by Xuseen Juma Shongole reveals an exemplary case of how even the state provided not only a leeway to expropriation of the property of members of the Bantu Jareer community, but actually practically participated in the looting of the fertile farms adjacent to the rivers. According to Xuseen:

> We woke up one morning only to witness our livelihood including mature crops and thousands of fruit bearing trees bulldozed to the ground. There was a number of heavy machinery equipment because the government had decided to build a sugar factory in the neighborhood and saw it in its benefit to dislodge us from the area in order to establish an enormous sugarcane plantation to supply the factory. To add insult to injury, the staff of the project told us that we should stop 'crying over land' and be part of the 'waged workforce' that would be employed to work on our state-expropriated farms. That action told us that our livelihood was not important to the government and that the governor who was representing it was very cruel, arrogant and irresponsible.

Compiling empirical evidence, contributors to the edited volume of Besteman and Cassanelli (1996) provide a credible account of the nature and velocity of expropriation of Bantu agricultural land and the means utilized to acquire their property. It was a matter of who could locate a Bantu-owned prime location and in fact who could act faster in the documentation (title deed) of the property. Mohamed Eno (2008) explores how it was a risky approach for a Bantu Jareer to seek redress against the rampant looting spree or any other unlawful treatment regarding the appropriation of their farmland. Ahmed Q. Ali (2004) raises a similar contention, revealing how top public functionaries and military officers and their kinfolk raided the Bantu agricultural land in various regions and acquired them at free will.

While admitting the occurrences of numerous types of institutionalized as well as socialized categories of discrimination and other abuses, Mohamed Eno (2008) argues that the period of civil anarchy rates as the worst the community had ever experienced. Likewise, Martin Hill (2010) demonstrates the appalling situation of members of the Bantu Jareer who both as IDPs (Internally Displaced

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Persons) and as sedentary residents in their distinguished areas are subjected to multiple types of persecution. During this period, wanton killings by the diverse ethnic armed groups, the Islamic Courts and other socially based aggressions in the form of calculated property appropriation have become the order of the day. Madiina Caliyoow Tuure, presently a resident of Wadajir District in Mogadishu narrates:

> One evening about four armed men came to our home in Waaberi and talked to my brother Xasan. When they left, my brother was in frenzy and told us to collect our stuff immediately. We walked to the house of a relative quite away from our house. On the way, Xasan told us that the armed men had warned him not to be seen around the house by daybreak of the following day. So, we had to vacate our house quickly because we were scared that they might come back at night and kill us for the sake of the house. Later, some neighbors told us that two of the same armed men were working with the Courts Union. We were very surprised!

Describing the severe nature of prejudice and discrimination he underwent in Somalia and in the refugee camps in Kenya at young age, Ibrahim Iftin, a Bantu Jareer young man resettled in the USA on humanitarian grounds, calls the experience as "*midibtakoor indhamadanne*" meaning, incessant Apartheid (http://www.youtube.co m). Iftin's unforgettable stigma underpins a vicious kind of agony lived with, "a mark or sign of disgrace usually eliciting negative attitudes to its bearer" (Thornicroft et al, 2007). Despite the Lewisian concept of egalitarianism (Lewis 1961), this is a representation of the typical nature of trauma lived and experienced past and present by the Bantu Jareer people; although only someone as *bold* and also as biased as Kapteijns (2013) can equate such deplorable segregation and stigma to a "considerable political and economic opportunity,"[4] which members of the Bantu community "enjoyed" (p. 271note 136).

Warsame Siyaad Warsame, a Somali from the European Diaspora compares, "what we experience in Europe or any part of the West is not much different from what we have been subjecting to the Bantu people or Jareer-weyne in Somalia. Only an honest person, a realistic Somali person who has experienced discrimination, can think back and say 'what we have done to the Jareer; what we do to this

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hardworking community is really inhumane." Cabdullaahi Sheekh Muuse, a Somali businessman of the African Diaspora agrees with his compatriot, "It is painful when we experience stereotypes and discrimination. It is even more painful to remember the stigma the Bantu Jareer-weyne and the outcast groups face in Somalia. They suffer inside their own country exactly the same prejudice and stigma we complain about in the Diaspora. We have to learn to be just and practice the Islamic teaching of equality."

Cabdicasiis Abuukar Cali, a Somali Canadian, contextualizes the situation as this:

> Some crazy people put into our head that we are not blacks. They made us believe that all the Jareer people in the world, all black people are slaves and we come from a higher race as Arabs. But when we came outside Africa we are called names like 'black', 'African', 'nigger', and all the things we used to call the Bantu Jareer in Somalia. It is now that we realize how painfully disturbing racism is and how discrimination is an incurable cancer to live with. Really it feels sick to remember those things. We need to change our attitude towards the Bantu and all the other minorities. After all, they are the hardest working communities.

Silence and Hypocrisy in Somalia Scholarship

Socially discriminated, they [the Bantu Jareer] nevertheless enjoyed considerable political and economic opportunity in post-independence Somalia.

– Lidwien Kapteijns (2013:271note 136)

According to the empirical data demonstrated in the preceding section, the theory and practice of the social orientation of dominance in Somalia is coterminous with what scholars explain as classical racism. Using what Kusow (2004:2) terms as "Lineaga-based narratives," Somalia's dominant groups use ethnic-related biological distinctions as a parameter to serve themselves to state as well as social privileges. Invoking Critical Race Theory (CRT), we argue that the notion ensconced in the principles of 'homogenous', 'egalitarian' society, as advocated by the traditionalists of Somali studies, disregards the true essence of egalitarianism.

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As academic and experiential learning supports, a public which constantly subjugates a section of the society with exclusion and deprivation due to ethnic or racial classification "hardly exemplifies this ideal" (Delgado, 1982:141), a principle supposed to enshrine equality for all humans. To say the least, the academic disdain in the investigation of "the lived experiences and histories of those oppressed by institutionalized racism limited [Somali] scholarship," borrowing from Yosso (2005:71). Consequently, this lack of diagnostic approach to Lewis's early works led to an unconscious scholarship of what Ahmed (2012) critiqued as "card-carrying Lewisites" who built the crux of their reading on what *was* Lewisian idealism of Somali society rather than engaging with the nitty-gritty of a Somalia beyond the inhibited imagery and imagination of Lewisian teaching.

In Somalia, despite the chronic silence of scholarship and allergy to the examination of the nature of subjugation, persecution, and stigmatization, the formation and operation of social stratification has not ended either with the abolition of slavery and the slave trade or the departure of colonialism (Besteman 1999; Cassanelli 1988). Similar to what McKay and colleagues (1993) would suggest, the local recipients of power continued the oppression and stigmatization exactly from the point it had been left by the successive predecessors; in certain cases exceeding the affliction of the colonial period.

Though appreciable the academic contribution, benchmarking on the traditionalists' version of Somalia has in many cases misguided students of Somali studies for long. One can argue that they contributed to the investiture and inculcation of the classification of the multiple ethnicities as superior Somalis and inferior non-Somalis, among other categories. That lack of problematizing what is and is not about the other ethnicities and cultures in tandem with what is and what is not about Somaliness; in other words, the incorporation of the variant ethnicities into an implausible homogeneity has contaminated the harmony that would otherwise remain vibrant in the social and cultural meaningfulness of each clan entity. As such, it divulges an academic negligence which, in another perspective, could be censured not just for neglecting the condemnation of inequality and Apartheid, and other types of stigma but indeed condoning it by

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subscribing to what was a colonial project. In the same contention, one would wonder why traditionalist scholarship fell short of scrutinizing the dichotomy of how an oft-referred egalitarian system could exist in a society where systematized degrees of exclusion and segregation were so evident and in fact profusely rampant in everyday social interaction.

It is also noteworthy that the work of researchers who highlighted the existence of distinct groups and some kind of discrimination, lacked emphasis as to what layers of oppression existed and to what degrees. They did not provide a more enlightening analysis of Bantu Jareer existence beyond the spectrum of the slavery institution. Thus, lacking in most of these studies is the specification and ramification of the problems of oppression and marginalization according to their variant degrees (Cherrie Moraga, 1983).

On the other hand, understanding details of the variation and degrees of oppression will create our consciousness to the outcome of the 'collective process' (mentioned above) which functions as the group identity, since it represents underlying factors beyond a person or a group per se. It is rather attached to strongly internalize abstract values that mean more in the social space where interactions with one another are conducted. In effect, therefore, scholars of Somalia did not make much academic sense of the separation of identities into racial or ethnic categories and the subsequently positioning of the bearers of these identification tags into distinct categories.

A reflective view suggests that what makes the discrimination in Somalia institutionalized could be based on the fact that it is hinged to laws and cultures which restrict the rights and participation of the Bantu in situations and environments where other preferred groups were allowed to exercise active participation. As Ingiriis (2012) points out, the SYL (Somali Youth League) constitution divided the ethnic groups in the country into two fundamentally distinct categories:

a. Somalis.
b. Africans.

That cracked ideology of the SYL laid the foundation for the civilian regimes and any ruling organization after them to incubate

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the institutionalization of discrimination in post-independence Somalia. However, during and after the military regime, this has taken different shape with new configuration of violence where the clan system became the recipe for continual discrimination. As a consequence, the marginalization of the Bantu Jareer ethnic group was heightened by the Somalis who, despite their mysterious origin (Mukhtar 1995), claimed to have descended from Arabian progenitor.

Among the disadvantages is that the imbalance in the ramification of the groups and the unfavorable positioning of the Bantu at a low social level has created cultural misunderstanding among the different ethnicities that function within the same society. Therefore, without acquiring sufficient information about the subtle trajectories of the other ethnic group, the dominant groups may never be able to comprehend, leave alone appreciate or even configure with, the intimate reading that is true of the aesthetics and philosophy of those who live amongst them. Additionally, sheer degradation of what are ethno-culturally non-Somali has subjected Somalis to suffer from objective ignorance of the cultural values of the diverse peoples that have lived in the country for centuries well before their early migration.

It is with such lack of understanding that Prof. Kapteijns (2013:170) raises the oddly spurious claim that the Bantu/Jareer community "had sided with the USC," when this community suffered immensely from the clan wars of which they were not a part, not to think of taking arms in support of an ethnically and culturally unrelated group. Notwithstanding the lack of engagement to emphasize and study details of the stigma, scholars have provided empirical evidence that the Bantu/Jareer are among the most marginalized and disenfranchised communities in Somalia. Besteman (1993), who conducted field research for her doctoral work among the Bantu/Jareer community several years before the downfall of Siad Barre, noted that the community had "no position of political power in the Somali government" (p. 568). Although the Bantu/Jareer had expressed their grievances of pre- and post-colonial Somalia in various forms of their oral literature, they have not hitherto been studied due to the degradation of their agronomic culture in contrast

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to nomadic pastoralism. In any case, an example in this verse criticizes the said egalitarianism with fallacy in that: "*Jugaa ku jirtee, ma jiro Janaraal Jareer eh*" (there is sticky situation, since there is no single army general who belonged to Jareer [Bantu]) (Eno 2008:179). Kapteijns's uncorroborated thesis aside, the evidence chronicled in this essay demonstrates that the community's position in post-colonial Somalia captures what Ulf Hannerz refers to as "the *most* other of others" (emphasis in original) (1986:362).

Conclusion

By approaching various disciplines and research tools, the study discussed about the nature of prejudice, discrimination and other social vice related to subjugation and marginalization in the context of Somali society by presenting the emotions of the victims. It attempted to draw attention to the implausibility of the old reading of Somalia as an egalitarian society and attempted to provide scholarly repudiation that the existence of prejudice and discrimination run counter to the ideals of egalitarianism. The reason for this long enduring misrepresentation, or misinterpretation of the society as such, was partly contributed by the early Somalia scholarship which directed its focus on an idealistic nature of a self-same society without further analysis and examination of what was lurked under that superficial characterization. That intellectual disdain had cost academia and the other ethnic groups in the country dearly in that until recently, there was total disregard to study groups and cultures other than pastoralism. The repercussions became so damaging that a whole body of aesthetics including ethnic, linguistic, and cultural knowledge was depreciated and their contribution downplayed. With that degradation, society was denied the harmony that could be achieved within the diverse types of knowledge with a potential to enrich and learn from each other.

In fact, only after acquiring solid knowledge of the constructs of the other ethno-cultural establishments can we accommodate their viewpoint (Ward, 1991) in order to learn what is in and also of the multiethnicities that Somalia holds together. We also raise the opinion that "a false belief" which precariously hinges on the tenets of "faulty

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generalizations about members of selected racial and ethnic groups" (Matusitz, p. 91) do not foster co-existence. However, as the reconceptualization and reconsideration of Somali society has begun of late, more research is still needed to contribute to our understanding of the institutionalization of the racial apartheid inherent in the pastoralist nomad tradition and the various natures and degrees of intolerable persecution and stigma which the victims of discrimination experience and live with. An intrepid move toward that direction will ultimately help to create awareness in the biased scholars to come to terms with the reality of the everyday social life rather than the academicization of the misconceptions of a rival group. It will also go a long way as to educate the oppressors along the path to overcoming their fear of what constitutes the other group.

Notes:

1. For disagreement with Lewis's argument and the ensuing debate on a heterogeneous Somalia, see for example, the edited volumes by Ali Jimale Ahmed (1995) and Abdi M. Kusow (2004); as well as M. Eno 2008; M.Eno & O. A. Eno 2008; and Ingiriis 2012.
2. Note that the constitution of the Somali Youth League (SYL), the party often praised for good leadership, spearheading the nation to independence, clearly segregated the Bantu Jareer people as "Africans" and not as a community within the social fabric of those considered as Somali (e.g. Ingiriis 2012). A very evident institutionalized form of discrimination has recently emerged in the Four-Point-Five (4.5) Somali power sharing system which determined parliamentary seats on the basis of Somaliness and non- or less-Somaliness. For a discussion on this, see Eno & Eno (2009), "Intellectualism amid Ethnocentrism: Mukhtar and the 4.5 Factor." *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* Vol. 9, (pp. 137-145).
3. Cabdullahi 'Ubax' is a former attorney in the Mogadishu Regional Court. He currently lives in Yemen as an asylum seeker. He is also from Afgooye but of non-Bantu ethnic group. Knowing how the court system worked, and being

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convinced that Cabdiraxiim wouldn't get justice based on the people behind the case, he alerted Cabdiraxiim on what was brewing and advised him on what legal channels to pursue. However, due process was hindered and Cabdiraxiim was in police custody longer than the law provided, and without further appearance in court.

4. Immediately upon its publication, Kapteijns's book, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia,* has been accused of various fallacies, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies in dates, names, titles of army officers, biases towards certain groups of interest, lack of empirical research, as well as insufficient understanding of the conundrums within Somali studies. For these, see M. Eno, 2013b:21-31; Ingiriis 2013; David Laitin (12 Nov. 2013) "Some Reflections on Lidwien Kapteijns (2013) Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991."

   http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2013/11/12/reflections-on-lidwien-kapteijns-clan-cleansing/ (accessed on 3 January 2013; and Abdulkadir Osman "Aroma" (28 March 2013). "An open letter to Professor Kapteijns: A rejoinder." http://www.keydmedia.net/en/editorial/article/an_open_letter_to_professor_kapteijns_a_rejoinder/ (accessed on 3 January 2013).

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