Reimagining Theological Anthropology: Ubuntu Philosophy, Election Violence, and the Quest for Peace and Justice in Kenya

Luvembe Ronald Muyonga[1]
Africa International University
Corresponding email: muyongaronald1988@gmail.com

Abstract

In recent years, the intersection of theology, anthropology, and socio-political realities has garnered increased attention, particularly in Africa. This study engages with this conversation by examining human nature within the Kenyan context through Ubuntu, a philosophical tradition emphasizing communal interconnectedness, dignity, and justice. Focusing on the challenge of election-related violence in Kenya, the research explores the potential of Ubuntu-inspired theological anthropology to provide insights into addressing socio-political issues. By analyzing the historical, cultural, and socio-political dynamics of Kenya, particularly the roots and impacts of electoral violence, the study demonstrates how Ubuntu philosophy can inform theological reflections on human nature and contribute to peacebuilding efforts. Ubuntu, a Southern African concept, underscores the interconnectedness of humanity, encapsulated in the belief that "I am because we are." This perspective enriches theological reflection, offering a holistic understanding of human nature concerning the divine. Incorporating insights from African Christian theology, particularly inculturation theology, the study examines how cultural and historical factors contribute to conflict and explores indigenous approaches to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Addressing the root causes of electoral violence in Kenya, including selfish political interests, ethnic divisions, and land disputes, requires strategies promoting accountable governance, national unity, and equitable resource distribution. Ubuntu philosophy advocates for values of interconnectedness, justice, and ethical leadership, urging a theological perspective that reflects the communal nature of the Triune God and emphasizes living in harmony within a community. Integrating Ubuntu into Kenyan socio-political discourse calls for collective efforts to transcend ethnic differences, foster unity, and prioritize dialogue and reconciliation. This study highlights the significance of Ubuntu-informed theological anthropology in global discourse, advocating for a more inclusive and empathetic understanding of humanity that aligns with the principles of interconnectedness and communal well-being.

Keywords: *Reimagining Theological Anthropology, Ubuntu Philosophy, Election Violence, Quest for Peace and Justice*

Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of theology, anthropology, and socio-political realities has garnered increased attention, particularly in Africa. Drawing on the growing conversation that intertwines theology and anthropology, as well as the challenges faced in society, this study dives into rethinking how we understand human nature within the context of Kenya.[1] It embraces the philosophical tradition of Ubuntu to offer a unique lens through which to reexamine theological anthropology, emphasizing communal interconnectedness, dignity, and justice with a specific focus on its relevance in addressing the pervasive challenge of election-related violence in Kenya. By delving into the philosophical underpinnings of Ubuntu anthropology and its practical implications, this study aims to elucidate how theological reflections can offer insights into understanding and confronting pressing socio-political issues. Through a critical examination of the Kenyan context, including the root causes, dynamics, and consequences of election-related violence, this study seeks to demonstrate how Ubuntu-inspired theological perspectives can contribute to the quest for peace, justice, and social cohesion in Kenya and beyond.

Ubuntu philosophy is a Southern African concept that emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the profound significance of community. Its essence, captured in the belief that "I am because we are," resonates deeply within African contexts, presenting a unique lens through which to understand humanity.[2] This work seeks to illuminate how Ubuntu philosophy enriches theological reflection, contributing to a more holistic understanding of human nature through the lens of understanding the nature of God.

This study will include insight from the course on trends in African Christian theology with a focus on inculturation theology to facilitate analysis of the cultural and historical factors contributing to conflict, as well as the role of indigenous approaches to peacebuilding and reconciliation. In that sense, the integration of ubuntu philosophy will be insightful as it refers to the ability of African cultures to demonstrate compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity, and mutuality to develop and maintain just and caring communities.[3] At this point, it is essential to understand the context behind election violence in Kenya in the quest for peace and justice.

Unpacking Election Violence in Kenya

As much as Kenya's electoral violence was caused by abuse of the democratic process, it is crucial also to acknowledge that the violence was linked to long-standing issues in the country.[4] It is observed that politicians use elections for selfish gain rather than for the benefit of the citizens in the sense that leaders sowed disagreement among citizens and pitted communities against one other in pursuit of political supremacy and financial benefits, undermining nation-

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[1] Nyanni, Caleb. "Faith in African Lived Christianity: Bridging Anthropological and Theological Perspectives: Edited by Karen Lauterbach and Mika Vähäkangas, Leiden, Brill, 2020, 358 Pages, ISBN 9789004398498." Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association 40 (2): 165–66. doi:10.1080/18124461.2020.1794431.

[2] Mugumbate, Jacob, and Andrew Nyanguru. "Exploring African philosophy: The value of ubuntu in social work." African Journal of Social Work 3, no. 1 (2013): 82-100.

[3] James Kamwachale Khomba and Ella Cindy Kangaude-Ulaya, "Indigenisation of Corporate Strategies in Africa: Lessons from the African Ubuntu Philosophy," China-USA Business Review 12, no. 7 ,673, (2013):

[4] Godwin R. Murunga, Spontaneous or Premeditated?: Post-Election Violence in Kenya 7, (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2011).

building efforts. For them, the state is the ultimate reward, which gives them access to ensure economic prosperity and control over resources.[5] This demonstrates that these kinds of leaders have individualistic and selfish approaches to life which is the opposite of the ubuntu philosophy. The majority are driven by a selfish desire for quick prosperity which means their agenda in politics does not come from a mindset of helping and contributing to the growth of the country, but rather how best to gain wealth and political stability.

Looking back into Kenyan history, the first signs that negative ethnicity would harm post-colonial Kenya appeared during the latter stages of the war for independence from the British. The issue of negative ethnicity is a result of the colonial past, which was fostered by the British ruling structure. The British established a divide-and-rule system in Kenya, which involved the purposeful stratification of the colony's population in a variety of ways, including along ethnic lines, primarily for ease of rule and exploitation.[6] In examining the issue of negative ethnicity in Kenya through the lens of Ubuntu philosophy, it becomes evident that the colonial legacy has deeply entrenched divisions within Kenyan society. From an Ubuntu perspective, the stratification of Kenyan society along ethnic lines for the benefit of colonial rulers contradicts the principles of interconnectedness and mutual respect. By acknowledging the harm caused by colonial policies, individuals can begin to dismantle the barriers that perpetuate negative ethnicity.

Aside from military conflicts, ethnic interests continued to impact most events, including those that damaged the collective interests of Kenyans as a whole. This resulted in the fear that big tribes would dominate the small tribes after independence, which was even evident in the first two political parties, namely the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), each representing ethnic demands of their respective members.[7] The phenomenon of ethnic interests shaping events and political dynamics in Kenya reflects a departure from the principles of interconnectedness, communal harmony, and inclusivity inherent in Ubuntu ethics. When ethnic interests dominate political discourse and decision-making processes, it can perpetuate divisions and tensions within society, eroding the fabric of communal harmony that Ubuntu seeks to uphold. This helps us understand why the 2007 post-election violence might have been a result of the power struggle between two groups, the Kikuyu which is the majority ethnic group, and the Luo, the minority group.[8]

Another issue to look at is the distribution of land. Following independence from British rule, the new Kenyan government redistributed land previously owned by European immigrants. The situation in the Rift Valley became more complicated when, after independence, the land redistribution program included not only the Kalenjin people, who were indigenous to the region, but also the Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya people, who had relocated to the land as farm labor. There is also an opinion that the Kikuyu people were given preferential treatment in the redistribution because of the ethnic affiliation of the first President Kenyatta and many other

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[5] Ibid., 9.

[6] Sosteness Francis Materu, The Post-Election Violence in Kenya: Domestic and International Legal Responses, vol. 2, 17 (Springer, 2014).

[7] Ibid., 18.

[8] Takashi Yamano, Raphael Gitau, and Yuki Tanaka, Haki Yetu (It's Our Right): Determinants of Post-Election Violence in Kenya, 3 (GRIPS Policy Research Center, 2010).

Kikuyu officials who maintained key positions in the administration.[9] The distribution of land in post-colonial Kenya reflects complex socio-political dynamics for equitable access to land while respecting the rights and dignity of all members of society.

As observed, selfish political interests, ethnicity, and land disputes converge to fuel election violence in Kenya. Addressing these root causes requires comprehensive strategies aimed at promoting accountable governance, fostering national unity beyond ethnic lines, and implementing equitable land reforms to mitigate the underlying grievances driving conflict. Without meaningful efforts to address these fundamental issues, Kenya risks perpetuating a cycle of electoral violence that undermines democratic progress and threatens the stability of the nation.

With these predicaments, Kenyans ought to embrace values of interconnectedness, inclusivity, justice, and ethical leadership recognizing the aspect of unity and the worth of each other within the society. At this point, it is crucial to grasp the theological perspective of human nature.

Theological Anthropology: Understanding Human Nature

Theological anthropology strives to comprehend the essence of the human being considering divine revelation. It is a theologically informed perspective on humankind. Christian theological anthropology embraces all humanity, regardless of culture, gender, or beliefs.[10] A keen observation of God creating man in his image suggests that human beings reflect aspects of God's nature.[11] In the Trinity, there is a community of people—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—existing in perfect unity and relationship.[12] The three people of the Trinity are distinct yet united in purpose and essence which provides a model of interconnectedness and mutual love, where each person complements and supports the others.[13] Similarly, human beings are created for relationship and community, mirroring the communal nature of the Triune God. This implies that as much as man was created in the image of God, God also created him to live in a community. Living in the community involves recognizing and valuing the diversity of individuals while working together for common goals. Individuals within a community are distinct people but are also called to live in unity and harmony.

After God created man in his image, he established the foundations for marriage, work, and government. Considering that it was not good for man to be alone, God created a helper for him. In this regard, it led to the establishment of marriage.[14] God also entrusted humans with

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[9] Ibid., 7-8.

[10] "Christian Theological Anthropology and Its Implications for Human Dignity, Equality, and Rights," Oakwood University, accessed April 5, 2024, https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=831acb4252790900JmltdHM9MTcxMjYyMDgwMCZpZ3VpZD0wNjliYT QxNS01ZWJmLTYxMTgtMGE3OS1iMDBmNWY0MzYwMTImaW5zaWQ9NTE5Mw&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh= 3&fclid=069ba415-5ebf-6118-0a79-b00f5f436012&psq=Christian+theological+anthropology+is+not+concerned+only+with+Christians%2c+but+is +committed+to+all+humanity%2c+with+its+diversity+of+culture%2c+colour%2c+gender%2c+sexuality+and+ beliefs.

[11] Genesis 1:26-2

[12] Matthew 28:18-20

[13] John 17:16

[14] Genesis 2:18, 20b-24

caring for the garden, establishing the basis for work.[15] It is essential to note an aspect of governance in God creating man to rule over all living things, including fish, birds, animals, and the soil, establishing governance.[16] God in establishing marriage, work, and governance for man; makes him the originator of human culture. The idea of marriage, work, and governance demonstrates that man was not created to operate from an individualist perspective, but rather, live in a group or community. The idea of stewardship and partnership with God in the care of creation aligns with the Ubuntu principle of shared responsibility and community cooperation in the management of resources.

After man sinned, his nature was affected by sin.[17] It is essential to recognize the universal reality of human sinfulness, in the sense that every individual, regardless of background or status, is prone to sin and falls short of God's standard of perfection. This implies that man who is created to live in a community, is affected by sin, which affects how he lives in the community resulting in divisions and strife among members of the community.[18]

God, who is love and holy desires to relate to the fallen man. The heavenly host exclaims, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty"[19] In this endeavor, Leviticus' sacrificial system aims to reconcile sinful people with a holy God. God describes Himself as "the Lord, who makes you holy."[20] God's love and holiness shape his relationship with human beings. God loves His creations and wishes a relationship with them. God wishes that human civilization mirrors His nature of love and holiness.[21] This is why throughout the Bible; believers are encouraged to love one another as God loves them and to strive for holiness.[22] The goal is to emulate God's character in their thoughts, actions, and relationships, thereby reflecting His love and holiness in human civilization that takes us back to reflecting his image, in which we were created at the beginning.[23] Embracing Ubuntu as one lives in the community will come out easily as each of us seeks to reflect God's nature of love and holiness.

Throughout the Holy Scriptures, God encourages us to live a life that recognizes others in the community. God in guiding the Israelites, instructed them to extend kindness and assistance even to their enemies. [24] Such acts of kindness are essential for fostering harmony and strengthening the bonds within the community.

The Book of Ruth tells the story of a Moabite woman named Ruth who chooses to stay with her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, after the death of her husband. Ruth's commitment to Naomi and her willingness to support and care for her despite the challenges they face exemplifies the values of loyalty, compassion, and solidarity. Ruth's famous declaration to

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[15] Ibid., 2:15

[16] Ibid., 1:26-27

[17] Romans 3:23

[18] James 4:1

[19] Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8

[20] Lev. 20:8

[21] 1 Pet. 1:16; Lev. 11:44-46

[22] John 13:34; 1 Peter 1:16

[23] Genesis 1:26.

[24] Exodus 23:4-5

Naomi, "Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."[25] Despite being a gentile, she demonstrates genuine love for her mother-in-law. In her, we see the human nature that reflects the nature of God, the God who is love.

Reflecting on God's nature of love, theology can provide insight into the realities of love and community that are often overlooked by individualistic perspectives.[26] Theologically, being formed "in the image of God" underscores the remarkable importance of human beings: human beings are walking representations of God, and as such, they are of exquisite value and importance.[27] Kenyans ought to cherish and love one another because they are all created in the image of a divine being. This belief transcends individual differences and backgrounds, highlighting the inherent worth and dignity that each person possesses. Embracing principles like interconnection, inclusion, fairness, and ethical leadership reflects a commitment to honoring this divine image in every individual.

From a theological perspective, recognizing the shared humanity in each person encourages empathy, compassion, and respect for one another. Just as one would treat a sacred object with reverence, so too Kenyans ought to treat each other with kindness and understanding.

In a society guided by these principles, unity becomes a natural consequence, as people recognize the interconnectedness of their lives and the importance of working together for the common good. By fostering a culture of love and respect for one another, Kenyans can build a stronger, more cohesive society that celebrates the diversity and richness of its people.

Highlighting Ubuntu Philosophy

"Ubuntu," refers to humans as individuals within a community. It describes the essence of being human that lies in our interconnectedness and shared humanity, recognizing the inherent dignity and the worth of every individual. This implies that an individual is understood in the light of the community they belong to.[28] The Ubuntu ideology, which originated with the Bantu and Xhosa peoples of Southern Africa, represents a communal attitude emphasizing shared responsibility, trust in one another, and connection within the community. Ubuntu expresses humanity via the principles of compassion, solidarity, harmony, consensus, hospitality, sympathy, and sharing, among others.[29] The African philosophy of Ubuntu emphasizes the

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[25] Ruth 1:16, NIV,

[26] John Swinton, "Friendship in Community: Creating a Space for Love," Contact 122, no. 1 (1997): 17-22.

[27] J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen, "What Makes Us Human? The Interdisciplinary Challenge to Theological Anthropology and Christology," Toronto Journal of Theology 26, no. 2 (2010): 143-160.

[28] David Taurus and Stephanie Lowery, "African Theologies of Identity and Community: The Contributions of John Mbiti, Jesse Mugambi, Vincent Mulago, and Kwame Bediako," Open Theology 3 (2017): doi: 10.1515/opt-2017-0024.

[29] Rodreck Mupedziswa, Morena Rankopo, and L. Mwansa, "Ubuntu as a pan-African philosophical framework for social work in Africa," in Social Work Practice in Africa: Indigenous and Innovative Approaches (2019), 21-38.

interdependence of oneself with society. Ubuntu is about protecting humankind, and any deliberate behavior that puts others in danger which is the opposite of Ubuntu.[30]

The Ubuntu ideology serves as a socio-cultural foundation for individuals and institutions across Africa. It is essential in shaping the behaviors, norms, and attitudes of individuals and institutions throughout Africa. It informs decision-making processes, encourages collaboration in problem-solving, and underpins efforts towards social justice and inclusivity.[31] The Ubuntu ideology permeates many facets of daily life in Africa shaping how people interact with one another, approach challenges, and view their place within society.[32] According to the Ubuntu concept, African societies are humanist, community-based, and socialist. The Ubuntu ethic reinforces all groups in African society. This means that African cultures prioritize the well-being of individuals within the community and emphasize collective welfare over individual gain. In African societies, unity and sharing are crucial for local groups and organizations, as stated in the Bantu language Chinyanja: "mu umudzi muli mphamvu" (unity is strength). Community-based techniques promote constructive interaction, resulting in greater effectiveness than the sum of individual efforts.[33] Rather than individuals acting independently, community-based initiatives prioritize working together, pooling resources, and sharing responsibilities. This approach generates constructive interaction, where the combined efforts of the group result in outcomes that exceed what could be achieved by individual elements alone. By embracing unity and sharing, communities harness their collective power to achieve common goals more effectively and efficiently.

Analyzing keenly ubuntu philosophy, it relates to insights from African Christian theology which highlights the communal nature of humanity and the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. This is rooted in the idea that every person is created in the image of God, and deserving of respect, love, and care. Furthermore, Jesus Christ's emphasis is on love for one another and caring for the marginalized and vulnerable and calls believers to demonstrate compassion and solidarity towards others, mirroring the Ubuntu ethic.[34] Therefore, Ubuntu provides a lens through which to understand and appreciate the profound theological truth of humanity being created in the image of God.

Integrating insights from Ubuntu into the Kenyan situation calls for a collective effort to foster unity and solidarity among Kenyan communities. This entails transcending ethnic differences and working towards a common vision of a more inclusive and equitable society. In the context of Kenya, acknowledging the impact of colonialism on ethnic relations is a crucial step towards healing societal divisions. It is essential to embrace ubuntu-inspired approaches to reconciliation and prioritize dialogue, forgiveness, and collective healing as essential components of building a more cohesive and peaceful society. Still, on the same, the idea of

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[30] R. K. Chigangaidze, A. A. Matanga, and T. R. Katsuro, "Ubuntu Philosophy as a Humanistic–Existential Framework for the Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic," Journal of Humanistic Psychology 62, no. 3 (2022): 319-333, https://doi.org/10.1177/00221678211044554.

[31] James Kamwachale Khomba and Ella Cindy Kangaude-Ulaya, "Indigenisation of Corporate Strategies in Africa: Lessons from the African Ubuntu Philosophy," *China-USA Business Review* 12, no. 7, 673 (2013).

[32] Ibid., 674.

[33] Ibid., 676

[34] John 15:17

negative ethnicity in Kenya calls for fostering cross-cultural understanding and building inclusive institutions that uphold the dignity and rights of all citizens

The Significance of Ubuntu – Informed Theological Anthropology for Global Discourse

Exploring the Ubuntu Philosophy in this work underscores the incorporation of human nature, reflecting the divine image, as grasped within the triune community of the Godhead. The Ubuntu ideology, emphasizing interdependence and interconnectedness within society, offers a profound perspective on understanding the unity within the Body of Christ, the Church.[35] It underscores the importance of safeguarding humanity and opposes any actions that endanger others, thus aligning with the core principles of Ubuntu. This ethical framework not only enriches our understanding of communal solidarity but also reinforces the imperative of cherishing and preserving the well-being of all individuals within the Christian community. It is essential to explore what the Scriptures teach concerning the church as the Body of Christ.

> The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So, it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." Some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So, we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So, God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.[36]

This passage highlights the principle of unity in diversity just as the human body is made up of many different parts, each with its unique function, the Body of Christ consists of individuals from diverse backgrounds all united body through baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of the body's parts. It illustrates that each part, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is essential for the proper functioning of the whole. This mirrors the interdependence among members of the Church, where each person contributes uniquely to the overall health and functioning of the body. Every individual has been intentionally placed within the body by God for a specific purpose. There is also an aspect of mutual care and support that ought to characterize the relationships within the body in the sense that when one part suffers, the entire body suffers, and when one part is honored, all rejoice

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[35] 1 Cor 12:27

[36] Corinthians 12:12-26 (NLT)

together. This underscores the importance of empathy, compassion, and solidarity that ought to be among believers.

Ubuntu ideology, as a cultural concept rooted in African traditions, shares parallels with the idea of the body of Christ in Christianity and emphasizes compassion, reciprocity, dignity, and harmony for community-building The body of Christ metaphor in Christianity symbolizes the interconnectedness and mutual care among believers.[37] Both concepts underscore the importance of unity, empathy, and collective well-being in fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility within their respective communities.

Now, it is clear the church should serve as a vital catalyst for fostering harmonious communities. Considering past election violence in Kenya, the church has a crucial responsibility to ensure a peaceful future. The human need for belonging to society wants connections through relationships, which are shown in the communal functions of humankind.[38]

Highlight on Inculturation Theology

It is essential at this point to explore how the Ubuntu philosophy within the framework of theological anthropology enriches the insights from inculturation theology, by offering a comprehensive understanding of the complex socio-political realities, particularly exemplified by election violence in Kenya. To begin with, Victor Cole's perspective on contextualization underscores the universal applicability of biblical authority, urging churches worldwide to allow the Bible to address their contemporary concerns.[39] This approach resonates with the Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of adapting timeless principles to address the unique needs and challenges of diverse communities, fostering unity and mutual support.

Examining the intersection of inculturation theology with Ubuntu principles and its implications for the global church helps grasp the emphasis on maintaining African customs while adopting Christian ideals that align with Ubuntu's value of maintaining cultural heritage as well as embracing beneficial external contributions for community well-being.[40] A more inclusive expression of Christianity through inculturation, promoting communication and understanding across cultures, resonates with Ubuntu's emphasis on mutual respect within communities which is highlighted as an essential component for effective communication between cultures and religions, a sentiment shared by both inculturation theology and Ubuntu. The adaptation of Christianity within local contexts is seen as crucial for authenticity and relevance that aligns with the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture promoted by

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[37] Barbara Nussbaum, "African Culture and Ubuntu," *Perspectives* 17, no. 1, 2 (2003)

[38] Vushebwashe Mhaka, "Becoming a Christ for Your Neighbour: Exploring Luther's Notion of Neighbourliness in Light of Ukama and Ubuntu in the Zimbabwean Lutheran Church" (PhD diss., 2010), 9.

[39]Mark Shaw, Tite Tienou, and Samuel Ngewa, eds., *Issues in African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1998), 12-23.

[40]Sussy Gumo Kurgat, "The Theology of Inculturation and the African Church," Department of Religion, Theology and Philosophy, Maseno University, accepted August 31, 2009.
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inculturation theology and is essential for the global church's mission of spreading the Gospel worldwide.[41]

In the lens of ubuntu inclusivity, it is critical how traditional African theology has emphasized the positive aspects of community while neglecting the oppressive elements that diminish women. African women theologians' contributions in reshaping theological discourse highlight the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives, including those of marginalized groups, to foster a more inclusive and gender-sensitive understanding of community and theology in Africa and beyond. The global church ought to actively engage with local contexts, such as African culture, and work towards promoting gender equality and social justice within its communities.[42] The emphasis on communal values inherent in African theology, reflected in ubuntu ideology challenges the global church to rethink its understanding of community and inclusivity, encouraging a more holistic approach that values the interconnectedness of all individuals.

It is essential to note the various aspects of inculturation theology within African theological discourse that are significant in promoting unity within the global theological community and the Body of Christ, the universal church. This begins with acknowledging the diversity within African culture and religion while emphasizing a fundamental unity in religious experience. The diversity in unity mirrors the core principle of inculturation theology, which seeks to integrate elements of local culture into Christian practice while maintaining essential Christian doctrines.[43] By doing so, it fosters a sense of unity among diverse cultural contexts within the global church.

The development of Christological models, that depict Jesus Christ as a liberator, ancestor, healer, and African king, reflects the influence of the Ubuntu ideology that emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within a community by illustrating Jesus' role not only as a personal savior but also as a figure deeply connected to the collective well-being of the community. Further, the emphasis on inclusivity, gender equality, spirituality, and liberation within inculturation theology aligns with the Ubuntu principle of inclusiveness and interconnectedness.[44] Ubuntu emphasizes the recognition of everyone's inherent dignity and worth within the community. Therefore, promoting inclusivity and gender equality in theological discourse reflects a commitment to honoring the humanity of all individuals, echoing Ubuntu's core values.

Reflecting on the work on African Theologies of Identity and Community brings to the surface the ubuntu ideology as the lens for Christian theology efforts to understand identity, community, and ethnic diversity in Africa.[45] Further, it is essential how it criticizes negative

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[41] Sussy Gumo Kurgat, "The Theology of Inculturation and the African Church," Department of Religion, Theology and Philosophy, Maseno University, accepted August 31, 2009.

[42] Loreen Maseno, "African Women's Theology and the Re-Imagining of Community in Africa," HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 77, no. 2 (2021).

[43] Oborji, Francis Anekwe. African Christian Theology: Origins and Perspectives.

[44] Ibid.,

[45] Tarus, David Kirwa, Stephanie A. Lowery, and Stephanie A. Lowery. "African Theologies of Identity and Community: The Contributions of John Mbiti, Jesse Mugambi, Vincent Mulago, and Kwame Bediako." Open Theology 3, no. 1 (June 2017): doi:10.1515/opth-2017-0024.

attitudes toward ethnicity as an issue addressed in Kenyan election violence and offers suggestions for developing unity, respect, and inclusivity among varied communities. It is essential to embrace the idea of knowing and building identity in ways that foster unity, respect for others, and inclusivity to combat negative aspects of identity that can lead to separation, radicalism, or violence as seen in the Kenyan post-election violence. The inclusion of ethnic diversity as part of God's original creation, which is confirmed in the eschatological kingdom, challenges negative notions of ethnicity. This aligns with the ubuntu principle of mutual respect and interconnectedness within communities.

Conclusion

The exploration of Ubuntu philosophy within the framework of theological anthropology offers profound insights into understanding and addressing the complex socio-political realities, particularly exemplified by election violence in Kenya. By delving into the principles of Ubuntu, which emphasize interconnectedness, communal solidarity, and the inherent dignity of every individual, this study illuminates how theological reflections can provide valuable perspectives on confronting societal challenges and fostering peace and justice.

Through a critical analysis of the Kenyan context, including the historical legacies of colonialism, ethnic tensions, and socioeconomic disparities, it becomes evident how selfish political interests and divisive narratives contribute to election-related violence. However, by integrating Ubuntu-inspired approaches to reconciliation, forgiveness, and collective healing, there is a promising opportunity to build more cohesive and inclusive societies.

Moreover, examining Ubuntu philosophy alongside insights from African Christian theology underscores the importance of communal harmony, empathy, and mutual care within communities. Both Ubuntu and Christian theology emphasize the interconnectedness of humanity and the imperative of promoting unity, justice, and social cohesion.

The exploration of Ubuntu philosophy within the framework of theological anthropology, alongside insights from inculturation theology, offers profound perspectives on understanding and addressing the complex socio-political realities, particularly exemplified by election violence in Kenya. This approach enriches our understanding of communal solidarity and underscores the importance of embracing diverse cultural identities within the Christian faith. By integrating insights from inculturation theology, this study reinforces the significance of recognizing and affirming the cultural diversity inherent in African societies, including Kenya.

Recommendation

This study underscores the critical role of Ubuntu philosophy in enriching theological reflections on human nature and societal harmony, particularly in the context of Kenya's election-related violence. The deep-rooted issues of ethnic division and political exploitation are to be addressed by promoting Ubuntu values by advocating for the widespread adoption of Ubuntu principles within educational curricula and community programs across Kenya, encouraging policymakers to integrate Ubuntu-inspired approaches into governance frameworks and policies, supporting initiatives that promote cross-cultural education and dialogue from an early age through nurturing a generation that values diversity and inclusivity and invests in community-driven projects that promote economic empowerment and reconciliation initiatives.

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