Corruption in Kenya and Communities of Interpretation: A Sacramental Pneuma-Ontological Perspective

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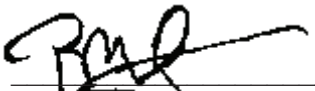

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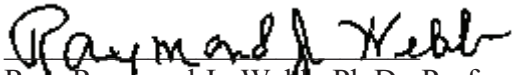

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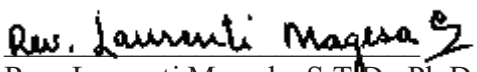

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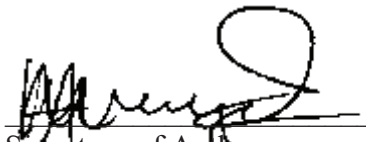

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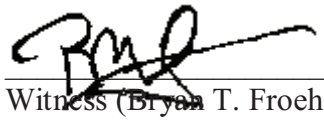

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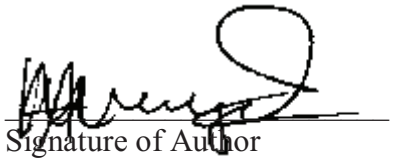

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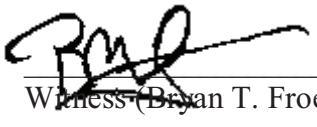

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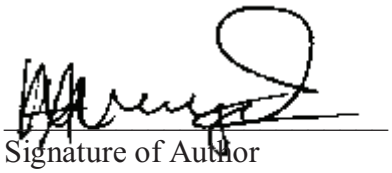
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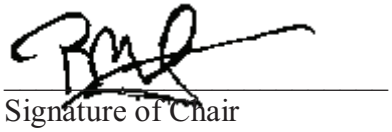
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Abstract

This dissertation explores the possibility of engaging African sacramental ontology in the fight against practices of corruption in Kenya. Such an approach must incorporate both the African worldview as well as communities' interpretive capacities. The Gĩkũyũ worldview, centered on land, is engaged in depth.[1] Land brings together God, ancestors, the living dead, the living, the unborn, animate, and inanimate things into a mutual sharing of life. Within that communion, human beings have a unique role in ensuring a responsible transmission and increase of the vital force. For the Gĩkũyũ, all corrupt practices are ultimately violations of land in this sense, and are therefore viewed as *thahu*, contamination.

The Gĩkũyũ experience of land, as with everything else, is sacramental. Within a sacramental vision, a person used a piece of land for the needs of his *nyumba,* household, but always with the awareness that land belonged to the *mbari*, community, and was therefore communal. Emphasis on individual ownership and a neglect of the communal dimension started before the rise of colonialism but was undoubtedly accelerated by it. This individualism is rooted in a desire to dominate. Domination is antithetical to a spirit of mutual sharing proper to the Gĩkũyũ participatory ontology. It has created a wedge that has increasingly weakened the Gĩkũyũ experience of sacramentality as a whole.

Behind the colonial project was an essentialist ontology that reduces all reality to the observable, measurable, knowable, and conquerable. Essentialist ontology also helped create the European "buffered" self, marked by self-consciousness, was all-knowing, and

[1] A disclaimer is here made to the effect that this work is not a promotion of ethnocentricism. What is intended here is to begin with an appreciation of the beauty of our African cultures, collectively, but also in their particularity. Emphasis here is on a perspectival approach. Kikuyu ontology is not projected here as superior than any other worldview. It is simply offered as one way of the many ways of being African and Kenyan.

all-powerful. The non-European "other" was a non-subject and non-human. In other words, essentialist ontology succeeded in creating the conquerable and the conqueror. Instrumental rationality and racist anthropology conspired to inspire a coercive colonial state and an extractive colonial economy. Missionary theology cooperated with a colonial mentality that operated by denigrating local cultures and by ordering them through a system of education that sought to replace local cosmologies with European notions.

In the postcolonial era, land reform policies follow legal frameworks inspired by the essentialist ontology of the colonial era. Such policies promote the need to protect the rights of individual ownership and uphold the commercial significance of the land. Further, conversations on reform of such policies remain limited to elites, and the vast majority are left out, considered incapable of such sophisticated understanding. The ongoing commodification of land and exclusion of people in the postcolonial era further underlines the critical need for an intentional recovery of a sacramental experience and understanding in the Kenyan context.

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) that flourish today among the Gĩkũyũ offer a space for mutually critical conversations that engage African participatory ontology and Catholic sacramental theology**.** As such, SCCs offer a means for both recognizing and transcending *thahu,* the sense of contamination that comes from the disruption of community and subjection of land to purely instrumental rationality. They also reflect the promise of an ongoing incarnation of a Christianity in Africa that transcends the limitations of the missionary theologies of earlier generations.

Keywords: corruption, epistemology, gikuyu, sacramentality, small christian communities, social justice

Acknowledgments

The Gĩkũyũ proverb *kaara kamwe gatiũragaga ndaa* ("one finger does not kill a louse") indeed describes the nature of the efforts that went into the production of this piece of knowledge. It was a joint venture. If I did not acknowledge this fact, then I would be like *mũrĩa wiki akuaga wiki*, the man who eats alone and who for that reason must await a lonely death. I want to applaud the effort of those who played a role in the preparation of the meal, the many fingers that worked with mine to kill the louse. I would like to thank the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) of St. Francis of Assisi, Ruiru, for generously welcoming me into their fellowship, both as a son and a scholar. I thank Fr. Njoroge and Fr. Waweru for permitting me to research within the parish and for facilitating my research engagement of the SCCs. I am particularly indebted to those who agreed to share their stories with me. It would have been impossible to realize the goal of this project without such generous assistance.

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ti gũtĩĩra, better late than never. I am grateful to the community of St. Maximillian Kolbe Parish and to Fr. Jeff for providing a home for me during my academic sojourn.

To my family, I thank you for being an Oasis of strength and encouragement. I come to you whenever I feel tired and overburdened and you give me rest. Nothing spurs me on more than the thought of "turning left" on Jacaranda Lane. To my mother who speaks volumes without uttering a word, I thank you for passing on a contemplative spirit. I made good use of it during the writing process. To Nduta, we share a womb and much more. Thank you for your prayers and goodwill. To Mary, my most cherished niece, thank you for helping with the transcription. To my nephew Ben, thanks for your sheer good-heartedness. A special word of gratitude to Jacinta and Dr. Florence, my two sisters from another mother. I thought better, wrote better, and did most things well because I had a home and family on this side of the Atlantic. Dr. Florence, I am eternally grateful for your friendship and partnership.

Dedication

To Cũcũ wa Mũraya, grandma (1921-2019), *Kĩoni wanyoneire*, the Seer who saw for me; you inducted me into the art of wrestling with God in Gĩkũyũ. ũromama kwega kuuraga.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

LG— Lumen Gentium

NAB—New American Bible

NJBC—New Jerome Biblical Commentary

SC—Sacrosanctum Concilium

AMECEA—Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa

GS—Gaudium et Spes

EG— Evangelii Gaudium

JTI— Journal of Theological Interpretation

NDBT— The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology

RLA—Registration Land Act

NLP—National Land Policy

WB—World Bank

KADU—Kenya Africa Democratic Union

CLB -Central Land Board

NIS —National Intelligence Service

NARC—National Alliance Rainbow Coalition

CHAPTER ONE. CRISIS OF LAND CORRUPTION IN KENYA, REDISTRIBUTIVE REGIMES, AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This chapter introduces the subject of land corruption. Corruption is a threat to the statehood and the livelihood of most African countries. Land corruption deserves special treatment because it is the economic mainstay for nearly 80 percent of the inhabitants of Africa. Furthermore, for a majority of African communities, land has a cultural and religious significance. The second part of this chapter will argue that the matter of land in Kenya, unlike in most other countries of Africa, is and has been intertwined with state power since colonial times. The distributive regime thus far has worked to favor only the rich and the powerful. In the meantime, politicians incite communities to fight those they are led to believe have come to occupy their land. The third part of this chapter will assess the role of the Church[1] in advocating for the poor. For the most part, churches in Kenya have oscillated between being prophetic to being complicit, and sometimes indifferent.

Crisis of Land Corruption in Kenya

Morphology of Corruption and Its Extent in Africa

Land is a vital economic and cultural resource for the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa. Economically, 70 percent of the population in this region is involved in agriculture, mostly on a small scale basis, and more than 32 percent of the continent's

[1] When "Church" is used in a sentence, reference will be to different Christian denominations collectively considered, or to the universal Christian experience if implied by the context.

gross domestic product comes from the sector.[2] In Kenya, 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture for food as well as for wealth creation, thus making land the most important factor of production.[3] Culturally, "land is closely intertwined with people's sense of belonging and cultural and religious identity. Ancestral land is symbolic of citizenship for most Africans peoples, and as such, often carries more weight than any legal definition of citizenship."[4]

Although the continent boasts of a vast arable area and a tropical climate, agricultural productivity both for food and export has largely remained low. It accounts for only two percent of the world's total agricultural exports, this from 8 percent in the 1970s. Some manifestations of this desperate situation include biting poverty, especially among the rural folks, malnutrition, and the fact that one out of every four undernourished persons come from Africa. Some of the factors that affect agricultural productivity include global warming, inadequate training for farmers on better farming methods and skills, poor policy, and infrastructures. A major contributing factor is corrupt practices of land management. It has been the cause of significant conflict in Kenya, which has, in turn, led to the loss of life, loss of property, displacement of families, and food insecurity.

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[2] AGRA, *Africa Agriculture Status Report: The Business of Smallholder Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa,* Issue 5 (Nairobi: Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, 2017), vi.

[3] Major land-cover types in Kenya include forests, savannah, grasslands, wetlands, fresh and saline water bodies, and deserts. These are used for agriculture, pastoralism, water catchments, nature reserves, urban and rural settlements, industry, mining, infrastructure, tourism, and recreation. Other uses include cultural sites, fishing, forestry, and energy. See Government of Kenya, Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, "National Land Use Policy," Session Paper No. 1 (2017): 42. http://lands.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SESSIONAL-PAPER-NO.-1-OF-2017-ON-NATIONAL-LAND-USE-POLICY.pdf

[4] Edmond J. Keller, *Identity Citizenship and Political Conflict in Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 104.

From its Latin derivation, the word corruption (*corrumpere*) connotes the idea of ruin, where something loses its original value and assumes a debased one.[5] Nyasani defines corruption as:

> the art of self-ingratiation to some other person with an ulterior motive usually wicked, amoral, infringing, and illegitimate to wheedle some favor out of him at a deliberate price usually monetary or in free service terms, always though in return for significant material comfort, spiritual and material patronage, physical and material protection, accessibility or shadow use of the status the corrupted person to the personal advantage of the corrupter, and finally the derivation of psychological solace and security under insecure or unpredictable circumstances such as may be imposed from time to time by the economic, social, political, and emotional pressures of the world. [6]

Although corruption does not necessarily obliterate people or even render them incapable of pursuing their destiny, it nonetheless inflicts on them a stigma that undermines their integrity. Against an idyllic view that imagines a time when humankind was uncorrupt and innocent, Nyasani suggests that in the real world, a person is a *homos lupus sibi*, a wolf unto themself. When they come into contact with others, they change either for the better, but mostly for the worse, and in the process, corrupts their contacts.[7]

Corruption is as old as humanity itself. However, it was only after the 1990s that countries and international institutions began to be more aware of its negative impact and

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[5] Joseph M. Nyasani, *Philosophy of Development: African Perspective, A Reflection on Why Africa May Never Develop on the Western Model* (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 2010), 157.

[6] Nyasani, *Philosophy of Development,* 158.

[7] Nyasani, *Philosophy of Development,* 159.

to engage it. The "erosion of moral values and the excessive, almost anarchic, freedoms that accompanied the spread of democracy and capitalism were reinforcing each other, creating the conditions for corruption to soar."[8] Since then, many researchers and institutions such as World Bank, the European Commission, the United Nations have studied the effects of corruption on macroeconomic and microeconomic indicators such as GDP growth, investments, employment, tax revenues, and foreign investments, or the study of various forms of political corruption. Besides, these studies investigate bribery in connection with local customs and habits and how it affects the everyday lives of people.[9]

Most studies on corruption focus on public service. They view corruption in terms of a violation of norms that protect the public good for personal interest. Osoba defines it as "anti-social practice of conferring benefits to oneself, relatives, friends, and a willing buyer, which is contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermines the principle of fairness."[10] That said, it is worth noting that corruption manifests in some other morally unacceptable behaviors that may not necessarily be criminal. Accordingly, corruption with only one of its (smaller) parts is manifested in a way that can be successfully regulated by norms of criminal law.[11]

In an attempt to explain the widespread nature of corrupt practices in Africa, "continuists" argue that corrupt behavior is endogenous, deeply rooted in African

[8] Moises Naim, "Corruption Eruption," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* (Summer 1995):1-2.

[9] Vito Tanzi and Hamid Davoodi, Corruption, Public Investment, and Growth (Working Paper Washington: International Monetary Fund, 1997), 35.

[10] Segun Osoba, "Corruption in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives," *Review of African Political Economy* 69 (1996): 372.

[11] Segun Osoba, "Corruption in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives," 373.

culture.[12] "Rupturists," on the other hand, claim that corrupt behavior is modern and coincides with the European colonization of Africa.[13] These two opposing theories suffer from the same distortion: an essentialist view of culture and tradition, an absence of historical memory, and a moralizing and normative concept of corruption. Thus, in this debate, culture either is the ultimate cause of corruption, or it is the victim of an external actor who has perverted it.[14] Recent works have sought a middle path. Mbaku contextualizes corruption against the backdrop of the character of the weak African state, which Bayart calls the "government of the belly."[15] He attributes this type of government, typical in most African states, to a complex process of hybridization of a "distorted form of African patrimonialism"[16] and a colonial mindset of centralized authority and an extractive economy.[17]

Štefan Šumah discusses three interrelated factors that contribute to the rise of corruption. The first is the prevailing political and economic environment conditions corruption.[18] According to Dimant, when the economic activity of a country is over-regulated, public servants begin to claim the monopoly of power and to extort bribes

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[12] J-P. Olivier De Sardan, "A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 1 (1999): 25-52.

[13] Bertha Osei-Hwedie and Kwaku Osei-Hwedie, "The Political, Economic, and Cultural Basis of Corruption in Africa," in *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies*, ed. K. Hope and B. Chikulo (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 47.

[14] Bertha and Kwaku, "The Political, Economic, and Cultural Bases of Corruption in Africa," 49.

[15] Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 28-56.

[16] Paul Gifford, *African Christianity*: *Its Public Role* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1998), 5.

[17] John Mukum Mbaku, *Bureaucratic, and Political Corruption in Africa: The Public Choice Perspective* (Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2000), 36.

[18] Štefan Šumah, "Corruption, Causes, and Consequences," in *Trade and Global Market,* ed. Vito Bobek (London: IntechOpen, 2018), 67.

from clients who are unable to or are unwilling to abide by regulations.[19] On the other hand, under-regulation is a fertile ground for corrupt activities. However, as both Goel and Nelson observe, when States have a well-regulated financial sector that allows higher economic and political freedom, corruption tends to be less.[20]

In addition, the lack of professional ethics, laws that criminalize corruption, mechanisms of prosecution, and political goodwill, all constitutive of a democratic state, explain why corruption continues to ravage the African continent.[21] Although most African States are now democratic, the state is still a carryover of the coercive and extractive colonial state. The political elite sees it as a source of self-enrichment, and citizens do not value it as the legitimate institution that holds the rein of economic, social, and political power for every member of the society. Citizens view the state as an alien creature that acts totally on its own without the least consideration of the people. In both cases, state assets quickly become an object of regular plunder for the powerful but also for the less powerful whenever there is a chance.[22]

Moreover, corruption is also determined by attitudes, habits, customs, and traditions.[23] It is less in contexts where practices such as gift-giving are considered to be corruption, but more widespread in contexts where such practices are seen as an expression of courtesy. Nyasani argues that African cultures, and indeed other cultures

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[19] Eugen Dimant and Guglielmo Tosato, "Causes of Corruption and Effects of Corruption," What Has Past Decade's Empirical Data Taught Us? *Journal of Economic Surveys* (London: Wiley Blackwell, vol. 32 no.2 (2018): 335-346.

[20] Goel Rajeev and Michael Nelson, "Economic Freedom versus Political Freedom: Cross-Country Influences on Corruption," *Australian Economic Papers* 44(2) (2005):123.

[21] Štefan Šumah, "Corruption, Causes and Consequences," 68.

[22] Paul Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5. See also Nyasani, *Philosophy of Development,* 178.

[23] Štefan Šumah, "Corruption, Causes and Consequences," 70.

defined by a hierarchical social ontology, tend to be more susceptible to corruption. Within such ontologies, a person subordinates to a power above, whether that power is in the form of ancestral spirits, the heads of families, chiefs, religious leaders, or even politicians. Hierarchical social ontology gives rise to patrimonialism and clientelism, where the powerful maintain their position by creating a dependent client and where the client must show allegiance to the superior power for protection and favors. The client acts out fear and a feeling of impotence. In such an environment, corruption thrives and is perpetuated by both the patronage of the powerful and the dependence of the client.[24]

Another aspect of African social ontology responsible for corruption is the "extended" family mindset.[25] One is loyal to one's "family" by looking out for its members. Obligation to family, however, may compel individuals to act beyond their means, thus leading to a violation of ethical norms. An extended family mentality encourages nepotism and favoritism. Nyasani notes that finding solace in the community diminishes initiative and personal responsibility. Individual know that the family will always come to their aid, and therefore he has no drive to work hard or become more

[24] In discussing corruption, Mbaku argues that the role of citizens or what he refers to as the supply side is equally important. It consists of the willingness of private persons, families, communities, or companies to offer bribes. Accordingly, corruption does not only refer to the abuse of state offices but also other questionable social behaviors that enable the achievement of wealth, power, and prestige. Smith argues that in Africa, corruption encompasses everything from government bribery, rigged elections, fraudulent business deals, cheating in school, and even deceiving a lover. He observes how ordinary citizens recognize the fact that corruption undermines the country's democratic political institutions, economic development, and yet they also participate in seemingly contradictory behaviors that enable, encourage, and even glorify corruption. See John Mukum M., "Bureaucratic Corruption in Africa: The Futility of Cleanups," *The Cato Journal* vol 16 no.1. Spring /Summer, 1996, 21; Daniel, J. Smith, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 6.

[25] Cahit Guven, "Engaging In Corruption: The Influence of Cultural Values and Contagion Effects at the Microlevel," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 39 (2013): 287-290.

competent. Besides, they also knows that the community will come to their rescue should they find themselves in trouble.[26]

A Topography of Land Corruption in Kenya

Kakai observes that the term land corruption is relatively new in both policy and academic literature.[27] "It is an operational concept reflecting the illicit acts and abuse of power for private gain by those mandated with land governance."[28] A widely acknowledged definition of land governance is that it "concerns the rules, and structures through which administrators make decisions about access to land and its use, how they implement and enforce decisions, and the way they manage competing interests."[29] Kakai argues that in the sphere of land corruption, power is both an exploited resource and the aim of the action undertaken. Corruption in the land sector is, therefore, the abuse of power, and authority, by those in charge of land administration for self-gain.[30]

Corruption in the land sector is both political and bureaucratic. It occurs at the policy, legal, and institutional levels. Amundsen defines political corruption as "the manipulation of legal processes and institutions to facilitate resource allocation that sustains the power and wealth of political decision-makers."[31] At the policy level, political corruption takes the form of state capture and grand corruption. State capture

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[26]Nyasani, *Philosophy of Development,* 157.

[27] Sèdagban, H.F. Kakai, *Government and Land Corruption in Benin* (Working Paper 12, Brighton, UK: Land Deal Politics Initiative, 2012), 24.

[28] Sèdagban, H.F. Kakai, *Government and Land Corruption in Benin*, 34.

[29] David Palmer, Szilard Fricska, and Babette Wehrmann, "Towards Improved Land Governance," Land Tenure Working Paper (FAO,2009), 25.

[30] Farai Mutondoro, Mary Jane Ncube and Mary Awelana Addah Ncube, "An Analysis of The Impact of Land Related Corruption on Women: Case Studies From Ghana and Zimbabwe," (A Paper prepared for presentation at the "2016 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty," Washington DC: World Bank, 2016), 17-45.

[31] Inge Amundsen, "Political Corruption: An introduction to the Issues," (Working Paper 851, Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway:1999), 12-21.

occurs when individuals, families, groups, or even commercial companies influence public policy to satisfy their private interests. Forms of political corruption include irregular privatization of State-owned land, re-zoning of land by influential persons to increase its value at the expense of the poor. Other types of political corruption include illegal approval of construction plans, large-scale land acquisitions that push out the poor with little or no compensation, and the influence of the judicial systems by the ruling elite to prevent impartial scrutiny of land deals or to make preferential judgments.[32]

Bureaucratic corruption cripples the performance of an institution. It is to be distinguished from institutional or systemic corruption. Lawrence Lessig argues that "institutional corruption is manifest where there is a systemic and strategic influence which is legal, or even currently ethical, that diverts and cripples an institution's ability to achieve its purpose, including, to the extent relevant to its purpose, weakening either the public's trust in that institution or the institution's inherent trustworthiness."[33] While institutional or systemic corruption may be legal and ethical, at least for now, bureaucratic corruption is unethical and illegal. It occurs in the public administration at the implementation end of politics, where civil servants seeking to increase their level of compensation systematically and consistently solicit or receive money in return for

[32] Farai Mutondoro, Mary Jane Ncube, and Mary Awelana Addah Ncube, "An Analysis of the Impact of Land Related Corruption on Women," 34.

[33] Lawrence Lessig, "Institutional Corruption," Defined, *Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics,* Vol. 41, No. 3, (2013), 45. https://ssrn.com/abstract=2295067.

services rendered, exclusively for their benefit with or without the knowledge of others in the institution.[34] Many institutions in Kenya are corrupt in this sense.[35]

In 2002, Mr. Mwai Kibaki appointed The Ndung'u Commission of Inquiry with the mandate of: "inquiring into the unlawful allocation of public lands, ascertaining the beneficiaries, identifying public officials…Furthermore, making recommendations for appropriate measures for the restoration of illegally allocated lands to their proper purpose, for prevention of future illegal allocations, and appropriate criminal prosecutions."[36] The Commission uncovered massive corruption before 2002 involving both Trust and government lands.[37] The State issued some 200,000 illegal titles between 1962 and 2002, 98 percent of these between 1986 and 2002. This unlawful process affected three categories of public land. (i) Urban, State and Ministries' Land. (ii)

[34] Peter Annasi describes the various stages of land administrative and how they attract bribery: (i) *Demarcation of land* is a requirement for registration and titling of property. Clients may be required to give bribes to officials at the registration offices. (ii) *Categorization* is the designation of land for various purposes. Land designated for the community may officially be labeled "unused" by corrupt officials and then sold to private individuals (iii) *Zoning* regulates the use and development of land. This process is vulnerable to corruption since decision-makers are required to balance the competing interests of various stakeholders by placing limits on landowners' rights on urban land use and their discretion to construct buildings. (iv) Valuation is the determination of the worth of a piece of land for payment of land rates. Undervaluing or overvaluing can be a powerful tool of coercion and subject to bribery (v) *Enforcement* is the process of implementing policies. See Peter, Annasi, *Corruption in Africa: The Kenyan Experience*: *A Handbook for Civic Education on Corruption* (Cheshire, UK: Trafford, 2004), 36-37.

[35] The most corrupt institutions in Kenya include the Police Department, the Ministry of Public Works, the Immigration Department, the Ministry of Lands, International Organizations and Local authority, the Judiciary, and the Prison Department. See Peter Annasi, *Corruption in Africa*, 21.

[36] Roger Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 103 (2005): 144.

[37] Government of Kenya, *Report of the Land Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal or Irregular Allocation of Land* (Nairobi: Government Press, 2004), 46.

Settlement Schemes and Trust Lands. (iii) Forestlands, National Parks, game reserves, riparian reserves, and protected areas.[38]

The state allocated Public land illegally in complete disregard to public interests.[39] Commissioners of Land would transfer public land to third parties by replacing legitimate documents at the Ministry of Land office and Settlement with illegal ones. Examples of lands that the ministry allocated illegally included: land earmarked for construction of schools, playgrounds, and hospitals. Senior management of corporations in cahoots with the commissioner of lands facilitated the sale of alienated land to private entities at less than market value. Buyers would later sell the same land to different corporations in the amount excess of market value. Sometimes Commissioners of land would execute the sale of land allocated to corporations without the cooperation of management.[40]

Settlement scheme land was land purchased by the government from European settlers for purposes of resettling small-scale African holders. As the trustee, the government could then convert the Trustee land to private holdings. This process had unfolded smoothly during the early years after independence. Later, however, allocations were made for other purposes other than settlement and agricultural production.[41] This

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[38] Ambreena Manji. "The Grabbed State: Lawyers, Politics, and Public Land in Kenya," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 3 (2012): 469. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41653718

[39] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 146.

[40] Some of the Corporations that lost vast tracts of land include Kenya Railways, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, the Power and Lighting Company, Kenya Airports Authority, and Kenya Industrial Estates. Others, such as Kenya Food and Chemical Corporation, had to sell their land at a throwaway price due to liquidation following mismanagement, nonetheless proceeded to sell off their remaining assets, including land, at throwaway prices. See *Report of the Land Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal or Irregular Allocation of Land,* 87-90.

[41] Agricultural Development Corporation farms whose stated mission is to research and develop high-quality seeds and livestock for improved agriculture became settlement schemes which were then allocated to individuals or companies, often as political reward or patronage. See *Report of the Land Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal or Irregular Allocation of Land,* 125-126.

shift resulted from the devolution of the process from the Settlement Fund Trustees (SFT) to the District allocation committee. Soon, the interest of the politically correct replaced those of the landless, so that "the majority of deserving allottees received smaller plots, while the undeserving received large ones."[42]

By the year 2002, the forested area in the country was a paltry 1.7 percent compared to 3 percent at independence. Illegal excisions facilitated deforestation under the pretext of settling the landless and were done without any reference to scientific considerations.[43] According to the Ndungu Commission report, beneficiaries of such excisions included privately owned schools, churches, private individuals, and companies. One case of Kenya Wild Service's illegal allocation was on riparian lands in Naivasha made since 1995.[44] Kenyan laws define riparian land as being a minimum of six meters and up to a maximum of 30 meters on either side of a riverbank from the highest watermark. Encroachment on waterways and riparian reserves is the cause of much flooding being experienced, especially in Kenya today.[45]

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[42] *Report of the Land Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal or Irregular Allocation of Land*, 127.

[43] *Report of the Land Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal or Irregular Allocation of Land*, 149.

[44] *Report of the Land Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal or Irregular Allocation of Land, 159.*

[45] According to the United States Department of Agriculture, riparian areas are lands that occur along watercourses and water bodies. Riparian areas are known to help ensure that sediments settle out before they reach the waterway. They trap nutrients and microscopic pathogens that are present in the runoff. They act as a safety valve in the watershed because they slow water flows, reduce the size of a flood further downstream, and the destructive power of fast-flowing water. They help to maintain the local water table and hold the majority of the remaining biological diversity. Besides, riparian area vegetation provides forage for livestock or high-value hardwood. See Delfhin Mugo, "The Riparian Dilemma and Why the Zones Matters," Daily Nation, December 20, 2018. https://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/dn2/riparian-dilemma-and-why-the-zones-matter/957860-4903160-qoanjd/index.html

However, land corruption in Kenya is not limited to public land. Land owned by private individuals or groups has been targeted by the powerful in the society who collude with government officials to defraud the poor and the vulnerable. A recent case worth mentioning involves a farmers' cooperative society known as *Kihiu Mwiri* in Murang' a County. Allegedly, a group of disgruntled members of the cooperative carved out a prime parcel of land belonging to the cooperative society and sold it to a firm owned by a prominent government official. A county commissioner and senior police officers may have orchestrated the murder of some top-ranking members of the cooperative in an attempt to silence opposition to the illegal sale.[46] Other cases involve land belonging to families where men, favored by customary laws, feel it is within their right to dispose of the land as they want without the consent of their spouses and children.

Effects of Land Corruption

Land corruption has severe ramifications in Kenya and Africa in general. First, it causes insecurity and uncertainty in land tenure, which limits access to land and, in turn, "increases levels of poverty and hunger. Land corruption is known to damage the livelihood of small-scale producers, agricultural workers, and landless rural and urban poor."[47] In sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, smallholders manage 80 percent of the farmland, and small-scale farming produces 80 percent of the food supply. Land tenure is affected

[46] Kamau Maichuhie, "CS, Governor, Top Police Officers Linked to Kihiu Mwiri Land Murders," Daily Standard, August 8, 2019. https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001337268/cs-governor-top-police-officers-linked-to-land-related-murders

[47] Zúñiga Nieves, *Land Corruption: Topic Guide* (Berlin, Germany: Transparency International, 2018), 2.

whenever government allocations of credit, agricultural supplies, and other services cannot be dispensed with efficiency and without bribery. On a global scale, land tenure is affected by the imbalance of trade.[48]

Besides, land corruption "can indirectly affect economic inequality in both positive and negative ways."[49] Positively, the acquisition of large pieces of land can create gainful employment for local communities, create business opportunities, and help improve infrastructures. Negatively, such investments may lead to an increase in prices of land and products, thereby upping the local cost of living without necessarily improving incomes. Displacement of people to allow for large scale investment does not always lead to just compensation. Besides, big investments use technology which reduces employment, or at most attract "low-skilled, seasonal, poorly paid, and often in conditions that violate labor legislation on minimum wages, forced labor, child labor, health, safety, and social protection."[50]

Moreover, "corruption in land administration impedes women's access and use of land."[51] Women own less, smaller, and low-quality agricultural land. Customary norms tie their land rights to their relationship with men. The government registers customary land under a male's name. Accordingly, husbands can arbitrarily and solely dispose of it, and in the event of death, they leave widows and daughters out of the inheritance. Commercialization of customary land displaces women whose foothold in the business space is still at its minimum. In the city where one acquires land through the market,

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[48] Rodney Fink, *Corruption and the Agricultural Sector* (Washington DC: Management Systems International, 2002), 65.

[49] Nieves Zúñiga, *Land Corruption Topic Guide*, 3.

[50] Guerenya Alantra, *Unearthed: Land, Power, And Inequality In Latin America* (Washington: Oxfam International, 2016), 46.

[51] Nieves Zúñiga, *Land Corruption Topic Guide*, 4.

women form only one-third of the total ownership in some countries.[52] Women are especially vulnerable to pressure to pay bribes. Corrupt officials subject them to sexual harassment, violence, and extortion.[53]

Furthermore, corruption in land management and governance can cause violations of fundamental human rights.[54] Some industries in agriculture, construction, and mining are harmful to local populations. Their establishment often demands evictions, displacements, and forced relocations, all of which serve to disintegrate and erode the cultural identity of indigenous communities. ILO and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognize indigenous peoples' rights to prior consultation, participation, and consent. Governments and companies subvert them through a lack of transparency and imbalanced power relations during negotiations, bribing of community leaders, and impeding fair and equitable agreements.[55]

Finally, corrupt land governance results in land-related conflict. The majority of landowners in the upcountry have received land from the central government through settlement schemes. The “settlers” hold on the land remains tenuous, so that lack of protection from the government leaves them vulnerable. The "rightful" indigenous landowners contest settlers’ claim to this land. Accordingly, the settlers become

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[52] UN-Habitat, *The State of Women in Cities 2012 -2013: Gender and the Prosperity of Cities* (Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Program, 2013), 28.

[53] The new Constitution provides for several gains for women on their land and property rights, including Article 2(4) that provides that "any law, including customary law that is inconsistent with this Constitution, is void to the extent of the inconsistency. Article 27 (4) prohibits discrimination on any ground, including sex and marital status, and expressly states that women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. See Government of Kenya, *The Constitution of Kenya 2010* (Nairobi: National Council for Law Reporting, 2010), 45.

[54] Nieves Zúñiga, *Land Corruption Topic Guide*, 2.

[55] United Nations, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, (March 2008) http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

vulnerable, especially during elections, when the "rightful" owners, usually through incitement from politicians seek to displace them. Politicians use this convenience to reconfigure the demographics for voting, but also in order to conceal their own corruption. Other land-related conflicts result from land "grabbing" and double allocations by corrupt public officials.

Land Corruption and Distributive Regimes

Dangerous Memories: Consolidation of State Power

The inauguration of a new constitution in 2010 with its notable features of limited executive power and a comprehensive land policy was a moment of great hope. Memory focuses attention on the developments that led to this moment. Johann Metz's underscores the centrality of memory in human experience. "Memory is indeed what gives human beings, … their historical identity…."[56] Memory may simply be a recollection of the past as the "good old days."[57] It may also focus us on human suffering or what Metz refers to as " dangerous memories." Memory is, however, future-oriented. It recalls God's promises and the "hopes that are experienced as a result of those promises."[58] It "makes the present unsafe." By telling the story of Kenya, the focus is on hope and the need to continue scaling the heights for a better future."[59]

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[56] Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Fundamental Practical Theology*, trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury, 1980), 66.

[57] It is this type of memory that has taken shape since the Enlightenment and what Metz calls the "evolutionary logic" of our post-narrative age in which history has no beginning and no end. Because of the lack of a narrative sense, the horizons of reality are permanent as "the way things are," and the status quo goes unquestioned. In this post-narrative, evolutionary worldview, salvation is merely the result of increased control over nature and history through the domination of science, technology, and political control. "There is hardly any reference in history as we know it to the conquered and defeated or to the forgotten or suppressed hopes of our historical existence." See Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 66.

[58] Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 109.

[59] Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 109.

Punter and others describe the concept of a "distributive regime" as "a structure that coordinates movement and settlement control practices in ways that engender ideal distributions of populations across space."[60] The "ideal" frequently is what favors those who have the power. The colonial government used its distributive powers in this manner.[61] By1926, the British government designated all land in Kenya as Crown Land. It allocated most of the productive land to European settlers and settled Africans in the "reserves," land units designated for peasant farming or pastoralism. By the 1940s, thousands of African "squatters" and laborers were living and working in the so-called White Highlands. Kanongo observes that in the 1950s, agrarian radicalism fused with anticolonialism propelled Kenya's nationalist struggle.[62]

Determining "the structure of the postcolonial state was driven by the actors' assessments of how the choice between a unitary versus federal structure, and the drawing of jurisdictional boundaries, would affect the distribution and redistribution of land rights in the Rift."[63] The independent constitution drawn mainly by the colonialists promoted a federal system, otherwise known as *majimboism*. White minorities and politicians allied to KADU (Kenya African Democratic Union) favored it. It promised to devolve some powers from the central government and to institutionalize regional autonomy. Regional land boards would accomplish the functions of the Central Land

[60] Dagmar E. Punter, Hasse van der Veen, Enrike van Wingerden and Darshan Vigneswaran, "Distributive Regime: Rethinking Global Migration Control," *Political Geography* vol 70(2019), 117.

[61] Catherine Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2012), 82.

[62] Tabitha Kanongo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1900-1963* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987), 56.

[63] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 83.

Board.[64] Other notable elements included the setting up of the Million Acre Settlement Scheme that would help resettle the landless from all the African ethnic communities, and a commitment to respect the private property.[65]

At independence, Jomo Kenyatta sought to consolidate state power.[66] He was pleased by the Constitution's protection of private property, but he was not in favor of *majimboism*, which he saw as a violation of a single market system. He rejected the idea of sequestering land matters from politics. He engineered the merger of KANU with KADU in 1964 by coopting KADU leaders into government, thus effectively foreclosing *majimboism*. He also abolished the CLB (Central land Board) and reverted to the old system where the office of the president managed land matters. Kenyatta worked hard to suppress debate on the land question. However, that question became inevitable as the country turned its attention to the substantive issues of economic growth and resource allocation.[67]

Under Daniel Arap Moi, Kenya became one party-state system.[68] He systematically usurped the functions of other institutions of governance. He embarked on

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[64] David Anderson, "Yours in the Struggle for Majimbo: Nationalism and the Party Politics of Decolonization in Kenya, 1955-1964," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (July 2005): 552.

[65] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 83.

[66] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 83.

[67] Gatheru N. Wanjohi, "The Politics of Land, Elections, and Democratic Performance in Kenya: A Case Study of Nakuru District," (Working Paper no. 412 Nairobi University, Institute of Development Studies, 2000). Two moments in 1970 exposed the Kenyatta regime's underbelly: imprisonment and silencing of Jean-Marie Seroney and the assassination of J. M. Kariuki, Member of Parliament from Nyandarua, both of whom denounced unfair land distribution. See David Anderson, "Yours in the Struggle for *Majimbo*," 553.

[68] The party-state represents an effort by leaders both to exclude the participation of some social groups and, at the same time, to shape views held by members of weaker interest groups. In a party-state system, new African parties assumed policy-making roles, and authority for developing legislation came to rest in the hands of the party leadership, as did the appointment of individuals to leadership positions. Widner offers three elements of the party-state system: "confusion of party tasks with public tasks through the use of administrative bodies to carry out

the gradual *Kalenjinization*—putting people from his community into the public office and private sectors— and made use of the Special Branch (NIS), the police, and indeed the military as a means to counter any form of dissent.[69] Due to pressure from home and abroad, Moi finally allowed for reforms, and Kenya became a multi-party state in 1992. The National Alliance Rainbow Coalation (NARC) led by Mr. Kibaki would later oust him from power in 2002. The NARC government took power on a platform of promoting democracy and popular empowerment. Its critical achievement was the enactment of a new constitution in 2010 whose objective was to entrench democratic values, decentralize power, create independent institutions, and to empower the people. [70]

Dynamics of Distributive Regime on Land and Consequences

In many African countries, land politics often revolve around the use and abuse of ostensibly customary authority. In other words, debate mostly happens within communities and involves community leaders. It hardly becomes a national or even regional issue. The Kenyan case is unique. Land politics and discussions over access to land intertwine with disputes over state power. He who controls state power controls the distributive power over the land. Within a national political economy whose outcome is the creation of total losers and total winners, a do or die approach to politics makes the land issue highly emotive. The national public sphere is a prime theater of land conflict.

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party functions; the use of the party not just as a means of mobilizing regime support, but as an adjunct to the security forces monitoring and controlling opposition: and the propagation of a single party platform, with little or no tolerance of internal dissent." See Jennifer A. Widner, *The Rise of Party State in Kenya: From Harambee to Nyayo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 1.

[69] Korwa G. Adar and Isaac Munyae, "Human Rights Abuse in Kenya Under Daniel Arap Moi, 1978-2001," *African Studies Quarterly* 5, no.1 (Winter 2001), 11.

[70] Prempeh H. Kwasi, Africa's "Constitutionalism Revival: False Start or New Dawn?" in *Democracy, Constitutionalism, and Politics in Africa: Historical Contexts, Development, and Dilemmas,* ed. Eunice Sahle (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 13-78.

Rival groups have often stood on opposite sides of a distributive conflict stoked by the land- allocation policies of Kenya's governments, both colonial and postcolonial.[71]

High population densities in the former African “reserves” created land hunger that both colonial and Kenyatta governments understood as a political problem which, if left unaddressed, threatened not only political stability but also Kenyatta's hold onto power. Between 1962 and 1966, approximately 20 percent of the land in the White Highlands was purchased through state-financed and state-run programs, parceled up to create settlement schemes, and transferred to Kenyan smallholders. In the 1970s, the Kenyan government acquired more European-owned farms and then granted, sold, or otherwise transferred them to individuals and companies in transactions that were financed by the government.[72] State-mediated access to farmland took three forms: settlement schemes, land buying companies, and forests.[73]

Most settlement schemes were either "high-density schemes,” designed for commercial farming, and “low-density schemes,” designed for subsistence farming.[74] State officials were in direct control of the allocation of plots to individual household heads, who were selected on a case-by-case basis by the official settlement authority. The allocation was on a thirty-year mortgage payable at a 6 percent rate of interest, at the completion of which a title was issued. Indebtedness and low rates of titling, especially

[71] Boone, “Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya,” 78.
[72] Boone, “Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya,” 80.
[73] Boone, “Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya,” 78. See also Tabitha Kanongo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1900-1963*, 56.
[74] R. S. Ondingo, *The Kenya Highlands: Land Use and Agricultural Development* (Nairobi: East Africa Publications, 1971), 200-201.

on the high-density settlement schemes, kept alive the direct political tie between the rights-holders and the state.[75]

In the late 1960s and 1970s and under Kenyatta, private land-buying companies acquired farms or estates in the former White Highlands from the government through Settlement Fund Trustees (SFT).[76] Members of the public—the majority of them from the Kikuyus and Luos— would then be invited to buy shares in these holdings.[77] The process was not free of political influence. Some SFT acquired lands were sold to land-buying companies headed by people close to Kenyatta, who could benefit from financing for this purpose.[78] Some politicians who owned some of these land buying companies also owned private finance companies that offered loans to settlers to buy from them. If such lands were in a constituency of interest, they became political clients of politicians who were proprietors of the land-buying companies.[79]

The land was also accessible through the excision of forest reserves.[80] Forests can be cleared legitimately for alternative use through a process of de-classification and de-gazettement. However, both colonial and postcolonial governments abused this process. Forests were regarded "as a state-owned resource that is available, virtually without cost

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[75] John Harbeson, *Nation-Building in Kenya: The Role of Land Reform* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 282-285; see also Shem E. Migot-Adholla, Frank Place, and W. Oluoch-Kosura, "Security of Tenure and Land Productivity in Kenya," In *Searching for Land Tenure Security in Kenya,* ed. John Bruce and Shem Migot-Adholla (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1993), 199-39.

[76] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 9.

[77] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa. Book 2: Violence and Ethnicity* (London: James Curry, 1992), 460.

[78] Government of Kenya, *Report of the Judicial Commission Appointed to Inquire into Tribal Clashes in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1999), 138.

[79] Ato Kwamena Onoma, *The Politics of Property Rights Institutions in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 23-45.

[80] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 82.

or restriction, for arbitrary allocation to private users."[81] In the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial government resettled many squatters in the Olunguruone area of the Narok forest. In the 1960s and 1970s, Kenyatta settled Kikuyu squatters in Mau Forest in Nakuru District - around Londiani, Nyoro, and Elburgon in Molo Division. From 1986, Moi turned government forest lands into a *Caisse Noire* to guarantee his political survival through the politics of patronage.[82]

The use and abuse of state powers in the allocations of government land became notorious under Moi. Following the attempted coup of 1982, he embarked on a process of shaping reliable ethnopolitical support among the KAMATUSA fraternity (Kalenjin groups, the Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu). Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) farms and Settlement Fund Trustees (SFT) properties became targets of plunder for political purposes. Declassification of new forest land became for him the means of creating land on which to settle the KAMATUSA group and his supporters. This process created a clique of super-wealthy personalities from the Kalenjin community who would act as Moi's point men in the Rift valley. They were notorious land-grabbers in regions of high agricultural potential.[83]

When excising forest reserves became untenable because of public and international outcry, Moi conveniently deflected the wrath of his supporters by questioning the legitimacy of settlement schemes created under the patronage of Kenyatta. Rift valley politicians politicked openly on a platform of chasing settlers out of the Rift and reallocating land to its rightful owners, the KAMATUSA group, during the

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[81] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 78.
[82] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 1.
[83] David Throup and Hornsby Charles, *Multiparty Politics in Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), 198-189.

multiparty elections of 1992, 1997, and 2002.[84] The violence –financed by senior politicians from Rift Valley—left hundreds maimed, dead, women raped, property destroyed, homes burnt down, and displaced thousands of families. Attackers occupied the vacated land with the help of state officials. The government issued titles to these illegal occupiers.[85]

Mr. Kibaki put in motion a process that aimed at decentralizing power in general and of land-distribution in particular. In June 2003, he appointed the Ndung'u led Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal and Irregular Allocation of Public Land. A national land Policy was formulated in 2007 to enshrine guidelines towards the drafting of land legislation.[86] However, before the process could come to fruition, another wave of conflict over land erupted following the disputed election of 2007. The opposition had promised Rift Valley residents that if elected, they would take back the land that had been given to "foreigners." The violence that followed claimed hundreds of lives, caused massive destruction of properties, and displacement of peoples. [87]

New Constitutional Dispensation and Distributive Implications

The drafting of a National Land Policy from 2004 to 2008 and its adoption in 2009 became the latest attempt at restructuring the distributive regime. Some of its provisions were incorporated into the proposed constitution of August 4, 2010.[88] Kalenjin

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[84] Mutua Makau, *Kenya's Quest for Democracy: Taming Leviathan* (Boulder: Lynne, 2008), 78-79.

[85] Colin Kahl, *States, Scarcity, and Civil Strife in the Developing World* (Princeton: Princeton, 2006), 67.

[86] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 149.

[87] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 149.

[88] They included: (1) the establishment of a National Land Commission to manage all public land, (2) the provision that foreigners should only hold land under 99-year leases, (3) conversion of all existing freehold titles to 99 year leases down from the previous 999-years, (4) investigation of all land-related historical injustices, (5) repossession of grabbed or illegally

politicians opposed the draft, not because of its provisions such as "redressing injustices" and "restitution," but because it proposed to restructure the institutional locus of state power by devolving it to the county governments.[89] They feared that in a devolved system, the KAMATUSA group would be the minority in most of the new counties such as Nakuru.[90] Devolution would shrink their territorial spheres of influence and limit their access to the state institutions that would be decisive in the distribution and redistribution of land.[91]

Manji disputes Boone's claim of an "intensely redistributive potential in Kenya's land regime in the new Constitution."[92] He describes the regime as shallow redistributive land reform—focused on land administration and a critique of the bureaucratic power. Deep redistributive land reform ought to focus on the structure of landholding. It aims to redistribute land from the wealthy to the poor and landless.[93] Struggle over land distribution in Kenya has two dimensions: the question of indigenous versus settlers, and the use of state power to allocate land to the rich. By focusing on the poor masses

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acquired public land, (6) return to communities of all grabbed Trust land and conversion of all former Trust land to community land, (8) compulsory government acquisition of all land with minerals and appropriate compensation; (9) the establishment of maximum and minimum acreages for private landholdings, and (10) protection of the interests of spouses and children in transfers of private land (including the right of women to inherit land from fathers or husbands). See Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 149.

[89] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 94-95.

[90] Mwangi Kimenyi and S. Ndung'u Njunga, "Sporadic Ethnic Violence: Why Has Kenya Not Experienced a Full-Blown Civil War?" In *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, ed. Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005), 145.

[91] According to Boone, "the anticipated distributional effects of the proposed changes were visible in the geographic pattern of support and no support for the new constitution. The Rift Valley voted about 66-34 against approval, the only one of Kenya's provinces to return a "no." See Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 94.

[92] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 94.

[93] Ambreena Manji, The Politics of Land Reform in Kenya 2012, *African Studies Review Volume* 57 / Issue 01 / April (2014): 115-122.

divided into state-nurtured ethnic factions, the government ignores class privilege and betrayal of the public. These questions are logically before all other land matters.[94]

The new distributive regime has not even succeeded in depoliticizing the question of land. Divesting the president of powers over land is undoubtedly a huge step. However, this does not insulate land-allocation processes against politics. The critical question regards what principles will guide land distribution and redistribution. Due to a lack of clear parameters defining their respective functions, the Lands Ministry and NLC have engaged in power fights. In 2016, the High Court nullified titles issued since 2013 because the Lands Minister had ignored the counsel of NLC. It did not seek parliamentary approval and did not engage in public participation. That said, the courts themselves could not clearly articulate what public participation entails or, in the absence of such, what directive they would issue. It is this absence of clarity in the Land laws that leaves the distributive land regime vulnerable to political interference.[95]

Ecclesiological Implications of Land Corruption

Church and Civil Society

The Church has traditionally described the encounter with Christ in terms of faith formed in love or *fides caritate formata*. Some have interpreted this in a pietist, individualistic, and exclusive way as the soul's encounter with God. *Fides caritate formata* leads to the type of spirituality that Henry Corbin describes as "alone with the

[94] Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya," 94.

[95] Geoffrey Mosoku, "Jubilee Three Million Title Deeds may be Declared Illegal," Daily Standard 14 December 2017**.** https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001263035/jubilee-blunder-may-lead-to-3-million-title-deeds-being-revoked

alone."[96] Over the years, experiences of injustices and oppression have come to demand a faith formed in justice, *fides justicia formata*. It is a faith orientation that creates a new consciousness of solidarity with victims of injustices.[97]

The Medellin conference of 1986 distinguished between soft and hard liberation. Soft liberation attributes societal evils to individuals' sinfulness and gives priority to individual conversion. Political commitment comes at the end of an individual's maturity. The hard notion of liberation, on the other hand, locates personal growth in one's solidarity with others in the striving for emancipation from repressive structures for which they may not be responsible but are their victims. It locates political commitment in the very definition of one's commitment to Christ. Both notions are valid; the choice between them depends on whether the desired social reform is gradual or radical.[98]

Vatican II Council significantly modified the stance of the Roman Catholic church and theology towards society. However, the Council emphasized the soft notion of liberation.[99] Baum observes that the council never mentioned social sin. The focus was on self-development, an "aspirations of the western middle class that did not shed light on the emancipatory struggles of people."[100] It belonged to the Synod of Bishops on Justice in the World in 1971 to advance a hard notion of liberation based on faith formed

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[96]Henry Carbin, *Alone with the Alone*, trans. Ralph Manheim Princeton: Princeton University press, 1997).

[97] Gregory Baum, *Theology and Society* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 4.

[98] Baum, *Theology and Society*, 9.

[99] Inspired by the progress made in the West during the post-World War II period, the Council Fathers could not conceal their optimism and hoped for the future of the world. Gaudium et Spes reflected this optimism. The Council Fathers affirmed modernity and hoped that its benefit would reach all peoples, provided individual ethics is replaced by one that encourages participation and social engagement, and if men obeyed their consciences. The Fathers' optimism is further evident in the fact that the first draft did not include a treatment on sin and the devil. Paragraph number 13 was only added later at the demand of some Bishops. See Baum, *Theology and Society*, 2.

[100] Baum, *Theology and Society*, 14.

in justice, *fides Justicia formata*.[101] Two crucial documents emerged from this effort: *Justice in the World* and *Octogesima Adveniens.* They have profoundly shaped the social teaching of the national hierarchies in many parts of the world.[102]

The Church is an instrument and agent of reconciliation of all things in Christ[103], renewal of heaven and earth[104], and the realization of God's reign of peace and justice.[105] At the core of its mission is an awareness of the dignity of the human person created by God and redeemed in Christ; his social nature including the need for family and a community in search of the common good; his need for productive work including a decent wage; his need to be in solidarity with others, especially the poor; and finally, a desire to reverence and honor God's creation.[106] This appreciation for human dignity calls for an increase in food productivity, fairness in dealings, exchanges, and distribution of social benefits, the reward for labor including stable tenure systems, and stewardship that seeks to uphold environmental sustainability.[107]

The role and place of the Church in the society have been widely viewed within the context of the civil society: that "sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifest in norms of community cooperation such as trust, reciprocity and tolerance, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public

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[101] Baum, *Theology and Society*, 14.
[102] Baum, *Theology and Society*, 9.
[103] cf. Col 1:20.
[104] cf. Isaiah 65:17.
[105] cf. 2 Pt 3:12; Rev. 21:1.
[106] USCCB, *For I was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflection On Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2003), 3. http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/agriculture-nutrition-rural-issues/for-i-was-hungry.cfm
[107] USCCB, *For I Was Hungry*, 2-6.

communication."[108] The dominant organizational structure in civil society is the voluntary association, constituted by citizens for the reason of identity or interest to pursue a common objective. Civil society, therefore, includes NGOs, private voluntary organizations, professional associations, churches, and other religious bodies. To facilitate political activity and civil discourse, citizens engage oral and public communications media, both print and electronic.[109]

Whether during the colonial period or after independence, African societies have had intermediary organizations that occupy the political space between household and state. However, their vitality was severely limited by post-independent leaders. These leaders viewed "de-participation" as the ideal means to preserve national sovereignty, integration, and security. As a result, organizations were either absorbed into the one-party system or were simply banned. In Kenya, for example, Moi embarked on repression, surveillance, abduction, state violence, and unlawful detention of perceived enemies. This state of affairs was not unique to Kenya. [110]

When most civil society organizations went under because of Moi's suppression, the Church was about the only remaining channel for the expression of discontent and the desire for change in the country. Beyond its location within the civil society movement, the Church locates her mandate to speak to power in the very nature of its calling. [111]

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[108] Michael Bratton, "Civil Society and Political Transition," In Africa, *IDR Reports* Volume 11, no.6 (1994), 2.

[109] Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions In Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 17-18.

[110] Michael Bratton, "Civil Society And Political Transition In Africa," 2.

[111] Sabar-Friedman Galia, "Church and State in Kenya, 1986-1992: The Churches' Involvement in the Game of Change," *African Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 382 (Jan. 1997): 28.

Church in Kenya: From a Prophetic Church to Discordant Voices

In her study of the role of the Church in the civil society movement in Kenya, Parsitau identifies three historical phases (i) From a quiescent to a prophetic Church (1970-2000), (ii) From a prophetic to a silent Church (from 2000) and (iii) From muted to discordant voices (from 2005).[112] During the colonial period, Protestant denominations and missionary societies remained quiescent in matters political. For this, the nationalists accused them of being anti-nationalistic, mainly due to their opposition to the oathing—a practice in which the entire community was forced to take a vow to resist the colonialist and the forfeiture of which invited a death punishment—which they regarded as unchristian.[113] Following independence, however, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) "shifted focus towards reconstruction efforts while its members became increasingly engaged, both theologically and socially."[114]

Parsitau observes that the relationship between mainline churches and successive governments has been both ambivalent and complicated, with each of now four presidents relating differently with the churches. Jomo Kenyatta largely maintained an amiable affiliation with Kenya's religious groups during his time in office (1963-1978), perhaps because, as Parsitau notes, most of the leaders of churches then were mainly drawn for the Kikuyu community. When Moi ascended to power in 1978, things changed.

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[112] Damaris Seleina Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to lack of Voice (Academic Paper, University of Nairobi, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, 2008), 1.

[113] Mue Njonjo, "Reflecting on Church-State Relationship in Kenya," in *Jesus And Ubuntu: Exploring The Social Impact of Christianity In Africa,* ed. M.N. Ndarangwi (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 123-145.

[114] Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice, 7.

The attempted coup of 1982 turned him into a dictator. As a result, support from leaders of the mainstream churches began to fade.[115]

The Church's challenge to power unfolded in three discourses. The first was on the definition of politics and the legitimate exercise of power.[116] While the Church advocated for democracy, politicians interpreted power to be an exclusive right of politicians and the Church's claim to universal and limitless influence as an affront of political sovereignty. Discourse also centered on corruption. Outspoken clerics decried a public service and political leadership for self-enrichment. Moreover, discourse dealt with humanitarian causes and conflict. Leaders of churches condemned brutal evictions in shantytowns in significant cities and were critical of the government's handling of local ethnic conflicts during the tribal clashes of 1991-1992 and 1997.[117]

With the ascendance of Kibaki to power, churches fell on a "worrisome trend" concerning their prophetic role. [118]Mainline churches, particularly the Catholic Church, openly supported him throughout much of his reign.[119] None of the churches called him out for reneging on the pre-election agreement with his political partner, over the Anglo-

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[115] Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice, 8.

[116] Sabar-Friedman Galia, Church and State in Kenya, 1986-1992, 36.

[117] Even as individual clerics from mainline churches and Catholic Bishops exerted pressure on Moi, their Evangelical and Pentecostal counterparts appeared more friendly and accommodating. Moi used some of them to attack his opponents. They portrayed Mr. Moi as a God-fearing leader, a great ambassador of peace, love, and unity, and a guarantor of freedom of worship. They turned a blind eye to the increasing cases of corruption, nepotism, torture, and complete disregard for human rights. Several reasons explain this compromise: (i) lack of a social activism program for constructive criticism, (ii) a conservative theology focused on personal brokenness and salvation that did not depend on political activism, (iii) a political praxis limited to praying for the coming of the kingdom and leaders, and (v) promises of financial help and publicity. See S. Ndegwa, *National Dialogue In Kenya: Religious Organizations and Constitutional Reforms* 1990-2000: A Report Prepared For Management Systems International (Washington DC, 2000), 45.

[118] Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice, 10.

[119] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in* Kenya, 40.

Leasing scandal, and increased allegations of tribalism. This worrisome trend was due to the rise of a new crop of leaders who were less controversial and reluctant to criticize a government they had helped craft. Some of them joined the government. Leaders of churches were no longer immune to tribalism.[120]

In addition to the worrisome silence among the mainstream churches, the rise of Pentecostals and charismatic movements occasioned the introduction of discordant voices in public life."[121] Pentecostal and evangelical clergy helped defeat the draft constitution of 2005 because it advocated for abortion, provided for *Kadhi* courts, allowed same-sex unions, and seemed to encourage unethical behavior such as pornography. Soon after, some of these clerics joined the opposition, and a good number of them vied for 2007. Henceforth, Pentecostals viewed elective politics as Christian projects in which they can rightly participate. As a result of this development, the Pentecostals were no longer living on the margins of politics, but they were also not speaking with one voice.[122]

Today, the silence of mainstream churches and the discordant voices of Pentecostals compromise the Church's role in the fight for a just and corruption-free society. In the post-election of 2007/2008, the Church absconded that role and became overly partisan. Church leaders failed to show any form of prophetic leadership. They engaged in partisan politics and in tribalism. Churches were genuinely prophetic in their opposition to the violence that rocked the country in the 1992 and 1997 violence. That same prophetic outlook was invisible in the 2007/08 violence. This compromise made churches into a problem rather than a solution to the moral decadence in the society.[123]

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[120] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in* Kenya, 40.
[121] Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice, 11.
[122] Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice, 11.
[123] Parsitau, From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice, 13.

On land corruption, Southall observes that mainstream churches have participated in the process of unequal distribution of land since independence and are as such the biggest landowners in the country.[124] Like other centers of power that grabbed and looted without shame, religious institutions targeted public utility plots and school playgrounds. Some of them received land allocations for mobilizing support for KANU.[125] When a draft constitution with a substantive agenda on land was put up for voting in 2005, mainstream churches' leaders urged their followers to vote with their conscience. On their part, Pentecostals refused to support it, preferring instead to focus on issues of *Kadhi* courts, abortion, and pornography.[126]

One may ask, therefore, how churches in Kenya can challenge the government on land graft when they have been coopted into corruption or are beneficiaries of the same. More importantly, the question should be, how can corruption remain an issue in a country where between 70 to 80 percent of the entire population is Christian. No doubt, Christianity has become part of Kenya's cultural and social landscape, and as such, it influences people's moral choices. This study argues that lack of inclusion in the national debate on land ownership of religio-political values of Kenyan communities is the reason for the economic gaps and corruption in Kenya.[127]

The Church has played and continues to play a role in the exclusion of the religio-political world views and values of local communities. In the endeavor to promote Christianity, missionaries marginalized traditional religions and cultures, which they

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[124] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 142.
[125] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 143.
[126] Southall, "The Ndungu Report: Land and Graft in Kenya," 145.
[127] Mathew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy: A Tool for Understanding the Current Religio-Political Debates in Kenya," *Anthropos*, volume 108, no. 2. (2013), 620.

considered anti-Christian.[128] In the absence of an integrated faith, religion becomes nothing more than a religious mask. The mask is cast-off whenever it is convenient, and people begin to show who they indeed are, as happened during the 2007/2008 violence. People became deeply tribal. Karangi challenges Churches to commit to a study of indigenous sacred ways. He raises some pertinent questions:

> How far do the current debates on land and ownership, social exclusion, and resettlement of the victims of land grabbing include all ethnic groups in Kenya? What is the role of the traditional religions and mainstream religions in initiating practical debates on land distribution and ownership in the country? Has the new constitution considered the traditional notion of land tenure while trying to address the question of land reform?[129]

The African synod of 1995 reaffirmed that "the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church…."[130] Evangelization aims at leading to a transforming encounter with the living person of Christ. Inculturation is "a requirement for evangelization," a "path towards full evangelization," and "one of the greatest challenges for the Church on the Continent."[131] Inculturation is the process by which "catechesis "takes flesh" in the various cultures."[132] This process has two dimensions: on the one hand, it calls for "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through

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[128] Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 23ff.

[129] Mathew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 620.

[130] John Paul, *Ecclesia in Africa: Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000* (Nairobi, Paulines, 19910), 82.

[131] John Paull II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 91.

[132] John Paull II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 86.

their integration in Christianity" and, on the other, "the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."[133] Just as "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (*Jn* 1:14), so too through inculturation, the Word of Jesus Christ proclaimed to the nations, *must take root* in the life-situation of the hearers of the Word. The Fathers acknowledged the fact that inculturation is a delicate and challenging task. They urged fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of cultures.[134]

Scope of Study

This study focuses on the perception of land corruption among Christians in Kenya. Its goal is to focus such communities on their role within the civil society. "Being a practical-theological study, however, the focus will ultimately be on the theological dimension of the tension field created when Christian communities must shape their constructive contribution in an ever-changing public forum."[135] Sacramental pneuma-ontology is preferred as the framework that affirms land as a source of life and upholds community participation. The world—creation, nature, society, culture, arts, our inner being, relationships, and labor—, is sacramental. It is the medium of God's self-disclosure and human response. Sacramental ontology appreciates the Christ-shaped,

[133] John Paull II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 87.
[134]John Paull II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 87.
[135] F.W. De Wet, "Dealing with Corruption in South African Civil Society: Orientating Christian communities for their Role in a Post-Apartheid Context," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(1), Art. #1388, 2015. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ ve.v36i1.1388. See also Chris A.M. Hermans, "A Pragmatic Practical Theology as Public Theology," in *Pathways to the Public Square: Practical Theology in an Age of Pluralism*, ed. E. Graham and A. Rowlands (Manchester: Lit Verlag, 2005), 219.

mysterious depth of created reality. According to Boersma, "it is this underlying ontological basis that makes it possible for a covenant relationship to flourish."[136]

From a sacramental-ontological perspective, the world has received an initial Word at creation, making it a visible Word, the same way "the Word comes to the element during the liturgical celebration, bringing to reality a sacrament, a sort of visible Word. Both the world and the sacraments have two aspects: the physical object(s) - the sign (signum) - and the invisible reality (res), or the signified. Sacramental pneuma-ontology seeks to reconcile and reintegrate the sign (signum) and the thing (res) as it searches for the divine purpose of creation in Christ. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the *Pneuma*, Jesus was the sacrament of God to the world—a perfect integration of the *signum* and the *res*. The same *Pneuma* continues his mission of integrating the *signum* and the *res.*[137]

A sacramental pneuma-ontological approach is relevant to this study in several ways that determine how this study proceeds. Chapter Two will present the Gĩkũyũ world view, focused on land, as an example of an integral/sacramental ontology. The land depicts a higher degree of integration of *signum* and *res*. It is a place of communion between God, ancestors, living dead, and the living. A Gĩkũyũ integral ontology of communion calls for ethical responsibility, proper use of power, dependence in human relationships, and a fair and equitable sharing of resources. The Gĩkũyũ proverb, *muria wiki akuaga wiki*, he who eats alone dies alone, is a severe indictment against those given to selfishness and self-aggrandizement. By being selfish, the corrupt invite for himself the

[136] Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011), 25.

[137] Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation,* 24.

loneliness of dying alone, the worst form of isolation. Biblical tradition shares the same ontology in which land is both the *signum* and the *res*, “inauguration," and “consummation” of God's providence. This holistic view rejects any form of dualism, especially between sacred and profane.

The loss of sacramentality in relation to land is due to essentialist and dualistic epistemologies. These do not only affect the way we view the world but also how social relationships are interpreted. A refusal to engage a people's world view results from a flawed understanding of who they are. Chapter Three forms the methodological component of this study. It investigates the perception of corruption among Small Christian communities (henceforth referred to as SCCs). It discusses the philosophical presuppositions that led to the creation and colonization of the “Other,” leading to marginalization of communities and communal epistemologies. It employs critical realism in designing research aimed at collecting and interpreting data from conversations with members of SCCs. Within a sacramental-pneuma-ontology, critical realism affirms being, is aware of the fact that human knowledge is historically, socially, and culturally conditioned, and is focused not so much on the objectivity of knowledge, but rather on its practical adequacy.

Chapter Four will give voice to selected participants of SCCs from St. Francis Catholic parish. The history of SCCs at St. Francis dates back to the rise of SCCs in East Africa in the 1970s. The selected voices of participants are based on their responses to interview questions in the interview protocol. (i) What is the importance of being a member of an SCC? (ii) What is the cultural perception of corruption? (iii) How does culture contribute to the reenactment of practices of corruption and those opposed to it?

(iv) How do cultural practices of anticorruption correlate with Christian practices? (v) What transformative practices would you propose to ensure a corruption-free society in Kenya?

Chapter Five will develop some of the themes that emerge implicitly or explicitly from the interviews by locating them within a lived eschatology framework. Eschatology is the horizon between the "already" and the "not yet" of the kingdom of God. As such, it is the horizon of sacramental expression, disclosing in the "already," while at the same time concealing in the expectation of the "not yet." Christians locate themselves within this horizon through joy and hope. SCCs as the new way of being Church in Africa, embrace this horizon in the most concrete form. From it grows a particular ethical disposition and commitment that seeks to transfigure the world into a place characterized by a flourishing of life for all. This chapter will discuss three ethical dimensions of Christian ethics and how SCCs embrace each of them. (i) The formative dimension, which is the way the Christian story is appropriated. (ii) The interpretive dimension, which is the way the Christian story is interpreted and communicated. (iii) The missional dimension, or the way this story informs engagement with the world. Chapter Six will offer a summary of the chapters and a cursory glance into the future of SCCs.

CHAPTER TWO. LAND WITHIN GĨKŨYŨ ONTOLOGY, BIBLICAL PARALLELS, AND ECLIPSE OF SACRAMENTAL ONTOLOGY

Failure in land reform in Kenya is mainly due to the absence of an integral perspective. The first part of this chapter will present the Gĩkũyũ religio-political view of land as captured in the myth of *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga*. The land supports and advances the kinship between the visible and the invisible worlds. The second part cites parallels of this perspective in Biblical narrative, where the centrality of land in the mythical Garden of Eden both "inaugurates" and "consummates" the reign of God. Both myths present land as a place of encounter, where people form their identity, and where ritual practices flourish. Within such sacredness, corruption becomes a form of contamination of that which is sacred and whole. The third part demonstrates how essentialist and dualistic epistemologies shape the literature on land reform. These dualisms diminish sacramentality, thus reducing the land to a commercial commodity. A sacramental-pneuma-ontological framework is proposed as a corrective.

Land Within Gĩkũyũ Cosmology

Gĩkũyũ People and Their Religion

The mainstream view locates the cradle of man in East Africa. A recent study suggests the coastal border of Namibia and Angola— the original homeland of the San-Khoi people—nearly 200,000 years ago as the original home of mankind.[138] The ancestors of human beings may have found their way south-westwards to South West Africa from Eastern Africa, for indeed, the story of human beings is one of perpetual

[138] Paul Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Nairobi: Sycamore Tree Publishers, 2017), 1.

movement.[139] By 70 to 50 thousand years ago, they headed north to a belt stretching all the 4000 Kilometers from the Atlantic seaboard of the African continent to the Nile River valley in the East.[140] From here, some left for the Middle East through the Suez Canal peninsula from where they then migrated East to Asia and West to Europe.[141] The remnants on this belt became the ancestors of three significant language populations of Africa (Niger-Kordofanian speakers, the Nilo-Sahara speakers, and the Afro-Asiatic.[142]

The Niger-Kordofanian language speakers populated the part of Western Africa beyond the Gulf of Guinea. Their language would become the proto-Bantu language.[143] Their migration took place over a long time (5000-3000BC)[144] One wing headed south, reaching KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, while another entered the great lakes region of Eastern Africa by 1000 BC.[145] By 500BC, the Urewe people made a home on the shores of Lake Victoria.[146] Two groups emerged from this big group and made their way into Kenya. One group took the northern route and comprised of Abaluhyia and the Abagusii. Another group followed a southern path and included the Mijikenda, Swahili, Pokomo, Zaramo, *Taita*, and *Thagicu* group (Gĩkũyũ, *Embu-Mbeere*, *Ameru*, *Akamba*, *Chuka*, and the *Tharaka.*[147]

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[139] Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ,* 1.

[140] Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ*, 3.

[141] Ngig e Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ*, 3.

[142] Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ*, 6.

[143] Sara Tishkoff. "The Genetic Structure and History of Africans and African Americans," *Science Magazine,* Vol 324, No. 5930 (May 22, 2009), 1038. See also Catherine Cymone, Rhonda Fourshley, M. Gonzalez, and Christine Saidi, *Bantu Africa: 3500 to Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7.

[144] Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ*, 12.

[145] Catherine Cymone, Rhonda Fourshley, M. Gonzalez, and Christine Saidi, *Bantu Africa, 3500 to Present,* 11.

[146] Robert Maxon, *East Africa: An Introductory History* (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1986), 67-96.

[147] Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ,* 18.

Thagicu people settled in *Nyambene* hills, to the northeast of Mount Kenya, present-day Igembe, Meru county. Migration southwards was underway by 1450 AD, and different groups hived off from the leading group.[148] The remnants of the original migrants from Nyambene hills moved westwards to a place called *Gakuyu*, a hilly wooded area to the west of present-day Sagana town. *Gakuyu* is the original home of the ancestors of the Gĩkũyũ. It was here that they developed their traditions and culture. As they increased in number, they expanded their territory in all directions to become the people that live between the mountains of the sacred Mount Kenya to the North, the Nyandarua range to the East, Ngong Hills to the South, and Kilimambogo to the West.[149]

Like many other human communities with sustained shared experiences over the centuries, Gĩkũyũ developed their cultural identity, character, and the collective consciousness of their oneness as a community. Their identity is related to land.[150] The Myth[151] of *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga*—the legendary name for *Gakuyu*, the original homeland of the Gĩkũyũ—captures the collective consciousness of the Gĩkũyũ. A shrine

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[148] The Tharaka settled on the lower plains of the *Thagan* river while Chuka settled on the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya. The Aembu settled across river *Thuci* and the Mbeere on Kiambere hills. The *Gicugu* occupied the ridge between *Nyamindi* and *Rubigaci* rivers *while the Ndia* people who settled on the area between *Ragati* and *Thiba* rivers. See Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ,* 18-35.

[149] Ngige Njoroge, *A People Called the AGĩkũyũ,* 34.

[150] Some of the terminologies used to denote landholder's position include *Mwene ng'ondu* (individual owner of the land), *muramati* (a trustee), *Muhoi* (one who has borrowed cultivation rights), and *muciarwa* (an adoptee). Also, *githaka kia ngwataniro* was land owned by two individual families, while *bururi* is the entire Gĩkũyũ land). See Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1938), 22.

[151] Myths are story symbols that bind people together and claim to reveal imaginatively or symbolically a fundamental truth about the world and human life. The truth is so compelling for those who accept it that no rational or conceptual form can capture it. Clifford Geertz observes that "myths are like beams of a house, not exposed to outside view, they are the structure which holds the houses together so that people can live in it. Myths are not concerned so much with the succession of events as with the moral significance of the happenings." See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 78.

bearing the name of *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* stands on what people imagine to be the center of *Gakuyu.* It attracts curious Gĩkũyũ who want to know their history as well as visitors who wish to find out more about the community. Gĩkũyũ political elite uses it as a platform to rally the people around a common cause. Gĩkũyũ traditional religious men also visit the place from time to time for prayers and sacrifices.[152]

Traditional geographical studies considered landscape as physical and objective, to be empirically accessed and analyzed through a "limpid observation and recording of material features in the field."[153] A similar attitude was applied to literary texts— the text was an immutable, coherent system of signification produced by a prior authored utterance. Semiosis was about reproducing the author's mind. However, the cultural turn in the 1980s overturned this view. The text was no longer immutable and coherent, but fluid and polyvalent. Semiosis now locates interpretation as an intermediate way between the author's intentions and the total arbitrariness of the readers' interpretations. The revised text metaphor applied to everything: landscapes, social practices, and cultural processes. The landscape became a system that engenders and communicates meanings through representations.[154]

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[152] For a description of the architectural design of the shrine, see Michael Wainaina, "Land as Story and the Place of The Story: A Contemporary Kenyan Illustration of Landscape as Text," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 2 No. 23 (December 2012), 92.

[153] John Wylie, *Landscape* (London: Routledge. 2007), 17.

[154] "Textual borders shift, instead of being everlasting, textual meanings refashion. As a consequence of this, actors interpret different texts according to their system of values and cultural identity. When actors have similar interpretations, they gather around textual communities. Each textual community differently evaluates different texts. Each textual community has its knowledge about events and identities represented in texts (cognitive dimension) and its way to evaluate texts (axiological dimension). Furthermore, each interpretative community has its specific emotional responses to texts." See Federico Bellentani, "Landscape as Text," Concepts for Semiotics (Cardiff University, School of Planning and Geography, Wales, 2016).

It is this renewed appreciation of the text metaphor and the semiotic analysis it inspires that Wainaina employs to study the relationship between *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* and the cultural identity of the Gĩkũyũ. He notes that as textual systems, landscapes "restructure the problematics of ideology, of the unconscious and desire, of representation, of history, and cultural production, around the all-informing process of narrative."[155] *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* is both a medium, but also a subject of narratives. It relates the story of the land but is also the place of the stories. These tensioned narratives emerge from the need to preserve the old, but also to inscribe a new contemporary context of a globalizing Kenya.[156] Wainaina laments that the "…complex relationship between landscape and our cultural identities…have tended to be sidelined by critical perspectives of our oral literary forms and our modern African literature."[157]

The overall narrative inscribed in the myth of *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* constitutes the Gĩkũyũ religion. Wanjohi makes two observations regarding the study of Gĩkũyũ religion. First, since the majority of the Gĩkũyũ have converted to other faiths, "traditional" refers more to the traditional and not so much to the contemporary period. Besides, an interpretive approach, as opposed to a positivist one that conceives religion in terms of a system of beliefs assented to through religious knowledge, is to be preferred. In an interpretive approach, religion permeates the various aspects of a people's life: ritual, social, political, and economic experience, and participation. For the traditional Gĩkũyũ, 'religion' served to explain, predict, and control everyday events. The goal of

[155] Michael Wainaina, "Land as Story and the Place of The Story," 92.
[156] Wainaina, "Land as Story and the Place of The Story," 96.
[157] Wainaina, "Land as Story and the Place of The Story," 98.

religious experience is harmony within the communion of the people, *Ngai*, nature, and the ancestors.[158]

Gĩkũyũ conception of God as the fullness of life, creator, and sustainer can be gleaned mainly from three names given to Him.[159] *Murungu* means "dweller of the underworld."[160] When taken together with another name for God, *Maagũ* or *Maagũ ngũrũ*, which means the most ancient, God is the proto-ancestor, the ultimate source of the fire of life.[161] God is also *Mwene Nyaga*, the possessor of brilliance. The peak of Mt. Kenya has a brilliant patch of white snow, *nyaga*, which is why it was called *Kirinyaga.* According to the Gĩkũyũ myth of origin, the top of this mountain was God's favorite dwelling place. He is *Mwene Nyaga* or possessor of brilliance. *Ngai* is perhaps the most common name for God among the Gĩkũyũ and means the one who shares.[162]

Gĩkũyũ traditional religion is monotheistic. Bujo observes: "The novelty of Christianity for Africans did not consist in its proclamation of one God, but rather in the more complete and definitive proclamation of that one God…."[163] Nevertheless, is Gathigira suggesting otherwise in the following quote?

> When it is thundering, people say that gods disagree, one god wanting it to rain and the other being of the contrary opinion. According to the Gĩkũyũ, there are

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[158] Matthew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 622.

[159] Mathew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 622.

[160] In some Bantu communities, *Mulungu* means the spirit of an ancestor believed to dwell underground. See Bujo Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context,* transl. John O'Donohue (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1992), 24.

[161] Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 333.

[162] Matthew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 621. See also Robert MacPherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1970), 10; Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press. 1974), 98.

[163] Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*, 18.

> two gods, one good and the other evil. The good god belongs to the Gĩkũyũ, and it is he who performs good deeds, and the bad one belongs to the Maasai, and it is he who bothers people when Gĩkũyũ god is not watching. Very often, there is a warfare between these two gods, and at the new moon, one can quickly tell which one conquers the other. If the Gĩkũyũ side of the moon [the right side] is tilting, then he is losing to the Maasai god; and if the Maasai side of the moon [the left side] is bent, this is a sign that the Maasai god has lost.[164]

While Wanjohi acknowledges the possibility of such speech, he, however, does not think it is reflective of the core belief of the Gĩkũyũ people. The conclusion that Gĩkũyũ people do not worship more than one God, even on the practical level, harmonizes better with the rest of these people's religious beliefs and practices. Gĩkũyũ differentiates between *guthaithaya* and *guitangera Ngoma njohi*, the honor to God, and the honor given to the ancestors, respectively.[165]

God is both transcendent and immanent. To uphold his transcendence, Gĩkũyũ would never make a "graven image" of *Ngai*. *Ngai* "descends" from above whenever he comes down for the sacrifice. He does not sleep (*Ngai, ndakomaga*). He is the possessor of the transcendent qualities of beauty (*Mwene Nyaga)* and goodness and is the *mũgai*, the one who shares. However, Ngai is also immanent and can be described both anthropomorphically and in spatial terms. People can speak to him, and he can talk to them. He is affected by the supplications of his people. He hates and loves people according to their behavior, bringing both *kĩrathimo and kirumi* (blessing and curse).

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[164] Stanly K. Gathigira, *Miikarire ya AGĩkũyũ* [Customs of the Gĩkũyũ] (Nairobi Equatorial Publishers Ltd., 1970), 33.

[165] G.J. Wanjohi, "An African Conception of God: The Case of the Gĩkũyũ," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 9, Fasc. 2 (1978), 138.

Because of his immanence, "the existence of Ngai was never debated; people experienced it."[166] S. K. Gathigira notes:

> The Gĩkũyũ not only conceive of Ngai as an animal but as the biggest of the animals. They also imagine Him to be a human being with animal characteristics; also, that He is uncharacterizable, that is to say, He cannot be described as an actual human being nor as a real animal. Nobody has ever seen this Ngai, and that is why when a Gĩkũyũ person sees something big and amazing, he exclaims, "Truly, this object is like Ngai![167]

Ngai manifested himself variously. He lived in the four mountains of *Kirima gia Kirinyaga* (Mount Kenya), *Kĩrĩma Kia-njahi* in the east (Donyo-Sabuk), *Kĩrĩma kĩa-Nyandarũa* (the Aberdares), and *Kiambirũirũ (Ngong Hills).* Occasionally, he visits either to inspect creation or to pick his gifts offered to him under the sacred Mũgumo tree.[168] Bujo describes this manifestation in terms of constant exchange of life between the visible and the invisible worlds. Within Bantu ontology, the gift of life emanates from a higher level in the ordering of being. Ngai, the originator of life, is at the peak of the hierarchy, followed by the founding fathers, tribal heroes, and deceased elders. In the visible world, first comes the chief, senior member of families, heads of households, and family members. They all link with the ancestors from where the vital force flows from God.[169]

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[166]Matthew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 615.
[167] Stanley K. Gathigira, *Miikarire ya AGĩkũyũ* [Customs of the Gĩkũyũ], 29.
[168] Matthew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 617.
[169] Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context,* 20.

Religious Significance of Land among the Gĩkũyũ

Karangi that the above-described disclosure and exchange between the visible and the invisible worlds took place on the land. The fact that the land stands in the middle of four divine mountains accorded it an integrative function of all that is in it, including God himself, even though He transcends above everything. It also gives land and all in it a sacramental outlook. Bujo observes that Africans conceive life and, indeed, the entire creation in a sacramental manner.[170] Within a sacramental ontology, the land participates in God. It reveals Him and is purposed for Him. Within the confines of these mountains, everything was sacred. Outside of these confines was nothingness. Karangi observes that land for the Gĩkũyũ was the podium on which 'religious' interaction, participation, and experience takes place. It is for this reason that land for the Gĩkũyũ had a powerful religious significance. [171]

Land as Mother. Kenyatta observes that land is "the key to people's lives. It secures for them that peaceful tillage of the soil which supplies their material needs and enables them to perform their magic and traditional ceremonies in undisturbed serenity, facing Mount Kenya…."[172] Gĩkũyũ people conceived ancestral land in terms of a female figure, a mother. Kenyatta writes:

> In the first place, Gĩkũyũ considers the land as the mother of the community. A mother bears her burden for about eight or nine moons while the child is in her womb, and then for a short period of suckling. However, it is the soil that feeds the child through a lifetime. Crucially, it is the soil that, after death, nurses the

[170] Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context,* 20.
[171] Matthew Karangi M., "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 617.
[172] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 21.

> spirits of the dead for eternity. Thus, the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it. It supplies them with the material needs of life, thereby satisfying their spiritual and mental needs.[173]

By employing the potent images of 'mother' and 'womb' in explicating on the Gĩkũyũ land tenure, Kenyatta is proposing an ontological and mystical connection between people and their land, the same way there is an ontological connection between an actual mother and her offspring. The land has the same potency to engender life, just like a mother's womb. It produces everything that sustains and nourishes both human beings and the rest of creation.[174]

If the land is for the Gĩkũyũ is a mother that sustains both its material and spiritual wellbeing, dispossessing someone of a piece of land that rightly belongs to him or her is tantamount to depriving a newborn baby of her mother's milk thereby denying it an essential means for survival. Moreover, while dependence on one's mother may have a span, that of the land is eternal. The soil continues to feed the *ngoma* (ancestors) long after death. Members of the clan using farm products to pour libation to placate the ancestors in order to ensure harmony among families and to tighten their bond. "In this way, the land constitutes the bones and sinews of Gĩkũyũ religious, social, economic, and political structure."[175]

Land as Canvas for Ethical Formation. Bujo observes that "a mystical and ontological character of a people and their land "serves as a basis for a better understanding of the status of customary rules."[176] Land bonded the members and defined

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[173] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 21.
[174] Karangi, "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 617.
[175] Karangi, "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 617.
[176] Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context,* 26.

the character of their collective life. Customary laws and taboos resulted from the experiences of the ancestors who lived exemplary lives on the land. Remaining faithful to the inheritance bequeathed by them, namely, land and the proper conduct that preserves it, guarantees a life in communion with God, with the ancestors themselves, and with one's living kin. Every member shares the responsibility of strengthening the force of life in all its manifestation. One's conduct either enhances the vital force or diminishes it.[177]

Incorporation into the vital current was a lifelong educational and ritual formation. Gĩkũyũ curriculum focused on the learner's interaction with the land, relationships: with parents, elders, and *riika* (age group) and the need to imitate the behavior of one's age group.[178] The spirit of working together and the norm of reciprocity was highly valued. Young men and women received training on how to work on the land. A man had to know how to produce fire, how to layout a homestead, *Mũciĩ*. He had to learn the names and uses of plants, the art of animal husbandry, and how to kill animals. He also had to learn the art and science of Gĩkũyũ, become competent with rhetoric, the art of striking a bargain, as well as undergo military and leadership training.[179]

Like most African communities, Gĩkũyũ ethical outlook was anthropocentric. Bujo argues that this does not mean that there is no place for God in the African ethical outlook. Gĩkũyũ ethical outlook was on life, which is itself a gift from God and on the mutual obligations of persons. Man causes evil by refusing to live harmoniously with his

[177] Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*, 27.
[178] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 14 -21.
[179] For an understanding of the various stages, a Gĩkũyũ young man had to go through after circumcision into adulthood, see https://kikuyunationalism.wordpress.com/2008/12/18/njama-ya-anake-a-mumo-ita/.

fellow human beings or causes good by seeking peace and justice. When evil happens, it does not affect God since he is pure actuality. If he responds by chastising, it is for the sake of healing human relationships. The converse is also true. If man merits a blessing for promoting life, it will not reduce God in any way. When he extends the favor of a blessing, it is solely for the sake of human relationships.[180]

The Gĩkũyũ cosmology had implications on the use of power.[181] Gĩkũyũ had a family-oriented government that was inclusive of all sections of the population. Members of one family formed a family council *(ndundu ya mucii)*, and the father served as president of this council. Next, was the *ituur*a (village), headed by *Kiama gia ituura* (several heads of the family). The most senior member of this group was the presumed leader. The next level of government was *Kiama kia rugongo* (district council), where all the senior elders of the villages participated. The most senior elders in this group formed a consultative council, kiama *kia ndundu*. The senior-most member of the consultative

[180] Bujo also adds that when reference is not made to God directly, the honor directed to the ancestors is ultimately for God. See Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context,* 23.

[181] According to one legend, Gĩkũyũ were once under a tyrant king named Gĩkũyũ, the grandson of Gĩkũyũ, the proto- Gĩkũyũ. He was a brutal dictator who forced men to join the military and to keep from cultivating the land. He enforced a nomadic lifestyle, so that people never built permanent homes. Without agriculture, people suffered whenever drought struck, and their animals died. A group of *iregis* (revolters) toppled him. The generation that followed the *iregis* was known as *ndemi* (cutters). They were first to clear the forest and start farming. This revolution came to be known as *ituika*, which means to break away from autocracy. The community embraced democracy. Henceforth, the community was to subsist into two generations: Mwangi and Maina or Irungu. If one generation was Mwangi, sons were called Mwangi, and their grandsons were to be called Maina. Each generation remained in office for forty years. At the end of leadership, there was an *ituika*, and a new generation entered leadership. The elders in the new dispensation, *njama ya ituika*, met at *mukurwe* wa *Nyagathanga,* which is the center of the Gĩkũyũ world to draft a new constitution. Fundamental among the provisions in the new constitution was the right to acquire and develop land under a family system. An initiation process was necessary for incorporation into the community and assumption of responsibilities over land and family. No male was to be allowed to take up a position of leadership without a homestead. Leadership was to be shared by the rotation of generations. https://kikuyunationalism.wordpress.com/2008/12/18/njama-ya-anake-a-mumo-ita/

group was considered the wisest and was the *muciiri* or *muthamaki* (judge and king, respectively). Several consultative councils, *ndundus*, formed the national council and represented the whole population.[182]

Land as the Abode of the Ancestors. The land is the home of the ancestors. Although Gĩkũyũ concern themselves more with an earthly life of prosperity and blessing, there is an eternal and eschatological dimension to this earthly preoccupation—participation in that other world where the ancestors live.[183] Gĩkũyũ people's ultimate desire is to become an ancestor. The dead rejoice in the knowledge that through the excellent memory of the living, they will find a home among the ancestors. Magesa observes that from the perspective of the *mbarĩ*, a traditional Gĩkũyũ father with many wives and children knew that after his death, he would not be wandering in the wilderness or lose contact with the earth. His family would appease the land to provide him a home.[184]

A person's prospects of ultimate membership of the other world depend on the degree of communion and harmony established with it while still living the earthly life. The living must render due honor to their dead and follow faithfully the customs and taboos bequeathed to them. Harmony with the ancestors guarantees health, prosperity, and the promise of the hereafter. Initiation rites are types of ordination ceremonies in which young people are consecrated, especially with their creative powers into the whole

[182] https://kikuyunationalism.wordpress.com/2008/12/18/njama-ya-anake-a-mumo-ita/
[183] Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*, 24.
[184] Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 70-79.

community of the living and the dead, to the creator God, and to the ancestors from whom flows life and strength.[185]

Kerschaw explains that to the Gĩkũyũ, the land is not only the place where they bury their ancestors; it "is itself the prime ancestor."[186] It is consequently part of the totality of relationships and creates its own."[187] Thus the relationship between people and the land itself is a *mbari* -(lineage) - relationship. Harmony within *mbari* (family), and *riika* (age group) is related to the harmony between the community and the land—the prime ancestor.[188]

Land as Theater of Ritual Performance. A ritual is not a formula from some occult heritage kept alive by antiquarian interest and the weight of tradition. Human beings are ontogenetically constituted by ritual and cosmologically informed by it.[189] Rituals sprout everywhere, but blossom in contexts where they function as dramas of the divine. As organized behavior, rituals emerge from the ordinary business of life, and the group's or community's rituals become, among other things, the symbolic codes for interpreting and negotiating events of everyday existence.[190] According to Grimes, rituals are "gestural embodiments of the inner cognitive or affective states of the performers. Gestures are metaphors of the body. They generate corresponding thought and feeling patterns, as well as reinforce particular values."[191]

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[185] Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context,* 24.

[186] Gretha Kershaw, "The Land is the People: A Study of Kikuyu Social Organisation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1972), 197.

[187] Kershaw, "The Land is the People," 193.

[188] Kershaw, "The Land is the People," 193.

[189] Peter L. McLaren, L. "Rethinking Ritual," *A Review of General Semantics* 41, no. 3 (1984): 271. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42576687

[190] McLaren, L. "Rethinking Ritual," 275.

[191] Ronald Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18.

Bujo observes that "it is above all in the ancestral cults that we see how people envisage life, for it is above all here that they seek an increase of that life-force…."[192] Kenyatta notes: "Communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil…."[193] This contact is also necessary for the offering of sacrifices to Ngai. The council of sacrifice must erect *mathĩnjĩro* (platform) around the sacred *Mũgumo* from where God comes down to receive it. This contact between God and man on the land was the most explicit expression of sacramentality. On the importance of land as a theater of ritual performance, Gĩkũyũ would ask: *Tũtarĩ mũgũnda rĩ MuGĩkũyũ angirutira Ngai magongona atĩa? Tũtarĩ mũgũnda rĩ, ngoma citũ nacio ingĩikara kũ*? (Without land, where would the Gĩkũyũ offer the sacrifice to Ngai? Without land, where would our ancestors rest?) *Gũtarĩ Mũgunda rĩ, andũ na ngoma no makorwo na wĩyathi?* (Without the land, would the people and ancestors live in freedom?)[194] The land was the location on which divine was expressed, and human freedom realized during a ritual.

Ancestor-cult did not organize around fixed times or even fixed places.[195] The community did not need to congregate in order to honor its ancestors. Every good deed which a person performed in the course of daily life honors the ancestors. There is no compartmentalization of life and space for the Gĩkũyũ people. Indeed, whenever the Gĩkũyũ slaughtered animals for any purpose, the first gush of blood that spurted was an offering to the ancestors. This observation demonstrates the importance of the traditional concept of land tenure for the Gĩkũyũ, and the role the traditional religious beliefs played in Gĩkũyũ land tenure. As long as the Gĩkũyũ can show that a piece of *githaka* or land

[192] Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context,* 23.
[193] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 14 -21.
[194] Karangi, "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 623.
[195] Bujo *African Theology in Its Social Context,* 23.

belonged to *mbarĩ* who in return had acquired it from their ancestors, then, the religious implications are apparent.[196]

The sacrosanctity of land is also upheld in the purpose for which sacrifice was offered. People would pour out fat and beer as a libation to both the ancestors and God. Rituals were performed on the land to cement the various strands of religious life. Performance of such rituals had the effect of strengthening the bond resulting from sharing a common mythological sentiment of origin, the investment of the land under the power of *mbarĩ*, and the ritual sacrifices conducted by the religious or sacrificial council (*kĩama kĩa matũranguru*) around the sacred *Mũgumo.* Rituals also served to strengthen a sense of security made possible by a shared sentiment of belonging to a religio-political community of joint armed forces in defense of the land.[197]

Contamination: *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* as a Place of Contestation of Narratives

Landscape as a story and the place of the story merge and guarantees each other's survival. This mutuality ensures "that for so long as the landscape lives…the story will never end."[198] Within a sacramental ontology perspective, this tension is upheld through a constant dialogue between what the landscape says and people's interpretation of it. Contemporary narratives on the landscape of the shrine of *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* mark it out with textual tensions of the instability of meaning and social contradictions. Global forces affect the mutual energization and tension between landscape as a story of the place and a place of the story. When this healthy tension between the old and the new

[196] Karangi, "The Gĩkũyũ Religion and Philosophy," 613.

[197] Matthew Karangi M., The Sacred Mũgumo Tree: Revisiting the Roots of Gĩkũyũ Cosmology and Worship (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2005), 75. https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/28797/1/10672965.pdf

[198] Wainaina, "Land as Story and the Place of The Story," 97.

horizons is not maintained, the old is either essentialized or is contaminated. Contamination is here understood as making the clean unclean. What is made unclean is not so much the old, but that healthy dialogue that leaves everything suspended. Today, the balance tilts more in favor of the forces of globalization. As a result, the sacredness the community has professed for ages disappears.[199]

Contamination of Sacred Space. A sense of mystery shines forth in remembrance of the *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* as a holy shrine, according to Gĩkũyũ mythology. Locals recall an incident during the emergency in which the colonial administration contemptuously placed a home guard camp at the shrine. Home guards, *ngati,* were local loyalists who were collaborating with the colonizers against the Mau Mau. This contamination of the sacred site was reflective of the operations of the colonial project. The invasion of Gĩkũyũ land and indeed of the country began when Kenya became a part of the British East Africa Protectorate in 1895, and soon after was opened for European settlement. The majority of Gĩkũyũ lost their fertile land in the central region, as did other communities from Coastal and Rift valley regions. To invade a people's God-given land was considered sacrilegious. It was also sacrilegious to place home guards on such a holy place.[200]

However, the sense of mystery has been infringed upon not just by external forces, but by internal ones as well. The shrine is an abandoned project in severe decay. It does not reflect the beauty of the story it once told. Few people visit it in order to learn more about the Gĩkũyũ. The county government has made several attempts to develop an

[199] Wainaina, "Land as Story and the Place of The Story," 97.

[200] Christine Loflin, "Ngũgĩ Wa Thion'go's Visions of Africa," *Research in African Literatures* 26, no. 4 (1995):76-93. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3820228

international tourist and cultural center, but all the buildings on the site have stalled. This reflects the collapse of infrastructures in the country. It is the hallmark of incompetence, corruption, and the excesses of those in power. The community has rejected attempts to erect modern structures for tourist attraction, first because they say nobody consulted them and second, for fear that this might attract an inappropriate tourist culture of promiscuity and a resultant desecration.[201]

Contamination of Cultural Values. Although Gĩkũyũ have evolved tremendously to embrace a hybrid identity that is both global and African, the balance has not favored their ancestral roots. Young people from the community can hardly understand the Gĩkũyũ language and customs. Sometimes they openly defy and make a mockery of traditions. The collapse of values can explain why young Gĩkũyũ men have fallen into all forms of irregular conduct: wanton drunkenness, idleness, and materialism. There is a dire need for re-education in Gĩkũyũ values such as responsibility, diligence, entrepreneurship, and individual prosperity, community service, honesty, and self-pride.

A postcolonial approach to education reduces performance to the achievement of a high score and by an independent individual.[202] There is something to be learned from the traditional approach to education if an effective system of inculcating values is to be reclaimed. The traditional education system was progressive. It facilitated the retention of valuable knowledge and skills.[203] In terms of method, it was praxis-based and hands-on.

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[201] https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001261233/spirits-keep-contractors-away-from-holy-shrine-in-murang-a

[202] Njogu Kimani, ed., *Citizen Participation in Decision Making: Towards Inclusive Development In Kenya* (Nairobi:Tunaweza Communications, 2013), 99-100.

[203] For a detailed treatment of how the education of generations among the Bantus unfolded, see Catherine Cymone, Rhoda Fourshley, M. Gonzales, and Christine Saidi, *Bantu Africa: 3500 to Present*, 89-114.

It focused on student and group-led discovery. The goal of learning was to understand facts, their application, analysis, evaluation, and innovation through critical thinking. Significant attention focused on social development, including teamwork, interpersonal relationships, and self-awareness. The interaction between students and teachers was more between collaborators and co-learners.

Contamination and Economic Disempowerment. Young people from the Gĩkũyũ region suffer from a lack of gainful employment. Gĩkũyũ region depends mainly on cash crop farming (tea, coffee, miraa, among others). The region is also known for dairy farming and subsistence agriculture. The constant shortage of rain, declining global prices, and economic sabotage— especially during Moi's time because of the region's disdain for him—conspired to wreck the economy of this region. As a way out, young people fall into alcoholism, move to the cities, and have become easy prey for terrorist recruitment. Although some of them have benefited from the Youth Fund, Women Fund, and Constituency Fund under President Kibaki, more efforts are needed to restore a sense of hope among young people in the region.[204]

In line with the Gĩkũyũ culture, the youth need the example of good role models in the areas of education, business, religion, politics, and sports. Gĩkũyũ folklore is replete with *useful njamba's* (heroes and heroines) stories. Society should not lampoon and worship men and women who represent the get rich quick mentality. Priority should focus on the conscientization of the youth on opportunities available to them to improve their lot. These opportunities include further education, businesses, farming, among others.[205]

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[204] Njogu Kimani, ed., *Citizen Participation in Decision Making*, 95.
[205] Kimani, ed., *Citizen Participation in Decision Making*, 100.

Contamination and Poor Political Leadership. With political pluralism in the 1990s, politics in Kenya returned to ethnic polarization of the 1960s.[206] No government has managed to reassure the 40 plus ethnic groups that their interests are safe if the president is not from their ethnic community. As a result, people rally behind a candidate from their community, frequently overlooking their lack of credibility. The challenge for the Gĩkũyũ community is to become part of a more inclusive society without buying into propagandas of partisanship that only benefits political players.[207] Young people are the main target of such politicking. There is a need for youth and women to review their attitudes towards political leadership. They should aim for a creative and productive leadership matched with a robust economic agenda. They should become more involved in politics, especially by offering themselves for elections. [208]

Biblical Parallels: Land as Inauguration and Consummation of Kingdom

Methodological Presuppositions

Given the multifaceted nature of the interpretative process of Scriptures, different themes may emerge as organizing ideas, some better than others at explicating the message of Scripture to the extent that they are connected to and incorporate other important themes. According to Lint, a sound interpretive process comprises three horizons of redemptive interpretation: "the textual (immediate context at the grammatical-historical level), epochal (context of the period of revelation), and canonical (context of the entirety of revelation) horizons."[209] The goal of keeping these three

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[206] Kimani, ed., *Citizen Participation in Decision Making,* 105.
[207] Kimani, ed., *Citizen Participation in Decision Making*, 105.
[208] Kimani, ed., *Citizen Participation in Decision Making*, 112.
[209] Richard Lint, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1993), 293–311.

together is to uphold the redemptive-revelatory and redemptive-historical nature of Scripture and to keep the eschatological orientation in sharp focus.[210]

Another essential element to keep in mind in the interpretive process is typology—"correspondence(s) between persons, events and institutions, and later persons, events and institutions."[211] Typology has three components. First, it pays careful attention to correspondences that develop across the canon. These correspondences provide the hermeneutical controls for linking types with their antitype(s). Secondly, typology is prospective and prophetic in the sense that it describes a revelation and divine action that have not happened yet, and have a Christological orientation. That is, God intentionally planned certain persons, events, and institutions in redemptive history in order that they would serve later redemptive – and Christological – realities. Finally, typology stresses escalation as the Old Testament storyline moves forward to its New Testament fulfillment.[212]

Oren chooses "land" as the organizing idea in the Biblical narrative.[213] Weinfield notes that the fate of the land is the focal point of Biblical historiography.[214] The theme of land has, however, not received a great deal of attention. Discourse on land tends to focus on Old Testament theology exclusively. The view that the New Testament does not advance the theme promise of the land has led to a noticeable examination of how the

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[210] Martin Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in* God's *Redemption* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 26.

[211] Benjamin J. Ribbens, "Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue," *JTI* 5.1 (2011): 81.

[212] David Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship Between the Old and the New Testaments 3rd edition* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 187.

[213] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 27.

[214] Moshe Weinfield, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xv.

theme of land arises. Davies notes that the concept of land was "Christified" in the New Testament era.[215] Brueggemann speaks of this in terms of "spiritualizing."[216]

The first book in the Bible begins with the creation of the land. In the same way, the last book of the Bible ends with an even more glorious new creation where the redeemed dwell with the Lord and his Christ.[217] Eden is the *inaugural* kingdom, and the new Jerusalem is the *consummated* kingdom. The concept of the Kingdom consists of three critical components: king/rule, people, and place.[218]

The Convergence of Rule, Place, and People

As King, God is the grammatical subject of the first sentence and the thematic subject throughout the creation account. He creates by merely issuing a word. This idea points to his sovereignty and supremacy, and according to Mathews, makes 'the creation account theocentric. Creation is not a given but a gift that displays the glory of God. Its finitude testifies to its dependence upon God. God's ability to issues commands also asserts his kingship. He commands Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply, cultivate the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over creation (Gen. 1:28). He also commands them not to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). The rest of Scripture affirms that God is Creator and King.[219]

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[215] W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 213, 220.

[216] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 185ff.

[217] C.f. Rev. 11:15; 21:1 – 22:5.

[218] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 26.

[219] Kenneth Mathews, *The New American Commentary vol I A Genesis 1-11-2*6 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 113.

The second component of the kingdom is the people of God. Without undermining the theocentric perspective, God's creative narrative is anthropological.[220] Human beings are related to and yet distinct from the rest of creation. Only they live by God's breath. Made in the image and likeness of God, they enjoy a kingly status that empowers them to rule over the rest of creation and to extend the kingdom to the whole world. This kingly status connects to that of the priesthood.[221] The words *sama* and *abad* used in the second chapter of Genesis for cultivation means to "serve" or to "guard."

Interestingly, these are the same words used for the priestly task. Accordingly, the text suggests a type of priest-king. Later, the description "kingdom of priests" will become a common way of describing the people of Israel. Their mission is to multiply in their descendants and make the entire universe a garden city.[222]

The third component of the kingdom is the place—a garden planted by God. Within this sacred space, Adam and Eve fulfill and multiply, subdue, and enjoy God's blessings. Here, the theme of the kingdom, people, and place intertwine. It is the archetypal place where God inhabits with his kingly and priestly people. It is, therefore, a temple garden. It is a fertile area, a lush oasis with vibrant life overflowing from it. Although the boundaries of the garden initially delimit territory, its rich theological associations and eschatological horizons extend beyond the territory itself. The patriarchal promise of land anticipates something better and more significant with both international and global dimensions. From Adam through Abraham, God's cosmological

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[220] Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 57.

[221] D.A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament. The Possibility of Systematic Theology," In *Scripture and Truth* ed. D.A. Carson and John Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 204.

[222] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 28.

plan progresses and is cast in terms of an Edenic land, city, and temple –all of which are coextensive.[223]

From Inauguration to Consummation: Escalation

After the disruption of the inaugural kingdom resulting from the fall, the rest of the biblical narrative focuses on restoration: the re-establishment of God's kingdom: a priestly-kingly people in the garden temple.[224] The historical development between inauguration and consummation unfolds through the land promised to Abraham. Covenants form the backbone of the scriptures and are crucial in the understanding of the story from creation to restoration. This unfolding occurs in four plot movements across the Old Testament: (i) Inauguration and loss of land in Genesis 1 –11, (ii) the covenants with Abraham and the promise of land (Gen 12-50), (iii) the advancement and fulfillment of God's promise of land throughout Israel's history (Joshua-Deuteronomy), and (iv) the exile and the prophetic anticipation of an international and universal restoration brought through a new covenant (prophets).[225]

The events of Genesis 1 – 11 are paradigmatic. Following the fall, the community eventually disperses across the face of the earth at Babel, having lost their land, so that when Abraham arrives on the historical scene, God promises him and his descendants a commodity that was in short supply—land. The land was at the core of God's covenant with Abraham. The promise of land unfolds in the light of what preceded it, namely the Eden as the prototypical place of the kingdom. The flexibility of the geographical

[223] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 28.
[224] Alexander T. Desmond, *From Eden to New Jerusalem: Exploring God's Plan for Life on* Earth (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 14.
[225] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 30.

boundaries points to its rich theological significance, which suggests an eschatological horizon that extends beyond the territory itself. The patriarchal promise of land anticipates something better and more magnificent with both international and global dimensions.[226]

Advancement of the promise in Exodus and Deuteronomy centers on the miraculous act of the exodus. The spectacular deliverance out of Egypt constitutes the beginning of a great journey to relocate to a new land –a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3: 8, 17; 13: 5; 33: 3). Deuteronomy presents a highly developed theology of the land. The land is a gift that Yahweh owns; it is a new paradise; the creational mandate comes alive; prolongation of days on the land as a reward for obedience (Deut. 30: 20); inheritance, rest, and worship converge on the land (Deut. 28: 65) 247; and each family has a share though land belongs to the entire people. Even though Deuteronomy does not close with the patriarchal promises fulfilled, there is a prospect of hope.[227]

Historical Books (Joshua-Kings) depict a partial fulfillment of the promise. A significant portion of the book of Joshua is devoted to detailing the allotment of inheritances to families and tribes (chs. 13–21). Three essential themes emerge from the text. While Deuteronomy anticipates rest from enemies, in Joshua, this becomes a reality (Joshua 11:23 and 14:15). Second, while some texts speak of conquest and rest, others indicate that the land was not entirely and finally possessed. Third, conquest and settlement are an advancement of the Edenic mandate (Gen. 1: 28). As some scholars have noted, the structure of Joshua is mainly about taking dominion of a piece of land.[228]

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[226] Stephen Dempster, *Dominion And Dynasty,* 53.
[227] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 29.
[228] David M. Howard Jnr., *Joshua*: *An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC 5 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 258.

A significant advance in God's purpose to plant his people in the land is the arrival of David.[229] Reminiscent of the promises made to Abraham, God gives David a great name on an international scale (1Kings 7:9), designates a place for his people (1Kings 7:10), and makes his enemies into his footstool (1Kings 7:11). God promises him an offspring, a king who will also be a son of God (1Kings 7:14). King Solomon brings with him a comprehensive fulfillment of territorial promises. The temple is a reminder that God was in the midst of his people. After Solomon, the land becomes the focus of a constant struggle between the forces of contamination of the land: dispossession, greed, exploitation, and land grabbing on the one hand, and the protests of the prophets on the other.[230]

The latter prophets provide commentary on the grand narrative from creation to exile, showing that it was a just judgment but that the promise of a glorious future was on the horizon. Prophet Ezekiel calls Eden the first garden sanctuary because it is the archetypal temple that will later become central in the life of Israel.[231] Isaiah distinguishes between imminent and distant return and physical and spiritual captivity. While King Cyrus procures physical deliverance, only the suffering Servant can deliver from spiritual bondage and make worldwide people for God. The scope of his reign will be international and universal.[232]

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[229] C.f. 2 Sam 7; 1Chr.17; Psalm 89;110;132.

[230] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Living as the People of God* (Leicester Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 82.

[231] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 29.

[232] Stephen Dempster, *Dominion And Dynasty,* 191.

New Testament: Fulfilment, Not Yet Consummated

According to Waltke, "the trajectory of the land motif into the New Testament is the most difficult biblical motif to track."[233] This difficulty is because the term 'land' is rare in the New Testament.[234] However, despite the relatively rare occurrences of the term 'land' in the New Testament, Gary Millar rightly notes that "the formative influence in a biblical theology of the relational ideas associated with land must not be underestimated."[235] The New Testament demonstrates the fulfillment of land in ways that are both similar and dissimilar to those found in the Old Testament.[236] Wellum observes:

> First, the order in producing the new creation reverses from that used in producing the old creation. In the old creation, God first made the place where we live, and then he made the creatures to live there. In the new creation, however, God first will make his new people, and then he will make the home where they will live. The priority of the New Testament is on how God is making new people, and the land theme is secondary to this, even though it is taught, especially in Revelation 21–22. Second, once the subject of land is placed within the more extensive discussion of the covenants, the New Testament is replete with allusions to land. Besides, the primary focus of the New Testament is on Christ and the inauguration of the kingdom. If the New Testament centers on the fulfillment of God's saving promises in which the Lord would reign over the whole earth through his son, then its focus is rightly on the King who brings this kingdom.

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[233] Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 559.

[234] P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus, and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 82.

[235] Gary Millar "Land," NDBT, 2000: 623–627.

[236] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 117.

> Indeed, the New Testament makes clear from the beginning that God's promises in the Old Testament reach their telos in Christ.[237]

The New Testament contends that what God promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New. Luke records Jesus' quoting of Isaiah 61:1–278 at the beginning of his ministry, "Today, this is fulfilled in your hearing." Accordingly, the centrality of the kingdom in the New Testament signals that the time of the long-awaited fulfillment has definitively begun. In Matthew, God's highly anticipated Messiah arrives on the historical scene and, true to prophetic form, inaugurates the kingdom that awaits its consummation in the new earth. The themes associated with land in the Old Testament relate to Jesus. He now possesses and offers the life that once abounded in the land following his resurrection from the dead. In him, they find both life and rest. Additionally, all the nations are his, and he summons his disciples to go and gather those whom he already possesses.[238]

That said, the kingdom has not come to complete fulfillment. Matthew 6:10 has Jesus pray to his Father: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." The kingdom is present because the King-Messiah is present, but his reign will fully and finally come to reality in the end time. The New Testament message of the inaugurated, yet not finally consummated is crucial in connecting the beginning with the end. Scripture begins with creation and ends with a vision of a more glorious creation (Rev. 21 – 22). The end will echo the beginning – creation as God originally designed it to be. However, the end will also bring something qualitatively better.[239]

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[237] Stephen J. Wellum and Peter J. Gentry, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 713.

[238] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 149.

[239] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 149.

In the consummative vision of Revelation, John draws attention to the divine throne in which there is an international community of people ((Rev. 22:1–3). Through his death and resurrection, Christ now shares in his Father's rule. Yahweh has set his King, the obedient Son par excellence, to rule over the nations (Ps. 2:6–12). Nevertheless, God's kingship is not new for those familiar with Genesis 1 – 2. Those who enter the city will serve and worship him (cf. Rev. 7:15). Through him, humanity can once again function as God's kingdom and priests (Rev. 1:6). The consummation of God's rule in Christ at the end is qualitatively better than at the inauguration for, in the new creation, nothing or no one will be allowed to challenge his rule, and there will no longer be anything accursed (Rev. 22:3).[240]

Literature on Land and Eclipse of Sacramental Ontology

Postcolonial Artistic Production and Mainstream Literature

Postcolonial Artistic Production. The first form of literature on governance and access to land was in the form of plays and poems. It was in reaction to efforts by colonialist minded authors' use of the same literary method to propagate and promote a colonial ideology. Colonial representations portrayed Africans as lazy and, therefore, undeserving of the land. Included in such a depiction was the idea that African lands were empty, unoccupied, and ready for colonial settlement. A glorified notion of British imperialism matched such a negative portrayal.[241] Four themes are identifiable in the anti-colonial artistic production: (i) counternarratives to colonial assumptions; (ii) an indictment of post-colonial governments; (iii) the marginalization of women; (iv)

[240] Oren, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 149.

[241] Peter Muchiri N., "Writing on the Soil: Literature's Influence on African Land Rights," (Ph.D. diss., University of Miami, 2015), 45-67.

violence, conflict, and the creation of landless subjects; and (v) Ways in which people assert their belongingness and resist oppression.[242]

To counter the narrative of empty land, Grace Ogot and Margaret Ogola point to the connection between the colonial narrative and the violence enacted upon both colonized psyches and landscapes. Ogot deconstructs colonial convictions about East Africa's emptiness and the availability of land for European settlement by re-creating the challenging journey of an indigenous family from one location, or homeland, to another location—foreign land. In an occupied land, there is potential for conflict, migration, and ambition to make it elsewhere.[243] Ogola, on the other hand, creates a story that portrays land as the place where people create narratives and live by them.[244]

Ngugi wa Thion'go demonstrates that pre-colonial landscape "was already defined and mapped by local histories, myths, and memories of bequeathal and ownership"[245] His description of the landscape is replete with geographic features—ridges, valleys, and rivers. River *Honia* separates two opposing hills, perhaps a symbol of communal discord, but also the psychological turmoil caused by two antagonistic cultural values: Gĩkũyũ traditions versus Christianity. That said, *Honia*—a Gĩkũyũ word meaning "to heal"—denotes a potential site of reconciliation, communal renewal, and unification—just as it connects and waters the two ridges.[246] Ngugi also laments on the harmful impact colonialism had on the landscapes. He is unforgiving of the colonial

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[242] Glenn Hooper, "History, Historiography, and Self in Ngugi's Petals of Blood," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* vol 1 (1998): 33.

[243] Grace Ogot, *The Promised Land* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Pub. House, 1966), 7-145.

[244] Margaret Ogola, *The River and the Source* (Nairobi: Focus Books, 1994), 45-94.

[245] Ngugi wa Thiong'o *Weep Not, Child* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 5-78.

[246] Ngugi wa Thiong'o *Weep Not, Child*, 34-76.

forms of economic production and their inherently rapacious and unsustainable use of natural resources. [247]

On postcolonial condition, Ebrahim Hussein decries the state's failure to nurture equitable land rights. B. M. S. Sellassie indicts the state for its autocracy and inability to entrench bottom-up socio-economic reform. Ngugi's laments that in the same way the colonial epoch led to violent alienation of land, postcolonial progress has led to the disenfranchisement of the poor at the hands of black political elites. He argues that the colonial rhetoric of civilization and the postcolonial elitist rhetoric of modernization are similar. Outsiders, colonialists, or the black elites whose paternalism overrules *Ilmorog's* future aspirations determine the meaning of progress. He is critical of the so-called global capitalism and its rhetoric of development and the willingness and cooperation it finds locally, which always seems to victimize the global south.[248]

Sony L. Tansi argues that insecurity of land tenure stems from the same political framework as political tyranny and gender inequality.[249] Hussein's allegorical discussion of land rights—using marriage as a trope—encompasses gender issues and uses competition between the sexes to comment on the rise of individualism at the expense of communalist norms. Ngugi projects the image of a woman whose revolutionary boldness allows her to not only engage in militant activities. His depiction of women has not been without critics. By interchanging land with masculinity, Ngugi turns land into an exclusionary space where only those that can exhibit masculine authority are welcome. Elleke Boehmer sees in this an attempt to enlist women "into the ranks of a male-ordered

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[247] Christine Loflin, "Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Visions of Africa," 79.
[248] Ngugi wa Thion'go, *Petals of Blood* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 125.
[249] Sony Tansi, *Life and a Half*, trans. Alison Dundy (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2011), 34-68.

struggle. He also criticizes Ngugi's omission of East Africa's female writers in his suggested canon for literary study at the university level.[250]

Mainstream Literature. Mainstream literature on land comes from international bodies and organizations. This literature gained dominance in the 90s and has had an enormous impact on the formulation of national policies and legislation, mostly in developing countries. It focuses more on the value of secure access to land in terms of income generation and food security, adequate housing, conflict avoidance, and gender quality.[251] Besides, it assesses the scale of insecure land access and devises strategies on how to secure land access through property rights, economic growth, and social justice.[252] Moreover, it focuses on the effects of anthropogenic and natural factors on the land cover.[253] Finally, it focuses on land corruption and political processes.[254]

This literature has been criticized for putting more emphasis on the land's measurability and marketability and a neglect of it as a source of religious and psychological security. Within a market environment, regulation in terms of legislation becomes key. David Kennedy observes that most scholars in the 90s came to believe that working within a strictly legal framework can help avoid "perplexing political and

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[250] Elleke Bohmer, "The Master's Dance to the Master's Voice: Revolutionary Nationalism and the Representation of Women in the Writing of Ngugi wa Thion'go." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 26:1 (1991): 189-186.

[251] Robin Palmer, "*Literature Review of Governance and Secure Access to Land*," Report prepared for the Department for International Development (UK: Governance and Social Development Research Center, March 2007), 7.

[252] Palmer, "*Literature Review of Governance and Secure Access to Land*," 7.

[253] Shaghla Parveen, Jasmeen Basheer, and Bushra Praveen, "A Literature Review On Land Use Land Cover Changes International," *Journal of Advanced Research 6(7) (July 2008):*1-6. http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/7327

[254] Palmer, *Literature Review of Governance and Secure Access to Land*, 8.

economic choices."[255] This neglect of the traditional tenure system was not new. The RLA (Registration land Act) of 1963 expressly sought to replace the customary system of communal ownership with the formal British individualized ownership scheme. The Anglo 'bundle of rights' concept allows an individual owner to have absolute rights over the property. The crux of the RLA is the legally defined certainty of any interest in land through formal registration.[256]

The National Land Policy of 2009 sought to achieve sustainable land reforms through adequate engagement with the customary tenure systems.[257] The process anticipated land management that is equitable, efficient, productive, participatory, and gender sensitive.[258] However, the process that followed and led to the consent into law, The Land Act, The Land Registration Act, and The National Land Commission Act of 2012, gave more value to land law reform over substantive redistribution, primarily due to the exclusion of customary tenure systems and world views resulting from inadequate participation. The reform operated in a narrow redistributive fashion. The focus was on land administration as opposed to deep redistributive land reform, where the focus is on

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[255] David Kennedy, "Laws and Development" In *Law and Development: Facing Complexity in the 21st Century*, ed. John Hatchard and Amanda Perry Kessaris (London: Cavendish, 2003), 17.

[256] From a customary tenure perspective, an individual derives his rights from the group and only for a particular purpose regarding control, access, and use of land. Each function carries varying degrees of control at different social levels so that on one piece of land, one person could have 'rights' to cultivate crops, and another may have 'rights' to gather fruits. One person may use the land during cropping season but allow another to herd during the off-season. See Andrew Harrington, "Women's Access to Land and Property Rights: A Review of the Literature," (Working Paper, Justice for the Poor Initiative Series, vol 1. Asia and Pacific, 2008), 8.

[257] John W. Harbeson, "Land and the Quest for a Democratic State in Kenya: Bringing Citizens Back In." *African Studies Review* 55, no. 1 (2012): 15-30. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41804126.17

[258] Government of Kenya, *Draft National Land Policy for Kenya*, *Session Paper No.1*.(National Land Policy Secretariat, Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, 2007), S. 1.5.1, ss. 7(c); S. 1.5.2, ss. 8 (h)

changing the nature and foundations of land ownership by redistributing land from the wealthy to the poor and the landless.[259]

Much like the RLA of 1963, the New Land Policy relied on western notions of ownership. Sections 5 (i) (c) and 5 (iii) of the National Land Commission Act focus on an individual right to ownership similar to the one of RLA.[260] Article 68 (c) (i) of the constitution and Section 159 (1) of the Land Act calls for a determination of minimum and maximum land holding acreages in respect of private land. Such a determination is dependent on economic viability. One can own as much as they want as long as they can show that size regulation may inhibit development and growth. Interestingly, The World Bank is opposed to ceilings in global land policy. Thus, the land becomes a commercial commodity, and the distributive system works in favor of those who have means.[261]

Essentialist and Dualistic Epistemologies and the Loss of Sacramental Vision

At the core of the reduction of land into a commercial commodity and neglect of peoples' world view in the conversation on land reform in Kenya is an essentialist ontology, one in which reality is "described as, or uncritically reduced to, a dense and seamless constellation of things (reification) or essences (essentialism).[262] Essentialism erodes sacramentality. It arises from a form of dualism, dichotomous thinking.[263] Bleiker

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[259] Ambreena Manji, "The Politics of Land Reform in Kenya 2012," 115.

[260] John W. Bruce, Renée Giovarelli, Leonard Rolfes, Jr., David Bledsoe and Robert Mitchell, "Land Law Reform: Achieving Development Policy Objectives," *Law, Justice, And Development Series*, World Bank, 2006, 67.

[261] John W. Bruce, Renée Giovarelli, Leonard Rolfes, Jr., David Bledsoe and Robert Mitchell, "Land Law Reform Achieving Development Policy Objectives," 67.

[262] Charalambos Tsekeris, "Norbert Elias on Relations: Insights and Perspectives," In Conceptualizing Relational Sociology, ed. Christopher Powell and Francois Dépelteau (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 102.

[263] Erin Wilson K., "Beyond Dualism: Expanded Understandings of Religion and Global Justice," *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2010): 733. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40931134.

observes how Western dualistic thinking separates concepts that often exist in symbiotic relationships" into bipolar opposites."[264] Through a process of hierarchical privileging, specific characteristics, events, and representations of history are set over and against others. Erik observes that although this epistemology provides scholars with useful means to make sense of the world, in many cases, it also results in what Kristeva refers to as "monological discourse," a discourse in which one object, experience, or perspective becomes the only object, experience or perspective.[265] Ashley observes how in a dichotomous relationship where one object is valued over another, privilege and subordination operate within the public/private divide. Only the privileged is public. The non-privileged is relegated to the sphere of the private.[266]

Dichotomies are not neutral ways of dividing up the world. They contain "implicit assumptions that assign a prominence and a dominant value to the term in the position A at the expense of not-A."[267] The neglected in the symbiotic relationship becomes the Other.[268] Walzer has highlighted this tendency about reason and passion. Passion is separated from and subordinated to reason.[269] Excluded are the emotional, spiritual, and experiential aspects, elements traditionally considered to be "irrational" from the

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[264] Roland Bleiker, "East-West Stories of War and Peace: Neorealist Claims in Light of Ancient Chinese Philosophy," In *The Zen of International Relations*, ed. Stephen Chan, Peter Mandaville, and Roland Bleiker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 181.

[265] Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in The Kristeva Reader, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 49.

[266] Richard Ashley, "Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War," in *International/ Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books,1989), 45.

[267] Ann J. Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation," *Millennium*: *Journal of International Studies* 17 (3) (1998): 430.

[268] Erin Wilson K., "Beyond Dualism: Expanded Understandings of Religion and Global Justice," 734.

[269] Michael Walzer, *Politics and Passion: Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 122.

"rational" concerns of legal, theoretical, and moral debates. Feminist authors emphasize how male scholars use these "conceptual dichotomies" to describe differences between men and women and, in many cases, to subordinate women to men.[270]

A more telling dichotomy has been that of science and religion, with religion being considered irrational and the childhood of humanity. It is similar to other "irrational" factors such as ethnicity, culture, identity, and emotion.[271] Essentialist/dualistic thinking has not spared religion either. McIlhenny cites the dualism of the Two Kingdom theory within the reformed tradition in which the redemptive privileged over the so-called non-redemptive sphere of the civil kingdom.[272] Maurice Blondel is critical of *extrinsicism*[273] and *historicism* [274]—two forms of dualism that defined Catholic theology in the 19th century.

Both liberal and Christian dualisms have impacted on the African continent. Educated Africans abhor their traditions, viewing them as primitive and in need of being abandoned in favor of the sophisticated western lthinking and lifestyle. A two Kingdom theory has defocused African Christians away from their socio-political contexts and

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[270] Erin Wilson K., "Beyond Dualism: Expanded Understandings of Religion and Global Justice," 752. See also Ann J. Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism," 431.

[271] Erin Wilson K., "Beyond Dualism: Expanded Understandings of Religion and Global Justice," 733.

[272] Ryan C. McIlhenny, "Third-way Reformed Approach to Christ and Culture: Appropriating Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism and the Two Kingdoms Perspective," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 20(1) (2009):76.

[273] Blondel observes, "Thus the relation of the sign to the thing signified is extrinsic, the relation of the facts to the theology superimposed upon them is extrinsic, and extrinsic too is the link between our thought and our life and the truths proposed to us from outside." Maurice Blondel, "History and Dogma," in *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. and ed. Alexander Dru and Illtyd Trethowan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 283.

[274] Here, history became autonomous, independent, and self-sufficient. forgetting that "while the historian has, as it were, a word to say in everything concerning man, there is nothing on which he has the last word." See Hans Boersma and James I. Packer, "Sacramental Ontology: Nature and the Supernatural in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac," *New Blackfriars* 88, no. 1015 (2007): 247. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43251132

political responsibility to a preoccupation with hereafter, which is antithetical to history and politics. Formulation of national policies is based on essentialist/dualistic thinking that pays attention to the scientific and legal as opposed to native ontologies. This dualism and reductionism succeed in creating a world that is no longer an autobiography of God, as has been shown in the discussion on the traditional Gĩkũyũ ontology.

A Sacramental/Participatory Ontological Framework

Sacramental pneuma-ontology is the most suitable framework that can heal dualism by honoring creation as concealing and revealing more than what is often reduced to instrumental rationality. The world: creation, nature, society, culture, arts, our inner being, relationships, and labor, is sacramental. It is the medium of God's self-disclosure and human response. Sacramental ontology appreciates the mysterious depth of created reality, which creates a possibility for a covenantal relationship with God. Within a participatory/sacramental pneuma-ontology, the land is seen as a central factor given its role as a source and location of the exchange of the force of life between the *Ngai,* the sharer, and his creation. A participatory ontology also allows for people's participation in a conversation aimed at the flourishing of life for all.

The term "sacramental ontology" was first used by Doyle to describe Henri de Lubac's theological approach.[275] De Lubac's sacramental ontology unfolded against the background of his appropriation of the thinking of Maurice Blondel (1861-1949)—his opposition to "extrinsicism" and "historicism" and his insistence on an organic

[275] Dennis Doyle M. "Henri De Lubac and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 60, no. 2 (May 1999): 209–27.

relationship between nature and the supernatural.[276] The African worldview is essentially sacramental. The metaphor of the Great Time captures this sacramentality. This metaphor accounts for the origin of all created things and how they are interrelated. For the Gĩkũyũ, the primary function of the shrine of *Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga* is to transport the mind to this primeval event.

In traditional African thinking, time is a succession of events. It began at creation when things first came into being. This moment, referred to as The Great Time, is the basis of all African thinking. The entire creation, human and non-humans, animate or inanimate bears the same mark of the event of The Great Time. Another name for The Great time is God. Things participate in Him and are participated in by Him. By participating in the Creator, things participate in each other, resulting in a universal fraternity. Ontological participation links both the physical creatures and the spiritual world. "Our being is defined by participating in and being participated in; hence we cannot but be communal in nature."[277]

Within this participatory ontology, human beings occupy a special place. They participate in the rationality of the creator. Perhaps this explains why a traditional priest would hang around his body all kinds of objects as he made his way into the shrine. Each of these objects has a fraction of the vital force through which it came into this world and continues to survive, and man has the responsibility of bringing everything to the absolute, the fountain of vital force. [278] Since all things have their being from the Great

[276] Hans Boersma and James I. Packer, "Sacramental Ontology: Nature and the Supernatural in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac," 247.

[277] Emmanuel Mutyaba Musoke, *Ontological Foundation of Traditional African Morality* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2018), 14.

[278] Musoke, *Ontological Foundation of Traditional African Morality,* 14.

Time, they bear something of that great voice by which they exist. The communion and communication between the source of being and recipients of being are necessary. It transpires through rituals, prayers, and sacrifices.[279]

Within the framework of the Great Time, life is the most foundational ethical value. Mutyaba cites the use of the term *gbetto* for a human being among the Adja-Fon of Benin. While *Gbe* means life, *tto* means father. A human being is, therefore, a father of life. Located at the center of the pyramid in which vital forces interact, he must propagate and preserve life. Mutyaba also cites the use of the term *muntu* for a human person among the Bantus. While *Mu* connects with life, *tu* connects with force. Accordingly, man is a moral being and *ubuntu*, which is the virtue of being human is manifested in such life engendering qualities as patience, hospitality, loyalty, respect, conviviality, sympathy, and empathy. Qualities that violate and inhibit life such as violence, dictatorship, individualism, corruption, among others, do not describe *ubuntu*.[280]

Recovery of an integral/ sacramental ontology serves the purpose of bringing everything together by avoiding any form of reductionism and dualism. It brings back a mystical character to everything without which contamination and corruption reign supreme. If the land were to reclaim its integrative function, and if that formed the bases of land reform conversations, this would help to tamper the individualism that has been occasioned by liberalism. Liberalism has reduced the land to a mere commercial commodity for which we should all compete to acquire and exploit. Recovery of a religious view of land can help to generate virtues of mutual accountability, reverence for

[279] Musoke, *Ontological Foundation of Traditional African Morality*, 17.
[280] Musoke, *Ontological Foundation of Traditional African Morality,* 18.

the environment, as well as a spirit of solidarity and sharing, and a determination for deep as opposed to shallow redistribution.

The effect of an essentialist ontology on the understanding of human beings is explored in the next chapter. Just as it led to the eclipse of the mystery in the perception of the physical world, so too did it help in the articulation of philosophies and anthropologies that conceived some sections of the global population in less human terms. This led to the colonization and marginalization of such populations, denigration of their cultures, and suppression of embodied forms of knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE. RECLAIMING AGENCY: THE POWER OF INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITIES

Engaging Christian communities as active agents in social transformation requires a methodological justification. The first part of this chapter will focus on philosophical and historical developments that led to the creation of a non-interpretive "Other" or the subaltern.[1] The second part will discuss postcolonial and postmodern efforts aimed at recovering the "Other" through a deconstruction of grand narratives and an emphasis on local epistemologies.[2] The third part proposes critical realism as an adequate philosophy that underpins the "Other's" agency. It affirms the objectivity of being, the relativity, trustworthiness, and adequacy of our knowledge. Critical realism is used to design practical-theological research for purposes of collecting and analyzing data from

[1] Antonio Francesco Gramsci (1891-1937) uses the term to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers, and other groups denied access to 'hegemonic' power. See Henry A. Giroux, "Rethinking Cultural Politics and Radical Pedagogy in the Work of Antonio Gramsci" in *Educational Theory* 49, no. 1 (Winter, 1999):1. Gayatri Spivak would use it to describe the "subject" of Western knowledge often viewed as unknowing. She raises the question of whether it is the right time for investigators to refrain from representation and allow the subaltern to speak for themselves. See Gayatri Spivak, "Three women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12 (1985): 242. One can see why Postcolonial studies dealing with relationships of dominance and subordination adopted the concept of the "Subaltern" Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 1.

[2] According to Zine Magubane, "the "Posts" can be historicized. They emerged in the Anglo-America milieu of the 1970s and 1980s. They were conditioned by the intellectual, institutional, and ideological contexts in the universities, which in turn reflected the transformation in the larger society. The increased distance of the academy from civics manifested in waning interest in transformative theories of societies—grand narratives –coincided with the crisis of legitimization in the broader political economies following the calamities of World War II, Vietnam War, Watergate, the growth of struggles for civil rights, women rights gay rights, and proliferation of identity politics." See Zine Mbagane, *Post Modernism, Postcoloniality, and African* Studies (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 1.

members of SCCs of St. Francis Catholic Church in Kenya regarding their perception of land corruption and involvement in social transformation.

Essentialist and Dualistic Epistemologies, and Eclipse of Agency

The previous chapter demonstrated how essentialist and dualistic epistemologies have led to an erosion of a mystical view of the land. These same epistemologies impact on social reality. By reifying and essentializing the social reality, they helped to create the "Other" and contributed to the loss of communities of interpretation and an eclipse of embodied forms of knowledge.[3] Two variants of essentialism will be discussed below, namely: individualism and structuralism. These two are responsible for the creation of a mythical subject that treats differences with contempt, and for seeking to subsume particularity into an imaginary universality through colonial and neocolonial domination.[4]

Individualistic Humanism and Creation of the "Other"

According to Julian, "individualism prioritizes a single social actor, not a single culture, system, or society. Instead of an overarching system, it reduces down to a self-identical individual unit and claims that there are only individuals and their actions."[5] Crossley quotes Jeremy Bentham, who observes that the community "is reduced to a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members."[6] A typical example is the rational choice theory. Like all manifestations of individualism, it does not recognize autonomous systems or structures.

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[3] Charalambos Tsekeris, "Norbert Elias on Relations: Insights and Perspectives" In *Conceptualizing Relational Sociology*, ed. Christopher Powell and Francois Dépelteau (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 88.

[4] Julian Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (New York, Oxford University Press 2016), 119.

[5] Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory,* 119.

[6] Nick Crossley, *Towards Relational Sociology* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 10.

What is assumed to be a "system" is nothing more but the "totality of individual actors' calculations and actions. In turn, the individual has an essential, unchanging identity: the rational and utility-maximizing person."[7]

Leela Gandhi describes two forms of European humanism responsible for the creation of a mythical subject and the subaltern. With its high appreciation of culture and knowledge, the Renaissance period suggested the ideal person be one who allows himself to be affected by knowledge and culture. The second form of humanism was philosophically inaugurated by Descartes (1596-1650) and later found its proper articulation Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in the eighteenth century under the banner of Enlightenment, or *Aufklärung*. Its focus was not on how knowledge affects man but on how man affects knowledge. The focus was on epistemological structures and conditions that make knowledge possible and valid. In other words, knowledge is identifiable with the subject.[8] Russel observes that "in all philosophy which descends from Descartes, it follows that matter is only knowable "by inference of what is known of the mind."[9]

The differences between the above two forms of humanism notwithstanding, they are unanimous in their anthropocentrism and categorical valorization of the human subject. Charles Taylor says of the Enlightenment humanism: "it generates an epistemological revolution with anthropological consequences."[10] According to Leela, humanism, especially in its Cartesian form produced three revolutionary variants on the notion of the self and its relationship to knowledge and thereby to the external world: (i)

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[7] Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory,* 119.

[8] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 23-27.

[9] Bertrand Russel, *History of Western Philosophy*, *2nd ed.* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 548.

[10] Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge University Press, 1975), 5.

the notion of the self-defining subject of consciousness; (ii) the all-knowing subject of consciousness; and, (iii) the formally empowered subject of consciousness.[11]

The self-defining consciousness emerges when persons begins to doubt their knowledge. Through a simple exercise of inquiry into the things they knows, they realizes that what is purported to be knowledge is subject to doubt. Suddenly, they experience a eureka moment! Only one thing is sure: the phenomenon of their existence. They must exist in order to doubt. If that were not the case, they would not be able to doubt. The uncertainty of their skepticism guarantees their existence. In effect, Leela observes, "what is called knowledge is nothing but the narcissism of self-consciousness."[12]

From a self-defining consciousness, one can quickly see how the self-defining consciousness is at the same time the all-knowing consciousness. It is the originator and validator of any form of knowledge. The Cartesian *cogito*, or the 'I think' makes, as Bertrand Russell puts it, "mind more certain than matter…."[13] The knower is "a being such that knowledge will be possible in him of what renders all knowledge possible."[14] Foucault describes the all-knowing subject as "an emperico-transcendental doublet." He is an object of knowledge, but also the originator of all knowledge and the organizer of the reality of which he is a part. He has godlike powers of intellect to organize the unified world of humans.[15]

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[11] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 35-37.
[12] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 35-37.
[13] Bertrand Russel, *History of Western Philosophy*, 548.
[14] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1970), 318.
[15] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 318.

The Cartesian jubilation over the subject's epistemological prowess unavoidably comes with claims to power founded in knowledge. This power gives the person total freedom concerning the material world and indeed all objects of knowledge. Should this world prove mysterious and intimidating, that is so only in appearance, and not in reality, and to the extent, it is not incalculable. The *cogito* can transform the incalculability and complexity of the world into familiar contents of the mind. This liberating rationality operates through a mathematical demonstration. For Descartes, this cognitive function enables the mind to tame and order the wild profusion of things and multiplicity.[16]

Foucault does not think Enlightenment thinkers believed in a standard universal human nature expressed in a common language of rationality. He views Kant's conception of *Menschheit,* 'mankind' as merely prescriptive rather than descriptive. Rather than describing a social, political change that impacted on all people on the face of the earth, he focuses his attention "exclusively on the apparent universal structures of human existence and to the normative condition of adult rationality."[17] In so doing, he fails to take into account the fact that adult rationality as a value emerges a specific context of European society. In his prescription, Kant neglects the heterogeneity that defines the world. His philosophy diminishes the possibility of conversation with other ways of being human.[18]

Inevitably, a valorization of man assumes some human beings to be more human than others on account of their cognitive abilities to generate superior knowledge. What

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[16] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* transl. Talcott Parsons (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930), 1.

[17]Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment," in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought,* ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin,1984), 121.

[18] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment," 122.

follows is a duality that consists of a hierarchy between European adulthood and its childish "Other." As Bauman writes, "Since the sovereignty of the modern intellect is the power to define and make definitions stick—everything that eludes unequivocal allocation is a glitch and a challenge."[19] Against all appearance of benignity and benevolence, the European adult "violently negates material and historical alterity in his narcissistic desire always to see the world in his self-image."[20]

Structuralism and Frog-Matching

Structuralism emerged in France in the wake of existentialism, in the 1960s. While Existentialism advocated for the concept of human freedom and choice, Structuralism focused instead on how human culture is determined by various structures and how all elements of human culture must be subordinated to a much broader and all-encompassing structure. In order to understand the culture and human behavior, one must be ready to uncover the structures that underlie them. Structuralism developed in France in the early 1900s, mainly in the school of linguistics. Ferdinand de Saussure was its leading proponent. As linguistic structuralism was fading in importance, scholars in the humanities such as Claude Levi-Strauss started to apply it in their respective fields.[21]

French intellectuals would later begin to push back against structuralism, beginning in the 1960s. These thinkers included Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Louis Althusser, and Roland Barthes. They criticized Structuralism for being ahistorical and for favoring deterministic structural forces over the ability of people to act. Even though they

[19] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity, and Ambivalence* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 9.
[20] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 29.
[21] Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 353.

borrowed elements from structuralism in the articulation of their systems, they came to be known as poststructuralists. Structuralism became less popular in the 1970s, particularly as the political upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s began to influence academia, and as issues of power and political struggle started to attract people's attention.[22] Despite this, many of structuralism's proponents, such as Lacan, remain influential in continental philosophy.[23]

Structuralism or "holism purports the existence of a social system equipped with essential characteristics of a core, semi-periphery, and a periphery. It claims to be able to explain other social events by " fitting them into that whole," [24] which is itself. Not needing to be explained by other social events, the whole operates by its inherent logic. The "whole" is always greater than any of its parts or even the sum of its parts.[25] A social theory warrants the label a "variant of essentialism if it claims this sort of integration. Any given social system can make claims of holism. A world-systems theory of economics proposing a single global structure is substantialist since it claims to have an essential nature and an internal logic. Social units or events are evaluated based on how they operate within or in opposition to the mechanics of the economic world-system.[26]

Durkheim describes structuralism as a "social fact," defined as "any way of acting whether fixed or otherwise, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint …(and) which is general over the whole of a given society while having an existence of

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[22] James D. Marshall, ed. *Poststructuralism, Philosophy, and Pedagogy* (New York: Springer, 2004), xviii.

[23] John Sturrock, *Structuralism and since: from Lévi Strauss to Derrida*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 5ff.

[24] Crossley, *Towards Relational Sociology*, 10.

[25] Crossley, *Towards Relational Sociology*, 7-8.

[26] Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*, 118.

its independent of its manifestations."[27] An example of a social fact is "collective representation," which captures a group's vision. Enlightenment based thinking seeks to impose collective representation, which Foucault describes in terms of "an exhaustive ordering of the world."[28] It suggests a universal and unitary view of thought in which things become identical due to the fact of their knowability.[29] Whatever stands outside its categorization is an anomaly and a challenge. Lyotard's observes:

> the grand narratives of legitimation that characterize modernity in the West are cosmopolitical, as Kant would say. They involve precisely an 'overcoming' (dépassement) of the particular cultural identity in favor of universal civic identity. However, how such an overcoming can take place is not apparent.[30]

Koyama describes how *historicism*— an intellectual movement of the nineteenth century supposed to question the assumptions of enlightenment—rendered itself to conflicting interpretations.[31] On the one hand, *historicism* favored context and particularity and rejected any claim to trans-historicism.[32] On the other hand, and just like Enlightenment, it postulated a general law of historical development into which the unique and particular must fit.[33] European metrocentricism and exceptionalism depends

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[27] E. Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method, and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Methods* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 59.

[28] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xxiv.

[29] E. Gilson, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), 74.

[30] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982–1985*, transl. and ed. Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas (Sidney: Power Publications, 1992), 44-45.

[31] Hitomi Koyama, "Historicism, Coloniality, and Culture in Wartime Japan," *Contexto Internacional*, Vol. 38(3) (Sep/Dec 2016): 783.

[32] John Hobson and George Lawson. "What is History in International Relations?" *Millennium* 37(2): (2008):10.

[33] Koyama, "Historicism, Coloniality, and Culture in Wartime Japan," 784.

[33] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 38.

[33] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xxiv.

on the latter. This version of historicism justified European domination of the world in the Nineteenth Century. It legitimized expropriation and exploitation as part of the 'white man's burden' to 'bring up' and help 'advance' the "Other." Ultimately, the Other was to conform in the image of their colonial masters.[34]

The colonial historiography promoted the image of Africa as a 'dark continent" and the Africans as people without history. If there was to be any semblance of history in Africa, such had to come from outside. Both the colonialists and theologians shared a common purpose of ordering. As a result, they developed related methodologies of ordering knowledge, which included Western education as a system of ordering minds, bodies, and souls according to the models used in Europe.[35] The colonial administration set boundaries without considering the ethnic distribution of people, or even the customary law. They gave foreign names to geographical features like mountains and rivers as they did with new "nations." The "civilizing" mission was a radical attempt to replace traditional African customs with European ones.[36]

The intrigues of historicism did not end with European colonization.

Modernization theories and development studies continue to propagate and legitimize the idea of advanced Western states and developing states—the latter

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[33] E. Gilson, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant*, 74.

[33] John Hobson and George Lawson, "What is History in International Relations?*"* 10.

[33] Koyama, "Historicism, Coloniality, and Culture in Wartime Japan," 800.

[34] Koyama, "Historicism, Coloniality, and Culture in Wartime Japan," 800.

[35] Roland Oliver "Introduction" in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. VI: 1870-1905, ed. Roland Oliver and G.N. Sanderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ix.

[36] Bethwel Ogot notes that "even during the dark days of colonialism there were other historians, for example, the traditional historians, African historians educated in the West and Western colonial critics such as Basil Davidson, who were writing different African or colonial histories. These historians challenged the imperial historiographical hegemony, resulting in the 1950s into a New African Historiography." See Bethwel A. Ogot, ed., *General History of Africa, Vol V: Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (California: James Currey, 1999), 200.

> still trying to catch up. The difference is in terms of who is ahead and who is behind. With Western powers playing the gateman role, 'modernization' and 'developmental' prescriptions always begin with the same question: How can we make the rest look like the West? Historicism thus appears as necessarily complicit not only with colonialism but with neocolonialism as well.[37]

Postcolonial states did not depart from the objectives of the colonial state. Perhaps this is because postcolonial resulted from a similar narrative as that of the colonialists: securing obedience and extraction of resources. As African nations were transitioning to self-governance, the state became the modernizing force: a transformer of traditions that hampered development and capable of defining and executing public policies. Nationalists were determined to fit all into the schema of governments of national unity. Moreover, in the same way the colonial state blurred the distinctness and uniqueness of peoples, the notion of the tribe became highly politicized. It became a tool for the political class to be used for political convenience. Within a centralized unit, resulting as it were from a combination of colonial and African patrimonialism, authority and power came from above with those below turned into passive onlookers.

Essentialist Epistemologies and the Eclipse of Phronesis: Narrativity and Praxis

Steven Long observes: "Enlightenment wrongly separated sensibility and reason. It tried to answer questions by having us bracket out our sensibilities, passions, culture, language, abstract from them, and remain neutral and objective."[38] In other words, it killed phronesis. Phronesis or practical knowledge is the type of knowledge people

[37] Koyama, "Historicism, Coloniality, and Culture in Wartime Japan," 783.

[38] Steven Long, *Theology, and Culture: A Guide to the Discussion* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 43.

display in their ability to make a sound judgment as they go about their daily struggles, engaging their cognitive powers, emotions, relationships, morality, as well as spirituality.[39] *Phronesis* knowledge is contextual and adaptive.[40] Gadamer describes phronesis as a form of moral knowledge guided by the habits of virtue that come to form character. He critiques ethical theories inspired by enlightenment over their neglect of the most practical nature of the ethical while at the same time showing a flawed conception of the ethical agent as substantially disengaged and atomistic.[41]

Ricoeur rejects reductionist and essentialist versions of the human subject, such as that of the rational, isolated Cartesian *cogito*, but also the radically decentered non-subject of the postmodernist determined by discourse according to Foucault, or language according to Derrida. Ricoeur observes that since the "linguistic turn" in philosophy, the subject has access to itself (and the world) only through language. This self-relationship is essentially one of active interpretation, rather than fully autonomous self-authoring. He argues for a version of the human subject in which personal identity is not sufficiently stable or self-transparent but is also not incoherent or self-alienated. Self-identity is a

[39] Aristotle distinguished between three kinds of knowledge: *episteme, techne, and phronesis. Episteme* or theoretical wisdom expresses itself in propositions whose veracity transcends the particular. Its conclusions are reproducible under similar circumstances. Such knowledge is universal. *Techne* pertains to the production of things. Similar to epistemic knowledge, *techne* quickly results in reproducible procedure capable of predictable results across varying contexts. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics,* trans. Martin Ostwald (London: Hackett Publishing Company, 1961), 300-321.

[40] Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen Cahalan, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, James R. Nieman, and Christian B. Scharen, *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids. Eerdmans, 2016), 145.

[41] Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen Cahalan, and Bonnie J. McLemore, *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters*," 146.

matter of culturally and socially mediated self-definitions, which are practically relevant for one's orientation in life.[42]

According to Ricoeur, the interpretive subject emerges through narrative. [43] He laments the eclipse of narrative that resulted from a displacement of the object of history, which is no longer the active individual in a community but the total social fact. Narrativity is about the way human beings engage in "emplotment" or mimesis as they bring together isolated past experiences into a sensible whole, begin to appreciate future possibilities, and how they mentally organize and analyze their past.[44] Charles Taylor locates the role of narrativity in the subject's determination of what values to uphold and what not to. Through what he refers to as strong evaluation, the subject decides on the value of different desires, actions, and even lifestyles. Narrativity for Taylor is the movement towards or away from valuable ends.[45]

Gadamer locates narrativity in a community that professes certain traditions, certain biases, and inhabits a given environment. The subject makes ethical judgments and engages in morally significant acts.[46] This process unfolds through a tripartite scheme of understanding, similar to that of text interpretation. In other words, human experience is essentially hermeneutical.[47] Hermeneutics proceeds from an existing

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[42] Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,1992), 143.

[43] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 114, fn1.

[44] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative I* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 71.

[45] Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 13-97.

[46] H-G Gadamer, On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutic Reflection (1967) in *Philosophical Hermeneutics,* ed. D.E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 18–43.

[47] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), 32.

structure of prejudices and preconceptions concerning the text, what he calls fore-having (*vorhabe*).[48] The interpreter then proceeds to recognize the object of understanding as an object of a particular sort, different from his prejudices, fore-sight (*vorsicht*). Finally, in fore-conception (*vorgrift*), he performs an articulation based on these revised prejudices in such a way that it can be understood or make sense to others. In this way, hermeneutics is circular in the sense that it always moves from whole to part and back to whole again, never escaping our prejudices but never wholly bound to them either.

According to Ricoeur, the individual understands the meaning of the text from within his community. The goal of reading in community with others is to effect a response that produces not only an intelligible configuration of the text but, more significantly, the reconfiguration of experience by way of intersubjective knowledge and transposition of new evaluations and norms in the intersubjective world of agents and patients.[49]Allen makes the same point when he suggests that phronesis grows and matures in a community. The value judgments essential to phronesis emerge from the trust and loyalty invested in communities that have formed us.[50] Such communities contain resources for self-criticism into the heart of our practical engagements. Loyalty demands a certain level of accountability to others, while trust allows others to be accountable to us.[51] Unlike, in bureaucratic settings where it is enforced, this

[48] H-G Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd *Revised Edition* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 67-89.

[49] David J. Leichter, Études Ricœuriennes, *Ricœur Studies*, Vol 3, No 1 (2012), 116.

[50] Charles W. Allen, "The Primacy of "Phronesis": A Proposal for Avoiding Frustrating Tendencies in Our Conceptions of Rationality." *The Journal of Religion* 69, no. 3 (1989): 359-74. www.jstor.org/stable/1205007. See also Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character* (Indianapolis: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 111-28.

[51] Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis,* transl. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1975), 107-8.

accountability is more elastic while at the same time seeking to preserve continuity. It leaves considerable room for individual discretion (*epieikeia*).[52]

In addition to narrativity, phronesis unites knowledge of truth and reason with a concern for activities related to human goods. Accordingly, phronesis demands praxis, understood as a "dialectical unity" of theory and practice where there is reciprocal movement between "action done reflectively, and reflection on what is being done." Weber observes that during the enlightenment, a mathematical/objective perception of the world was the basis of knowledge. It required a progression from *theoria*, to *praxis*, rather than the other way around. Few abstract and generalizing principles bear on a multiplicity of things. Weber observes that a mathematical perception of reality is ultimately a 'theft' of its inherent unquantifiability and uncontainability.[53]

How has Kenya and the rest of Africa related to the above three components constitutive of the subject, that is, phronesis, narrativity, and praxis? A better place to focus on is education since it is how culture is passed on and character is formed. The education system, in academia or institutions of moral and spiritual formation, is still very colonial. It is marked by a "forgetfulness" of being. Students do not get a chance to engage their own stories with the content offered in class. In other words, it is devoid of narrativity and praxis. Education is defined by a certain "past-ness," "conformism," and "foreignness" perhaps because it is still indebted to our colonial heritage and also because it is today determined by demands of a global economic culture. Pedagogically, the

[52] Stephen E. Toulmin, "Equity and Principles," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 20 (1982): 1-12.

[53] M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 139.

system relies on the banking approach in which learners become spectators as opposed to world re-creators.

Recovery of Agency: Philosophical and Theological Critiques

Postmodern Critique and Postcolonial Theories

According to Canning, "postmodernism has become a catch-all phrase for divergent critiques of established historical paradigms, narratives, and chronologies, encompassing not only poststructuralist literary criticism, linguistic theory, and philosophy but also cultural and symbolic anthropology, new historicism, and gender theory."[54] She points to the pivotal role feminism played in this development. On her part, while not discounting Canning's observation,' Leela argues that Criticism of Western civilization properly begins with the counter assessment of Cartesianism in Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard. Poststructuralists/Postmodernists deconstruct two critical aspects of Cartesianism: the theory of the subject and the idea that knowledge has power over objective reality.[55]

Cartesian philosophy of identity is founded on an ethically untenable and unjustifiable omission of the Other. For Heidegger, seen by many to be the "archetype and trend-setter of postmodernism,"[56] the Cartesian subject violently opposes material and historical alterity/ Otherness in its narcissistic desire to view the world as its self-reflection.[57] Heidegger locates the quality of alterity in the natural and non-human

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[54]Kathleen Canning, "Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience, *Signs*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Winter, 1994): 369.

[55] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory,* 39.

[56] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrel Krell (London: Routledge, 1977), 206.

[57] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 39.

world[58], while Foucault extends Otherness to criminality, madness, disease, foreigners, homosexuals, strangers, and women. As for Derrida, the other is the 'remainder." Lyotard sees the Other in the singularity and plurality of what he calls the "event."[59] The finitude of the rational subject manifests in its rejection of the infinite cosmological diversity, which is always more than what it claims to know. Accordingly, the rational subject is not only a source of incomplete knowledge, but it is also a source of "misunderstanding."[60]

On knowledge and power, critics note how Cartesianism considered the omitted Other to be an irregularity that requires overcoming.[61] For the Cartesian subject to be, he must violently set himself in opposition to the omitted Other. The "Dare to know" principle is a call to be audacious, daring, brazen, insolent, in the exercise of mastery over that which is particular in favor of universal civic identity. The postmodern intervention offers the possibility of an alternative way of knowing. It is the way of knowing the difference in and for itself. Its motto could very well be "Care to know." It calls for an end to arrogance and a rising to humility, or as Levinas puts it, "it is in the laying down by the ego of its sovereignty that we find ethics."[62]

Postcolonialism is a theory that seeks to understand and theorize the condition of postcoloniality, or the post-empire condition. It is an intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism.[63] It

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[58] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 206.
[59] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 56.
[60] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 323.
[61] Bauman, *Modernity, and Ambivalence*, 9.
[62] E. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 85.
[63] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, ix

emerged in the early 1980s as a critical discourse in the humanities in the ranks of poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, and feminism. Postcolonial studies generally trace their roots to the works of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak.[64] Pal Ahluwala rejects any denigration of postcolonial theory "that renders it subservient and theoretically vulnerable to charges leveled at poststructuralism and postmodernism."[65] By setting it apart from other "posts," he observes "that at its core, postcolonial theory is about understanding the dilemmas of modernization and how African states negotiate their way through complexities that have grown out of the colonial experience."[66]

Although Katongole acknowledges the analytical usefulness of Postmodernism., he is, however, critical of it the same way he is critical of any Western philosophy with universalist claims. He sees in it an advance on the crudest forms of modern western self-interest and treatment of the Other as voiced out by Kurtz's 'final solution to the problem of difference' in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: 'exterminate all the brutes.'[67] He points to three areas of concern. First, in a troubled postmodern global economy based on Western life and consumption, African countries are trapped in leapfrogging as they attempt to fit in "through different theories and programs of development that more often than not neglect immediate economic realities."[68] Second, the postmodern liberal approach to issues of sexuality erodes familial, tribal, and Church tradition that insists on *training* into

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[64] Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera eds., *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 3.

[65] Pal Agluwala, *Politics and Postcolonial Theory: African Inflections* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

[66] Agluwala, *Politics and Postcolonial Theory*, 1.

[67] Emmanuel Katongole, *A Future for Africa: Critical Essays in Christian Social Imagination* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 74-75.

[68] Katongole, *A Future for Africa*, 81.

the relevant practices and habits or virtues.[69] Third, the idea of celebrating difference often leads to indifference. He observes:

> there is something sinister about the postmodern celebration of difference, which at the same time renders differences ineffectual or inconsequential. In other words, the ability to recognize otherness and difference everywhere might just as well amount to an ironic shielding of oneself from listening or attending to the particular and historical claims of the "other[70]

Despite the above criticism, Postcolonial theory has certainly borrowed significantly from poststructuralist's criticism of Western civilization. It understands Western domination as a manifestation of the unholy alliance between power and knowledge. It has also learned to determine the material effects and ramifications of colonialism as an epistemological deficiency at the heart of Western rationality.[71] Edward Said and V. Y. Mudimbe borrows from the postmodern critique of the Western conception of the Other or what Said refers to as the Oriental. Mudimbe sometimes calls it "alterity"[72] Their work on "Otherness" seems calculated to expose an unholy alliance between the Enlightenment and colonialism. The "Other" in Western consciousness and the Orient, in this sense, is perceived as exotic, intellectually retarded, sensual, governmentally despotic, culturally passive, and politically chauvinists. Asians and African societies are described as feminine in their conquerability, docility, malleability,

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[69] Katongole, *A Future for Africa*, 85.

[70] Katongole, *A Future for Africa*, 76.

[71] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory,* 78. See also Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Marx after Marxism: History, Subalternity, and Difference," *Meanjin, vol. 52, no. 3* (1993): 421–34.

[72] Ali A. Mazrui, "The Re-Invention of Africa: Edward Said, V. Y. Mudimbe," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Autumn, 2005): 68.

and fundamental inferiority. Sexism, as well as racism, has informed the orientalist mind.[73]

Postcolonial theory preoccupies itself with two main issues. First, it must deal with postcolonial amnesia. This is the desire of former colonies to forget their experiences of colonization.[74] The danger of such forgetfulness is the possibility of falling prey to the unresolved past.[75] Lyotard describes the task of unearthing and elaborating memories of the colonial past as "psychoanalytic analysis of anamnesis."[76] It begins with a particular self-understanding that demands attentiveness to stories, habits, and practices that have shaped a people's life. In addition to bad memories, postcolonial theory should celebrate those who fought for emancipation and harvest their wisdom in the initial elaborations of a theory. Psychoanalysis of anamnesia thus has to re-member the seductive narrative of power and alongside it, the counter-narrative of the colonized by remembering that postcoloniality derives its genealogy from both narratives.[77]

In addition, postcolonial theory is keenly aware of the colonizer's complicity in the complexity of the mechanisms of power. Unlike in Hegel's paradigm of master and slave dialectic, where only the master is recognizable after the battle, postcolonial remembering must start by bearing testimony to the slave's refusal to concede the master's existential priority. Moreover, this defiant invitation to alterity or "civilizational difference" must confront the condition of the colonized, which Fanon's *Black Skin,*

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[73] Mazrui, "The Re-Invention of Africa: Edward Said, V. Y. Mudimbe," 70.
[74] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 9.
[75] Albert Memmi, *Dominated Man: Notes Towards a Portrait* (London: Orion Press, 1968), 88.
[76] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: University Press, 1991), 93.
[77] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 54.

White Masks describes as a symptom of "imitativeness." As both Fanon and Gandhi were to recognize, the slave's hypnotized gaze upon the master condemned him to a derivative existence. As a result, his becomes less than total liberation. It explains why the postcolonial states have tended to be self-serving, exploitive, and oppressive, just as their colonial forebears.[78]

Theological Critique: Practical Theology and Reconstructive Theology

Practical Theology. Practical theology re-emerged in the 1980s in the context of general shifts toward more significant interest in materiality and practice across disciplines. Randy Maddox argues that theology was inherently practical in its early history.[79] Farley laments the shift from theology as a lively *habitus* or disposition toward God to a purely theoretical science keen on systematic rationality.[80] Cahalan and Froehle observe that "practice has always been integral to lived Christian faith, and that theology developed precisely to define an understanding of faith in which practice takes place."[81] This focus on practice was particularly the case during the first ten centuries of the Church's history. The office of teaching resided with the bishop who ensured that theological reflection was both local and contextual, and always directed towards the flourishing of the community's faith. The movement was from *orthopraxis* (lived experience or *habitus*) to *orthodoxy* and back to *orthopraxis*.[82]

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[78] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 56.

[79] Randy L. Maddox, "The Recovery of Theology as a Practical Discipline," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990): 650.

[80] Edward Farley, *Theologia*: *The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 65.

[81] Kathleen A. Cahalan and Bryan Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology" in *Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions*, ed. Claire Wofteich (Mahwah: Paulist Press. 2014), 29.

[82] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 29.

The Great Schism of 1054, the founding of universities, and the discovery of the works of Aristotle altered the way of doing theology. Theology and sacramental praxis would henceforth become a single body of knowledge preserved and communicated through Scholastic categories and canon law. "The location of theological production thus shifted from the patristic model of the bishop serving the people to that of university scholars in service to the Church universal."[83] Attempts by St. Bonaventure to counter the speculative approach and to restore an approach to theology that was rooted in the tradition of theology as *Sapientia* did not go far. The Scholastic approach, championed mainly by the Dominicans, became the official approach to theology as the Church transitioned into the modern era.[84]

"If the medieval theological move was toward the practice of systemization through Scholastic and legal reasoning, Catholic modernity was about the systematization of practice."[85] Systematization unfolded through the formation of seminaries following the decree by Trent (1554-63), the creation of manuals, and the elevation of Thomistic "synthesis" by Pope Leo XIII, (1878 to 1903) as the official philosophical and theological system of the Catholic Church. For the Reformers, orthodoxy became a "set of intellectual affirmations," and theology a science. Friedrich Schleiermacher created a

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[83] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 30.

[84] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains, Studies in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 107. As a result, more practically inclined theology became "increasingly marginalized." That said, practical wisdom survived in less regulated areas of devotional practices, writings, and hospitality, among others. An example is the writings of Julian of Norwich, devotion to the Sacred Heart, the mysticism of Theresa of Avila, and the rise of the apostolic (meaning "sent forth") religious orders. See Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 35.

[85] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 31.

theological encyclopedia, one that sequestered practice to one corner of the curriculum. For both Catholics and Protestants, the focus was now on the formation of the clergy. [86]

The French movement *nouvelle theologue* preceded the Second Vatican Council in the quest for reintegration of theory and practice. Members of this group sought to recover theology as *habitus* and to retrieve the more genuine Aquinas. Outside of these formal efforts, Catholic vitality was evident in liturgical practice, religious education, and social action. While formal theology was preoccupied with knowing about God as opposed to knowing God, spirituality and mysticism naturally remained central to Catholic life and practice.[87] The symbolic universe underpinning this vitality operated through the dialectical tension between verticality (relationship with God and with the hierarchy) and horizontality (relationship with the world and the people). An example of this vitality that would inform practical theological thinking is Catholic Action and its praxis-oriented method of See-Judge-Act.[88]

The tension mentioned above between verticality and horizontality shaped the deliberations during the Second Vatican Council. In the end, the Council was able to produce an agenda for the world in the pastoral document *Gaudium et Spes*. More crucially, this tension produced a more dynamic quality that gazed backward to retrieve a more premodern communal instinct. The general tenor, both during and after the Council, was the need for a less systematic, contextual, less individualistic, pre-textual, and praxis-

[86] Randy L. Maddox, "The Recovery of Theology as a Practical Discipline," 655.
[87] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 35.
[88] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 34.

based theology.[89] This direction would prove to be immensely helpful in shaping Catholic practical theological of early post–Vatican II period and the new ecumenical conversation in practical theology taking place in the 1970s and 1980s.[90] On the other hand, Protestant sources of practical theology in the 1950s and 1980s tended to be mostly modernist, text-oriented, and individualistic.[91]

A praxis-based approach to theology has since Vatican II affected the entire theological enterprise. Premised on the belief that experience generates theology, it has renewed focus on the lived religiosity of ordinary people, so that theology is less about the application and more about letting people's lived experience generate theology. As Cahalan and Froehle observe, "All theology was charged with becoming more open and directed to social and cultural realities, and thus more pastoral, turning away from patterns of essentialist, non-historical discourse.[92]

African Theology: Ordering-Disordering-Ordering Dynamic. Theology in Africa has unfolded through an ordering-disordering-ordering dynamic.

Ordering Theology. In a more postmodern language, this can be described in terms of deconstruction and reconstruction. In order to appreciate this dynamic, one has to revisit this development historically. According to Mudimbe, Colonialism in the 19th

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[89] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 35.

[90] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 35.

[91] Bonnie Miller-McLemore traces a Protestant lineage familiar to practical theologians, which begins with Anton Boisen's 1950s textualization of the human experience, to Seward Hiltner's understanding of pastoral theology as "generating theology, and to Don Browning's conceptualization of theology as fundamentally practical. See Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Christian Theology in Practice," in Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen Cahalan, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, James R. Nieman, and Christian B. Scharen, *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids. Eerdmans, 2016), 174-230.

[92] Cahalan and Froehle, "A Developing Discipline: The Catholic Voice in Practical Theology," 35.

century was a science of ordering orchestrated and executed by explorers, colonial administrators, and missionaries. European explorers acting on behalf of their respective monarchs set out to fill in the blanks within maps of Africa and other regions. Upon reporting of their discoveries, that indeed these places had landscapes and people, the colonial administrators were dispatched with the sole mission of taking possession of these lands which were without owners, were uncivilized, and untamed.[93]

This mission had full earlier ecclesiastical blessing if the bull *Inter caetera* (1493) by Pope Alexander VI, and the documents *Dum diversas* (1452) and Romanus *pontifex* (1455) are anything to go by. Pope Alexander had called for an overthrow of paganism and a planting of Christian faith in nations conquered by Christian European kings. *Romanus pontifex* gave to the King of Portugal the right to take as his possession Muslims, pagans, enemies of Christ, and Africans in general. The scramble for Africa in the 19th century followed these practices. Considered *terra nullius*, it was to be ordered through Christianization and European knowledge.[94]

A flawed understanding of history fed the colonizing/ordering impulse. Hegel conceived the movement of world history in terms of the self-realization of God, reason, and freedom. This movement of universal history moves from East to West and has Europe as its terminal. Bypassed by it is the continent of Africa with its closed land.[95] While Hegel advocated for a complete abandonment of Africa, colonialists sought to

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[93] Mario I. Aguilar, "Postcolonial African Theology In Kabasele Lumbala," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), 305.

[94] O. Bimwenyi, Discours the´ologique ne´gro-africain: Proble`mes de fondements (Paris: Pre´sence Africaine, 1981), cited in V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa, Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* Bloomington, Indiana: Indian University Press, 1988), 46.

[95] G. W. F. Hegel, Sa¨mtliche Werke, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1955), 167.

order it. As a result, theology and colonialism developed related methodologies of ordering knowledge of ordering minds, bodies, and souls according to the models used in Europe. The goal of religious instruction in missionary school was to produce European Christians. The absence of history assigned to Africa by Europeans erased the age-old modes of knowledge. It replaced cosmological systems of cultural and religious knowledge with a European episteme. According to Mudimbe, history as "an intellectual effort of ordering human activities and social events chronologically," is also "a discourse of knowledge and a discourse of power."[96]

Disordering Theology. The first task of postcolonial independent states was to re-write the African history by reaffirming the value of African societies, their worldviews, the traditional and system of knowledge. The disordering efforts of African theology coincided with the end of colonial rule and with this urgency at self-validation. The context was also marked by emerging of economic elites, but also neocolonialism. The disordering efforts were also focused on understanding the challenges to colonial missionary activity posed by, among others, the Second Vatican Council and the epistemological shakeup that was happening in Europe with high demand for social action provided by the protests in Paris especially in 1968.

This disordering can be traced back to at least the preceding generation. The Belgian missionary, Placide Tempels, explored the possibilities of an African worldview different from the European.[97] In 1956, a group of African priests widely acclaimed to be the pioneers of African theology produced a collection of essays in which they raised

[96] V. Y. Mudimbe, *Invention of Africa*, 187.

[97] La Philosophie bantoue (Elisabethville: Lovania, 1945; Paris: Pre´sence Africaine 1949), English translation *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959).

questions about the possibility of inculturation and liberation within African Christianity. They were also focused on challenging missionary theology. The theology of adaptation would soon gain prominence leading up to the creation of the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians in 1977 in Accra. Theology of adaptation fostered the possibility of adapting the practice of Christianity in Africa. Although it still followed a Eurocentric perspective, it was nonetheless a significant move away from the *terra nullius* ideology.[98]

At the Accra meeting, theologians expressed a powerful critique toward European thought and laid a foundation for a critical African theology. Such a theology bears historical character and uses social analysis, is biblically rooted, is diverse, and conceives the person always as related. They advocated for a theology that is not trying to adapt European Christian practices to Africa. Instead, the focus should be on theology that emerges from a historical reflection on the social and political realities of Africa from the perspective of a Christian commitment. However, within that postcolonial period, African theologies recognized that contradictions were present within the postcolonial world of varied epistemes and disorderly gnosis. In the spirit of self-criticism, they recognized the privileged social location of the African theologian. He/she is educated in the West, reads books written by Western authors, and, most often than not, does not live with the poor or share their experience. [99]

African Theology and Need for Deconstruction? When written theology started to surface in the 20th century, one burning question needed to be addressed. It was about the relation between Christianity and the indigenous religions of Africa. Mbiti argues that

[98] Mario I. Aguilar, "Postcolonial African Theology in Kabasele Lumbala," 307.

[99] Final Communique´," Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17–23, 1977, Accra, Ghana, in *African Theology en Route*, 195.

African Christian theology and African theology can be used interchangeably.[100] Agbeti points to a clear-cut difference between African Christian theology and African traditional theology. African Christian theology is Christocentric and Traditional African theology is theocentric.[101] Kwesi views African traditional in terms of a *praeparatio evangelica*, a preparation for the announcement of the good news.[102] The moment this question was resolved, theologians were now ready to move on to more substantive theological matters in a systematic way. At the core of this systematization was the role of Christ as the center of a revelation within an African context.[103]

Aguilar cites two theologians who have articulated African theology by proposing two Christological paradigms that have become important in liturgical theology and systematic theology. Charles Nyamiti has labored for a more systematic and dogmatic Christology within the African discourse on Christ. He argues for the priority of Knowing "who Christ is in himself" before one can ask the question: "who is Christ for the African?" Nyamiti's effort is applauded, for it allows for familiarity with Church Tradition and dialogue with other non-African contexts.

Unlike Nyamiti, Kabasele Lumbala prefers a less universalistic approach. It should be possible to generate theology from the richness of culture. He favors a theological project that seeks to articulate an African Christology from the Christian experience of community in a given African locality. Such theology is expressed through

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[100] John Mbiti, "Some Currents of African Theology," in African and Asian Contributions to Contemporary Theology: Report, ed. J. Mbiti (Geneva: Bossey, 1976), 6–17.

[101] John K. Agbeti, "African Theology: What It Is," Presence 5.5–8, cited in Mario I. Aguilar, "Postcolonial African Theology In Kabasele Lumbala," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), 307.

[102] Dickson Kwesi and Paul Ellingworth, eds., *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1971), 180.

[103] Mario I. Aguilar, "Postcolonial African Theology in Kabasele Lumbala," 307.

liturgical rites. Such rites event Christ. Kabasele's model aims to uphold sacramentality by bridging the European division between the human and the sacred. He argues that human space is also the space in which God acts and where Christ is likely to appear more meaningful.[104]

Did adaptation, inculturation, and liberation theologies represent the new ordering that requires deconstruction? Proponents of African Theologies of Reconstruction (ATOR) emerged in the 1990s, following the end of the cold war in 1989 as African theologians sought to reflect on the changing global patterns and their relevance to Africa.[105] Its proponents insist that ATOR has not replaced other paradigms such as inculturation, liberation, market-theology, and reconciliation, among others. In its inclusive approach, ATOR embraces all of them, so that liberation can now fit within the more dominant reconstructive motif, the same way reconstruction theology has been done, since the 1960s within liberation theology.[106]

At an All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) gathering in early 1990, Jesse Mugambi, the undisputed founder of ATOR, suggested a shift in African theological emphasis from the Exodus motif to a reconstructive motif.[107] He found in the figure of Nehemiah and not Moses, a representative of where Africa was in the 1990s and where it needed to be. "Nehemiah can illuminate the nations emerging from the ashes of racism,

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[104] Francois Kabasele Lumbala, *Celebrating Jesus Christ in Africa: Liturgy and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998), 7ff.

[105] Julius Gathogo, "Genesis, Methodologies, and Concerns of African Theology of Reconstruction" in *Theologia Viatorum* 32 (1), (2008): 7.

[106] Julius Gathogo, "Genesis, Methodologies, and Concerns of African Theology of Reconstruction," 7.

[107] J N K. Mugambi, *African Christian Theology*, 36.

colonial domination, and ideological branding."[108] This motif should be able to guide nations as they shake off neocolonialism and as they seek to create free and democratic societies grounded on a postcolonial African worldview devoid of pessimism and a feeling of defeatism.

Theology of reconstruction distinguishes itself from the more adversarial approaches of liberation theologies and the self-assertive approaches of inculturation theologies. Mugambi calls for reciprocity in which everyone is invited to participate in the inauguration of a new social order. Reconstruction is thus a call for the restoration of relationships. It calls for a renewed proclamation of the gospel in its cosmic scope of a God reconciling the world. Reception of this good news must evoke in the hearer the Nehemiah's response: "Let's rebuild" Neh. 2:17). Maluleke sees reconstruction theology as a program of action for the Church. It is a missionary theology—a kind of program for Christian witness. Discovering for the first time that Mugambi had been placed in a concentration camp during colonialism and yet had never spoken about it, Magesa observes:

> It seems to me that he has chosen to reconstruct this profound personal experience he underwent as a young man in line with the theological project he proposes. For him, the way of reconstruction constitutes the Wisdom of Jesus, the wisdom…not of bitterness at injuries suffered but of befriending and winning over the oppressor, in other words reconstructing relationships.[109]

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[108] J.N.K. Mugambi, *Christian Theology, and Social Reconstruction* (Nairobi: Acton, 2003), 128.

[109] Laurenti Magesa, A Portrait of J.N.K. Mugambi's Theological Project of Reconstruction: A review of article of Theologies of Liberation and Reconstruction: Essay in honor of Professor J.N.K. Mugambi, Ph.D., ed. Isaac M. Mtwase and Eunice Kamaara *Studies in World Christianity* 19, no. 2 (2013), 184.

ATOR has paid attention to several methodological considerations. To begin with, it engages historical methods without succumbing to a "dictatorship of the past."[110] Besides, ATOR is ecumenical[111]and pan-Africanist without being a racialist pan-Africanist. Moreover, ATOR is multidisciplinary. It calls for dialogues with social sciences as well as with philosophical and cultural-anthropological resources in Africa.[112]Mugambi advocates for the use of ancestral sources, arguing that such will enrich ATOR articulations.

Furthermore, ATOR advocates storytelling as a means of communication that links the history of a people from their origins to the present. Finally, ATOR calls for contextual theologizing, arguing that social, ecclesiastical, historical, or geographical contexts or the environment consciously or unconsciously influence theological articulation.[113] Among the issues that ATOR addresses include human rights, legal reforms, environmental health, deconstruction of patriarchy, violence in all its manifestations, HIV-AIDs, among others.[114]

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[110] Kä Mana, L'Afrique va-t-elle mourir? Bousculer l'imaginaire Africaine: Essai d'éthique politique (Paris: Cerf, 1991), 79.

[111] Samuel Kobia, "The Next Fifty" in *A Vision of Christian Mission* ed. Margaret Crouch (Nairobi: NCCK, 1993), 232.

[112] Julius Gathogo, "Genesis, Methodologies, and Concerns of African Theology of Reconstruction," 12. See also Julius Gathogo, "The Use of Ancestral Resources in Combating HIV and AIDS: Mundurume's Task," *Journal of Constructive Theology, South Africa*, 131(2008): 3-20.

[113] Gathogo, "Genesis, Methodologies, and Concerns of African Theology of Reconstruction," 13.

[114] Gathogo, "Genesis, Methodologies, and Concerns of African Theology of Reconstruction," 13.

Research Design: Critical Realist Methodology, Method, and Strategies

Critical Realism (CR)

Critical realism gained prominence in the 1970s and 1980s and has been a dominant approach for nearly 30 years.[115] A distinctive feature of realism in general and critical realism in particular, is its insistence that objective or specific knowledge of the world is humanly unreachable. Instead, we should be content with a perspectival outlook, which allows for the possibility of valid alternative accounts of phenomena. Within social science, critical realism advocates for research whose focus is not just on how the world is, but also how the world ought to be."[116] Such science is positive and normative. It hopes to describe, explain, and judge, and in the end, offer prescriptions for how things ought to be. This normative orientation is because the world is different from our subjective proclivities. [117]

Critical realism emerged during the scientific crisis. Modernism had given rise to objectivist (positivist, deductive, and empiricist) approaches, while postmodernism gave rise to subjectivists (social constructionist, inductive, and interpretive) approaches. Some scholars attribute the scientific crisis to some forms of positivism and too strong interpretivist, or postmodern turn that favor description and hermeneutics at the cost of explanation.[118] While some scholars argue that both modernism and postmodernism promoted a "forgetfulness of being" and that exhorted their followers "not to talk about

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[115] Patrick Baert, *Social Theory in the Twentieth Centur*y (Washington: New York University Press, 1998), 189-190.

[116] Albert Sayer, *Realism, and Social Science* (London: Sage, 2000), 47.

[117] G. Lakoff. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 265.

[118] Baert, *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century*, 189-190.

the world, but to talk about your talk of the world,"[119] postmodernism makes claims that are closely related to critical realism.

Critical realism seeks a "re-vindication of ontology."[120] It retains an ontological realism while accepting a form of epistemological relativism or constructivism. Its task, according to Roy Bhaskar, is to demonstrate three key elements: (i) That there is an objective and an intransitive world that is an open system, stratified and differentiated (Ontological Realism); (ii) Our knowledge of the world is transitive, contextual, fallible, and relative (Epistemological Relativity); and (iii) Humans can produce in particular contexts, persuasive arguments for preferring one set of beliefs, one set of theories about the world to another (Judgmental Rationality).[121] For Bhaskar, these three represent three moments in a movement that yields not only a knowledge of being but also a reconciliation of the same: it is a movement from a multiplicity of being, through change, to a reconciliation of being or solidarity.[122]

Ontological Realism. Critical realism tells us to think of all science as learning about what exists (ontology), which is not the same as our knowledge of it (epistemology). Critical Realism argues that almost all the world's "entities" and "events" (as well as the "relations"' within and among entities and events) exist independently of one's identification (or knowledge).[123] To suggest otherwise is to fall

[119] Roy Bhasker, *The Order of Natural Necessity: A Kind of Introduction to Critical Realism*, ed. Gary Hawke (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2017), 11.

[120] Bhaskar, *The Order of Natural Necessity*, 11.

[120] Bhaskar, *The Order of Natural Necessity*, 14.

[121] Bhaskar, *The Order of Natural Necessity,* 47.

[122] Bhaskar, *The Order of Natural Necessity,* 94; See also Christian Smith, *Real Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 8.

[123] S. Fleetwood, *Critical Realism in Economics: Development and Debate* (London: Routledge, 2005), 198.

into the epistemic fallacy" of modernism which though not denying an extra-mental world, seem to insinuate that only the observable, perceptible, measurable, and quantifiable phenomena are real. Sousa accuses postmodernists in general of being ambiguous when it comes to making claims of an ontology. Nearly all admit the centrality of discourse in the discursive construction of the world. Some, however, opine that the world is entirely socially constructed by the human mind, while others endorse what Fleetwood refers to as "weak social constructivist'" or position in which only a part of the world is socially constructed, thus admitting the existence of an extra-discourse universe.[124]

Ontology is explicitly inclusive. It encompasses everything that has causal power or the ability to "bring about change."[125] The extra-mental reality has causal power that results in our knowledge of it. In reverse, our knowledge of the extra-mental universe has causal power in the sense that our knowledge of it, believed to be correct, can be used to bring about societal transformation. Arguably, ontology would also include errors and mistakes since such do possess causal powers as well, which can be used to harm the society or may become an occasion to pursue good and truthful knowledge. In its inclusiveness, therefore, and even when we must guard against the danger of conflating epistemology with ontology, epistemology is part of the ontology.[126]

The world contains entities, events, and relations. However, the primacy of entities must be presumed. Relationships originate, develop, and are sustained and terminated by entities. Events result whenever the power inherent in entities is affected,

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[124] Filipe J., Sousa, "Meta-Theories in Research: Positivism, Postmodernism, and Critical Realism" (February 1, 2010): 1-35. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1594098.

[125] Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, 48.

[126] Smith, *Real Religion*, 8.

either by action or inaction of other entities or through the entity's exercise or lack of exercise of its powers. Entities include "material," "ideal," "social," or "artifactual" things.[127] Every entity consists of a set of ‘‘causal powers and liabilities.” The universe operates by a configuration of causal mechanisms that either reinforce or counteract one another. Configurations come about whenever entities combine their forces to bring about a specific event within a given set of conditions. The universe is an open system that can neither be predetermined nor is complete. For Bhaskar, the world includes not just what is but also what could be.[128] “Emergent powers of an entity emerge from its interaction with other entities.[129]

Two types of relationships obtain both within and between entities. Entities are either necessarily or contingently related. Sayer captures the distinction between necessity and contingency as between “‘‘what must be the case’’ and ‘‘what can be the case,’’ respectively.”[130] Given the open nature of the world and world systems, necessary relationships tend to be rare. Events, in particular, can only be contingently related, for no constant conjunction of events can be found in the world.[131] Critical realism distinguishes between the real, the actual, and the empirical. The real is what exists. When causal mechanisms are activated, either from inside or by an external power, the real becomes actual. The actual is what happens in space and time and can be experienced empirically.

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[127] Sousa, Meta-Theories in Research, 35-50.

[128] Roy Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (London: Verso.1986), 209.

[129] Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 66.

[130] Sayer, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach* (London: Routledge, 1984), 104-105.

[131] Smith, *Real Religion*, 9.

The actual is much more than the empirical. Neither the actual nor the empirical is identical or is exhaustive of the real.[132]

Epistemological Relativity. Critical realism is committed to the relatively autonomous existence of social reality and our investigations into the nature of it. Epistemological relativity acknowledges that our knowledge of such reality is, however, historically, socially, and culturally conditioned. In other words, the world is knowable only through particular and historically fleeting descriptions. Moreover, in the absence of criteria of rationality outside of historical time, a critical realist acknowledges the fact that he is only one among many standpoints and cannot, therefore, claim privileged access to reality.[133]

Positivists and postmodernists subscribe to a concept-dependent and a concept-determined world, respectively. Critical realism argues that even though the world is independent of our knowledge of it, it is nonetheless knowable through human discourse.[134] Concept-dependence applies particularly to non-material such as the social world. Social entities and events have meanings that people create and share through language.[135] Those of the natural world, however, are inherently "meaningless" since their being is not dependent on their meaning. In other words, they are not concept-dependent. Given this difference, Sayer suggests a single and double "hermeneutic" on natural science and social science, respectively. While the sharing of meaning in the natural sciences happens within the scientific communities exclusively, in social science,

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[132] Smith, *Real Religion*, 8.
[133] Smith, *Real Religion*, 8.
[134] S. Fleetwood and S. Ackroyd, eds. *Critical Realist Applications in Organization and Management Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.
[135] Sayer, *Method in Social Science,* 104-105.

the same happens within communities of scholars and researchers and also within their objects of study or the social entities themselves.[136]

Social phenomena, once constructed, gain increasing independence from the agents responsible for its reproduction over time, and scholars and researchers who possibly inquire about it. Sayer writes: "To acknowledge that most social phenomena are concept-dependent is not to imply, in idealist fashion, that they are dependent on concepts alone, for it takes more than thinking to produce social institutions and practices.''[137] Despite the world's mind-independence (absolute in the natural world, relative in the social world), the human mind is not "world-independent." When one looks at or perceives the world, some sort of preunderstanding is always present. Critical realism assumes that human observation is theory-laden or ''conceptually mediated,'' instead of the theory-neutral observation postulated by positivism.[138]

The relationship between knowledge and the world is not one of ''correspondence'' or ''mirroring'' aimed at absolute Truth. It is not merely contemplative or passive but somewhat interactive and characterized by (a degree of) practical adequacy. Knowledge, besides describing and explaining (hence enabling reference to) and constructing in part the world, informs and guides practice within the world. So, referential, performative, and practical functions of knowledge are crucial. Knowledge and practice are "reciprocally confirming'" as each both legitimates and is

[136] Sayer, *Method in Social Science*, 105.

[137] Albert Sayer, "Why Critical Realism?" in *Critical Realist Application in Organization and Management Studies*, eds. S. Ackroyd and S. Fleetwood (London: Routledge, 2004), 19, fn. 9).

[138] Sayer, "Why Critical Realism?" 19.

legitimated by the other. Given reciprocal confirmation, changes in knowledge and practice usually go hand in hand.[139]

Judgmental Rationality (Meta-Reality). Critical Realism endorses the epistemic relativism characteristic of postmodernism. However, it does not subscribe to its judgmental relativism. Our cognition of the world may be perspectival, but critical realism asserts the possibility of adjudicating between two conflicting accounts to find the one account that is more plausible than others. It depends on "the belief that with time, research effort, and good, reasoned arguments about the best available evidence, it is indeed possible to advance human knowledge about reality and how it works."[140] One way such determination becomes possible is by the feedback that results in our intervention in the world. Postmodernists' relativism, which abhors consensus and promotes dissensus, stands in the way of any such determination.[141]

Critical realism relies on a form of abstraction that does not seek to explain the world's multiplicity by ''reducing'' it to one of its multiple constituents. It advocates for 'retroduction''(''abduction''), a mode of inference in which postulates or recalls a causal mechanism that may explain the phenomenon under investigation. Lawson provides an insightful description of retroduction:

> If the deduction is illustrated by the move from the general claim that 'all ravens are black' to the particular inference that the next one seen will be black, and induction by the move from the particular observation of numerous black ravens to the general claim that 'all ravens are black,' retroductive or abductive reasoning

[139] Sousa, Meta-Theories in Research, 67.
[140] Smith, *Real Religion*, 16.
[141] Sayer, *Method in Social Science,* 104.

is indicated by a move from the observation of numerous black ravens to a theory of a mechanism intrinsic to ravens which disposes them to be black.'[142]

The goal of critical realism research is to describe and explain multiplicity in the world. The preferential test for research is ‘‘triangulation,’’ that is, the simultaneous use of diverse techniques (e.g., direct observation, interviews, documentary analysis, and action research). When researchers achieve a sound knowledge of the nature of causal powers and configurations and their efficacy, they create the possibility of "highly qualified" predictions about the likelihood of the occurrence of a particular event. Critical realism dispenses with ‘‘disciplinary parochialism’’ and its close relative ‘‘disciplinary imperialism. Instead, critical realism favors, interdisciplinarity multi-disciplinarity, and intra-disciplinarity.[143]

Critical realism argues for the fallibility of all knowledge, arguing that no knowledge is indisputable and that all accounts remain open to challenge. However, not all knowledge is equally fallible. Embracing such a position would be as dangerous as treating all knowledge as equally valid. In the end and in a world of a duality of being, one in which differences between things result in antagonistic contradictions and horrendous splits, Bhaskar argues in his meta-theory for a more profound level of non-duality. He argues for three senses in which identity is before difference and unity more critical than alienation or split: in the transcendental self, in the constitution of social life, and in being itself.[144]

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[142] T. Lawson, *Economics, and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1997), 24.

[143] Sayer, *Method in Social Science,* 105.

[144] In the transcendental self, for example, Bhaskar differentiates three ways in which to overcome duality (i) Transcendental Identification in Consciousness, (ii) Transcendental Agency, (iii) Transcendental holism. Transcendental identification in consciousness is where one comes to

Critical Realism and Empirical Research Methods

Combining survey questionnaires, focus groups, and in-depth personal interviews offer a more robust approach than utilizing any single empirical research method alone. Surveys and questionnaires are the most common techniques for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative data on a group of people's views from a particular population. A Focus group is a qualitative approach that brings together a group in discussion in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of social issues. Having a big group (more than 15) can limit the ability to get ideas from all participants. In-depth interviews are a qualitative data collection method that involves direct, one-on-one engagement with individual participants. Besides creating rapport with participants, in-depth interviews allow for a more excellent opportunity to ask follow-up questions, probe for additional information, and to circle back to critical questions later.

The use of combined methods in research is a philosophical oxymoron or at least a problematic union.[145] The difference between the worldviews that inform these two is incompatible. Scholars describe the tension between them in terms of "paradigm wars." The qualitative approach builds on constructivism, while the quantitative approach relies on post-positivism. Methodological pragmatists undermine the value and relevance of such confrontations. They argue that in the absence of an intrinsic connection between

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share someone else thoughts in a conversation, use the same words, and perhaps begin to feel and act in the same way. This form of transcendence is necessary for any social interaction or any perception to take place. Transcendental Agency happens when one's thinking of what he or she is doing is no longer a distinct thing from what he is doing. Transcendental holism occurs when one enjoys complete unity with a group of people. A good example is when one is listening to a group or an orchestra, and they are playing in complete harmony with each other. See Bhasker, *The Order of Natural Necessity,* 14.

[145] Joseph A. Maxwell and Kavita Mittapalli, "Realism as a Stance for Mixed Methods Research," in *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, ed. A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (New York: Sage Publications, 2010), 145.

method and a particular worldview, the choice of a particular method is dependent on its utility value and not on its allegiance to a specific philosophical stance.[146]

Maxwell and Mittapali agree with the pragmatists'view that method cannot be tied to any particular paradigm. Indeed, one or more paradigms may inform a method.[147]They observe that the relationship between philosophy and practice is mutually interactive.[148] They decry pragmatists' underestimation of the role of philosophical assumptions on research methods. These assumptions provide constraints on methods but also act as lenses for viewing the world. They help reveal the phenomena by generating insights that otherwise would be difficult to achieve. As real properties of researchers and evaluators, assumptions form what Henry, Julnes, and Mark call "values."[149]

The rationale for combining qualitative and quantitative paradigmatic positions has traditionally been for purposes of complementarity.[150] However, there was still a desire to maintain the distinctiveness of each paradigm. Bergman describes this dichotomization as fallacious, arguing that the only thing it achieves is a "delineating and preserving of identities and ideologies rather than to describe possibilities and limits of a rather heterogeneous group of data collection and analysis techniques."[151] Besides, it is dependent on the assumption that paradigms are generally shared by members of a

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[146] Maxwell and Mittapalli, "Realism as a Stance for Mixed Methods Research," 146.
[147] Maxwell and Mittapalli, "Realism as a Stance for Mixed Methods Research," 145.
[148] Maxwell and Mittapalli, "Realism as a Stance for Mixed Methods Research," 156.
[149] Mark Henry, G. T., and Julnes, *Evaluation: An Integrated Framework for Understanding, Guiding, and Improving Policies and Programs* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 166.
[150] Maxwell and Mittapalli, "Realism as a Stance for Mixed Methods Research," 160.
[151] M. Bergman, "The Straw Men of the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide and their Influence on Mixed Methods Research," in *Advances in Mixed-Method Research,* ed. M. Bergman (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 34.

community of researchers, thereby obscuring intracultural diversity. Diversity can also exist within the same individual.

Critical realism offers support for a mixed-methods approach. First, it can provide an alternative to a Humean approach to science based on a "regularity" theory of causation and a focus on the correlation between variables. It proposes a "process" based approach which understands the processes by which an event occurs as opposed to making a comparison of situations in terms of whether a variable is present or not. However, critical realism does not devalue the importance of variance-based methods. It recognizes that phenomenon has causal powers that may or may not produce regularity and that such powers are also context-dependent.[152]

Also, where quantitative methods neglect mental phenomena: emotions, beliefs, and values, critical realism treats mental entities as real and causative.[153] However, it rejects dualism and the idea of multiple independent realities, arguing instead for a multiplicity of perspectives. A critical realism perspective also legitimates and clarifies the concept of "ideological distortion"—that cultural forms may obscure or misrepresent aspects of the economic or social system or the physical environment.[154]

Moreover, instead of focusing on the procedure for validity, critical realism focuses on the relationship between the claim about the phenomena and the phenomena itself. Critical realism's stance against objective knowledge does not preclude the possibility of testing claims against evidence about the nature of the phenomena. It distinguishes between the type of evidence required for "interpretive" claims and the one

[152] T. Lawson, *Economics and Reality,* 69.
[153] Sayer, Method in Social Science, 30, 60-61.
[154] Sayer, Method in Social Science, 30, 60-61.

required for claims about behavior and relationships between variables. On the same note, critical realism allows for the recognition of other ways of describing and explaining the phenomenon under investigation.[155]

Furthermore, critical realism accords real being to diversity and variation the same way these have come to form the basis of evolutionary biology. Both in its methodology and theory, quantitative research has shown a tendency to subsume diversity by aggregating data across individuals and settings into general models. Qualitative methods engage in the same generalizing exercise when they propose definitions that cut across. Within a dialectical stance proposed by critical realism, qualitative approaches can help to overcome the biases inherent in universalizing, variable-oriented quantitative methods. Conversely, quantitative methods can provide systematic evidence for diversity, and can help to correct a tendency to ignore complexity and to focus on typical characteristics and shared concepts and themes.[156]

Critical Realism and Research Design

Research Focus. Critical realism demands an empirical approach to advance understanding. The perception of corruption in general and land corruption, in particular among Christians in Kenya, can be explored most in-depth within a specific community. The organizing question for this research was: How can faith communities be more engaged in the fight against corruption in contemporary Kenya? Three related sub-questions followed: (i) How are corrupt practices to be viewed within Gĩkũyũ culture?

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[155] W. R. Shadish, T. D. Cook, and D. T. Campbell, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 34.

[156] W. R. Shadish, T. D. Cook, and D. T. Campbell, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*, 34.

(ii) How does culture reenact corrupt practices as well as practices that enhance life among the Gĩkũyũ people? (iii) What practical and strategic course of transformative action do the Gĩkũyũ and Kenyan society as a whole require to fight corruption?

Sample and Sampling Procedure. This study used a purposeful sampling method to recruit participants by intentionally selecting those who fit the criterion of this study. The target group selected was from Small Christian Communities (SCCs) of St. Francis Catholic Church, Ruiru. Ruiru is unique for being both rural and urban. While land corruption is more common in the cities, it is also found in the upcountry. Accordingly, for more balanced feedback, Ruiru was the best fit. Besides, the research was interested in a batter appreciation of the Gĩkũyũ worldview. Ruiru is one of the few parishes that meet this criterion taken together with the previous one. Moreover, although there are many other groups in the Church, some perhaps more active than most SCCs, this research was informed by the fact that until now, SCCs remain the preferred model of being a local Church in East Africa.

In order for qualitative research to get rich, in-depth data, it is necessary to limit the number of research participants. A large number of participants can become unwieldy and diminish the ability to present the complexity of the information shared by participants. To have a large group is also time-consuming when collecting and analyzing data.[157] The sample consisted of members of SCCs from St. Francis of Assisi Ruiru, Kenya. Two hundred survey questionnaires were distributed to 12 of the 22 SCCs constituting the Parish. The a Participant is picked from each of the 12 SCCs for in-depth individual interviews, six men and six women. A focus group interview is conducted with

[157] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th edition* (London: Sage, 2014), 158.

15 participants drawn from the same SCCs. The age of the participants for both the in-depth interview and focus group was from 18 years and above.

Interview and Survey Protocol. The protocol anticipated a semi-structured conversation consisting of five areas. (i) Self-introduction. (ii) understanding and experience of corruption. (iii) the role of culture in the reenactment and mitigation of corrupt practices. (iv) the place of a sacramental vision and how it can inspire a more revised political praxis of anti-corruption. (v) An exploration of practical and strategic courses of transformative action. The goal was to keep the interview conversation as open-ended as possible. Follow-ups such as "Tell me more" to invite the participant to share more their experiences was used.

Data Collection Procedure. The data collection procedure involved a series of activities both in preparation for the data collection and during the actual collection of data. These included (i) contacting the Parish Priest through email and telephone to request for permission to draw samples from the Parish; (ii) extensive library research to identify documentation that would contribute to the objectives of this study; (iii) identification of informants of different categories; (iv) explanation of the objective of the study; (v) participants are signing a consent form expressing their willingness to participate in the interview. The participants were informed on the objective of the study and how he would protect their confidentiality; (vi) scheduling of interviews; (vii) collection of data through note-taking and audio device (vi) transcribing and analyzing of data.

Data Analysis Procedure. The study applied a thematic method of data analysis. It is a method of analyzing qualitative data, usually applied to a set of texts, such as

interview transcripts. Data were carefully examined to identify common themes – topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. These themes are developed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR. GIVING VOICE TO SCCS: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The voice of the participants in the interviews will be presented. The first part will discuss the place of SCCs within African ecclesiology. The missionary ecclesiological model will be critiqued, followed by a discussion on the rise and growth of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as the new way of being Church in Africa. The second part will present the findings based on the five interview questions in the interview protocol: (i) What is the importance of being a member of an SCC? (ii) What is the cultural perception of Corruption? (iii) How does culture contribute to the reenactment of practices of corruption and those opposed to it? (iv) How do cultural anti-corruption practices correlate to the Christian vision? (v) What are some of the practical and strategic courses of transformative that can ensure a corruption-free society in Kenya?

Missionary Ecclesiology and the Quest for a New Way of Being Church

Missionary Ecclesiological Model

Magesa underscores the need for a historical consciousness concerning the development of the Church in East African. In the absence of such, he argues, one is bound to confirm the status quo of the missionary model, and by so doing, frustrate the creativity of the Holy Spirit whose sole mission is to give life where there is none, and to bring about renewal. Endorsing the status quo may also lead to alienation of those who act as agents of renewal, and whose contribution may be invaluable for the Church.[1] The missionary ecclesiological model emerged from an eighteenth and nineteenth-century

[1] Laurenti Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002), 4.

European socio-cultural and scientific environment. It consisted of attitudes of exclusion, imposition, passivity, and individualism.[2]

The model despised expressions of African religiosity, traditional ways of healing, and socializing. It even lobbied the colonial government to legislate against African rituals and practices. It promoted a spirituality that underscored an individual's relationship with God at the expense of social concerns. It was exclusive in its pastoral practice, welcoming to its rituals only baptized Catholics and, in the Eucharist, only those who had been allowed to commune. This praxis operated through a hierarchical structure that forestalled any avenue of communication and dialogue. Passivity and blind obedience were considered virtues proper to a church called to listen and simply obey. According to Magesa, the church enforced doctrine on particular situations without consultation.[3]

This missionary ecclesiological model was a complete departure from an African participatory ontology. Nothing in it had any semblance to the idea at the heart of the African worldview: "I am because we are." It did not fulfill the African desire for communion with God, ancestors, fellow humans, and indeed with the rest of creation. The call for passivity was contrary to the African spirit of palaver. Ritual expression devoid of emotions and physical expressions was entirely foreign. The missionary ecclesiological model promoted a church different from the *ekklesia* of the early Church or even the house Churches in the Pauline corpus. Frustrated and powerless, many people left. Some of them formed their churches, while others reverted to traditional religions.

[2] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 5.
[3] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa,* 6-7.

For those who stayed, their spirituality reflected a double consciousness: the European Christian consciousness, and the African cultural consciousness.[4]

The need to interrogate and overhaul Roman ecclesiology was reflective of a global quest for emancipation from European metrocentricism. Little wonder, the event of the Second Vatican Council coincided with a passionate clamor for independence by European colonies.[5] The Council sought to reinvent a church that was in harmony with a de-Europeanized world, a Church not driven by a grand colonial narrative, but solely by the Spirit of Christ, a Spirit of life, diversity, and accommodation. Many described it as the Council of the Church, *ad intra* in *Lumen Gentium,* and *ad extra* in *Gaudium et Spes.* Three key elements characterized the ecclesiology emanating from the Council's deliberations.[6]

The first was the view of the Church as the People of God.[7] This conception was a departure from a previous one in which emphasis was on the hierarchical structuring of the church. In the new conception, the people of God are constituted purely by God's grace. They become "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation…" (1 Pet. 2:9-10)[8] United, with its head, this entire Mystical Body of Christ, offers him a living sacrifice during the liturgical celebration."[9] Priesthood emerges from the community in

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[4] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 9.

[5] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa,* 9.

[6] John Paul Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish* (Kansas City, Sheed and Ward,1994), 35.

[7] Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, *in Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations,* ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Northport: Costello, 1996), 9-17. See also Michael Amaladoss, "Ecclesial Dimension of Small Christian Communities" *in Small Christian: Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church,* ed. Klaus Krämer and Klaus Vellguth (Quezon City, Philippine: Claretian Publications, 2013), 153.

[8] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 9.

[9] Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium in Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Northport: Costello, 1996), 7.

which it participates. The laity partakes in this participation through "reception of the sacraments, prayer, and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, self-abnegation and active charity."[10] This cohesiveness of the Mystical Body of Christ is evident in the manner in which it quickly averts error and arrives at a consensus in matters of faith and morals.[11]

Besides, Vatican II developed a theology of the local church.[12] Since Trent, the parish had been viewed sociologically and juridically as a territory served by a parish priest responsible for *cura animarum*. The bishop was responsible for a more extensive territory known as the Diocese. Christians living in a given locality were juridically bound to a parish close-by in what came to be known as the parish principle. Absent in this conception of the church was a theology of the community. The church was no more than a collection of individuals engaged in individual piety, a reason cited for the Church's inability to meet the social challenges of the 18th century, occasioned by industrialization, Enlightenment, French revolution, and the secularization resulting from the collapse of the medieval synthesis.[13]

Vandenakker observes early initiatives in the 19th century to develop a theology of the Church in the work of Johann Möhler and at Tübingen Tubingen school.[14] Pope Pius XII's *Mysticis Corporis* of 1943 made similar efforts. In the *ecclesiola* debates of the 1920s, theologians sought to inquire into the theological nature of the Parish. Wintersig questioned the legitimacy of a sociological and juridical view of the Church,

[10] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium,* 10.
[11] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 12.
[12] Michael Amaladoss, "Ecclesial Dimension of Small Christian Communities," 153.
[13] Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish,* 25.
[14] Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish,* 25.

insisting that the Church is a theological reality, with the parish being a microorganism of the Church, especially in the Eucharist.[15] L. Siemar was willing to accept a theological Church, but he attributed the mystery to the overall church and not to the parish. His opposition to ecclesiola centered on the debate on the whole versus the part.[16] Fx Arnold argued that what pertains to the whole applies to the part as well.[17]

This view was to gain full acceptance in the period leading up to Vatican II. Yves Congar compared the diocese to the city and the parish to the family. In the same way, the family is simultaneously the city; the local church is also the universal church.[18] Rahner describes the church in terms of an "event." The act of "eventing" can only be realized concretely and locally in communities gathered around the table of the Lord. The Council made the point that Christ is present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful around their pastor. Such communities are indeed the church. Christ is present in them by whose power and influence the Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.[19]

Moreover, the Council promoted the view of the Church as a communion. The bishops symbolize the unity of local churches, the same way the bishop of Rome symbolizes the unity of the college of bishops.[20] Church, as a communion, has several layers to it. First, the Church is a sacrament, imaging, and disclosing the Trinitarian life.[21]

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[15] Athanasius Wintersig, Le Realisme Mystique de la Paroisse" *La Maison Dieu* 8(1936), 15-26.

[16] L. Siemar, "Pfarregemeinde un Ecclesiola" in *Die Neue Ordnung* 3 (1949), 37-51.

[17] F.X. Arnold, Glaubensverkundigung und Glaubensgemeinschaft (Dusseldorf, Germany, 1955), 20-67

[18] Yves Congar, *Mystery of the Church* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1960), 45-67.

[19] Karl Rahner, "Theology of the Parish" in *The Parish: From Theology to Practice*, ed. Hugo Rahner (Westminster, Maryland, The Newman Press, 1955), 28-26.

[20] Amaladoss, "Ecclesial Dimension of Small Christian Communities," 154.

[21] *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

That makes it both a visible and spiritual reality.[22] Secondly, the Church exists as a sign of communion with God and unity among all men."[23] It is God who facilitates this communion through the Holy Spirit. This communion is not possible without diversity. Accordingly, the Church is a communion of local Churches. [24]

The African Church yearned for a Church that bears the above elements. It thirsted for a Church that feels a sense of empowerment as a priestly people of God, one that is locally situated and rooted, and whose uniqueness and diversity firmly placed inside the communion.[25] Following the Council, but even before it, emerging theologians in the continent began to formulate contextual theologies marked by a more positive view of the African culture and an indigenized Church. During a pastoral visit to Uganda in 1969, Pope Paul VI called for a recovery of the African spirit for a meaningful African Christian praxis.[26] During the Synod on evangelization in 1974, African bishops seemed to agree that the new way of being the Church in Africa will happen and was already happening through the formation of Small Christian Communities (SCCs).[27]

The Rise of SCCs as Locations of an Alternative Ecclesiology

The majority of Christians in Africa inhabit the Sub-Saharan region. This region claims a countless number of languages and cultures. Because of its colonial legacy, it is possible to divide the region into two main linguistic sub-domains. On the one hand, there is the French-speaking West and Central Africa, and on the other, the English-

[22] *Lumen Gentium*, 8.
[23] *Lumen Gentium*, 13.
[24] *Lumen Gentium*, 13; see also Amaladoss, "Ecclesial Dimension of Small Christian Communities,"156.
[25] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 9.
[26] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 9.
[27] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 12.

speaking East and South Africa. Accordingly, it is possible to talk about two stories of the rise and growth of SCCs. Prominent in the English-speaking subdomain is the AMECEA region, comprising of countries of Eastern Africa. Bishops from this region started to imagine SCCs. The Bishops from the parts of French-speaking Africa had already moved in this direction from as early as the 1960s.[28]Vandenakker observes that missing in this early initiative was a complete reception of Vatican II's vision of the Church and recognition of the role of the laity.[29]

In 1973, the Maryknoll Fathers tasked Marie-France Perrin Jassy to undertake a study in North Mara in Tanzania on the way out of a situation in which the Catholic church was losing many of its members to African Independent Churches. In her observation, the size of independent churches tended to be small, neighborhood-based, and with a leadership open to all. She noted that people get more involved if they belong to a group and feel more recognized if the group is small. Because of their large sizes, it was difficult to offer adequate pastoral care in Catholic Parishes. An initial corrective had been to set up outstations and to train Catechists, but this did not help matters. Her report formed the basis for the bishops' push for the formation of SCCs as the new pastoral priority in 1973. In 1976, the formation of SCCs became a pastoral policy, and in 1979 the Bishops sought to intensify awareness to avoid misunderstandings.[30]

The definition of SCCs has been somewhat fluid. Their functions and purpose seem to vary from one place to another. However, it is possible to outline some general

[28] In 1961, the Congolese Zaire Episcopal Conference had approved a pastoral plan to promote "Living Ecclesial Communities," (Communautés Ecclésiales Vivantes de Base. see Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish,* 115.

[29] Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish,* 115.

[30] Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish*, 116.

features that cut across the various local expressions.[31] SCCs function outside the standard parish devotional routine. They are small groups of about 20 households formed by people living in the same neighborhood and who meet regularly in alternative homes outside of the context of Sunday liturgical celebrations. Members of an SCC meet to pray together and to reflect on the liturgical readings. Members also use the gatherings to address common concerns in the community and to plan actions, either focused on the SCC, or the parish. Of utmost importance for SCCs is the desire to promote communion through interpersonal knowledge, participation, celebration, and solidarity.[32]

Orobator points to the objectives of SCCs as a pastoral strategy of evangelization and inculturation, but also as a remedy to the anonymity and impersonality that often defines life in large parish structure.[33] SCCs are cells in which life is highly concentrated, is intensely lived, and generously shared. Healy describes SCCs in terms of a "Church on the move." He alludes to their pneumatological constitution and the force behind their vitality. Noting SCCs' correspondence with African culture, Magesa describes them using the analogy of "clan and extended family."[34] SCCs are proper loci for the realization of the person, always understood in his relationship with the community, the same way the traditional African community was the appropriate place for the fulfillment of "Ubuntu." Constitutive values of Ubuntu promoted by life in the community include,

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[31] Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress, and Prospects," in *Small Christian Communities (One World Theology, Volume 2): Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church*, ed. Klaus Krämer and Klaus Vellguth Quezon City, Philippine: Claretian Publications,2013), 115.

[32] J. Healey and J. Hinton, *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment* (New York 2005), 4-6.

[33] Orobator, "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress, and Prospects," 114.

[34] Laurenti Magesa *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (New York, 2004), 43.

among others, interdependence, harmony, cooperation, and hospitality.[35] Accordingly, the use of the term local in describing SCCs in Africa unambiguously refers to "the aspects of communal belonging, inter-relationship and a shared vision of and responsibility for the mission of the Church in the local context."[36]

As indicated above, SCCs draw their inspiration from the above ecclesiological elements emanating from Vatican II. However, they find a more living testimony in the life of the early Churches. The Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline corpus give accounts of these Churches. The Acts of the Apostles report that the first Christians devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship. They broke bread together, prayed together, and, most importantly, led an egalitarian form of life in which they shared material needs from a shared pool.[37] This egalitarian model was facilitated by a principle in governance, according to which, as Magesa references, a diocese would split if the bishop could no longer remember the names of his flock.[38] In the Pauline corpus, Paul uses the term Church both in singular and plural form.[39] The bishops saw in this a scriptural warrant to call SCCs Churches.[40]

SCCs have received attention both from the local and universal magisterium. The African synod of 1994 underscored the importance and need for SCCs in the parish. SCCs would constitute the parish as a community of communities. SCCs can be immensely helpful in the key areas that formed the theme of the synod: the proclamation

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[35] Orobator, "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress, and Prospects," 114.

[36] Orobator, "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress, and Prospects," 115.

[37] See Acts 2:42, 44-47a.

[38] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 13.

[39] Cf. Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 14:23); 2 Cor 11:8; 12:13; Phil 4:14.

[40] Amaladoss, "Ecclesial Dimension of Small Christian Communities," 157.

of the Good News of Salvation" "Inculturation," "Dialogue," "Justice and Peace," and the "Means of Social Communication." The Second African Synod in 2009 had its theme: "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace." The bishops echoed *Ecclesia in Africa* on the importance of SCCs. In addition to prayer, the faithful in SCCs should strive to acquire sufficient knowledge of the Church doctrine and the social teachings of the Church.[41]

SCCs face several challenges. First, the adoption of cultural and sociological configurations, such as ethnic affiliation or the economic class mentality breeds exclusivity. Besides, in a situation where the parish model continues to dominate, the ecclesiological status of SCCs is interrogated. If the Priest sees SCCs in terms of encroachment of the Parish and his powers, he quickly turns them into clerically supervised communities.[42] Boff propose a dialectical relationship between the two, where neither seeks to absorb the other.[43] Moreover, SCCs tend to be more inward than outward-looking, functioning as prayer groups, having little or nothing to do with the broader social issues. Furthermore, most SCCs attract a predominantly female membership, leaving out the influential male members of the community.[44]

Orobator points to some indicators of bright prospects for SCCs as a manifestation of a Church rising from below. First, SCCs can and have been intentional communities that may not obey societal configurations. Second, if well integrated rather

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[41] John Paul, *Ecclesia in Africa: Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000* (Nairobi, Paulines, 1991), 88.

[42] Orobator, "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress, and Prospects," 118. See also Laurenti Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 14.

[43] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 14.

[44] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 117.

than juxtaposed against the parish, SCCs can facilitate the realization of the new way of being Church. Third, SCCs offer an intimate and compelling organizational unit in which both the proclamation of the Word and celebration of sacraments can happen on an ongoing basis. Some components of this unit do not require clerical supervision. Finally, SCCs provide the best place to actualize the model of the Church as a family where both communion and co-responsibility can thrive.[45]

Presentation of Findings

Context and Demographics

The SCCs under study form part of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Ruiru, in the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. St Francis of Assisi started as an outstation of Kalimoni parish in 1973. Masses were celebrated on the grounds of a nearby police station and later at St. George's primary school. The community was able to purchase a piece of land within Ruiru municipality, and before they could even start building, the celebration of masses shifted to the church grounds. The outstation was granted the status of a parish by the late Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga in 1976 with Fr. Doody, a member of the Holy Ghost Fathers, becoming its first pastor. In order to cut down on cost, the parish community was involved in the construction of the church. Father Doody rented a house close to the Church grounds while construction work was going on.

The Franciscan Capuchins assumed the running of the parish in 1979. They asked Parishioners to choose between Mary Immaculate and St. Francis of Assisi as possible names of the Parish. The majority chose St. Francis while the minority were given the promise that Mary Immaculate would be used for the first outstation branch off from the

[45] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 122.

Parish. Various Priests have served the Parish since its inception. Among them was Fr. Doody, who did the ground-work of the parish Church, Fr. George Bezzina, who built the Parish hall and initiated the idea of self-help group (Ruiru Catholic Church Members Development Fund), and the late Bishop Francis Baldacchino, who contributed immensely towards the building of the Church, but also in the evangelization of the area. Others are Andrew Mwaura, the first indigene and a parishioner himself (1996-1998), Fr. Francis Jabedo (1998-2003), Fr. Martin Njiraini (2003-2009), Fr. Paul Sila (2009-2015), Fr. Vincent Shumila (2015-2018), and Fr. Charles Njoroge, who is the current pastor.

Over the past 30 years, the Parish has experienced tremendous growth. As a testimony to its growth and expansion, it gave birth to three other parishes in 2012, two of them taken over by the Diocese, and one given to the Religious Order of the Carmelites. Currently, the Parish has ten outstations, each of which can have at least one mass every Sunday.[46] There is mass every day at the center, and four on the weekend: one in English, one in Kikuyu, and two in Swahili. Three resident priests serve the Parish with outside help on weekends from the Franciscan house of formation, which is about 45 minutes away.

The growth of this parish is due to the phenomenon of SCCs. The Swahili name for SCCs is *Jumuiyas*, which means a gathering of people. The Kikuyu translation for the same is *Miakis*, which means fire. The leadership of SCCs includes a chairperson, a vice-chair, a secretary, and a treasurer. One of the officials represents the SCC at the Parish level. The parish priest is the Chaplain of all SCCs. There are twenty-two

[46] St. Andrew Gitothua, St. Monica, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Marti de Porres, St. Paul Mukuyu, St. James Jacaranda, and St. Gabriel Mchana.

Jumuiyas currently making the Parish.[47] Members meet once a week to reflect on the lectionary readings, respond to the material and spiritual needs of members, offer prayers for the needs of the community and plan liturgies and other celebrations at the parish level. They also engage in works of charity within and outside the communities, organize occasional talks and seminars, plan days of recollection, and make financial contributions for their small group and the Parish.

The following tables show gender distribution, the Maritus status of participants, and level of education.

Table 1

Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	25	24
Female	65	76
Total	85	100

The majority of SCCs members tend to be women (Table 1). This preponderance is a common phenomenon in most SCCs across East Africa. Men are content with attending Mass and later, perhaps, other non-religious men's groups. Low attendance in SCCs among men is also reflective of a growing trend that has seen a decline in Church attendance among men.

[47] St Gilbert, Blessed of Allamano, Our lady of Guadalupe, St. Martha, St. Damian, St Joseph, St Rita of Cascia, St Justin the Martyr, St. Bruno, St. Raphael, St. Barbara, St. John Bosco, St. Blaise, St. Anselm, St Simeon, St. Crispino, St. Ambrose, St Patrick, St. Cupertino, St Joan of the Arc, St Sebastian, and St. Adelaide.

Table 2

Maritus Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married in the Church	43	51
Married but not in the Church	25	29
Never Married	17	20
Total	85	100

Sacramentally married persons feel more comfortable in SCCs. Some Parishes have a policy where only those married in the Church can assume positions of leadership. The married but not in the Church (usually through customary law) hope to regularize their unions. Regularization is more straightforward if both spouses are open to the idea and more challenging if one is not ready. For some members, it is for this reason that they joined SCCs. For the conferment of sacraments and other spiritual benefits, one has to demonstrate that they belong to a certain SCC.

Table 3

Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
University degree	25	30
College level	30	35
High school or less	30	35
Total	85	100

The majority of members of SCCs have high school and above education. Being a satellite town of the city of Nairobi, Ruiru has traditionally attracted people who have some formal or technical training to work in industries, in government offices, or private businesses. In rural areas, matters tend to be different where the majority do not go beyond high school.

Benefits of SCCs

Table 4

How has being a member of SCC contributed to Christian growth?

Benefits of SCCs	Frequency	Percentage
Very much	80	94
Some	3	4
Little	2	2
Total	85	100

On the importance of SCC, the majority said it was highly beneficial. This benefit had several aspects to it. For some, attending SCC had contributed to personal and family spiritual growth. Maki says*:*

> *I feel the growth that it has had in my life in that some prayers I was not able to pray I can now pray. It has also enabled me to heal emotional wounds that I could not overcome before, and I have felt a step of growth in my spiritual life*.

Aleki Observes:

> *Initially, we were not even used to praying together. We learned how to pray together, and the children can now recite the whole rosary. They cannot even*

agree to eat before praying. There before, not praying was just a regular occurrence, and we would just pray individually before going to sleep. After joining the small Christian community, it became mandatory to pray as a family, bringing us together and closer.

Second, participating in SCCs leads to transformation for witnesses. Members feel empowered to be able to reach out to the world through a credible life witness and by way of proclamation. Beka says:

It has because when we meet, we discuss the Saints, and if we align our ways with the teachings that please God, we are following the ways of the Saints before us. That will help me attract others in terms of faith and in living a clean life. Being a member of our SCC has "... helped me to be fulfilled Christian and to know how I can live in the Lord and to distance myself from wrongdoing. Even when people see me, they can identify me with a positive change. It has helped my family and me.

Thirdly, respondents noted the role of SCCs in the promotion of community growth and personal relationships. SCCs are supposed to be small enough where people know one another and where people feel free enough to express their opinions and share their fears and needs. The majority rated communication in SCCs as useful. The parish has invested in the training of leaders who can listen, guide, empathize and collaborate. Those who thought communication was poor alluded to the use of other languages other than Swahili by some members. Others alluded to the domination of conversations by some members.

Table 5

How would you rate communication in your SCC?

Communication	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	36	42
Good	34	40
Poor	15	18
Total	85	100

Maga says:

> *The best part of the small Christian community is that you attend together with the people that live close to you, the neighbors, so you know each other, and you can help each other, and anyone with a need can present it at the meeting. It helps us grow in our faith. The older adults we have around us like grandma, we can visit and help them as a small Christian community. We pray with them and remember them as we are praying for needs and include them in charity work within the small Christian community.*

For Stevo:

> *… because of the size and the population since you all know each other. You get to discuss more issues on a personal level rather than in the Church because in the Church the priest will tend to generalize issues, but in the small Christian community when you take a particular topic, you can dive deeper into it and brainstorm because you have enough time and the issue is personal.*

Finally, some saw SCCs as the right place for nurturing vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Steve says:

> *My experience has inspired me to go deeper into the catholic faith and to continue aspiring to be maybe like a priest*.

Perception of Corruption

Table 6

Corruption is a significant issue in Kenya

Prevalence of corruption	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	55	88
Agree	25	4
Disagree	5	2
Total	85	100

Although a high number of respondents strongly feel that corruption is a significant issue in the country, Those who just agree corruption is a problem think the media give it too much prominence at the expense of other issues such as poverty and education. The understanding of corruption was also diverse. Some understand corruption in general spiritual and moral terms as any behavior that does not accord with good Christian morals. For Beka:

> *... corruption is any behavior that runs contrary to "cleanliness," which is the essence of Christian calling and the life of saints.*

Corruption is also a violation of the natural order and processes. Majo says:

I can say corruption is whenever somebody does not do something according to how it should be done. Everything has its process, so whenever you go off hand, and you do not fulfill what you are supposed to do, you are corrupt. In our country, most people understand corruption as when you give a bribe or steal public property or when you do not follow processes that you are supposed to follow. That is what people understand as corruption. However, in my view, corruption is everywhere. You can even be more corrupt that the person you are pointing out to be corrupt because you did not carry your burdens on how you are supposed to. As a woman or a man, you should take you place and responsibilities in the family. That is the highest degree of corruption, which eventually grows and becomes other forms of corruption.

Within such broad categorization, failure to attend to one's family responsibility is the worst form of corruption. Mbuga says:

As a woman or a man, you should take your place and responsibilities in the family. That is the highest degree of corruption, which eventually grows and becomes other forms of corruption.

The majority of respondents preferred to situate corruption in public goods and services delivery. Corruption is an abuse of power by public servants. Judo says:

I think corruption is stealing of funds; it might not only be funds but public amenities either by leaders. It is also the misuse of community funds. Corruption is also asking for bribes from police officers or when I have to give something small for me to get a service in a ministry or a hospital. So, for me, corruption involves all that.

Some respondents observed that corruption goes beyond the delivery of public goods and services. It happens among ordinary citizens in their daily exchanges. People move beacons on land to enlarge their pieces at the expense of their neighbors. More scandalous is when corruption happens in the Church as among officials and leaders. Maga gives the example of offering:

> *A friend of my husband told him of how he came across some Church leaders from St. Francis with many coins that he presumed were from the offering, and they were drinking. They were three, all Church leaders, and had many coins – so he could only conclude that it was Church offering. Rumors started spreading up about the matter, and later on, it blew up when one of them was caught by a sister who sends a friend to warn him because he used to go right to the tithe box and steal the money. He had a master key. CCTV cameras captured him, leading to his arrest. He and his family could not continue to attend Church.*

Lewo cites the case of how greed and avarice sometimes determine the delivery of religious services:

> *I am not going to mention names, but from where I am as a leader, I have seen priests who want to celebrate masses in places where people are financially stable as opposed to impoverished areas. One gives 1,000, and another Church can give 10,000. Yes. Even in the small Christian communities. Some priests would not want to go to a particular Small Christian Community because it is in a slum. They want to go to estates because there they can get good money.*

Greed also determines how building projects and contracts in the Church are assigned.

Ndicho observes:

> *Yes, corruption in the Church is there, especially among the leaders. You can see that in constructions going on the leader might keep a tender or a contract to himself instead of advertising it in the Church for everyone to hear. I have seen a lot of that happen because I sometimes work with 'jua kali.' My friend had got a job to construct Church windows, and when doing the quotation, he knew somebody from the Church. After showing it to him, the Church member showed him up to where he should present his quotation, and they agreed that he would get 'something small.'*

Respondents gave examples of their own experiences of corruption. Judo spoke of her family's experience in court:

> *My family has a court case going on in which we are suing someone for stealing our plot of land. We have been to court many times, and every time the case is mention, either the defendant is absent, or the file is missing. As soon as we step outside frustrated, someone always comes to tell us that things could change if we are willing to speak with the judge or prosecutor who could rule in our favor. Nevertheless, we know that means bribing. So, the case cannot go on until someone pushes it, and then pushing is in terms of money, which is something we have agreed not to do. However, now we have suffered for that since the people we have taken to court have been doing it.*

Githe tells of his experience when he was joining high school:

> *In my context, the first time I saw it was when I was joining form one. I got 333 marks. We were among the first students taking the examinations that we out of*

500 instead of 700. So, we were the first lot and at school. I was in most of the students who did not pass very well. I was among those that passed, and the admission letters came in. That was when I realized that having gotten the 333 marks, I was among the top five students, and I never got a letter of admission to high school. After following up with mum, we realized that some wealthy parents would bribe the headteacher to give letters of kids who score high to their kids who did not score well. That is what happened to me. So, I had to go around looking for a school which could admit me. I found one eventually.

Maga tells of the experience of her family during elections in her SCC:

It was when we were conducting our elections. My husband was contesting. As we were walking home one evening, we overheard some people gossiping about us, that we have so many children, and we should therefore not be elected. I did not know whether that was because we had a lot in our hands, or it was presumed we do not know how to manage our households. We quit the small Christian community. We even moved to a new location, and for a while, we were without an SCC. Later we rejoined during an election period, which was a coincidence. Some of the people who knew my husband wanted him to be a leader. He agreed but vowed not to corruption or other wrongdoings if he was elected. He would say it point-blank. Some people wanted to vote for him, and they campaigned. Others, however, feared because of their wicked ways and did not want him in the position. The priest ordered a repeat of the election. It even raised concern over the reason for having a Small Christian Community. Some people are wicked. He lost the election.

On the effects of corruption, respondents said that it denies justice to the needy and the poor in the society and make them more miserable. Githo cites the case where bursary funds go to underserving kids. As a result, the future of poor kids jeopardized, and the cycle of poverty becomes perpetual. Without the prospect of a better future, these children are made vulnerable to exploitation, crime, or other corrupt activities. He says:

> *Most of them are given to friends and not the right people. Even if there are local day schools around for the poor kids to find admission, their morale is dead, and their parents are demoralized and them not getting the proper attention to utilize what was in them. They end up failing, but they were gifted with knowledge though whatever school they attend, they never got to practice that and get the right guidance to become a better person. Corruption in the education sector has made able students not pursue the right courses, and such is the process. The cycle continues to their smaller brothers and sisters, and they have no one to look up to and uplift them*

Cultural Reenactment of Corrupt Practices

Table 7

Does African culture help in the promotion of practices of corruption?

Culture and Practices of corruption	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	6
Agree	30	35
Disagree	50	59
Total	85	100

The majority of respondents are quick to deny that traditional African culture has anything to do with corruption. This group attributes corruption exclusively to influences from the West. Among those who think culture influences corruption, some see the hybridity of culture and Western influences. On culture and corruption, several respondents point to patriotism as one way through which corrupt practices play out. Regarding male privilege as a cause of corruption, Maga says:

> *You hear men say, "If I want a certain lady, I can have her because I am a man." They can survey and see that a particular piece of land is good, and they can pass through the backdoor and grab it. Most of the time, we see that the men were positioned higher in our traditions, and they could hold themselves higher than others. The position of the man in the African community can contribute a lot to corruption. No, that is not even respect; it was as though the men were special than the rest. Women and children were seen as property. The male had much power, and I think it has contributed to corruption.*

Kinship was another traditional value that respondents cited as a potential loophole for corruption. Kinship is expressed negatively through nepotism and tribalism. Stevo observes that men are especially under intense pressure to take care of their kinsfolk:

> *An example of a guy he is well up, but he has about ten brothers, and in Africa, we take care of each other. He may be having enough for himself, but he needs to take care of the rest. Those values of wanting to take care of the siblings can it in a way, encourage corruption. Sometimes you can meet all of your family's needs. However, if you start catering for others with the same resources, it will not be*

enough. You find yourself looking for a job or contract for siblings, and you might find yourself using illegal means. Do you think there is something? Especially in government institutions and parastatals that happens a lot. People will tend to give contacts and tenders to their families. However, there is also another factor of the male aspect in the traditional setting. The man is usually the pillar of the home. So as much as I do not have enough, I have to be perceived as having something. You just do not walk around without something. So that will also encourage. I think what corruption it does is needs a certain kind of a vent or desperation

Mbuga observes:

According to the wakwitu mentality, 'you cry for what is yours' If for instance, your relative is caught by police and you know they generally do not have good behavior, you cannot agree to let them be locked up in jail. There is that element of blood and 'my people.' It is said that 'a child born is not thrown away' so you cannot let your blood suffer.

Participants also mentioned gift-giving. In itself, it is not a corrupt practice, but it can become corrupt. Majo observes the example of marriage where such abuse takes place :

So, a long time ago, people could exchange things, and it would just be like gifting, and today, that term 'returning a hand' or gifting is corruption. The institute of marriage in the African setting makes it look like a woman is bought and not a gift. People demand too much and see themselves as superior to the other party. A long time ago, there was something that was set aside like cows to be given to the bride's family by the elders. Now people demand too much. They

might break up because you lack something to do. I remember one young man who looked prosperous, and on arrival, they were told to give additional cows. They took the cows, but apparently, the elders needed the value of the cows, not the cows themselves.

On the role of Western Culture on corruption, Maka references the creation of economic classes as an explanation for corruption:

You find that someone can pretend to be of a specific class because of the Western influence they may have. They may be educated and all, but they see themselves as untouchable because of their influence. They change even how they talk and lose all their African morals toward people and even their parents. It brings barriers where people cannot access some things because the two classes are divided. People suffer, and it also brings about the visible divisions even between family and between parents and children. People end up getting curses from the country and their families. The rich lack worth for the poor and maltreat them because they do not see value in them as a person. Even your parents, you lose worth for them as people and only treat them right because they are your parents.

Stevo seems to think that Westernism has mainly influenced our politics and its all about self-preservation:

One I think in politics. I think we got the wrong idea of politics in Kenya. Because we see people get into power to protect their interests and not to serve the people, unlike in other places, for example, in Lilongwe, the politicians are servants. You get into politics to serve the people. Yes. Malawi. I have no idea. From the times of Kamuzu Banda, they serve the people. Here people get into power to amass

more wealth. That is their understanding of public service and that we inherited from the West. Among the British, the Royal family, when you look at how the structure is, you know whenever there is power, there is wealth. Wealth is a symbol of power. So, people get to those seats to amass wealth to the point of even taking people's lives if you cross their paths

For Alek, our problem is simply wanting to ape western lifestyles, some of which we cannot afford:

I think it is our copycat syndrome because when these white men came, they would drive big cars and they would own nice things, so we tried to copy the lifestyle, and as much as I want to drive such a car and live in such a house, I might become too ambitious about it and engage in corruption because I do not want anything less than what I have seen. Without the means, but I want it within a certain timeline, you are forced to engage in corruption and steal in order to acquire it. The nature of Africans copying white people's lifestyles makes them want to get rich fast. Yes. I can also support that we have the constitution, which we follow that was framed by them, and though we have tried to change it, we still use the same style. There comes a time where if one is a leader of a certain area. They are basically in control over everything. Such leadership style is money-based. We inherited it from the colonialists and could contribute a lot to corruption. Traditionally, leaders were not elected. People chose them because of their age and wisdom. In today's setting, you have to have power and to be on top and be a "Sonko" for people to elect you.

Lewo thinks that this arouses competition hence the need to be corrupt:

Competition because we want to be like them. So, when they have their railway, we also want ours. We end up getting something doing the same job, but it is substandard. We do things without even knowing the need. For example, one can build a road because others have built and because one wants to compete. The thing will end up not helping because we do not even know how to use it. People who invest in such want to get something out of it, and that is pure corruption.

Judo alludes to the colonial effect on people's psyche:

It makes us feel like we are not resourceful enough, and we cannot get things on our own. Even now the western culture has influenced us in that we want to be more like them, but we are doing it in the wrong way. We want democracy to be more urbanized, freedom of speech, and to be able to govern ourselves, but our leaders are not doing it in the right way. If one wants to lead a company, they do not want to do it through merit. They expect quick promotion. That is a form of corruption because they expect to be promoted by walking over other people but not by merits. Even without much knowledge about corruption in western countries, many people want to imitate them, and that is where our problem lies. They are not doing much to help African countries overcome corruption as much as they are helping us fight HIV and malaria. It is like we are on our own, and we continue to swim deeper and deeper into it.

Majo blames our education system for inculcating western values:

Yes. When a child goes there and comes back, they talk by their nose and forget about their mother tongue. They change and are not able to interact with their grandmothers and grandfathers because they think they are beneath them. So, the

Western culture has played a massive part in corruption, but traditionally also we have grown to be corrupt.

Some respondents think corruption is a matter of moral impropriety. It is rooted in selfishness and greed. Beka observes:

At the same time, because of greed, no one is content, even if God has provided you with basic needs. Especially those who have. Yes, even the rich, since they want to acquire more and more. We had a case yesterday where a man lost three of his children. He was rich and remarried and got the other three children. His brother, who was in Sweden, died and was buried, but he said he has a son and so his land inheritance should go to his son. So, this man who is a Churchgoer told the sisters that the land is his, and he will not give it out. The man has land, plots, and the sisters looked for the son, and he feared to ask for the land from the uncle. He does not talk to them now and wants nothing to do with them. So that is a rich man, but he just wants more and more.

Whether imported, local, a hybrid of both, or rooted in moral impropriety, respondents agree that corruption is now part of the Kenya culture. In such an environment, honesty is a sign of weakness. Any achievement becomes inconceivable without the involvement of bribes. One bribe to get a job, a promotion, or even proper academic qualifications from institutions of higher learning. In a corruption inundated environment, Judo observed how the electorate views public service as a platform for dishing out favors:

When we elect a leader, we expect him to help our people and our children to get jobs regardless of whether they are qualified or not. Our leaders are under pressure from citizens who go to them, expecting favors. Some people want jobs

for their children even when they do not have the proper qualification. Yes. Tokens in the African culture was sacred, and it was like appreciating leaders or parents. When a chief offered help, for example, in mediation, people would slaughter a goat for him. This chief did not expect the goat before he did the work, unlike today, where one has to offer something before a service. Today some people do not think corruption is wrong; they think it is a way of expressing gratitude.

Mbuga notes:

A long time ago, we did not have these things. However, when people started becoming corrupt since there was no corruption before, it became a routine. Yes. So, it became like a habit and slowly passed on from one generation to another. That is how it now permeates the culture. No one feels anything while practicing corruption in our culture. When a child grows and finds his/her father becoming corrupt, they want to emulate him. It has become entirely reasonable, and you cannot grow or benefit from something without corruption. At the same time, because of greed, no one is content, even if God has provided you with basic needs.

The normalization of corruption happened through the use of codes (words, signs and language that conceal corruption). The use of codes is supposed to make it acceptable and to minimize the severity of its shamefulness and immorality. Aleki observes:

Corruption is a shameful thing, so I will not come and say I want to engage in corruption. We know of the phrase 'chai.' How can you identify someone talking about corruption that someone else from maybe Tanzania or the States cannot

identify? For instance, if somebody comes here and tells me, 'we will see each other later.

Culture and Promotion of life

Table 8

Are there practices in our African traditional religion that can help fight corruption?

Culture and Life	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	81	94
Agree	3	4
Disagree	0	2
Total	85	100

The few respondents who did not strongly agree that certain practices and values in the traditional culture can help in the fight against corruption felt that affirming culture too strongly would nullify the need for the gospel. The majority strongly felt that specific African values, if observed, could allow for a corruption-free society where life is shared by all and is not the preserve of a few. Some respondents pointed to a consequentialist morality that barred people from corruption. People were afraid of punishment either from the community or from the invisible world of God and the ancestors. Maga says:

The Africans had morals. For example, a thief was rolled downhill in a beehive or lynched. So, the way they treated thieves is proof that you should not steal because there were consequences. When we look at the Kikuyus, for instance, a long time ago, if they found you stealing, they would take to a hill, put in a beehive, and left to roll down the hill slope. Others could wrap you in dry banana

leaves and lynch you. I remember a few years back, the Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister was accused of wrongly, and he could talk about it and say that he found it hard to even look his children in the eye. There is this shame associated with corruption, and if this long time ago punishments were continued even today, they would have tremendously helped a lot in reducing the shamelessness and greed that is corruption. I also remember John Githongo, who had outstanding policies, and I believe that is where we got lost in trying to adopt the Western culture.

Githo observes:

Africans used to teach that whenever you eat something that is not yours, and a child sleeps hungry, or somebody somewhere complains about you and your property your animals; for example, adding water to milk for sale, calamity will follow you. That is the teaching that used to drive most people. Unfortunately, we have all lost the belief that everything we do has consequences. Africans used to view each other as a family.

The traditional education system was value-based. It was in the custody of the elders who were responsible for disseminating it to the rest of the community. Although there was learning going on all the time, the semi-structured pedagogy seemed to focus on life transitions or rites of passage. At the core of traditional learning was an emphasis on being truthful and respectful of people and property.

Maki says:

From a long time ago, people used to learn about being truthful and respecting people and people's property. People viewed each other as brothers and sisters. I

tell my son that his friend and he and his friends are alike and are brothers, and people would grow like that. One can do good deeds to others because you know that they are your fellow brothers. You learn that taking something that belongs to someone else is something wrong, and people know that taking someone else's property is terrible.

Instilling these values in children was accorded particular and urgent importance. This urgency was out of the realization that training is more effective when the learner is younger. Youngsters tend to have higher receptivity. They can retain more and can apply more. Besides, people believed that the value of education is in the formation of character, while the person is still young. The Gĩkũyũ people have a saying, *muti urungagwo riria wi munini* (that if you want your tree to be straight, then you have to start while it is still small). Given the importance of educating children, everyone in the community was called upon to play a role. Majo observes:

Children learned to see and respect the humanity in people. I remember, for example, when a child did wrong, any parent who was close by could discipline the child. The child would not take the case to his/her parent because the discipline was from a fellow parent, and when he/she reports, they have to answer why they received punishment—the other as being part of you. Yes, and if you reported, the disciplined was added up by your parents. People were very free with each other. The entire community shaped the future generations, but today if you touch somebody's child. There was much sharing because you could not find a family that had too many problems that they lacked someone to assist them. For example, my dad dies in 1963 when I was a very young girl. We did not know how

to survive, and my mother struggled a lot, but in a way, the neighbor could bring us something like bananas, sugar. So, we were able to survive through those around us. If you were suffering, you could just go to a friend's place and tell them your problems, and you would get help. Today you cannot try that.

The training of the young was also on the value of good work. Gĩkũyũ people believed that a hardworking child would be valued everywhere and by everyone (*mwana uri kio ndgagaga muthambia*). Githo notes:

Yes, like, for example, taking charge of the kids being initiated so from that age we train them how to work. A long time ago, people would go to the garden as a family - father, mother, and children would all toil the land to get food. So that aspect of you has to work for what you need. That is one thing I think the African tradition tries to correct or to shun corruption because people will understand that they need to work. They take two or three jobs in order to buy that Range Rover. The society by then focused on community service. People perceived resources as that is our hospital meant to benefit all of us, but today it is personalized; it has to be my hospital and bribing the doctor in charge. A long time ago, the setup was communal, as opposed to personal. So that public view discouraged corruption.

The focus of all training in the Gĩkũyũ education system was the advancement of the community through sharing. Githe observes:

We used to be each other's brother's keeper a long time ago, and if people still take it that way, you would not have the thoughts of hurting each other since corruption is denying someone something and hurting their feelings. The Kikuyus'

used to say that when a grain of beans falls, we should divide it amongst each other, but with corruption, the grain of bean is for whoever rushes and picks it up first. That is the spirit. The belief is that as much as you can arrive earlier or get something earlier, you would first look and see if you were supposed to share what you have among your people, or did it need informing an elder or a person who was a community leader like the council of elders. So, we used to respect that everything we had as people was not ours and had to be shared or passed on to a leader who would show us how better we could share it among ourselves.

Respondents viewed the call to the community through sharing in Gĩkũyũ culture as central to the Christian calling as well. On the congruity between traditional culture and Christianity, Maga observes:

That is very true. We come from a culture that teaches the importance of community and sharing. These are also values that Christianity also teaches. That should make you stand firm, and a Christian should be even stronger to defend those who believe in their cultural values, support their visions, and avoid corruption. Also, Christians who have lost value in the culture fit in there, and they should strive to say no to corruption.

The primary task for a Christian is to imitate Christ, who is himself a communion with the rest of the persons of the Trinity and the entire creation. Majo observes:

First and foremost, being a Christian is being Christ-like. Christ comes from the community of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. When he became like us, he united with the whole creation. Christians today have refused to be Christ-like because they do not want to care for others. However, following Christ is not easy. It is

not easy to be like him, to be selfless, and to want to be united with everyone and everything. We are selfish.

Stevo focuses on the expression of community and sharing during worship, especially in the Eucharist as well as in Christian praxis.

The Church focuses on the person as an integral part of the community. We come together to achieve a common goal, so everything a Church disseminates from the reading to the songs involves coming together. You see the aspect of 'we' rather than 'me.' During the communion also. We share food. So, everything that we see trickles down to that 'we' aspect. From even how the Church dictates its issues, we talk about community roles and all that it must always have the aspect of communalism as opposed to individualism.

Respondents recognize the importance of the expression of communion through the Eucharist. Regrettably, some people cannot partake of it for failure to meet Church requirements. Aleki notes:

I do not take it because I have not wedded in the Church, but when it is happening, we are all involved in the process. You feel the humility even when coming out of the Church. There is a certain kind of communion and unity that you would not like to set yourself apart from through corruption. You get to grow and feel so peaceful that you would not like to involve yourself in any kind of corruption.

Practical Strategies to Fight Corruption

Table 9

Is your SCCs involved in social justice issues?

SCCs and Social Justice	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	85	100
Agree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Total	85	100

The majority of participants did not think their SCCs are fully engaged in social justice issues as they should. They mentioned several areas they will need to work on in order to become credible witnesses against corruption and other vices in the society. The first thing they would want to see is increased membership and appreciation of SCCs. To meet the requirement by many Parishes that for you to receive Church's sacramental benefits such as infant baptism and wedding, you must be sponsored by a given SCC, a lot of Catholics register to be members of SCCs only and exclusively for that reason. Once the benefits are received, they suspend their membership and are content with attending mass at the Parish center or the outstation. Maka has no kind word for such. She underscores the importance of SCCs as a place of communion.

> *People abandoned the Small Christian community because they know a lot, but they do not. People believe in staying by themselves and praying for themselves. When you attend the small Christian community, the prayers of others might help you out. Some might be purer than others and have a better relationship with*

God. In our small Christian community, we pray for our issues and divide the duty of leading the rosary among us. That is easier for God to listen to us and stay in our hearts due to our unity. Due to that, we know God will come through and help us and even in the issues surrounding us

Alek stresses the importance of love among members as the glue that will hold members together but also as the means to draw non-members into membership.

The most important thing and reason for SCC is love. When we gather in our small Christian community, and we meet with other families, they should see that we have love, harmony and they should be able to emulate it from us as a family. That is very good. Even to the outside world, we come from and quite an interior area, and when we drive around and meet an older person, we give them a lift. That, to us, is a compelling witness.

Githo emphasizes integrity among the member of SCCs in the way they conduct themselves, especially publicly:

Some of the things I would like to see in people are good morals and character. You cannot, for example, leave the small Christian community and engage in drinking. You have to have a good character and be loved by people. They should not ignore it at all. A Christian should stand with justice and say that that is not right.

Still on the importance of leading an exemplary life, Majo, underscores the one most important virtue:

If you want to be a good example, first and foremost, humility is essential. Such that when you are among people, you do not want to beat your chest. If you see

something corrupt point it out to somebody and maybe that will make someone who perhaps did not think it was an issue, stop it. There is a drunkard family around, and I was worried and started praying for them and challenging them to go to Church. Today I have seen many changes in that family. Some of them have stopped drinking, and they have started on productive projects like building residential houses and having healthy competitions in the family.

Judo thinks accountability is another virtue that ought to define SCCs leadership, but also the relationship among members and also members and the wider society:

Taking it from our small Christian community, which I believe are the grassroots like I said, our chairman came from another small Christian community that was doing well. Say I was a treasurer of a small Christian community. I should be accountable for all the little funds that are I receive every month. If there was any position in the Church, I am sure I would be vouched for because I was accountable for something small. Yes, Accountability in small things gives you a chance to assume greater responsibility.

The second area respondent suggested that needs improvement is conscientization. Members of SCCs should cultivate a greater awareness of issues facing the community and the nation at large. They lamented that the only time that seems to happen is during lent when the Kenya Episcopal Conference suggests a Lenten theme, divide it into weekly sub-themes with a practical case or a story, a judgment based on the scripture texts, and a call to action (See, Judge, and Act). Increased conscientization, especially regarding human rights, will result in the courage to stand against evil. Majo testifies:

In my previous SCC, we used to talk about issues. I always found out something new I did not know or new courage to act. I once went to T.S.C. (Teachers Service Commission) to check my salary that after I noted some irregularities. I met a man whose age is close to my dad's, and he started to make a move on me with the promise that if I went along, he would look into the situation, and much more. I told him off and told him to stop with the worldly pleasures. I told him I would not insult him, but he needed to stop because he might have succeeded with other ladies before but not with me. I also told him to remember that there is a deadly disease on the loose, and you cannot tell a healthy person from a dying horse. He was embarrassed.

Maga alludes to voting as the one area Kenyans have sold their birthright to greedy politicians. They lie to voters, bribe, and intimidate them, and when they acquire power, all they do is to enrich themselves at taxpayers' expense.

We can do, in the neighborhood, for example, when we vote, we know when leaders give out bribes because you find groups talking along the way and in homes. We should talk to each other and educate each other. Like for example, where we fetch water, you might hear a certain discussion, correct there. When you attend a meeting, make your point and let people hear it. We should listen to one another and try to educate each other without waiting for outsiders. If it is the voting season, people should stop taking bribes. Choose someone because you can see that they can lead your community well.

The third area of transformative practice is engaging public and political leadership for effective service delivery. Participants hailed the new constitutional

dispensation for devolving political authority and provision of services to county and sub-county levels. As a result, leaders have become more accessible, and citizens do oversight on service delivery. Aleki recounts how he took the initiative in mobilizing the people to get involved

> *For instance, we are just coming from the election, and we have a new councilor. A few weeks ago, I organized a goat eating ceremony to bring people together, and I called the counselor, and he came. We gave him a memorandum of what we expect from him as our leader. We talked to him about the roads, security, and lighting of our estate. We told him that that is a scorecard, and we would call for another ceremony after five months, and you will be accountable. We handed it to him in written form to show him we need him to address our problems. We are still in communication, and after a few months, he is already addressing the water and road pothole problem. We have also proposed the construction of a police post. We want to see what he has done after those five months, and we told him to avoid any problems for blaming his lack of performance. We will walk with him, monitor, and engage him throughout his term.*

The fourth area in transformative practice is collaboration. Participants expressed the need to work with others for a better society. These others are their neighbors, they work in the same places, and their kids play and school together. They may not be Catholics, they may not be Christians, but that should never be a reason to isolate and ignore them. Aleki says:

As I was saying, even from the attendants of the goat eating ceremony, we have several groups according to the different areas we live in. Nowadays, we have turned digital, and we have WhatsApp groups from different areas. I am in all of these three groups. Security is one area where we have shown great collaboration. If one person hears something from the other side, they are quick to approach the other two sides through phone calls and know what is happening. We also used to have vigilante groups, and we would survey the estate at night to ensure security. As a result, security is excellent, and you cannot hear any criminal activity, especially during the night. Even motorbike riders coming from bypass are very cautious when they bring customers here as they heard there are vigilante men who do not play, and they ask many questions. That is how we engage, and it is turning out great

Ndichu remembers how the Catholic Church had an awakening experience on the need to collaborate with non-Catholics and how SCCs co-operate with Protestant groups' welfare organizations.

A while ago, the Catholic Church had distanced itself from the other Churches, but now the situation is improving. For example, in St. Francis, all the small Christian communities have been divided into zones. Each zone has five small Christian communities. We have welfare like in my small Christian community if there is any problem that has come up like sickness or death, we come together as these five small Christian communities. However, even the Protestants will attend since they are also in the community and are maybe neighbors and friends. We each pray according to how we pray in our Churches, and with that, there is

inclusion. We do not divide ourselves, and we each have a chance even to preach, converse and unify together

Judy interacts with many of her friends, the majority of whom are not Catholics or even Christian through social media. She does not feel the need to identify herself. She lets her integrity do the talking.

I acknowledge that I am Catholic, and i am proud of my faith. I also recognize my friends who are Pentecostal or Presbyterian, the belief that we all serve one God, and there is not God-given set of rules for Catholics, Presbyterians, or Muslims. I do much agitation on social media without having to explain that I am Catholic but a person of integrity or aspiring to be a person of integrity. I try to speak the language of brotherhood. I have an Indian neighbor, and I have a Muslim neighbor whom I respect a lot and who respect me back.

CHAPTER FIVE. LIVED ESCHATOLOGY: SCCS AS LOCATIONS OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

This Chapter will discuss three aspects of SCCs and their corresponding ethical dimensions. (i) SCCs as eschatological communities: the formative dimension; (ii) SCCs as interpretive communities: the interpretive dimension; and (iii) SCCs as communities of shared praxis and tactical resistance: the missional dimension. The first part will focus on the notion of eschatology —the coming of the Kingdom of God—the horizon within which Christians conduct themselves in love and hope. The second part will affirm the role of communities in interpreting the Christian story as it relates to their circumstances. The third part will discuss the outward-looking nature of Christian ethics as it responds to the challenges facing the African continent and the need to be agents of transformation.

SCCs as Eschatological Communities: Formative Dimension

The Eclipse of Biblical Eschatology

The story of Jesus unfolds within an eschatological horizon.[1] Granted, Christians ought to interrogate the nature of Christian eschatology and reflect on how the future it points to, the *eschaton*—the coming of the kingdom of God bears on the present, and what kind of hope it inspires. Misconceptions of eschatology have resulted in ahistoricism, a disenchantment with the world that effortlessly creates an obsession with rapture and end-times chronology. In other cases, misconception leads to triumphalism, an enchantment with the world that often results in power entanglement.[2]

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[1] Gray observes that some sort of eschatology informs how people live. See John Gray, *Black Mass*: *Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 104.

[2] On how this entanglement has played out in the course of history, see Maria Doerfler E., ed. *Church and Empire* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2016), 76-108. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b3t7f5.

In its literal sense, eschatology means "words about the end."[3] The entire bible is about the end and how creation propels towards it. The keyword in this dynamic into the future is "promise." Adam and Eve received a promise, and so did Abraham through the covenants.[4] The Sinaic experience focused on a future in which the people of God will lead a life filled with joy and God's blessings. The prophets foretell a future in which faithfulness will receive its recompense of peace and disobedience with death. The critique of Job and Qohelet regarding the suffering of the innocent gave rise to apocalyptic eschatology in which evil has a short span, and those who suffer innocently can hope for vindication(wisdom 5:1ff).[5]

The long-anticipated future materializes in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. He "events" in his life—especially his death and resurrection— the apocalyptic hope and the day of the Lord.[6] He is the *autobasileia*—the Kingdom in person.[7] The Kingdom of God and the Lordship of Jesus come together in the New Testament.[8] Jesus transforms the inner being as well as the external world of the social relationships of the one who hears and believes his story. Coming to believe in him means locating the entire history and oneself in Christ, in whom is found " a climactic summing up, incorporation,

[3] Geoffrey Penn, Eschatology and Politics: The Last Thing we want to talk about? Cambridge Papers (Towards a Biblical Mind) vol 19 no. 3(2010), 1.

[4] Cf. Gen 3:15; Gen. 12:1–4.

[5] P. B. Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," in *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1988), 6.

[6] Jesus references Isa. 61 when in Luke 4:2, he declares, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

[7] Origen, "Commentary on Matthew," in Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: Scribner's, 1926), 498.

[8] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 6.

and identification of the whole people."[9] The crucifixion of Jesus reveals the social character of the Kingdom.[10]

The kingdom unfolds in the tension between what has "already" happened and what has "not yet" happened. Believers experience the forgiveness of sins and the joy of filial adoption through Christ at the present moment. At the same time, they understand that what has happened is only an inauguration of the future. Within this tension, they are invited not to wallow in anxiety or fear, but in joy, hope, trust, and confidence. The "already" will inevitably lead to a glorious realization of the "not yet"[11] A biblical understanding of eschatology calls for a "…critique, hope, and a re-orienting of everyday considerations and relationships towards the eschatological reality of a new heaven and a new earth."[12] Seen in this light, the horizon of "politics' broadens, and eschatology encompasses both the "NT interest in the day of the Lord, the kingdom of God, and hope. It also impacts on the Christian identity and commitment because of that hope."[13]

Biblical eschatology proposes a linear view of history where history moves with hope towards the fulfillment of God's promises. This linearity makes it dynamic and meaningful. For the Greeks, history is cyclical, and therefore static and meaningless. Placed in it, man needs to be sober, rational, and stoic. There is no place for hope and fear, *nec spe, nec metu.* Besides, biblical eschatology is universalistic. Both temporal and

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[9] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 47. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 46.

[10] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 47.

[11] In Mark 13 and the other versions of Jesus' eschatological discourse in Matthew 24–25 and Luke 21, the apocalyptic scenario is followed by sayings and parables that urge readers to be always on guard, vigilant and watchful. We are to act always as if the Son of Man were to come very soon.

[12] Geoffrey Penn, Eschatology and Politics, 34.

[13] Penn, Eschatology and Politics, 34.

spatial schemes can express its reality, as can references to heaven and earth for salvation both in the present and in the future. For the Greeks, eschatology was ahistorical. Transition does not take place within history but from history. A reality trapped in time and materiality requires deliverance from the world of time into the world of timelessness.[14]

In his synthesis of Christianity and Hellenistic thinking, Augustine rejected the view that the *saeculum*, cosmos, did not have a meaningful end.[15] However, his idea of salvation remained mostly ahistorical. Salvation was an overcoming of temporality and a transition into a supra-temporal realm. Augustine's synthesis was biased in favor of the Greek metaphysics. Although he was opposed to the notion of repetition, salvation for him is liberation from history and not of history. The world and its history are stages in which conflict between the *Civitas Dei* and the c*ivitas terrena* is taking place. The redemption of the individual is taking place now within history, awaiting its final salvation when the soul will transition from the world of the repetitive cycle of history.[16]

It was Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) who sought to break through the static, metaphysical Augustinian synthesis through his idea of progressive history.[17] Before the 12th century, the book of Revelation as a source of theological history had been both individualist and moralistic. Later, it became a source of meaning for history in its dimensions of past, present, and future. Joachim embraced this view and imagined such in the advent of more perfect institutions and societal formations. He saw such evolutions in the form of religious orders and monasticism. His ideas created a sense of optimism.

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[14] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 5.
[15] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 6.
[16] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 7.
[17] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 8-9.

History was about to reach a decisive climax before the end, instead of merely dissolving into failure. He inspired many religious movements that saw themselves as realizations of societal perfection. These movements, however, did not succeed in overcoming the ahistoricism that had defined theology.[18]

Philosophers embraced Joachim's perspective of progressive history.[19] However, their perspective, unlike the one of Joachim, was not religious. Historical progress was no longer about the kingdom God on earth, but rather the Kingdom of man on earth. Philosophers of Enlightenment in the 18th century focused strictly and exclusively on what men can do in civil society and its history. Vico (1774) was interested in what lies within human scrutiny, the *factum*. Voltaire (1778) rejected the idea of divine providence, suggesting rational prognostication instead. He saw history as a progressive development of the sciences and skills, morals, and commerce. The apparent spiritual patterns of Lessing, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel would later get transposed into the positivistic and materialistic schemes of Marx and Comte.[20]

While philosophers took over universal eschatology and secularized it, Christian eschatology became individualistic and spiritualistic.[21] Supernaturalism "tended to turn the Church into a sect, living alongside society, but without any communication with

[18] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 11.
[19] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 11.
[20] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 12.
[21] The idea that the salvation of the individual soul occurs at death was widespread in the 14th century. Reference to the resurrection of the body disappeared in the 18th century, just as did any reference to the cosmos and corporeality disappeared. See Henry de Lubac, *Catholicism*: *Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (London: Burns,1961), 49-62; Pannenberg observes that in 1798, "Kant scoffed at the idea that anyone could love his body so much as to carry it around in eternity rather than getting rid of it." See W. Pannenberg, Constructive and Critical Functions of Christian Eschatology, *HTR* 77 (1984):12.

it."[22] It resulted in an attitude of triumphalism, particularly of the clerical type. The common denominator in triumphalism was to regard the Church as a perfect society seeing in it the embodiment of the kingdom of God. As a result, the Church saw itself as the teacher, the mother, and the judge of all nations. Its relationship with the world was that of domination. It over-estimated the scope and significance of correct teaching, pretending to have the concrete prescriptions on every concrete situation.[23]

Recovery of Eschatology

Four factors would contribute to the recovery of a universal/cosmic eschatology.[24] Towards the middle of the 20th century, theology became increasingly interested in the social question and history.[25]The emergence of social sciences occasioned this development. They showed interest in a just social order following the aftermath of industrialization in the 19th century.[26] By denouncing individualism as unchristian, De Lubac believed that a sense of shared destiny could lead to the creation of a better social order.[27] Against supernaturalism, he argued that a Christian eschatology that does not entertain the social question leads to an understanding of the world that has no place for God. God and world, salvation and history, cannot be separated.[28]

Besides, philosophers expressed hope for a future of history that included a concern for the poor, akin to the gospel message of love for the neighbor. However, in a

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[22] W. Kasper, *An Introduction to Christian Faith* (London: Burns & Oates, 1980), 119.
[23] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 12.
[24] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology," 15.
[25] G. Baum, *Religion and Alienation*: *A Theological Reading of Sociology* (New York: Paulist, 1984), 2.
[26] R. Wilson, Sociological approaches to the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 10-11.
[27] Henry de Lubac, *Catholicism. Christ and The Common Destiny of Man* (London: Burns, 1938), 7-14.
[28] K. Koch, *The Re-discovery of Apocalyptic* (London: SCM, 1972), 130.

context where an earthly utopia had replaced God, the challenge was how to reconcile *homo emancipator* and the *Deus Salvator.* As *homo emancipator* God is concerned with the social and political aspects of human life. As *Deus Salvator,* he is concerned with the ultimate destiny of creation. Theologians of history, such as Moltmann (1967), Baum (1975), and Metz 1980, reject the dualism between history and eschatological salvation.[29] To articulate the connection between the two, Cox distinguishes three different perspectives: apocalyptic, the teleological, and the prophetic. He calls for a recovery of the prophetic perspective.[30]

Moreover, Vatican II made a conscious attempt to identify the reign of God with Christ by calling for a Christocentric refocusing of theology. Previous practice in theology identified the reign of God with the Church. Jesus was a proponent of an objective ethical system. The notion of the kingdom sounded like it was about normative guidelines to inform social ethics. Scriptures became a source of general ethical principles that became a foundation for a rational ethical system. This perspective engendered an attitude of triumphalism in which the objective ethical system often disguised as natural law, which people had to obey without due regard to contexts. The result was a distortion of the meaning of eschatology. By separating the reign of God from the Church, Vatican II asserted that the place of the Church as *Lumen Gentium* is not about dominating the world. The Church is a pilgrim community that shares the joys and hopes, *Gaudium et Spes* of the world.[31]

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[29] E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Crossroad, 1980), 754.

[30] H. Cox, *On not Leaving it to the Snake* (London: SCM, 1968), 37-46.

[31] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology", 15.

Furthermore, a renewed interest in apocalyptic thinking in the New Testament was instrumental in the recovery of a cosmic eschatology. Bultmann denied any apocalyptic element in the New Testament and used this denial as a justification for his demythologizing adventure. He used an existentialist framework— in which man is the essence of history and its subject, thus reducing the study of history to a study of man. He promoted an inward eschatology in which salvation is more about man's attitude to the world, but not in the world and history.[32] His version of eschatology has no place for cosmic and universal elements.[33] Theologians of history argue that God discloses himself through historical events. Amid history, Jesus Christ has come as fully revealing God in anticipation of the consummation of history and God's kingdom when he returns. Christ then embodies the apocalyptic eschatology, whose significance is cosmic and universal and not merely individualistic. [34]

Church in Africa and SCCs as Eschatological Communities

Mbiti observed in the 1970s that theology falls or stands on how it understands, translates, and interprets Jesus Christ in a given time, place, or social situation. Accordingly, Christian theology ought to be Christology.[35] Africans had already experienced Jesus as *Deus Salvator and homo emancipator*. Still, a missionary ecclesiological model continued to present Christ in Western categories. The momentum

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[32] R. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh: University Press,1975), 153.

[33] Decock, "The Eclipse and Rediscovery of Eschatology", 15.

[34] Pannenberg seeks to construct a Christology "from below," deriving his dogmatic claims from a critical examination of the life and particularly the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Revelation as History: A Proposal for More Open, Less Authoritarian View of an Important Theological concept* (New York: MacMillan & Co, 1969), 46-79.

[35] J.S. Mbiti, *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A Study of the Encounter Between New Testament Theology and African Traditional Concepts* (London: Oxford University Press,1971), 190.

brought about by Vatican II[36]created the need in the 1960s to deforeignize Christ. De Jongh rightly observes that before 1970, a glance at available literature revealed that very little existed in the form of written Christology by African theologians. He notes, however, that today, Christology is perhaps the one aspect of African theology that has received the most significant attention from African theologians.[37]

Nyamiti identifies African theology of inculturation and African liberation theologies as the two broad bases undergirding approaches adopted by theologians towards Christologizing in Africa.[38] Bediako refers to these two as African theology and black theology.[39] According to Nyamiti, theologians from within the African theology of inculturation incarnate the Gospel message in the African cultures on a theological level. Those from within the liberation perspective try to find Christ in the socio-political situation of the Africans. These two aspects of African theology are complementary.[40]

Ancestral Christological approach is the most preferred approach in Africa.[41] It addresses the African traditional world view of ancestral veneration, a central pillar of African traditional religion.[42] "Ancestor" represents the most visible and prominent

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[36] Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, S.J. "After All, Africa is Largely A Nonliterate Continent": The Reception of Vatican II In Africa, *Theological Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (June 2013): 284.

[37] A.H. De Jong, *Challenge of Vatican II in East Africa: The Contribution of Dutch Missionaries to the Implementation of Vatican II in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1996), 2.

[38] C. Nyamiti, "African Christologies Today," in *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, ed. J.N.K. Mugambi and L. Magesa (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), 17-20.

[39] K. Bediako, "African Theology" in "The Modern Theologians," ed. D. Ford (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1998), 426-444.

[40] Nyamiti, "African Christologies Today," 35-39.

[41] F.A. Oborji, "African Theology, Roman Catholic," in *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church*, ed. W.A. Dyrness and V.-M. Kärkkäinen (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 16.

[42] V. Magezi and C. Magezi, "Healing and Coping with Life within Challenges of Spiritual Insecurity: Juxtaposed Consideration of Christ's Sinlessness and African Ancestors in

aspect of the transcendent realm. As the Great Ancestor, Christ performs the function of the ancestors in a super-eminent fashion. He passes life from the Proto-Ancestor, God the Father, through a process of descendancy. The Great Ancestor accompanies the living in all the phases of growth and development. He mediates between the visible and the invisible worlds. He also acts as a guardian of social and ethical values.[43]

The Great Ancestor is incomprehensible. Accordingly, our faith in him "is a continuing process of insertion insofar as our undertaking of life, of human beings, and of the world allows…"[44] Africans can now insert their own stories into the incomprehensibility of the Great Ancestor and do so within a death-resurrection dynamic. Within this dynamic lies the possibility of liberation. The Great Ancestor is our exemplar, the efficient cause that works within us, and a source of hope. In the Great Ancestor, Christians have access to the force of life and are transformed and made into agents of change. They are "steeped into the socio-political and economic reality where they discern the Spirit and work for the concretization of love and justice that generates freedom among the people within the confines of space and time."[45]

The Church is the primary location of the conjunction of *homo emancipator* and *Deus Salvator.* The conjunction coheres in the Church the same way it coheres in the Great Ancestor. As the local incarnations of the Church, SCCs concretize this dialectical conjunction of politics and eschatology, thus enabling the shaping of an African Christian

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Pastoral Guidance," *Theological Studies* 73(3), (2017): 2. http://dx.doi.org//10.4102/hts.v73i3.4333

[43] R. Potgieter and C. Magezi, "A Critical Assessment of Bediako's Incarnational Christological Model as a Response to the Foreignness of Christ in African Christianity," in *die Skriflig* 50 (2016), 3-4.

[44] Leonardo Boff, *Jesus the Liberator: A Critical Christology for our* Time (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978), 226.

[45] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 23.

praxis. Such eschatological praxis has three traits: joy, hope, and memory. Within an African communal ontology, the life and joy that pertains to the entire community happen at the level of smaller communities.

Similarly, the joy of being Church happens locally and concretely in the SCCs. Such joy comes alive through the core family values of love, solidarity, warmth in human relationship, acceptance, dialogue, and trust. It is manifest in the joyful proclamation of the Word of God, the celebration of community prayer, sacraments, the formation of others in faith, and offering service through care for those who are in need.[46] Pope Francis writes:

> The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, hand loneliness. With Christ, joy is always born anew. In this Exhortation, I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come.[47]

For a majority of Africans, there is very little cause for rejoicing. Lack of livelihood, inadequate health care systems, massive unemployment, corrupt political leadership, and terrorism, all these make life in Africa a cause of sorrow and desperation. Katongole observes, however, that despite this seemingly hopeless situation, optimism — the belief that things will be better through the intervention of God—remains one of the most excellent African spiritual resources. That said, Katongole argues that there is no

[46] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 23.

[47] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium, The Joy of the Gospel Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* (Dublin: Veritas Publication 2013), 1.

more urgent theological task than to provide an account of hope. He describes how the dynamic of hope unfolds in the form of lament or arguing and wrestling with God. At the initial stage, God, who is supposed to intervene, is perceived to be aloof and oblivious of human suffering. As the lament intensifies, it begins to engage God's lament. A God who was previously oblivious is now affected by human suffering and is capable of sympathy and love.[48] Once lamenting reaches this point, a deeper identification with God results. This identification becomes the fountain of the activism and energy to work, especially on behalf of the downtrodden. Lament sustains and carries forth Christian agency amid suffering.[49]

SCCs are communities of memory. The most prominent memory is, of course, *memoria passionis Jesu Christi*. Christians find consolation and power in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is into this great memory that all other memories find meaning, are redeemed and are healed. Within this dynamic of *memoria passionis* of Jesus, communities keep alive the memories of the downtrodden. Christian find inspiration and strength from memories of their heroes and heroines, men, and women who exemplify or have exemplified the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection. Their stories must be recounted and emulated. These heroes and heroines wrestled with God about what is going on and about the need to do something. They have demonstrated their hope in a God who hears the cry of his peoples, accompanies, and liberates them.

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[48] The age-old anathema that God suffers has become a new orthodoxy. God's apatheia (divine impassibility), a long-held belief by great Fathers and Doctors of the Church, has lost an appeal to the modern sensibility. An impassible God is in the words of Albert Camus, an "eternal bystander." It has no scriptural basis. See Ronald Goetz, "The Suffering God: The Rise of a New Orthodoxy," *The Christian Century* 103/13 (April 1986), 385; Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Knopf, 1954), 47.

[49] Emmanuel Katongole, *Born from Lament: The Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 25-57.

Ancestral reverence occupies a place of prominence in this regard. They are the custodians of life and values in the community.[50]

SCCs and the Telling of the Story: Interpretive Dimension

From a Universalistic to a Contextual Ethic

The story of Jesus is social ethics. It forms a community that continues to live, listen, and retell that story. The social, ethical task of the Church is to find better ways of communicating that story to generations so that individuals and communities within the confines of space and time and in the unfolding of life circumstances can hear Jesus addressing them the question "who do you say that I am?"[51] Reliable communication of the story of Jesus faces the danger of universalism- the pretext that this story exists in one, timeless, and common to all form and not in varieties. Against universalism, Vatican II (1962-1965) urged a turn to history and diversity. A historical return recognizes people as subjects, validates their struggles, their interpretive ability as active agents, and honors God who is actively involved in their lives through the Holy Spirit.[52]

Slavery and the scramble for Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries respectively aimed at exploiting and destroying African particularity. Colonialists and missionaries in the19th century operated based on a discourse of power and control. All efforts were expended at ordering and aligning the continent with European consciousness and standards. Magesa notices a resurgence of a similar attitude among Western organizations working in Africa, ecclesiastical or otherwise. The often referred to as Western experts

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[50] Emmanuel Katongole, *Born from Lament*, 57.

[51] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 48.

[52] Bénézet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*, trans. Brian Mcneil (New York: Herder and Herder, 2001), 24.

see themselves as saviors of Africa. They show little or no regard for local knowledge. Expatriate intervention should aim at empowering the locals; it should be temporary and should operate on an adult-adult dynamic.[53]

From being an ordering theology, theology in Africa is gradually becoming contextual, characterized more by historical consciousness.[54] This evident in the manner in which Sacred Scriptures are interpreted, in the conception of Church, and Christian Ethics. As far as Scriptures are concerned, three hermeneutic principles are noticeable. A Christo-centric focus calls for an appreciation of the fact that the narrative of Jesus is a many-sided tale whose truth can only be guaranteed by the kind of people who can bear the burden of that story with joy. It also calls for a sharp focus on the prophetic orientation of Scriptures that allows for the possibility of modification of tradition as it engages peoples' experience.[55] Bujo notes, "The Christian message encounters every human person in that person's historical, social and cultural situation and environment, and does not compel him or her to abandon his or her identity."[56]

Historical consciousness must also affect the polity formed by the story of Jesus. Orthodoxy in East Africa is a "literal and un-inculturated appropriation of doctrine and religious behavior."[57] Faith becomes blind obedience. Such faith is reflective of a particular version of ecclesiology.[58] Boff speaks of two conceptualizations of the Church. In a juridical Church, the hierarchy controls all the power while the laity remains mostly

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[53] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 111-113.

[54] Mario I. Aguilar, "Postcolonial African Theology In Kabasele Lumbala," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 306-314.

[55] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 47.

[56] Bénézet Bujo, *African Christian Morality at the Age of Inculturation* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1990), 103.

[57] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 111.

[58] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 113.

passive. In Church as a community of faith, both the hierarchy and the laity are integral components of the Church.[59] The Holy Spirit animates all members with life and different gifts. The clergy walks and works in a Spirit-filled community. Evangelization is about dialogue with cultures in order to render gradually more explicit and conscious of the presence of God's Spirit, which transforms and penetrates the human situation.[60]

The Church in East Africa is mainly juridical. Bishops micromanage parishes and priests do the same with their communities. The shadow of the parish priest looms large at every parochial undertaking, and communities seem to think that this is how things should be. Bishops are themselves subservient to Rome, perhaps for financial reasons, but also because the majority of those who become bishops subscribe to uncritical submission, whether such is what Rome requires of them, or they are the ones demanding it from others. More qualitative growth of the Church demands a faith-based on in-depth understanding. Such a faith emerges from within a community of faith where the Spirit is allowed to blow where it wills, critical reading of the signs of the times becomes the norm, and naïve obedience gives way to critical discernment.[61]

Another area that requires a historical configuration in the development of African Christian ethics is the conception of natural law in the development of African ethics.[62] Critics have pointed to the danger of its universalism and moral absolutism. Catholic natural law doctrine has long argued that obligation is grounded in being. In grasping what he is, man also grasps what he is to become by his free self-determination.

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[59] Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Re-Invent the Church*, trans. Robert Baar (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 18.

[60] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 132.

[61] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 126-127.

[62] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic,* 27.

However, the prevailing view today is that nature, as such, is not normative. It is the human reason that interprets nature to formulate moral norms. The normative content presumed in the critical natural law cannot supersede the dialectical reflection by which the community revises this normativity. An obsession with objectivity treats human nature as if it were similar to infrahuman entities. Accordingly, understanding of the natural law has shifted focus from a metaphysical perspective to anthropological concerns.[63]

Bujo criticizes the false universalism of the natural law and questions its relevance to Africa. By turning a blind eye to contexts, natural law argumentation aims for ultimate justification. On its part, African ethics hopes for an adequate justification until a better argument turns up."[64] Besides, "whereas the natural-law argumentation proceeds rationally and abstractly, African ethical justification includes a narrative dimension, which allows one to question an excessively idealistic theory…."[65] Through an intercultural method, Bujo believes that "theories with universal claims must be brought down to earth by particular practices which concretize the universal...."[66] Development of African Christian ethics demands for on-going critical dialogue between ecclesiastical moral theology and an African theology based on community.[67]

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[63] James Bresnahan "An Ethics of Faith." In an Introduction to the *Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology: A World of Grace,* ed. Leo J. O'Donovan (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1995), 169-184.

[64] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic,* 22.

[65] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic*, 23.

[66] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic*, 24.

[67] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic*, 25.

Interpretive Dimension of African Christian Ethics

A historical approach to ethics calls for an appreciation of the human person as an interpretive being. In a finite temporal world, human beings participate and make sense of this world through understanding. Only through understanding can they be said to experience anything actively. Tracy argues that understanding is interpretive, and since human existence finds itself always already participating and being already 'on the way, 'interpretation forms part of a larger participatory understanding.[68] If all human beings are engaged in understanding, interpretation cannot be the preserve of an exclusive elite.[69] Tracy observes that disclosure events project a world of surplus meaning and mimesis. Interpretation involves both the production of knowledge, but also verification of the same through a corresponding praxis.[70]

Limit-experiences disclose the mysteriousness of human existence that calls for hope, faith, love, and further interpretative understanding. A person experiencing limit-experience engages a "classic" either in the form of a text(s), an event(s), or a person(s) that bears an excess of the permanence of meaning, yet always resisting definitive interpretation.[71] It is this intensification of meaning and value that accords some authority to the classic. Tracy describes the dynamics of engaging the classic as involving four

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[68] David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, and Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 9.

[69] John P. McCarthy, "David Tracy," In *A New Handbook of Christian Theologians,* ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 469.

[70] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 103.

[71] Tracy's idea of spontaneous 'happening' of understanding that comes from having one's horizon is challenged and provoked by something that is both particular and universal (classic) resembles Bernard Lonergan's description of the occurrence of an insight. See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1963), 1-33.

steps. (i) The reader approaches the classic with pre-conceptions; (ii) In the actual confrontation with the classic, the interpreter interprets the text and is equally subject to interpretation by the text; (iii) The object of the classic captures the interpreter by focusing on the world disclosed in front of the text; (iv) The interpreter engages with the broader community of interpretation since the text does not exist in a vacuum.[72]

Theological interpretation occurs when the limit-experience correlates to one's faith tradition, symbol, or religious classic.[73] For Christians, that symbol is in the event of the risen Lord.[74] Correlation assumes the form of either of two conceptual languages of analogy or dialectics. Analogical language relates an event to a primary analogue by focusing on how such an event manifests or fail to manifest the first analogue, its official status. Its function is to create harmony between the event and the whole of reality—God, self, others. Neither univocal or static, such harmony always demands that one negate any claim to full adequacy while remaining attentive to the emerging harmony.[75] Dialectical language or proclamation involves a radical rejection of claims of human sufficiency in the attainment of salvation. It disavows suggestions of a natural continuity between God and the human world, or even a relationship of identity between human reason and God's Word.[76]

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[72] In contrast to mere texts that may be meaningful for a time, genuine classics transform one's horizon. They bring a meaning that is both particular and universal. See David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 115.

[73] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 420.

[74] McCarthy, "David Tracy." In *A New Handbook of Christian Theologians,* 467-70.

[75] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination,* 408-413.

[76] The conceptual language of analogy, Tracy observes that theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Rahner, and Wolfhart Pannenberg employ analogical language. While the language of dialectics is the domain of theologians such as Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich; see Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 414-417.

These two languages complement each other. Analogical imagination rejects univocity by allowing constant negation of any claim to adequacy—similarly, dialectical language issues into analogy when it rejects the equivocity that results from exaggerated dichotomizations.[77] Ultimately, the two are aspects of analogical imagination in which the interpreter seeks for a theological understanding of the initial religious experience about the totality of reality. The impossibility of attaining full understanding is in no doubt. However, if the surplus of meaning leads the interpreter, his horizon will surely be transformed, and a trust in the overwhelming reality disclosed will be evoked. In the end, this process frees the interpreter to the transcendence of regard for God and his fellow men, thus opening the possibility for authentic conversation.[78]

Bujo observes that "Africans do not think in 'either/or,' but instead in 'both/and' categories."[79] Accordingly, interpretation is both analogical and collective— two things are brought together not merely to contrast them, but to project them to a higher reality in which they participate. Despite the many changes that define contemporary Africa, communitarianism is still a significant factor in the formation of identity. Interpretation is participatory—it happens within and never outside the community. Besides, that interpretation is collective is not to say that the individual is displaced. African ethics acknowledges the inviolability of an individual's moral agency. The African system of name-giving underscores this fact. The name given to an individual at birth is both personal and a marker of ontological reality. Moreover, the individual is at the center of

[77] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 417-20.
[78] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination,* 408-413.
[79] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethics*, 1.

the determination of moral norms. He is held accountable either by being honored for proper or is subjected to shame and ridicule for bad conduct.[80]

That said, although moral reasoning is substantially an individual process, the individual has a heightened consciousness of how his behaviors affect the flourishing of his community. Individuality means acting with the other since "the community . . . enables the self-realization of the individual."[81] "The individual is bound to reflect on what is beneficial for herself or himself and the whole community—including participation in the eschatological communion.[82] The African conception of the human person is not the Cartesian cogito ergo sum ("I think; therefore I am") but an existential *cognatus sum*, *ergo sumus* ("I am known. Therefore we are").[83] Bujo adds, "in the traditional setting, individuals could not be free unless they first contributed to the freedom of the whole community." [84]

Maturity in African ethics happened during initiation— a form of education aimed at the integration of moral norms in a community. Magesa notes that "…The proverbs, riddles, songs, and dances, as well as other sources of ancestral wisdom used in this period, exude moral guidance."[85] He adds: "The phase of formal instruction stresses five areas of ethical concern in the life of the individual and society: religion, the mystery of life and death, domestic and social virtues, sex and sexuality, and forms of self-identity."[86] A well-formed person has integrated his conscience with the conscience of

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[80] Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethics*, 23.
[81] Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*: *African Model and the Dialogue Between the North and the* South (Nairobi: Paulines, 1998), 28.
[82] Bujo, *African Christian Morality at the Age of Inculturation*, 97.
[83] Bujo, *Foundations of African Ethics,* 4.
[84] Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*, 7.
[85] Magesa, *African Religion*, 97.
[86] Magesa, *African Religion*, 97.

the community. When there is a conflict between the two, “the "conscience of the community" is to be preferred. The individual does "not feel cheated by the community.”[87]

The paradoxical relationship between individual and communal conscience resolves through the power of the word, otherwise known as the palaver. Moral norms emerge through a participatory dialogical process among people living within a specific existential space.[88] Accordingly, moral norms are flexible. Concretely, palaver points to the dynamic nature of culture. Practically, it allows for a community or an individual to consults one another on ethical issues. Palaver takes place “not only at the macro-ethical level, but also and with the same intensity at the micro-ethical level.”[89] The palaver-community “as an ‘ideal community of communication’ is not only cultivated where a general ethical principle affects the well-being of the people as a whole, but also where individual action makes traditional rules uncertain in a new context of life."[90]

African palaver model resembles and is different from the European "ethics of discourse.” In both, the validity of ethical norms results from are a dialogical process consented to by the people. That said, in palaver, “the human being does not become human by *cogito* (thinking) but by *relatio* (relationship) and *cognatio* (kinship). Also, palaver focuses not so much on theories but rather on concrete and existential needs. Moreover, palaver engages all people and not a select few as does "ethics of discourse[91] In its attempt to provide solid foundations for universal norms, ethics of discourse ignores

[87] Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, 75.
[88] Magesa, *African Religion*, 36.
[89] Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community,* 36.
[90] Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, 36.
[91] Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, 49.

the conflict between "objective and subjective," which is common in traditional morality. Furthermore, palaver is not afraid of accusations of "ethnocentric fallacy," perhaps because unlike ethics of discourse, it is more interested in the moral adequacy of norms and not so much about universal principles of right and wrong.

SCCs as Communities of Interpretation

Small Christian Communities have been described not as a movement in the Catholic Church, but the "Church on the move." What these words imply first of all is that SCCs are the way to be Church in East Africa today. SCCs are not optional but are the basic unit of the Catholic Church. It was for this reason that AMECEA Bishops in 1976 demanded that "Systematic formation of Small Christian Communities should be the key pastoral priority in the years to come in Eastern Africa." A Church on the move will strive to be "self-ministering (self-governing), self-propagating (self-spreading), and self-supporting."[92]

To reach this kind of a Church, the Church in East Africa and specifically in SCCs will need to rid itself of the receptacle attitude typical of the missionary Church and still prevalent in Post-Vatican II Catholicism—this implies the explicit acceptance of itself as the particular or local Church:

> "The particular Church is the universal Church (the salvific will in Christ through the Spirit) in its phenomenal, or Sacramental, presentation. The particular Church is the universal Church rendered visible within the framework of a time and a place, a medium, and a culture. The particular Church is the universal Church concretized and in being concretized, taking flesh, assuming the limits of time and

[92] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa,* 12.

> space, time and culture, and human beings. The particular Church is the whole mystery of salvation in Christ, the universal Church— in history, but not the totality of the history of the mystery of salvation in Christ. Each particular Church is in itself limited and, precisely particular. Accordingly, each particular Church must be open to the others, which likewise, each in its manner concretize and manifest the same universal salvific mystery- that is, the Church universal."[93]

This text by Boff has two significant implications for the Church in East Africa. As an instantiation of the universal Church, the local Church is a true expression of the Church as it should be— a living faith situated within the limits of time and space. Secondly, the local Church takes ownership of the task of discerning the salvific will of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Ideally, SCCs appropriate these two principles: SCCs embody the vitality of a faith situated within space and time. They are constituted of people who know each other, live in the same social, political space, and who engage a common faith. It is in the SCCs where discernment happens through a retelling of the story of Jesus. It is in the SCCs that discipleship matures and is concretely lived through service to one another, to the surrounding community, and the Parish.[94]

As interpretive communities, SCCs provide a platform in which the individual can make personal and moral determinations, while at the same time remaining conscious of being a member of a community to which he is accountable. SCCs should be places where members' freedom is enhanced and not threatened or judged. Single mothers and couples that have not solemnized their unions in the Church feel judged in SCCs. That is not a way to enhance people's freedom. Collectively, SCCs' should be a platform where

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[93] Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis*, 18.
[94] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 12.

members take local initiative relevant to their local needs. The flourishing of freedom happens as an interplay between individual freedom and communitarianism.

> The relationship between African "communitarian" and individual responsibility has immense implications for Christian ethics. On the one hand, Christians make very personal decisions before God. However, they make such choices within their faith community. The Christian is bound together with the Mystical Body. Good work is an essential building block for the Mystical Body of Christ.[95]

The integration of individual conscience and community conscience is at the core of the Church curriculum. If SCCs are not peripheral to the normal working of the Parish but are manifestations of the Church in the neighborhood, certain functions should devolve to them. In addition to the rotational assignments in liturgical animation at the Parish Center, SCCs could take up catechesis. Inculturation Theology believes that the methodology of traditional rites of initiation— viewed as platforms for the education of freedom for the community—can be brought to bear on Christian catechesis for Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. The promotion of such understanding linkage can take place in the SCCs where preparation and execution of the curriculum take into consideration local realities and local resources.[96]

The notion of palaver can be applied to define the type of communication that ought to prevail in SCCs. From the perspective of the local Church, the formulation of norms ought to emerge from day-to-day decisions through a participatory dialogue or palaver. Members of SCCs are equal by baptism. They have all come to share in the

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[95] Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, 49.
[96] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 12.

common priesthood of believers. Dominance is a challenge in SCCs that have as members ex-seminarians, charismatic members, and learned people who turn gatherings into platforms for spiritual and intellectual hairsplitting. Magesa observes that palaver or participatory dialogue among many SCCs is still wanting. He cites as reasons the lack of well-trained leadership, attitudes of exclusion, and fear among priests of losing their supervisory role if they were to submit to the common priesthood of all believers.[97]

Palaver aligns itself more with the liberation method in Christian theology. Bujo notes that if palaver were to become the norm in Africa, the continent could devise solutions that could alleviate situations of hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty, and oppression. As it were, a top-down dynamic in international relations has ensured that Africans remain in the background in the process of seeking solutions to problems and in determining the future of the continent. While external interference is undoubtedly inexcusable, to blamed too is the ineptitude and greed of local leaders. If SCCs were to embrace the liberation impulse of palaver, they would seriously diagnose what is ailing the society at the local level through careful social analysis, smoke out corrupt leadership, ensure formation for civic society, and continue to engage in charity while at the same time addressing and demanding justice.[98]

SCCs, Tactical Resistance and Shared Praxis: Missional Dimension

Scholars have taken different stances regarding the relationship between Church and culture. They all seem to fall into one of the five categories of Niebuhr's

[97] Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*, 12.
[98] Bujo, The Ethical Dimension of Community, 41.

classification *of Christ and Culture*. Ottati divides Niebuhr's categories into two significant groups: radical and centrist approaches.[99]

Radical and Centrist Stances: A Niebuhrian Critique

A Christ-of-culture approach regard revelation in Jesus Christ and the best cultural reasoning as equal harmonious sources of insight for both theology and ethics. Representatives of this approach include ancient Gnostics, Abelard, Albrecht Ritschl, and a large swath of Protestant liberalism. Through reason, man steers both culture and the natural world on the path of God's designed purpose.[100] Christ is "the great enlightener, the great teacher, the one who directs all men in culture to the attainment of wisdom, moral perfection, and peace."[101] This approach observes Niebuhr reduces Christ to the highest manifestation of human achievement—he is the divine immanent Spirit active in persons and society—and redemption to a progressive realization of potentials already embedded and at work in the culture.[102]

Christ "against culture" approach contends that loyalty to Christ and the Church necessarily entails a rejection of culture and society. "Against culture" Christians argue that the world as culture is fundamentally corrupt and unreflective of God's purposes. Within such a world, Christians must pursue the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit."[103] Niebuhr observes that since this approach rejects cultural reasoning, it does not propose a system that is not reflective of cultural reasoning.

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[99] Douglas Ottati F., "Christ and Culture": Still Worth Reading after All These Years," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003):123. www.jstor.org/stable/23561531.

[100] Ottati, "Christ and Culture": Still Worth Reading after All These Years," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003):124.

[101] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 92.

[102] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 110.

[102] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 111.

[103] Ottati,"Christ and Culture," 125.

Besides, it minimizes the universality of sin by exonerating the holy community. Representatives of this approach include Tertullian, Leo Tolstoy, the Mennonites, and various voices from the monastic tradition.[104]

The centrist stance unites the redemptive and creative dimensions, viewing Jesus, the Son of God the Creator, and as the principle of redemption.[105]Accordingly, the world as nature and culture is not godless, and Christ, the redeemer, cannot be antithetical to it. Within this field of commonality, the "Christ-above-culture" approach seeks to synthesize redemption with the best cultural insights without undermining the transcendence of redemption over the culture's best aspirations and achievements. A synthesis between human reason and divine revelation allows for overlap between revelation and reason while at the same time, acknowledging that only through revelation can reason be guided to identify essential truths and moral norms.[106] While he applauds the synthesizing efforts, Niebuhr warns against the danger of absolutizing what is relative.[107]

"The Christ-and-culture-in-paradox position is the dualistic version of "Christ above Culture."[108] Proponents of this approach begin by acknowledging the ever-present conflict between God and humanity. Christ's relationship with culture is the best example of this conflict. Niebuhr captures this position by noting, "Grace is in God, and sin is in man."[109] Corruption and depravity pervade and corrupts human culture. By upholding the paradox of law and grace, divine wrath and mercy, Christians occupy a space between

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[104] Ottati, "Christ and Culture", 124; see also Niebuhr, *Christ, and Culture*, 76-82.
[105] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 117.
[106] Ottati, "Christ and Culture," 125.
[107] Ottati, "Christ and Culture," 125.
[108] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 117.
[109] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 117.

two magnetic poles—the lure of sin and then invitation of grace. Niebuhr claims the apostle Paul as an early advocate of this approach. While Niebuhr acknowledges that this view reflects our existential condition, he nonetheless considers its antinomianism problematic. Some of the representatives of this approach include Martin Luther and Sören Kierkegaard.[110]

The Christ-the-transformer-of-culture position is the conversionist version of "Christ above Culture. It views the entire creation as made and ordered through the redemptive principle, Jesus Christ.[111] Although sin is universal, it is not identifiable with temporality. Instead, it is the corruption of what is fundamentally sound both in human nature as well as in culture.[112] Accordingly, Niebuhr observes that "the problem of culture is, therefore, the problem of its conversion, not of its replacement by a new creation, though the conversion is so radical that it amounts to a kind of rebirth."[113] This position supports laws and institutions as instruments for the promotion and pursuit of the common good. The unity of creation and redemptive purposes creates a positive view of culture and its institutions. It also gives incentive for human participation in the transformation.[114]

Ecclesiology and Social Theory

While the majority of theologians favor a more transformative stance within the centrist approach and have become open to critical dialogue between theology and social sciences, some insist on doing theology out of a metaphysical framework that fits more

[110] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 187.
[111] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 199.
[112] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 192.
[113] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 117.
[114] Ottati, "Christ and Culture," 127.

in “Christ against culture” and “Christ and culture” stances within the Niebuhrian categorization.[115] Milbank argues that social sciences and social theories are a product of the modern ethos of secularism that stems from an ontology of violence. Reality is anarchical and must be subjected to "the will to power" in one way or another.[116] For Milbank, as for Augustine, peace and non-violence are ontologically before and more essential than the anarchy and strife.[117] Theology offers an alternative of an ontology of non-violence that extends to the social and political. In other words, theology does not require social theory since it is itself a social theory.[118]

Political and liberation theologians have insisted that critical social theory is indispensable in theologizing. Their methodology rests on a commitment to social praxis, critical reflection, and transformation of history.[119] Faith requires an ideology-the bridge between the "conception of God and the real-life problems of history.[120] Both political and liberation theologians emphasize the need to analyze the social situation aided by the tools of the social sciences. Political theologians have drawn insights from the Frankfurt School and the social theory of Jurgen Habermas, while liberation theologians rely on postcolonial and post-modern theories.[121]

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[115] Kwok Pui-la “Theology and Social Theory” *An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology*, ed. William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey Bailey and Craig Hovey (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2012), 601-609.

[116] Fergus Kerr, “Simplicity Itself: Milbank’s Thesis,” *New Blackfriars* 73 (June 1992): 309.

[117] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 363.

[118] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 411.

[119] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, Rev. ed., trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 5.

[120] Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 6.

[121] Pui-la “Theology and Social Theory”, 609-615.

Although their contexts are not similar, African theologians could borrow a leaf from liberation theology as they formulate their contextual theologies. Gustavo Gutierrez's use of cultural reasoning and best practices in social analysis is based on the idea that the God of the exodus is also the God of history and political liberation. He is also the God of Jesus Christ, who has come to inaugurate the kingdom of God by proposing a new norm of humanity. Gutierrez then relates insights arising from social analysis with themes of revelation.[122] Clodovis Boff outlines a three-step epistemological process by which social science is constitutive of theology.[123] In socio-analytic mediation, the science of the social examines and analyzed actual conditions and structures of oppression. Hermeneutics mediation considers oppression in the light of faith, scripture, and tradition. Finally, in practical mediation, a proposal for transformative action is made. The new praxis becomes the point of departure for a new cycle of critical reflection.[124]

Orobator laments the casual and fleeting approach with which African theologians engage social issues. As a corrective to an uncritical approach to issues and uncritical ecclesiology, he proposes an empirical-based approach.[125] Consequently, "there are sufficient grounds for reassessing inculturation approach given the different crises facing Africa."[126] He notices how, for example, Charles Nyamiti's s ancestor-koinonia model of ecclesiology conveniently bypasses contexts for fear of attributing too much to the social

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[122] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 83.

[123] Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*: *Epistemological Foundations* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1987), 5-17.

[124] Agbonkhianmeghe, Orobator, S.J., *From Crisis to Kairos, The Mission of The Church in The Time of HIV/Aids, Refugees And Poverty* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2005), 70-71.

[125] Agbonkhianmeghe, Orobator, S.J., *From Crisis to Kairos*, 75.

[126] Orobator, S.J., *From Crisis to Kairos*, 70-71.

role of the Church and inadvertently adopting a secular ecclesiology. For Nyamiti, the Church is an extension of Christ's ancestorship. As such, her focus should be the fulfillment of her supernatural goals in the elements of ancestral worship. It is to these Nyamiti appends liberation, pursued only in as far as it is related to the primary goals.[127]

SCCs: Tactical Resistance and Shared Praxis

Vatican II provided the Church with a fresh mandate for evangelization, the 1974 Synod on Evangelization, and the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiadi* by Pope Paul VI renewed its impetus. In the case of Africa, the two African Synods called the African Church to its urgency. To be a credible evangelizing Church, the Church first to be a beneficiary of evangelization. SCCs can be an evangelized Church by living a life defined by "evangelical poverty, simplicity, generosity, and courage."[128]

SCCs are also proclaimers of the Word to culture. They constitute the sacramental expression of the salvific will of Christ through the spirit of the universal Church. They are the first embodiment of the Christian conscience, and the concrete realization of the freedom proclaimed through Christ. Such a Church must necessarily look beyond itself to the broader society by engaging the political questions of the day. Based on No. 89 of St. John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa,* SCCs must read the contemporary signs of the times in Africa and respond to today's reality. They must continuously ask themselves the question: "What are the different human problems in Africa that we should reflect on in our SCC meetings in the light of the Gospel? "[129]

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[127] Orobator, S.J., *From Crisis to Kairos*, 75.

[128] A. Barreiro, Basic Ecclesial Communities: The Evangelization of the Poor, trans. Barbara Campbell (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1982), 68.

[129] https://cpn.nd.edu/assets/243459/2009_joseph_healy_the_role_of_small_christian_communities_sccs_in_the_implementation_of_reconciliation_justice_and_peace_in_africa.pdf

Katongole observes that amid postmodern culture, the Church in Africa must seek to form communities whose prescriptions are clearly at odds with forms of postmodern playfulness. In other words, they should be communities of resistance. SCCs fit this bill.[130] By encouraging strong fellowship and solidarity among members, SCCs show that the sustainability of resistance is possible through the life and practices of a given community. In the absence of a community, such resistance metamorphoses into the narcissism of post-liberal individualism.[131] Katongole's suggestion is reminiscent of the cultural-linguistic approach of Lindbeck's post-liberalism. Within this approach, religion is a body of doctrine and attendant grammar. Since this approach interprets religion on its terms, it is said to promote interreligious dialogue. One weakness of the cultural-linguistic approach is its potential to promotes elitism.[132]

Katongole denounces elitism or some kind of "brethren" enclave in the conceptualization of communities of resistance. SCCs should be communities that are empowered to deal "critically and selectively with postmodern culture."[133] In other words, it is not enough that SCCs be communities of resistance, but importantly that they are tactical communities of resistance. Katongole follows De Certeau's distinction between strategy and tact.[134] One adopts a strategy in an environment of competition

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[130] Emmanuel Katongole, "Postmodern illusions and the Challenges of African Theology: Ecclesial Tactics of Resistance," *An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology,* ed. William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey Bailey and Craig Hovey (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2012), 502-503.

[131] Katongole, "Postmodern illusions and the Challenges of African Theology: Ecclesial Tactics of Resistance," 503-512.

[132] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Theology in the Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 32.

[133] Katongole, "Postmodern illusions and the Challenges of African Theology: Ecclesial Tactics of Resistance," 503.

[134] Katongole, "Postmodern illusions and the Challenges of African Theology: Ecclesial Tactics of Resistance," 527.

where one carves his place and seeks to defend it against perceived or real rivals. De Certeau describes a tactic thus:

> calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as a subject that will empower (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives, and objects of research, can be managed. As in management, every "strategic" rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its "own" place, that is, the place of its power and will, from an "environment." A Cartesian attitude, if you wish: it is an effort to delimit one's place in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the Other. It is also the typical attitude of modern science, politics, and military strategy.[135]

In an environment where the Church stands on alien ground, with no place to call its own given the ubiquity of a postmodern culture of playfulness, and denied the full view of the adversary, adopting a strategy will be less helpful. Instead, more helpful will be a tactic. A tactic calls for isolated actions that take advantage of opportunities without a base where it can build up stockpiles for the next battle. De Certeau describes tactics as the art of the weak. A tactic is:

> a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delineation of exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space

[135] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 37.

of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus, it must play on and with the terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign[136]

As communities of tactical resistance, SCCs must be formed by the Bible story, viewed as a "story"—of a particular pilgrim community whose trust in God saw it through different obstacles, as a community of resistance and hope.[137] When this story is not objectified but remains tied to the history of the community which produced and was shaped by it, its potential to create communities of memory—a people that read and re-live the same story by inserting themselves into the biblical tradition— is made manifest. According to Katongole, the political contexts behind the formation of the text and subsequently the creation of the communities of memory do not only accord moral authority to the Scriptures; it suggests that the reading of scriptures is not a pious exercise but a political exercise, even a subversive form of politics. When properly formed, SCCs embody the same prophetic vision of resistance and hope as the Biblical community.

Joseph Healey cites two cases as evidence of SCCs engagement with politics in the Metropolis of Nairobi. The first is the regular peace-building Seminars for SCC leaders of Christ the King Catholic Parish in the slums of Kibera—one of the hotspots of political violence. The second is the many inspiring, uplifting, and positive stories of witnessing that his team and he have collected.[138] Most important is his observation of a slow, "gradual shift of SCCs in Eastern Africa from being small prayer groups that focus inwardly focus to active small faith communities that focus outwardly and concern itself

[136] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday*, 37.
[137] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 53-71.
[138] http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/africanstories- database.htm

with issues justice and peace issues."[139] By using the pastoral theological method of "See, Judge and Act," some SCCs have learned the art of theological reflection. This method finds more extensive usage in booklets for the annual Kenya Lenten Campaign produced by the Kenyan Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. Distributed to parishes and eventually to SCCs, they contain an issue ailing the country, a reflection based on the Word of God, and a call to action. [140]

By engaging the Christian Story with real-life situations, SCCs show themselves to be communities of shared praxis. A shared praxis community is shaped by Scripture and tradition and is in conversation with the contemporary world. Members of the shared praxis community learn their faith through their practices. Shared praxis approach is reflective of the Catholic theology of the sacramentality of life, where God's presence and grace in ordinary things accord a religious character to everyday experience and allows that such become sources of reflection and conation.[141] In the context of religious education, Groome, the leading proponent of this approach, describes shared praxis community as "a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story, and it is a vision toward the end of lived Christian faith."[142]

According to Groome, all Church ministries constitutes its curriculum. SCCs and their ministries constitute the Church curriculum. A ministry is a curriculum because it

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[139]https://cpn.nd.edu/assets/243459/2009_joseph_healy_the_role_of_small_christian_communities_sccs_in_the_implementation_of_reconciliation_justice_and_peace_in_africa.pdf

[140]https://cpn.nd.edu/assets/243459/2009_joseph_healy_the_role_of_small_christian_communities_sccs_in_the_implementation_of_reconciliation_justice_and_peace_in_africa.pdf

[141] Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 18.

[142] Thomas Groome, *Christians Religious Education Sharing our Stories and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 184.

involves "initiating a personal 'presence with' people, empowering them as agent-subjects of their faith, and calling them into partnership and community."[143] In order to facilitate their formative function, the SCCs curriculum should appropriate the method proper to a shared praxis. This method shares the practical theological model of moving from practice to theory to practice. It consists of five movements which though explained in a logical sequence of step-by-step order, are nonetheless marked by overlaps and recurrences: (i) naming/expressing/describing the present action; (i) critical reflection on present action; (iii) making accessible christian story and vision; (iv) dialectical hermeneutics/appropriation of the story/vision to the learner's story and visions; and (v) decision/response for lived christian faith.[144]

For a curriculum to succeed, good leadership is necessary. The increasing number of SCCs and the need to split those that have grown into unmanageable sizes creates pressure for leadership. Also, the majority of SCCs lack well-trained leadership. Moreover, dominance by the parish priest, ex-seminarians, charismatic members, and the more educated in the community is an obstacle in the flourishing of SCCs. There is a need for affordable training for SCCs. A sound catechesis on SCCs will require that the SCC agenda be incorporated into the seminary curriculum and in the training of catechists.[145]

[143] Groome, *Christians Religious Education Sharing our Stories and Vision*, 185.
[144] Groome, *Sharing Faith,* 490.
[145] https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/murori_2016.pdf

CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS AND A GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One introduced the problem of land corruption as a phenomenon that has occasionally resulted in a conflict that has led to the loss of life, loss of property, displacement of families, and food insecurity. Land politics and discussions over access to land in Kenya intertwine with disputes over state power. Political opponents stand on opposite sides of the distributive conflict. In political contests where the winner takes all, victors in elections assume both state power but are also in charge of the distributive regime. The drafting of a National Land Policy from 2004 to 2008, its adoption in 2009, and inclusion in the new constitution was an attempt at restructuring the distributive regime. However, it has neither been freed from political interference, nor has it addressed the question of landlessness. Churches in Kenya have not been very active in advocating for the poor by proposing radical reform policies that would defocus the attention of bureaucratic reform and focus on the question of landlessness.

Chapter Two claimed that issues facing Kenya could only be addressed through an integrated approach. The Gĩkũyũ sacramental ontology and the place of land within it were presented. The shrine of *Mukurwe* wa *Nyagathanga*, built on the purported original home of the Gĩkũyũ, captures the community's collective religious consciousness. Here, the land holds everything together and points it to *Ngai*. *Ngai* himself is not a stranger in the land. He lives in it even as he transcends it. In this sacramental function of the land, everything is included and is sacred. The land is a mother, the canvas of ethical formation, the theater of rituals, and the abode of the ancestors. Lack of appreciation of

the sacramentality is the reason for land corruption in Kenya. It is caused by an essentialist ontology that reduces the complexity of reality to the simple, manageable, and quantifiable. In the case of land, it becomes another commodity in the market to be regulated by market laws and regulations. Such reductionisms constitute contamination of that which is sacred.

Essentialist ontology is the antithesis of sacramental ontology. If sacramental ontology leaves nothing outside, essentialist ontology is exclusive, not just of worldviews, but also of bearers of such, after it has reduced them to subalterns. Chapter Three discussed the European philosophical foundations of the creation of the subaltern, populations considered to be incapable of rational agency. Colonialism depended on anthropologies informed by such assumptions. Colonialists disparaged native ways of knowing and suppressed people's interpretive capabilities. The daunting task of postcolonialism is to reaffirm a participatory ontology. For its ability to recognizes the complexity, transparency, and communicability of reality, critical realism renders a suitable alternative philosophy of science that can frame sacramental ontology and help recover communities of interpretation.

SCCs are excellent instances of communities of interpretation. In Chapter Four, the voices of some selected participants from St. Francis Catholic Church, Ruiru on their perception of corruption were lifted. The themes that emerged from the data were discussed within the framework of lived eschatology in Chapter Five. As the horizon between the "already" and the "not yet," eschatology is the realm of Christian sacramentality. It is also the realm of Christian ethics, where communities such as SCCs

form in the image of Christ, where they interpret and communicate the story of Jesus, and where they engage the world through a shared praxis.

SCCs and the Future

From a sacramental pneuma-ontological perspective, SCCs must play the role of pointing to the world the "already" in the many, beautiful, and diverse cultures of Africa, but also the "not yet." They become locations of joyful expectation and courage in the ongoing realization of the kingdom. With courage, they will point to the obstacles that stall this holistic movement. To be truly alive to the unfolding of the eschatological horizon, SCCs must become acutely aware of the various webs of power games playing out in their local settings, which often than not, they are not just victims, but participants at the local level. Collectively, SCCs will adopt tactics that seek to demystify power and to create a more participatory society.

The future of SCCs as locations of sacramentality will depend on how academic theology itself embraces sacramental pneumatology as its orientation. Such an orientation conceives the mission of the Church in relation to an ongoing active engagement with history and culture. A sacramental pneumatological framework lends itself to an anthropological approach in which focus is on particular communities and their religious experiences— understood in terms of people's daily struggles in faith as they navigate the socio-political and economic circumstances.

The phenomenon of SCCs as communities of interpretation suggests a theological method similar to the Socratic/maieutic approach in which parties in dialogue engage in the form of cooperative argumentation. A maieutic based theology highlights the need for interdisciplinary dialogue between various disciplines committed to the study of the human

phenomenon and culture. The starting point for such a theology in the African context is a crisis of suffering and a people's praxis (praxis 1)—the way they reflect and act on it. That praxis dialogues with the Christian classics or the praxis of the Church (praxis 2). In this dialogue, praxis 1 raises questions about praxis 2, and the latter seeks to respond. Conversely, praxis 2 raises questions about praxis 1 to which the latter seeks to respond. In this critical mutuality of dialogue, a revised praxis emerges, which hopefully results in transformative action.

Appendix A

IBR Approval

Institutional Review Board

16400 N.W. 32nd Ave., Miami, Florida 33054
Proposal Approval Form
St. Thomas University

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S) Dr. Bryan Froehle supervising Doctoral Candidate Fr. Anthony Muraya

TITLE: Fighting Land Corruption in Kenya Through Communities of Interpretation: A Sacramental Pneuma-Ontological Perspective

in accordance with St. Thomas University policy and national guidelines governing the ethical use of human participants in research, the university Institutional Review Board certifies that the above-stated project:

____ being exempt from the full review was peer-reviewed by the IRB under the expedited review process and in its original form was

X___ was revised according to suggestions made by the IRB to the investigators and was

_____ being subject to a full review by the IRB was

REVISION REQUESTED ON ___

APPROVED ON 11/17/2017

DISAPPROVED ON _____

Investigators may request continuation of a project using the IRB project submittal form and procedure.

Human Subjects are adequately informed of any risks:

Gary Feinberg, Ph.D.

Gary Feinberg, Ph.D.
Chair, St. Thomas University IRB

/Date: 11/17/2017

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