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**African Ethnopolitical Rivalry in a Public Theological Lens:
Building Bridges Between the Luo and Kikuyu**

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This research explores African ethnopolitical rivalry within a public theological framework, aiming to build bridges between the Luo and Kikuyu communities of Kenya. It argues that as a community enterprise, theology should engage with the public and be concerned about the well-being of God's people. Ethnopolitical conflict is a major impediment to human flourishing in sub-Saharan Africa, causing loss of life, displacement, and fractured identity. The paper draws on practical and public theologies to understand the lived contexts of human experience and argues that a robust interdisciplinary approach is necessary to uplift those affected by ethnic conflicts. As an example, it examines the underlying presuppositions, cultural and religious causes of conflict between the Luo and Kikuyu of Kenya. It proposes a framework for reconciliation and bridge-building between the two communities. Ultimately, the article seeks to offer a practical theological response to ethnopolitical conflict in Africa, promoting peacebuilding and human flourishing.

Introduction

Theology is a personal and cognitive disposition that orients the soul toward the divine through a study that deepens one's heartfelt knowledge of God (Farley, 1994).¹ The term *theology* has the double meaning of knowledge and discipline, which implies that its *telos* is to discern and set forth God's truth given to the world through Jesus so that humankind can fulfill its creation mandate—to flourish (Gen. 3). Knowing God is in a sense understanding God—his creation and the created order. Theology is a community enterprise and, therefore, ought to engage the public (Tracy, 1981). This engagement translates into love, care, and concern for the well-being of God's people, thereby placing theology specifically within the public and the practical (Charry, 1999; Swinton & Mowat, 2016).² Practical theology and public theology meet at the points of praxis and the lived contexts of human experience. Public theology is practical and practical theology is public, which underlies the motivation of this paper. It is a reflection on public theological engagement with a specific aspect of human experience, namely ethnopolitical rivalries in Africa. Practical and public theology provides the context and impetus for a robust engagement with other theologies and disciplines to serve Christ better, and in so doing, uplift the “least of these” (Matt. 25:40, 45) affected by ethnic rivalries and conflicts in Africa.

Throughout parts of sub-Saharan Africa, ethnopolitical conflicts are a major impediment to human flourishing. These conflicts are dehumanizing, causing pain and suffering from the loss of lives, livelihood, and possessions, including displacement and a fractured identity and sense of belonging. Ethnic conflicts diminish God's vision for humans thriving in the command to “subdue and fill the earth.” It undignifies humankind and dishonors God by failing to recognize the *Imago Dei* that is both intrinsic and inherent in all humans. By promoting violence and death, ethnic conflict trivializes the sanctity of human life and brings into question the meaning, value, and purpose of human existence. At the core of ethnopolitical conflict is idolatry or godlessness, which refuses to recognize the source and *telos* of human existence.

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Ethnopolitical conflicts are conflicts within communities that are often politically instigated, motivated, and exemplified. There are other occurrences of inter-ethnic conflict that pit a community against another, but for reasons other than politics. Three kinds of inter-ethnic conflicts common in Africa include those that are ethnocultural without a political component; those that have both political and ethnocultural factors at work; and those that are only political and are scarcely influenced by ethnocultural factors.³ This paper focuses on the third category.

Ethnopolitical conflict is a problem of ethnocentrism and negative ethnicity (see Wamwere, 2015a, 2015b), which is understood as consciousness, loyalty, and exaltation of one's ethnic group above others, disparaging the being and existence of other groups and their rights to be. This is usually characterized by derogatory and dehumanizing language.⁴ The varieties of ethnic conflict rob people of their dignity, livelihood, and right to build flourishing nation states. They also have debilitating effects on human relationships and can wipe out a generation if not mitigated. After the South African Apartheid, the Rwandan Genocide is the most documented case of ethnic conflict in modern Africa, but nearly all countries in sub-Saharan Africa have had an active case of conflict related to ethnicity, politics, and/or religion.⁵ It is concerning that sub-Saharan Africa, which is predominantly Christian, suffers extreme ethnocentrism.

Ethnopolitical conflict is both a public and a theological problem. Public theology involves deepening conversations on public issues. These are issues in the public arena that reflect a significant public concern and are important because they serve the public interest substantively. Public theology contributes a theological perspective to social problems (Tombs, 2016). The goal of this study is to explore the causes of ethnopolitical conflict in Africa. Using the public theological lens, it establishes that ethnopolitical rivalry in Africa is a theological problem that requires a theological conflict resolution approach. A case study of ethnic political rivalry in Kenya will show how the circle theological method can promote conflict transformation in the context of ethnopolitical rivalry.

Public theology is preferred to political theology. Ethnopolitical conflict falls within the domain of public theology and not political theology because public theology is concerned with the engagement of religious ideas and traditions with broader public debates and societal issues. Ethnopolitical conflict involves issues of social justice, ethics, and the role of religious communities in advocating for societal change, which are all areas of focus for public theology. Public theology seeks to bridge the gap between religious traditions and the wider society, promoting dialogue and understanding between different religious and secular perspectives. It aims to bring religious perspectives into the public sphere and contribute to discussions on ethics, justice, and social change. Political theology, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with analysing the theological foundations of political power and authority. It examines how religious beliefs and doctrines influence political decision-making and governance structures. Political theology explores questions such as the divine basis of political authority, the role of religion in shaping laws and policies, and the relationship between earthly governments and higher spiritual powers. Ethnopolitical conflict may involve questions of sovereignty and the role of religion in the public sphere, which are areas of focus for political theology. However, the broader issues of social justice and ethics that are central to ethnopolitical conflict fall within the domain of public theology.⁶ Overall, it is noteworthy that both fields involve examining the influence of religion on politics but approach it from different angles.

Ethnopolitical Conflict as a Theological Problem

Several theories help explain the causes of ethnic conflicts. Primordialist theory explains ethnicity by arguing that ethnic groups are a result of kinship ties based on biological and territorial bonds. Accordingly, those bonds provide the basis for identifying friends and enemies of the group (Grosby, 1994; Horowitz, 1985). While this theory may somewhat explain ethnicity, it certainly fails to account for the conflicts. Pegging the causation of ethnic conflict on biology and geography makes conflict inevitable. It is the case, however, that many communities live harmoniously alongside each other (Leys, 1978; Waruta, 2003).⁷

Instrumentalist theory understands ethnicity as the use of community members as a means toward an end. This theory sees ethnic conflict because of the mobilization of members of an ethnic group as tools of political entrepreneurship by their leaders (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998; Smith, 2001). This theory partially explains the post-election violence that rocked Kenya after the presidential elections of 2007, 2013, and 2017. For peace to prevail, the “sovereigns” of those communities must be consulted.

The constructivist school, suggested by Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani, holds that ethnic conflict results from a social construct based on experiences, knowledge, and perceptions of one group interpreting another (Musvosvi, 2020). This knowledge is based on a private logic that often results in a mistaken conviction, which is often always a misrepresentation of reality. A false construction is concocted and embedded into group consciousness. Mamdani explains that Rwandan Genocide was a product of ethnic constructivism (Mamdani, 2001).⁸ This perspective rejects the primordialist theory that has been used to entrench the misbelief that African people are in persistent violence and ethnic or “tribal” conflict. He argues that identity formation can never be captured by a single event or by simplistic notions as the primordialist and instrumentalist paradigms suggest.

Racial theory is akin to constructivist theory, which is a set of beliefs and concepts that aim to create a hierarchy among different human races based on assumed biological or genetic distinctions. Racial theory postulates that (1) races are biologically distinct from each other and can be hierarchically ranked based on inherent qualities, and (2) intellectual, moral, and social differences are rooted in biology instead of environmental or cultural influences. These concepts have been employed to validate colonialism, slavery, segregation, and various types of prejudice and subjugation. Nevertheless, scientists have debunked and disproved race theory by providing evidence that race is a social construct and not a biological fact. Claims that different races can be identified based on physical features have been proven to be scientifically unfounded. In any case, research suggests that human capabilities and behaviors are not hereditary, but rather the result of environmental and social impacts.⁹

Racial theory provides insights into how ethnic conflicts are explained by focusing on understanding disparities and tensions among different “racial” groups. Ethnic conflicts may occur when different ethnic groups compete for the same things such as power, resources, or territory. Due to their diverse interests, the elite class has often played a significant role in mobilizing ethnic groups into conflict. As such, ethnocentrism, like racism, is not merely a consequence of individual bias or prejudice, but rather a deep systemic issue that permeates the core of the everyday lives of humans. Andrew Walls has provided very useful insights on the intriguing question of racism in

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biblical history. In “The Ephesian Moment” (2002), he explains how the earliest Christian tradition spoke of three “people groups,” which unfortunately, is sometimes mistranslated as “three races” three races’ in English. Initially, there were two “people groups,” the Jews or Israelites who had a special covenant with the one true Creator God, and everyone else, referred to as “the peoples,” “the ethnic groups,” or “the Gentiles” the Gentiles. The third group, Christians, emerged from a combination of the first two. Within the Christian “people group,” there is an occurrence known as the “Ephesian Moment,” in which the dividing walls of ethnocultural prejudicial hostility are broken. Walls argues that this is a critical turning point in Christian history, in which Christianity transcends ethnic and cultural boundaries to become a universal faith.

The primordialist, instrumentalist, constructivist, and racial theories are only partial explanations of the causes of African ethnic conflicts. There must be a more substantial explanation common to all these cases. A more accurate diagnosis of the foundation of ethnopolitical conflicts is the only way that will give an enduring solution to the problem. The theories advanced may hold some truth, and indeed, they do. However, for those theories to hold they must be undergirded by a much greater reality: something underneath that makes those causes possible. Ethnic rivalry in Africa is pervasive because it is a theological issue that has been misdiagnosed as merely cultural, political, and economic. It is a theological problem and a public problem, placing it perfectly within the ambit of public theology. Three aspects of this problem will be considered: theological anthropology, theological publicness, and false consciousness.

Theological Anthropology

Theological anthropology basically concerns the understanding of the human nature. It helps to answer the question of identity. Who am I? A proper understanding of the human nature is a valuable framework for understanding and addressing issues related to ethnicity. It offers a unique perspective that can shed light on the underlying dynamics and contribute to potential solutions. The doctrine of the *Imago Dei* provides foundation for understanding why promoting equality and combating ethnic discrimination is every Christian’s concern. The Psalmist presupposes there is something intrinsic in humans—a quality and worth that necessitates God’s mindfulness of the human being. He asks God, “What is the human being that you are mindful of him?” (Ps. 8:5). Man is uniquely created in the “image and likeness of God” (Gen. 1:26-31). The core of the doctrine is the concept of image bearing, which implies representation. Humans are God’s representatives on earth. They are vessels through which God’s will is enacted on earth as it is in heaven. They embody the divine on earth – the everlasting goodness, tranquility, harmony, and everlasting excellence and serenity that is characteristic of the divine realm. Humanity is the embodiment of God without bias and free from gender, ethnicity, race, or social standing. Consequently, the doctrine serves as a reminder of the equal worth of all individuals, each of whom deserves love and respect. It contests the idea that one group is superior or inferior to another based on external factors, and encourages a feeling of unity and interdependence among people.

The *Imago Dei* also implies that humans have certain qualities that mirror the divine nature. These qualities encompass rationality, moral awareness, creativity, and the ability to love and be just. By recognizing the divine image in ourselves and others, we recognize the possibility of growth, transformation, and the striving for higher ideals. Furthermore, the concept of the *Imago Dei* encourages the development of virtues like empathy, kindness, and forgiveness. It encourages us to treat others with respect and to strive for justice and fairness in our dealings. This notion serves

as a moral guide, helping us make ethical decisions and take actions that benefit the greater good. In a world filled with prejudice, unfairness, and separation, a thorough comprehension of the *Imago Dei* is more essential than ever. This encourages us to confront our preconceived notions and biases, to dismantle oppressive systems, and to strive for a more equitable and inclusive society. By recognizing the *Imago Dei*, we recognize the inherent value of each person and lay the groundwork for a world of love, kindness, and fairness.

The doctrine of the *Imago Dei* also has a Christological implication. John Behr explains that God has revealed the self “uniquely in Jesus Christ,” and that this self-revelation of Jesus as fully divine and fully human, as affirmed by the Chalcedonian creed and apostle Paul (Col. 1:15), is the basis for understanding the human person (Behr, 2023).¹⁰ Behr shows how both Karl Barth and Karl Rahner’s theological anthropology flows from a definite Christology. Barth (1967) states, “In the mirror of this humanity of Jesus Christ the humanity of God enclosed in his divinity reveals itself” (p. 43). Similarly, Rahner (1966) argues that “anthropology, when most thoroughly realized in Christology, is eternally theology... unless we think that we could find God without the human Christ, and so without the human being at all” (p. 117).

Seeing all humans through this lens affords the opportunity to see Jesus as a model of the perfect human being, and in so doing, appropriate his teaching and example for human relationships. All humans derive their origins from God. The doctrine of the *Imago Dei* teaches that Jesus exemplifies human’s reflection of God and is also concerned with how humans treat one another. Treating “the least of these” as the outside-other is a self-disqualification from brotherhood with Jesus, who says, “Whatever you do to the least of these you do unto me” (Matthew 25:40). If God is love (1 John 4:16), and the human being is God’s image bearer, then it follows that the truest way of being human is to be in a loving relationship with God and fellow humans (Henriksen, 2014).

What are the repercussions of an incorrect understanding of theological anthropology? A lack of comprehension of human nature and the *Imago Dei* in terms of ethnicity may result in undesirable outcomes. People may inadvertently perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory attitudes towards ethnic groups that they do not belong to. Not acknowledging the inherent value and respect due to others can lead to ethnocentric and racist behaviors such as discrimination and exclusion. This could result in the intensification of ethnic conflicts when those who feel oppressed retaliate. These conflicts may be deeply entrenched and hard to resolve. Seeing ethnicity as a cause of separation and superiority, rather than acknowledging the shared humanity and equal value of all people, can impede the paths to understanding, reconciliation, and collaboration between different groups. Misconceptions about human nature can perpetuate a vicious cycle of violence, prejudice, and animosity.

A robust theological anthropology recognizes the brokenness in human relationships and can assist theologians and communities in confronting and challenging ethnic prejudices and stereotypes that fuel discord. The belief in the Incarnation emphasizes the significance of cultural context and encourages the recognition of various cultural expressions. This doctrine also stresses the significance of unity and reconciliation among all individuals and moral accountability towards other people. Ultimately, theological anthropology provides the basis for a well-informed

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understanding of human nature which can help to advance equality, human dignity, reconciliation, and social justice, and strive towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Theological Publicness

The *sine qua non* of public theology, that is the publicness of public theology, is contested (Veldsman, 2017). The position adopted here is that publicness pertains to all of human existence. Theological publicness is about theological interaction with all spheres of human existence. It is about enfleshing the transformation agenda of Jesus Christ into what David Tracy calls the three publics—church, society, and academia, although Stackhouse has added a fourth—religious (Stackhouse, 1997).¹¹ Abraham Kuyper has provided a beautiful vocabulary for conceptualizing the public space, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” (Bratt, 1998, 488).¹² Kuyper’s sphere sovereignty theology assumes the absolute sovereignty of God, equality of all people, and the worldwide calling of the Christian (Klapwijk, 2013).¹³ Kuyper conceived Calvinism as a worldview represented by the concept of Sphere sovereignty, but that perspective is not adopted in this paper. Here it is Kuyper’s vocabulary, not perspective, which is useful and necessary for conceptualizing the public.¹⁴ The notions that God is sovereign, all humans are equal, and that all Christians are called to the works of service can be traced to trinitarian theology. God created everything *ex nihilo* through his sovereign power and will, including all humans in his image, which the triune Godhead alone has designed. God makes man and places him in a space. Kuyper calls this the “domain of human existence.”

The triune Godhead declares “let us make humans in our own image.” The subjunctive “let us” signifies a voluntary cooperative activity of the Godhead. Making humans in the image of the divine, being simultaneously one and three, is instructive for human’s understanding of the shared space. There is both the distinctiveness of the individual and the sharedness of humanity. Humans are, therefore, both male and female, distinct but equal—one human race of multiple ethnicities and communities, distinct yet equal in language, culture, and socialization. Jesus, the God-man, incarnates into one ethnic group, yet his finished work on the cross redeems humans from all ethnic groups. This is what defines the publicness of theology.

False Consciousness or Idolatry

Identity is a fundamental concern for all humans. Establishing one’s true identity is the function of theological anthropology as discussed above. It is also an epistemic issue because how we know who we are is dependent on who is providing the narratives and definitions. Human behaviour is goal-oriented. If individuals or institutions with ulterior motives are allowed determine the narratives, then it is a foregone conclusion that truth will be sacrificed. Ethnic rivalry may end up as a problem of false consciousness, particularly when a false narrative is peddled to a people who uncritically picks up and owns such narratives. Yet, such falsehood is idolatry and a form of spiritual slavery. False consciousness is a social Marxian theory (Roemer, 1986),¹⁵ which is traditionally understood as “holding of false or inaccurate beliefs that are contrary to one’s own social interest and which thereby contribute to the maintenance of the disadvantaged position of the self or the group” (Jost, 1995, 400).¹⁶ It is about defective forms of reasoning that derive from forms of socialization (Thompson, 2015). Thompson offers a useful definition adopted in this study. He defines false consciousness as “a state of accepting the value patterns and cognitive styles of thinking generated by others, particularly by the forms of institutional norms and cultural

patterns of activity that can deform critical-cognitive capacities” (p. 449). False consciousness is about power, specifically as a means by which groups come to submit themselves to the interests of others, which Thompson stresses as the “ability of an elite to be able to actively distract subordinates from questioning the basis of their social relations with one another” (p. 449). False consciousness, in all its varieties, is harmful to the extent that it promotes mistaken beliefs that increase the possibility of acquiescence to otherwise unacceptable conditions or circumstances (Cunningham, 1987, p. 402).¹⁷ A biblical example is the case of Adam,¹⁸ which gives credence to Elster’s hypothesis that there is “is a tendency of the oppressed and exploited classes in a society to believe in the justice of the social order that oppresses them” (Elster, 1982, p. 131). It is important to lay emphasis on proper reading of sacred texts. Apartheid in South Africa was promoted by a Church that misread and misinterpreted the creation and election doctrines from the Old Testament. Samuel Cyuma (2012) asserts that it is possible to use the Old Testament to promote ethnic cleansing. People and ethnic groups have wrongfully interpreted and applied the scriptures, associating themselves with biblical figures or events, or even seeing themselves as fulfilment of biblical prophecies. Some of those misinterpretations and applications have led to a sense of false consciousness.

The notion of false consciousness helps explain post-colonial politics, and the politics of ethnic conflict and violence. Africa’s problems and challenges will be tackled by Africans themselves looking inwardly into their contribution to the prevailing situation.¹⁹ The colonialist may have planted ethnicity, but today it is perpetrated by Africans. Africans must reclaim their true identity as humans created in the image of God to fulfill his *telos* of stewardship and human flourishing as envisaged in the creation accounts of Genesis.

Theological Research Questions

This study is grounded and guided by three questions that correspond to the three issues raised in the research problem. First, how do members of one group of persons see themselves (*Imago Dei*) as superior to another in their very nature? Second, how does one group see their space as sacred and sacredness lacking in the space of the other? Three, how do apparent cultural differences become seen as vast and insurmountable sources of quasi-theological difference?

Research Design

The design section outlines the method, methodology, and contextuality for the study, which are derived from the theological research questions. The methods are aligned with the research questions and aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the theological aspects of ethnopolitical rivalry and conflicts. The methodology expands on the method and explains the theoretical frameworks and philosophical underpinnings that guided the study. It highlights the importance of a theological lens in analyzing the data and interpreting the findings. The contextuality and case is a description of the specific context or site in which the research is conducted. It provides the rationale for selecting these communities as the case study and highlights the relevance.

Method

The study employed two methods: the circle theological method, and the case study approach. The two methods were combined because of their complementarity and effectiveness in providing an effective understanding of the complex dynamics involved in ethnopolitical rivalry. The case

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study “seeks to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically” (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). This approach offers an in-depth exploration of the ethnopolitical rivalry between the Luo and Kikuyu communities, and allows for an examination of the phenomenon within its specific contextual setting. In this case, understanding the Luo-Kikuyu rivalry within the Kenyan (African) context is crucial for comprehending the cultural, historical, and sociopolitical factors that contribute to the rivalry. The circle theological method is useful in case-based and interdisciplinary studies because “it offers a dynamic way of proceeding for theological reflection, beginning and ending in the experience of God’s action in the world” (Froehle & Koll, 2019, p. 188). The circle method has four movements. The first movement, inserting-identifying (Holland & Henriot, 1983),²⁰ pinpoints the specific conflict by looking at the sociocultural, political, and historical setting and their interrelatedness (Nyukuri, 1997).²¹ The second step, assessing-analyzing, gains insight into the conflict situation using the social analysis method. It involves a process of broadening and deepening by combining it with cultural analysis to analyze the societal condition of the conflict. The third step, correlating-confronting, evaluates the conflict by way of theological reflection.²² It investigates how the situation challenges or expands a specific understanding of theological or biblical truth or experience. The fourth step, expanding-empowering, explores the latest insights and how they would deepen knowledge of the phenomenon and aid the process of conflict transformation.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a critical and contextual theological approach. The critical approach involves a critical examination of texts, traditions, and practices, and seeks to analyze and challenge the assumptions, ideologies, and power dynamics that exist within religious frameworks. It aims to uncover the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which beliefs and practices emerge and evolve. The approach is useful for challenging dogmas, demystifying assumptions and prejudices, critiquing oppressive systems, and promoting inclusivity, social justice, cohesion, and liberation. It encourages critical engagement with traditions and beliefs in order to promote a more reflective, transformative, and just understanding of theology. Contextual theology emphasizes the importance of analyzing beliefs and practices within their specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. It recognizes that ideas and practices are shaped by the cultural and social realities of a particular time and place. This approach seeks to understand how the contextual factors influence the interpretation and application of beliefs. Also, the approach recognizes the diversity of human experiences and perspectives and values the input of marginalized communities. It also recognizes the impact of social and political factors in shaping belief and practice. The approach promotes a well-nuanced and inclusive understanding of theology that is relevant to the lived experiences of individuals and communities. Critical and contextual theological approach is an ideal methodology for studying ethnopolitical rivalry, especially in a public theological lens in Africa because it is ideal for 1) analyzing power dynamics as it acknowledges that power relations play a significant role in shaping conflicts and their resolution, 2) uncovering underlying ideologies, beliefs and values that influence the ethnopolitical rivalry, 3) performing a contextual analysis of the specific cultural, historical, and socio-political and economic factors that shape the ethnopolitical rivalry between the Luo and Kikuyu communities, thereby helping to correct simplistic explanations while promoting well nuanced analysis of the conflicts, and 4) emphasizing justice and transformation by addressing the root causes of the rivalries and conflict, and promoting social change. This can help develop theological concepts and practices that contribute to peacebuilding, reconciliation, and the transformation of

power dynamics between the Luo and Kikuyu communities. In sum, the critical and contextual theological methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of the ethnopolitical rivalry and offers insights for addressing the conflicts through a theological lens. The approach offers a way of unity and is embedded in the understanding that African problems demand African solutions, which must be offered by Africans. One assumption is that the problem of ethnocentrism entered Africa through colonialism. This means that the problem cannot be resolved by the means that created it. The commitment of Africans to peaceful living and human flourishing should cause them to see the emptiness of the conflict-causing presuppositions and assumptions that are untrue. The approach is integrative and offers an opportunity for a fusion of horizons in a truly Christian and African way.

Contextuality and Case

The study investigates the Luo-Kikuyu conflict that has been part of Kenyan politics since the 1960s. This conflict continues to strain relationships between members of these communities. Kenya is home to over 40 ethnic groups. The 2019 census indicates that the Kikuyu are the most populous group comprising 17.1% of the population, while the Luos are the fourth, comprising 10.1%.²³ The Luos reside mainly in the Western part of Kenya, whereas the Kikuyu reside predominantly in central Kenya and parts of the former Rift Valley province (Lansner, 2010). The two ethnic groups, together with the Kalenjin (13.4%), have dominated Kenya's politics since independence. It is instructive to note that the situation between the Luo and the Kikuyu determines peace and harmony in the country. In terms of occupation of ancestral lands, the two communities live far from each other and do not share any common boundary or geographic proximity. Historically, conflicting communities have fought over land and livestock (Lansner, 2010). This is not the case with the Luo-Kikuyu conflict, which is what makes it a candidate for this study (Australian Government, 2011).²⁴

The post-election violence that took place in Kenya in 2007–2008, 2013, and 2017 was *prima facie*, a battle between the Luo and Kikuyu. There is reason to believe that there is a deeper root cause of the problem that warrants investigation. The conflict which began with a political marriage of convenience between Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu and Kenya's founding president, and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first vice president has become a full-blown case of interethnic conflict, most recently embodied in Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Jomo Kenyatta, and Raila Odinga, Son of Oginga Odinga. When Luo and Kikuyu are not fighting over political power there is relative calm in the country. For instance, during the 24 years of President Daniel Arap Moi's (a Kalenjin) rule, there was no conflict between the Luo and the Kikuyu. The Moi era was punctuated with tribal clashes which were politically instigated but they were never between the Luo and the Kikuyu. The conflicts which were over land ownership was vastly between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin in the Rift Valley. The Luo and Kikuyu have had a series of political marriages of convenience which have not lasted for long. For instance, during the clamor for multi-party democracy in Kenya, the two communities fought the Moi regime separately. It was until they joined hands that they handed Moi a resounding defeat in the 2002 presidential election. This union crafted between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga did not last and led to a series of post-election violence that saw the loss of many lives. Most recently, Uhuru Kenyatta joined hands with Raila Odinga in a contest where William Ruto emerged as the winner. What emerged is the complaint by some Luos that the Kikuyu duped them and that they were not fully in the coalition cobbled up

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by Uhuru and Odinga. For more, see Citizen Reporter (2022), Mueller (2022), Dahir (2022), and Center for International Development and Conflict Management (2016).

The Luo-Kikuyu conflict is not a question of economics or politics per se, rather, it is a public theological issue. In any case, attempts to resolve the conflicts have not borne fruit. A classic case is the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) that Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga spearheaded to heal the rifts caused by politics and negative ethnicity (Unity Advisory Presidential Taskforce, 2019). BBI was highly supported by the Luo and was opposed by most of the Kikuyuland. Data in this study comes from the Luo/Kikuyu history and the BBI debacle, showing the underlying theological issues.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the research findings, detailing the discovered patterns and insights concerning the theological aspects of the Luo-Kikuyu rivalry. It is also a discussion that delves into an in-depth analysis of the findings, contextualizing them within the broader scope of the theological inquiry. It explores the potential implications and opportunities for bridging the gap between the two communities.

The conflict between Luo and Kikuyu communities recurs every election cycle. Between elections are subtle movements that show the state of uneasiness between the two communities. Social media posts, which have become commonplace for negative ethnic expressions, are indicators of the simmering conflict (Ruteere, n.d.).²⁵ They indicate what is going on behind the scenes in terms of ethnic orientation and the distortion of the nature and status of the rival communities (Naituli & King'oro, 2018).²⁶ The rivalry and hatred are mostly expressed in terms of ethnic stereotyping. The Kikuyu depict the Luo as uncircumcised boys while the Luo depict the Kikuyu as thieves.²⁷ Although vocalized in political contexts, the conflict's subtle displays are seen in the context of work and employment, especially within governmental institutions where people in positions of influence favor their ethnic communities through resource allocation of government-funded projects. As Sunday Agang (2020) expresses, the issue at stake is a combination of power and control. The Luo accusations against the Kikuyu are a cry for economic and political liberation. The negative language used by the Kikuyu against the Luo is a way of asserting political control and dominance. Referring to uncircumcised Luos as boys is a way of saying they are immature, and therefore not ripe for political leadership.

The Luos attribute their struggles and poverty to the Kikuyu, who have led the country through three post-independence regimes. A study by Lesa Morrison suggests that Luos have long held a false notion of intellectual superiority based on a false narrative that they once dominated Kenyan political leadership and lost it. Consequently, they degenerated into poverty because successive regimes, initially orchestrated by Jomo Kenyatta (Kikuyu), spearheaded the political downfall of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (Luo). Therefore, Luos are bitter over the presumed loss of their elite status (Morrison, 2007). Morrison argues further that the Luo have not examined this assumption, at least to verify that “they are not innocent victims of unscrupulous petty bourgeois tribal ideologies” (p. 119).²⁸ She quotes Nnoli and Mafeje who “urges Africans to [examine their narratives] for ethnicity oversimplifies, mystifies, and obscures the real nature of economic and power relations” (p. 119). Therefore, the Luos' self-perception as a fallen elite group has constrained them from looking at alternative means of ameliorating their community's challenges.

This narrative does not sufficiently account for the Luos' suspicion of the Kikuyu. In any case, As Atieno Odhiambo explains, Kenyatta chose to support the petite bourgeoisie (*uthuuri*) community rather than work with Odinga and other reformers in the new Kenya. He felt the need to protect property as urgent. He resorted to the use of political power to protect the emerging bourgeoisie from his backyard. This meant that he had to do all it takes to consolidate power which he deemed as best protected within the Gikuyu nation and in the process eliminating the Luo and other ethnic rivals. According to Atieno Odhiambo, "the social struggle for the future was turned around and rebaptized Kikuyu-Luo rivalry as ethnicity won over ideology" (Atieno-Odhiambo, p. 5). Paul Abiero Opondo argues that "Kenyatta wanted to monopolize political power in order to use it for economic gain by the children of Gikuyu and Mumbi. [that is why] ...in contrast to Odinga, Kenyatta went for the already successful elites, not Odinga's poor and landless *ahoi*" (Paul A. Opondo, 2014). Thus, the Luos locates their political woes and the genesis of their rivalry with the Kikuyu tacitly at the door of Jomo Kenyatta.

Whereas Luo blame the genesis of their conflict on Jomo Kenyatta, the Kikuyu's apparent hatred of the Luo is attributed to Raila, whom they hold responsible for the 1982 attempted coup.²⁹ Hatred of Raila extends to the Luo, whom they see as his unwavering supporters. Raila and the Luo are slighted for not being circumcised, and the Kikuyu say that a *kehee* (Kikuyu for uncircumcised) cannot lead them.³⁰ It should be noted that the Kikuyu have used derogatory language against the Luo since the days of Kenyatta I. Atieno Odhiambo explains how the Luo were regularly referred to as *waruguru*, *kinyamu*, *kehee* (or little boys) (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1998, p. 31).

The Kikuyu loathe the Luo for extravagance, exhibitionism, and self-centeredness. They portray the Luo as over-indulgent people who cannot invest their money responsibly. The Luo's tendency to be pompous ignites fear among the Kikuyu who think that the Luo would overbear them should they acquire the leadership of Kenya.

Although the rivalries are seen as political, and expressed in cultural nuances, there is a deeper basis for the rivalry. First, each has a feeling of superiority over the other. Utterances from prominent members of each ethnic group as well as social media postings show how members of the two ethnic groups feel about themselves and others. Naituli and King'oro (2018) have also documented how members of diverse ethnic groups use ethnic stereotyping and defamatory language to denigrate others.³¹ This feeling of superiority is an indication of a major deficiency in their theological anthropologies. It portrays a lack of understanding of what it means to be human. The exclusivist mindset and attitude that holds the superiority of one's self or community, is in fact, ignorant of the origin, nature, and purpose of humanity. In the absence of God's self-revelation, humans cannot comprehend who they are, let alone perceive who God is. Christology is the proper foundation for theological anthropology. Seeing Jesus for who he is, God-Man and therefore the image of God, provides the foundation for how to see the human person, both the self and the neighbor. Jesus' teachings on human relationships are then appropriated as examples to follow— the things he taught and exemplified.

Secondly, they both deem themselves as the rightful occupants of Kenya's political public space. This also suggests a misconceived notion of the public. As suggested earlier, trinitarian theology helps appropriate the meaning of the public. The triune Godhead participates jointly, voluntarily, and mutually in the work of creation. They willingly make man in their own image. When the

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grasp of trinitarian theology and theological anthropology falls short of these understandings, what follows is a deficient conceptualization of the public space. The human sphere of existence is not divided into the sacred and the secular, the private and the public, as the Enlightenment and modernity have entrenched in the minds of modern persons. God's economy, as shown in the story of the Hebrew people, includes all aspects of human existence— art, culture, trade, farming, education, and networking are all aspects of worship done to the glory of God.³² Trinitarianism implies a plurality of existence. Plurality of existence requires mutuality and co-existence in a deliberate and relational space. Public theology walks into the public sphere, takes ordinary human activities, and converts them into meaningful public discourse. Public theology initiates God talk over everyday life in a way that is publicly comprehensible and meaningful. Ethnicity, ethnocentrism, ethnopolitical conflicts, and violence fall within this space. Public theology dialogues with communities on why and how the geographical spheres they occupy are by trust, how stewardship of all resources is wise, noble, and beneficial to all, and how reckless exploitation of resources hurts all. It teaches the equality of humankind, as it dialogues with other systems of thought (e.g., the human rights perspectives) that seek to promote human dignity and the common good. From public theological discourses, humans learn that no individual, ethnicity, or culture is superior to another. All are accountable to one another as they share the God-given space. This domain, "is conceived of in faith as the place where love should be promoted, witnessed, expressed, fulfilled, expected, and anticipated" (Henriksen, 2014, p. 118).

Third, both have cultural assumptions and beliefs that indicate a problem of false consciousness, which is a form of idolatry. The Luo have believed the narrative that the Kikuyu are their enemies based on the conflict between Kenyatta and Odinga. The political elite uses this false belief to keep them waiting for a political messiahship, which they believe will come from the Odinga family. This effectively makes Odingaism a form of idolatry. Luos have also harbored a false notion of their intellectual and political superiority, arguably a notion planted by the colonial regime that initially placed them in government positions as clerks. There is no such thing as intellectual superiority. All humans, given the same equal opportunity, have the same potential. The Kikuyu, on the other hand, have believed that they are the true owners of Kenya, having fought for independence through the Mau Mau uprising, and are therefore the best to lead the country.³³ They have also entertained the false idea that the Luo community is violent and should not be trusted with authority. Lastly, the Kikuyu community made an oath that they could never be ruled by the uncircumcised. The liberating power of the gospel speaks to these themes. There is no longer Jew nor Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, male or female, for all are equal in the eyes of God.

Kenya contains conflicting communities that misunderstand the basis of their rivalry. If asked to explain the reason for their hatred, the most honest answer would be "I don't know!" This is a problem of idolatry. Therefore, when theologizing among the "least of these," it is beneficial to acquire an understanding of how and why of people's lived experiences. Dialoguing with the relevant theories will help practical theologians perceive the background for the people's struggles with increased clarity.³⁴ Looking at these backgrounds with a theological lens helps to locate the exact problem of both the oppressor and the oppressed. People are not just deceived, neither are people just deceptive—they are motivated. It helps to ask what motivates them. The allure of self-worship, to be like God, motivated Adam. The desire to be believed and worshiped motivated the serpent. In both cases the problem was idolatry. At its core, false consciousness is not mere misbelief or deception, it is idolatry that makes misbelief and deception possible. False

consciousness, as a reason for ethno-political conflict, could be motivated by insecurity. This insecurity leads one to trust the oppressor and deceiver to deliver your security, causing you to eliminate their competition.

Conclusion

This study shows that the conflicts between the Kikuyu and Luo are founded on false beliefs about themselves and their neighbors. It is a theological problem, embedded in a deficient theological anthropology, a theological publicness, and false consciousness. The case study of the Kikuyu and Luo demonstrates what happens between other communities. Politics and economics, though real experiences, are symptoms of a bigger problem. Humans need to understand the meaning of humanity, their shared origins and purpose as derived from the *imago Dei* and communicated in the incarnation. Humanity is relationally shaped in the order of the Trinity and that living a life of the common good, in the best interest of others, is in the best interest of oneself. The theological circle method is an appropriate approach for building bridges between conflicting communities because it is transformative, empowering, and sustainable. It is also malleable and contextual. It transforms the epistemic and metaphysical assumptions that lead to conflicts and empowers by freeing the people to be truly human, truly African, and truly Christian. It is sustainable because it harnesses indigenous resources to build a society of mutuality and peaceful co-existence, and this results in socio-economic and political stability. This leads to human flourishing (enjoying the earth God put humans to thrive in). It is theological and is grounded on a biblical and theological foundation. It is irenic in its very nature as it fosters participation and inclusivity of the community members themselves. It is the recommended approach for Africans as the best way of fostering peaceful and mutual coexistence as a diverse community sharing the same sphere of human existence, which the Lord proclaims as his.

Endnotes

- ¹ Farley (1994) has argued that “the term *theology* is fundamentally ambiguous” in the sense that it “refers to things of entirely different *genres*.” He offers a twofold understanding of theology as first, a term denoting actual individual cognition of God and things related to God, and second, as a discipline, a self-conscious scholarly enterprise of understanding.
- ² Charry shows that Augustine argues for wisdom as man’s primary vocation (i.e., to love God). He distinguishes between wisdom (*sapientia*) and knowledge (*scientia*) and shows how sapiential knowledge enables humans to learn what it means to love God.
- ³ Take for instance cattle rustling between the Pokot and the Marakwet ethnic groups of Kenya which are motivated by culture and economics. Culturally because the Pokots and the Marakwets traditionally had initiation processes that involved the acquisition of cattle or livestock from other communities. Cattle are used to pay the bride price, and every young man ready for marriage must acquire his own cattle for that purpose. It is economic because it involves acquisition of material wealth, namely livestock, which is minimally discernible as political motivation. The post-election violence that pitted the Luo against the Kikuyu in 2007 and 2013 were mainly political duels that turned violent, although it could be argued that economic and cultural motivations underlined the conflicts.
- ⁴ Ethnocentrism and negative ethnicity, an attitude of inserting one’s ethnic group at the center of other ethnicities, more often leads to ethnic conflicts. It usually portrays other ethnic groups negatively. Ethnopolitical conflict is disagreement, disharmony, or lack of accord between ethnic groups due to political intolerance.
- ⁵ The classic story of ethnopolitical conflict in Africa that has been told in the last eighteen years is that of the Genocide in Rwanda that killed approximately one million people in 1994.
- ⁶ For well nuanced explications of public theology and political theology, see Carl Schmitt whose seminal work, “Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty” (1922), is considered a foundational text in Political Theology. The German theologian argues that sovereignty, the ultimate authority in political decision-making, is fundamentally linked to theological concepts of God’s absolute power. Johann Baptist Metz’ work “Faith and History: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology” (1977), explores the relationship between faith, politics, and social justice. He argues that political theology should focus on the liberation of the oppressed and marginalized, advocating for a theology that engages with the sociopolitical realities of the world. Jurgen Moltmann’s “Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology” (1965), explores the role of Christian hope in shaping a vision of a just and transformed society. Moltmann, A German theologian and contemporary of Metz, argues for the importance of religious communities engaging with social and political issues, advocating for a theology that actively contributes to societal transformation. Another prominent scholar in the field of public theology is Stanley Hauerwas (born 1940). Hauerwas argues for the importance of a theological perspective in addressing ethical and political questions. In his work “A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic” (1981), he emphasizes the role of Christian communities in embodying alternative moral and political values, challenging the dominant societal norms.

- ⁷ Waruta explains, “In traditional Africa, each tribe or people had their own territory, property and traditions, and it can be argued vehemently that there was more tolerance and co-operation among various peoples, particularly those who shared a geographical area, than it is often acknowledged” (p. 123). He contends that colonial literature has tended to exaggerate inter-tribal conflicts to justify its role in uniting and taming wild Africa.
- ⁸ Mamdani argues that the seeds of the Rwandan Genocide were planted in the colonial activities of 1927 to 1936 to concretize the belief that the Tutsi were foreigners to Rwanda, a different race, and who were yet entitled to rule over the Hutu, the true inhabitants of the land.
- ⁹ Baker (2007), Pinto et al (2020), Nicholson (1998), Plomin R, and Deary I.J (2018) separately but collectively suggest that human abilities and behaviors are not solely determined by genetics, but also by environmental and social factors.
- ¹⁰ John Behr argues that Jesus Christ’s perfectness and completeness in his divinity and humanity necessitates his definition of both, and in so doing, gives meaning to Paul’s assertion that Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Jesus is, “in one *hypostasis*, one concrete being, and one *prosopon*, one ‘face’, indeed the image of the invisible God” (p. 37). He agrees with Karl Barth that this Christological starting point of theological anthropology helps to remove the distantness and strangeness from God, and therefore from the human being, both of whom Jesus exemplifies.
- ¹¹ For definitions and further discussion on the publicness of theology see Tracy (1981). In the case of the three publics, Tracy shows how they are explicated further. For instance, the public of Society includes politics, economics, and culture—all of which he defines with great care and attention. See also Habermas (1974). See also Day and Kim (2017).
- ¹² The emphasis on the “domain of human existence” is derived from the context in which Kuyper spoke: the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam. Kuyper was making the claim that everything that all activities that the university would undertake were Christ’s activities: studying, teaching, research, science, business, recruitment, and administration. For more see Bratt (1998).
- ¹³ God’s sovereignty entails that He has set his “ordinances” or laws for the entire creation but that He is not subject to these laws Himself. The equality of all people means that God makes no distinction between some people and other people and particularly not between so-called clergymen and laymen. And the worldwide calling of the Christian implies that every believer is called from whatever position he or she occupies in this world to the service of God, the reformation of the church, and the transformation of society.
- ¹⁴ This is not an apologetic for Kuyper’s concept of Sphere sovereignty but an adoption of language. The three concepts as stated by Kuyper are hereto located in the trinitarian theology,
- ¹⁵ Roemer (1986) offers his definition of ‘Marxian’ social theory: that which is influenced by the method and content of Marx’s work and the work of his followers without necessarily adhering to the theory or practice of orthodox Marxism; it reflects, in other words, “a non-dogmatic approach to Marxism” (p. 2).
- ¹⁶ Jost argues for two independent and empirically observable criteria that a case must satisfy to meet the defined threshold. First, the belief must be “false” in the epistemological sense of being contrary to fact. Secondly, it must be “false” in the sense of failing to reflect one’s genuine social interests... Consciousness is ‘false’ when it serves to perpetuate inequality by leading members of a subordinate group to believe that they are inferior, deserving of their

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- plight, or incapable of taking action against the causes of their subordination.” For a detailed treatment of these criteria, see Cunningham (1987) and Meyerson (1991).
- ¹⁷ There are six varieties of false consciousness. For a robust discussion, see Cunningham (1987) who identifies two varieties of “false” consciousness as fatalism and false identification of blame, and to his list, Jost (1995) has added four: failure to perceive injustice and disadvantage; justification of social role and statuses; identification with the oppressor; and resistance to change.
- ¹⁸ Take for example false identification of blame where Adam blames God and the woman God gave him instead of owning up to his fault of disbelieving God and believing his oppressor the serpent. The serpent caused Adam to believe that it was acting in Adam’s best interest. The promise of being like God was so alluring, he even forgot that he was indeed the image of God. He believed his oppressor, the serpent. The same is true of countries in Africa where citizens acquiesce to dictatorship because they feel the false peace is better than the previous wars that they have experienced. It is a classic case of failing to perceive injustice and disadvantage. Adam adopted a false consciousness of what he was not, and in so doing, alienated himself from God, his maker, protector, and defender.
- ¹⁹ This is best done by Africans committing themselves to provide African-centric solutions to African problems. They do these using indigenous religious and cultural resources that are authentically African and soundly theological. True and long-lasting solutions must also be communal and inclusive, borne from in-depth investigation and analysis of diverse socio-cultural, historical, and political realities of the communities concerned.
- ²⁰ See Holland and Henriot (1983) and Wijzen (2005). This approach, unlike others like Joseph Cardijn’s “See, judge, act” approach, makes clear a distinction between observation and analysis. Wijzen observes that they give detailed directions for data analysis but not for gathering the data.
- ²¹ Nyukuri (1997) states, “It is a historical fact and current reality that most Kenyan districts are haunted by actual or potential ethnic conflicts. This is partly because different communities continue to consciously or unconsciously rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance and hegemony in an atmosphere characterized by scarce resources, fear and prejudice” (p. 3).
- ²² This does not mean that all the other parts of the research are not theological. All the work done within the circle is theological, in an expanded sense. The theological work happens in all the stages of the circle method because the stages happen contemporaneously. There is a correlation between human experience and the Christian tradition, gospel, and culture. This correlation is critical in the sense that it is not only clarifying but also mutually critical.
- ²³ Kenyan community demographics by ethnicity: Kikuyu 17.1%, Luhya 14.3%, Kalenjin 13.4%, Luo 10.7%, Kamba 9.8%, Somali 5.8%, Kisii 5.7%, Mijikenda 5.2%, Meru 4.2%, Maasai 2.5%, Turkana 2.1%, non-Kenyan 1%, other 8.2% (2019 est.). Index Mundi (n.d.).
- ²⁴ Ethnic tension in Kenya generally occurs as a result of “longstanding grievances over land tenure policies and competition for scarce agricultural land, the proliferation of guns, the commercialization of traditional cattle rustling, the growth of a modern warrior/bandit culture (distinct from traditional culture), ineffective local political leadership, diminished economic prospects for groups affected by a severe regional drought, political rivalries, and the inability of security forces to adequately quell violence” (Australian Government, 2011, p. 1).

- ²⁵ According to Ruteere (n.d.), “Ethnic hatred and incitement to ethnic violence have now migrated to the Internet and social media in Kenya. In blogs, on Facebook and on Twitter, Kenyans have taken the venom of ethnic chauvinism, hatred and incitement to the digital world to escape the fairly effective measures adopted by the print and broadcast media restricting inciting speech” (para. 1)
- ²⁶ Naituli and King’oro have done comprehensive work examining the stereotypes and coded language used to fuel ethnic conflicts in Kenya.
- ²⁷ Nyachwani (March 2013) observes, “The many Kikuyus I have spoken to, think of the Luos as loud and arrogant without even the slightest grasp of what business is. In fact I just lost a prospective girlfriend/wife for being a Raila sympathizer....The many Luo friends who have spoken to me have proclaimed the usual stereotypes of Kikuyus being thieves with a maniacal obsession with money. These stereotypes are a part of our everyday discourse. Some take it with a light touch. Some loathe it. For the whole article visit <https://nyachwani.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/the-luo-kikuyu-kalenjin-problem-is-something-we-must-fix-now/>. The story of Chwanya and Mathu seem to lend credence to Nyachwani’s perspective. <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna22672240>
- ²⁸ The Luo narrative of a flourishing community is negated by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga’s autobiography, *Not Yet Uhuru*, where he recounts his motivation for starting the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation. For more on this see Odinga (1966).
- ²⁹ In 2005, the BBC reported that a legislator Kalembe Ndile, [although] an ethnic Kamba [was supporting a Kikuyu incumbent], called Odinga "a murderer" because "he participated in the 1982 coup ..."
- ³⁰ Several Kikuyu politicians have been quoted as referring to Raila and by extension, his Luo community, as uncircumcised. In an article titled “Kenyan leaders accused of hate speech ahead of referendum”, the BBC reported that politicians were “using derogatory, insulting, and degrading statements... the biggest barbs, with ethnically and culturally sensitive overtones like circumcision, have been reserved for Raila Odinga....an ethnic Luo, a community [that] does not circumcise its males.” BBC further reported that “...James Njiru, a Kikuyu, told a Yes rally in central Kenya of the need to make circumcision a constitutional requirement.” This was a barb aimed at Odinga and his Luo community. It further reported that “Assistant Energy Minister Mwangi Kiunjuri, also Kikuyu, took the same line during a 5 October rally west of Nairobi. Kiunjuri told Odinga that if he [Odinga] "does not want to see me, he should put his eyes in his pockets" since "he remains uncircumcized". Kiunjuri followed with similar comments during another Yes rally in central Kenya on 8 October when he stated that "an uncircumcized person has no secrets". Another Politician, Kiraitu Murungi, was also reported to have referred to Raila as an uncircumcised man. James Gathaka took up the circumcision issue in regards to Kikuyus supporting Odinga. Gathaka zeroed on official opposition leader, Uhuru Kenyatta... Gathaka urged: "No-one knows whether Uhuru ever got circumcized since he studied abroad. However, I want to tell you that since he will come to lie to you here, we should all position ourselves strategically in the various exit points. Then we strip him naked and establish whether he is circumcized." For more on this, see Kenyan leaders accused of hate speech ahead of referendum. (2005, Nov 16). *BBC Monitoring Africa* <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.pba.edu/wire-feeds/kenyan-leaders-accused-hate-speech-ahead/docview/458423677/se-2>

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- ³¹ A Kikuyu legislator who is also a cabinet secretary has been in the news repeatedly over his use for derogatory language against people groups, both gender and ethnicities, that he has disdain for. Please see <https://www.pd.co.ke/inside-politics/stop-throwing-stones-at-me-i-have-nothing-personal-against-luos-raila-moses-kuria-120722/>; and <https://www.facebook.com/LarryMadowo/photos/a.10150564172698295/10152249401078295/?type=3>. Recently, a senior US government official who visited Kenya decline to have a meeting with him citing his untamed language and mannerisms. For more please see <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/us-katherine-tais-refuses-to-meet-moses-kuria-foul-mouth-4308290>. Also
- ³² Eighteen verses emphasize doing everything to the glory of God. See 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:23-24; Colossians 3:17; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Romans 11:36; Psalm 50:15; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Psalm 69:30; Psalm 34:3; John 7:27; Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Peter 4:11; Luke 1:46; Psalm 50:23; Romans 8:26; Ephesians 1:13; Psalm 22:23.
- ³³ Koigi Wamwere, a native Kikuyu, appealing to fellow Kikuyus to shun tribal bigotry. In it, Koigi alleges that ethnically thinking Kikuyus “considers themselves God’s chosen people and other people ‘gentiles’ who are created to serve them... many Kikuyus believe they are created to rule other communities who are in turn created to be ruled by them... Kikuyu elites believe they are entitled to all resources and power...” For more, see Koigi (2015a) Kikuyus Could Save Kenya If They Reject Negative Ethnicity. February 15. *allAfrica.com*. <https://link-gale-com.proxy.pba.edu/apps/doc/A401670000/AONE?u=west87348&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=d109c6c9> and Wamwere (2015b).
- ³⁴ Gustavo Gutiérrez has done a commendable job in dialoguing with Social Marxist theories to develop a liberation theology that focuses on the liberation of the poor and the oppressed. For more, see Gutiérrez, Gustavo (1933, and 1983).

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