

An Analysis of Mr Lugisani's Struggles in Aifheli Wilson Magau's Novel, 'Bulayo lo talifhaho' (2008) - Human Rights Violations and Ethical Leadership



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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the human rights violations experienced by Mr. Lugisani in Aifheli Wilson Magau's novel "Bulayo lo talifhaho," with a focus on the systemic injustices that erode the foundations of ethical leadership and moral integrity. Grounded in Human Rights Theory, the research employed thematic textual analysis to examine instances of injustice, discrimination, and abuse of power that Mr. Lugisani encounters as he navigates the complexities of a corrupt political landscape. By analysing key events within the narrative, the study highlighted how corrupt officials systematically violate Mr. Lugisani's rights, revealing the profound implications of these actions on his identity, community, and quest for justice. The findings highlight the broader societal impacts of these violations, telling a narrative rich in themes of resilience, moral courage, and the pursuit of truth in the face of adversity. This research emphasises the importance of understanding these human rights violations within the context of Tshivenda literature, offering a critical lens through which to explore ethical considerations and the ramifications of leadership failures. It advocates for further studies on human rights themes in diverse literary contexts to deepen awareness of social justice issues and inspire collective moral reflection. Ultimately, this study aims to expand African literary scholarship by demonstrating how Tshivenda literature serves as a site of political resistance and ethical reflection in the face of injustice.

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INTRODUCTION

Examining human rights violations and ethical leadership within African literature constitutes a pivotal area of scholarly inquiry, particularly in exploring how literary narratives critique and reflect upon governance structures. Aifheli Wilson Magau presents a profound engagement with these themes, exposing systemic corruption, injustice, and abuses of power as embodied in the tribulations of its protagonist, Mr Lugisani.¹ This study interrogates the novel's portrayal of these concerns, situating it within broader discourses on leadership, justice, and human rights violations in Tshivenda literature. Adopting Human Rights Theory as an analytical framework, the research seeks to illuminate the moral and political dilemmas embedded within the text and their broader implications for governance in South Africa and beyond.

¹ Aifheli Wilson Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho* (Cape Town: Van Schaik, 2008).

Existing scholarship on governance and ethical dilemmas in African literature has largely centred on works written in English, Zulu, and Xhosa. Studies in the English-language African literature have extensively examined crises of leadership and governance, underscoring literature's capacity to critique unethical political structures and their deleterious consequences for society.² Furthermore, the ethical dimensions of governance have been explored through the lens of Ubuntu's philosophical perspective, elucidating how African moral thought informs public administration and accountability.³ Similarly, research on Zulu and Xhosa literature has investigated the ramifications of colonialism and historical oppression on Indigenous literary traditions, foregrounding the marginalisation of African languages and their potential role in articulating governance concerns.⁴ The ethical complexities of governance have also been examined within the context of psychological assessment, particularly concerning the applicability of Western paradigms in African sociocultural contexts.⁵ Despite these significant contributions, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to Tshivenda literature's engagement with governance and human rights, thereby highlighting a critical gap that this study endeavours to address.

By focusing on *Bulayo lo talifhaho*, this research contributes to the expanding corpus of scholarship that interrogates the role of African literature in critiquing socio-political realities. It elucidates how the Tshivenda fiction interrogates human rights violations and leadership ethical dilemmas, demonstrating the efficacy of literature in exposing injustices and advocating for social transformation. Nevertheless, this study remains aware of ongoing academic debates concerning the reliability of fiction as a medium for governance critique. While some scholars contend that literature is a potent instrument for unveiling oppression and fostering moral introspection, others caution that fictional narratives may risk romanticising or oversimplifying intricate socio-political realities. Through an in-depth analysis of *Bulayo lo talifhaho*, this study asserts that literature offers a nuanced exploration of ethical leadership and human rights, reflecting both the pervasive nature of corruption and the resilience inherent within Tshivenda society.

This research addresses the following central question: How does Magau depict human rights violations and ethical leadership through the experiences of Mr Luginani?⁶ The study aims to critically analyse the thematic representation of systemic injustices, abuses of power, and moral resilience within the novel, employing Human Rights Theory as an interpretative lens. In doing so, it aims to deepen scholarly engagements with governance, justice, and ethical leadership in Tshivenda literature, thereby enriching the broader discourse on African literary critiques of power, accountability, and moral authority.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Human Rights Theory, which provides a critical lens through which to examine the systemic injustices, political oppression, and ethical leadership failures depicted in *Bulayo lo talifhaho* (2008).⁷ Human Rights Theory is rooted in the fundamental belief that all individuals are entitled to certain inalienable rights, regardless of their social, political, or economic status. The theoretical framework traces its intellectual origins from classical philosophers, such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant, whose works laid the foundation for modern human rights discourse. Locke's concept of natural rights, Rousseau's notion of the social contract, and Kant's emphasis on human dignity and moral autonomy collectively shape contemporary understandings of justice, governance, and individual freedoms.

Beyond Western philosophical traditions, the study also integrates African philosophical perspectives, particularly Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasises communal values, human dignity, and social justice. Scholars such as Mokgoro and Ramose have extensively articulated how Ubuntu aligns

² Ugur Aytac and Enzo Rossi, "Ideology Critique without Morality: A Radical Realist Approach," *American Political Science Review* 117, no. 4 (2023): 1215–27.

³ Janestic Mwendu Twikirize, Sharlotte Tusasiirwe, and Rugare Mugumbate, *Ubuntu Philosophy and Decolonising Social Work Fields of Practice in Africa* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

⁴ Russell Kaschula, *African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts* (New Africa Books, 2001).

⁵ M. P. Sebola, A N Moloto, and M A Mamabolo, "Leadership and Ethics in the South African Public Sector: Ethical and Leadership Challenges," 2024.

⁶ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

⁷ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

with human rights principles, particularly in Africa, where social harmony and collective responsibility are central to justice and governance.⁸ This integration of western and African perspectives strengthens the theoretical foundation, ensuring both contextual relevance and academic robustness.

In relation to *Bulayo lo tšalifhaho*, the Human Rights Theory is particularly relevant in exposing the multiple ways in which Mr. Lugisani's rights are violated, from forced removal and political sabotage to economic disenfranchisement and false accusations. His struggles serve as a literary representation of how corruption, power abuse, and systemic injustice undermine ethical leadership and social justice. Furthermore, the novel aligns with the broader tradition of African literature as a form of resistance, reinforcing the argument that literature is a powerful tool for critiquing socio-political realities and advocating for human rights.

However, while the study acknowledges the potency of literature in human rights advocacy, it is essential to engage with counterarguments. Some scholars contend that fictional narratives, though influential, may romanticise or oversimplify political struggles, potentially limiting their effectiveness in driving real-world change. Expanding on this debate, examining how African literary figures such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Tsitsi Dangarembga have historically influenced socio-political movements could provide further depth. Additionally, incorporating legal frameworks on human rights violations in Africa, such as postcolonial constitutional reforms and international human rights treaties, would further enhance the argument by linking literary analysis with broader political and legal realities.

Overall, this theoretical framework provides a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Human Rights Theory in relation to *Bulayo lo tšalifhaho*, demonstrating how literature serves as a critical space for interrogating governance, oppression, and justice in postcolonial African societies.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a thematic textual analysis approach to examine human rights violations and ethical leadership as depicted in Magau.⁹ The research was grounded in qualitative inquiry, which allows for an in-depth exploration of how the novel portrays systemic injustices, corruption, and moral integrity through Mr. Lugisani's struggles within a corrupt political landscape. By adopting Human Rights Theory as an analytical lens, the study sought to uncover how literature critiques governance failures and advocates for justice within a Tshivenda socio-political context.

The textual data was collected through purposive sampling, selecting *Bulayo lo tšalifhaho* due to its strong thematic engagement with human rights violations and leadership ethics. This selection ensures that the study critically engages with a narrative that reflects real-world political struggles, abuse of power, and resilience in the face of oppression. The thematic depth of the novel provides a rich textual basis for analysing how human rights violations manifest in Tshivenda literature and how the protagonist's experiences reflect broader social injustices.

The analysis process followed several key steps. Initially, the text was read multiple times to develop a comprehensive understanding of its narrative structure, themes, and character dynamics. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring motifs related to human rights violations, ethical dilemmas, and governance failures. The text was systematically coded to categorise instances of oppression, corruption, moral resilience, and leadership challenges, examining how these elements contribute to the broader social critique of the novel. Special attention was given to how the protagonist, Mr. Lugisani, embodies resistance against injustice, highlighting his ethical and political dilemmas as he pursues justice. Through this analytical framework, four dominant themes emerged: forced removal as a violation of human rights, political sabotage as a violation of human rights, economic disenfranchisement as a violation of human rights, and false accusations as a violation of human rights.

By focusing on a single, purposefully selected text, the study provides a detailed and context-specific exploration of how Tshivenda literature engages with human rights discourse. This

⁸ Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, "Ubuntu and the Law in South Africa," *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 1, no. 1 (1998); Mogobe B Ramose, "African Philosophy through Ubuntu," 1999.

⁹ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Tšalifhaho*.

methodological approach contributes to bridging the literature gap regarding human rights violations and leadership ethics in Tshivenda fiction, offering insights into the role of literature in fostering political and moral consciousness.

DISCUSSION

The study of human rights violations and ethical leadership in African literature has been a central area of scholarly inquiry, particularly in understanding how literature serves as a medium for political critique, social transformation, and moral discourse. African writers have long employed fiction to expose systemic injustices, challenge authoritarian regimes, and illuminate the ethical dilemmas that leaders face. However, while extensive research has been conducted on these themes in English, Zulu, and Xhosa literature, Tshivenda literary works remain significantly underexplored in academic discourse. This study seeks to address this gap by examining Magau's work through the lens of Human Rights Theory, contributing to the broader literary examination of governance, justice, and leadership in South African literature.

Human Rights Violations in African Literature

African literature has played a crucial role in documenting and interrogating human rights violations, particularly in contexts of colonial oppression, apartheid, and postcolonial governance crises. Many African literary works depict how political elites, security forces, and legal systems perpetuate systemic injustices, often at the expense of marginalised individuals and communities.¹⁰ The narratives often focus on themes such as state-sponsored violence, political imprisonment, economic marginalisation, and gender-based oppression.¹¹

Achebe's work is a notable example of how African literature exposes authoritarian rule and the suppression of civil liberties.¹² Similarly, Mokgoro critiques the failures of post-independence governance in Kenya, demonstrating how corruption and political betrayal exacerbate human suffering.¹³ Scholars such as Murphy have argued that these works serve as a literary form of human rights advocacy, offering a means of resistance against oppressive regimes.¹⁴

In South African literature, the apartheid-era novels of writers like Alex La Guma and Nadine Gordimer have been instrumental in highlighting racial oppression and state brutality. Kaschula explores how indigenous literature, particularly in Zulu and Xhosa traditions, has preserved oral narratives that document historical injustices, serving as a counter-narrative to official colonial and apartheid histories.¹⁵ Kunene expands on this by arguing that oral literature in South Africa has functioned as a form of social protest, exposing abuses of power while preserving indigenous knowledge systems.¹⁶

Despite the extensive scholarship on human rights violations in English, Zulu, and Xhosa literature, Tshivenda literature remains underrepresented in these discussions. The absence of critical engagement with Tshivenda fiction in the study of human rights suggests the need for further exploration of how works like *Bulayo lo talifhaho* contribute to these debates.

Ethical Leadership and Corruption in African Literature

Ethical leadership and governance are recurrent themes in African literature, particularly in narratives that critique post-independence political failures. Many literary texts depict leaders who, despite initial promises of justice and development, succumb to corruption, nepotism, and authoritarian tendencies. This pattern reflects broader socio-political concerns about the erosion of ethical values in leadership.¹⁷

¹⁰ Aytac and Rossi, "Ideology Critique without Morality: A Radical Realist Approach."

¹¹ Eleni Coundouriotis, *Narrating Human Rights in Africa* (Routledge, 2020).

¹² Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (Penguin UK, 1987).

¹³ Mokgoro, "Ubuntu and the Law in South Africa."

¹⁴ Sheila T Murphy, "The Impact of Factual versus Fictional Media Portrayals on Cultural Stereotypes," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 560, no. 1 (1998): 165–78.

¹⁵ Kaschula, *African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts*.

¹⁶ Raymond Fakazi Duke Kunene, "An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry, Both Traditional and Modern" (University of Natal, 1962).

¹⁷ Twikirize, Tusasiirwe, and Mugumbate, *Ubuntu Philosophy and Decolonising Social Work Fields of Practice in Africa*.

Achebe is often cited as one of the earliest literary critiques of postcolonial leadership failures.¹⁸ According to Losambe and Ojaide, it illustrates how political elites manipulate power for personal gain while disregarding the needs of ordinary citizens.¹⁹ Similarly, Mantzatis et.al. explore the moral dilemmas of individuals navigating a corrupt system, questioning whether personal integrity can survive within a deeply unethical political environment.²⁰

The Zulu and Xhosa literary traditions also engage with these themes, particularly those related to traditional leadership structures. Ngobe examines how Zulu literature often contrasts the ethical values of pre-colonial leadership with those of contemporary political figures, who are perceived as having moral decay.²¹ This is evident in the works of B.W. Vilakazi, who uses poetry and prose to reflect on the tensions between traditional governance and modern political corruption.

Sebola et.al. argue that ethical leadership is a concern in governance and broader public administration.²² Their study on psychological ethics in African governance suggests that many leadership failures stem from a lack of moral accountability, a theme frequently explored in African literature. However, although there is extensive research on ethical dilemmas in English and Zulu literature, there remains a significant gap in the engagement of Tshivenda literature with these themes. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how *Bulayo lo ṭalifhaho* navigates these moral complexities through the experiences of Mr. Lugisani.

Fiction as a Medium for Political Critique

One of the most debated aspects of African literature is the extent to which fiction can accurately and reliably critique political and social realities. Scholars are divided on whether literature should be viewed as a direct reflection of historical and political events or whether it primarily functions as an interpretive and symbolic medium.

Achebe famously asserted that African literature has a moral responsibility to reflect societal truths, arguing that writers must use their craft to challenge oppression and advocate for justice.²³ This perspective aligns with Mthembu, who views literature as an extension of political activism, capable of mobilising public sentiment against injustice.²⁴

Conversely, critics like Murphy caution that fictional narratives may oversimplify complex socio-political issues, potentially reinforcing stereotypes or distorting historical realities.²⁵ For instance, some scholars argue that the portrayal of corruption in African literature often follows a simplistic binary of good versus evil, overlooking the structural and systemic factors that contribute to governance failures.²⁶ It raises crucial questions about the limitations of literary critique, particularly how audiences interpret fictional representations of leadership and human rights.

This debate is particularly relevant to the study of *Bulayo lo ṭalifhaho*, as it examines how the novel portrays systemic corruption and challenges to ethical leadership. By engaging with these discussions, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of how literature both reflects and shapes public perceptions of governance.

Although significant scholarly attention has been paid to human rights violations and ethical leadership in African literature, the focus has remained mainly on the English, Zulu, and Xhosa texts. Tshivenda literary works have received comparatively little critical engagement in these discussions despite their potential to offer unique insights into governance and justice within South Africa's socio-political landscape.

¹⁸ Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People* (Penguin UK, 1966).

¹⁹ Lokangaka Losambe and Tanure Ojaide, *The Routledge Handbook of the New African Diasporic Literature* (Routledge, 2024).

²⁰ Losambe and Ojaide, *The Routledge Handbook of the New African Diasporic Literature*.

²¹ Muriel Nokuthula Ngobe, "Moral Degeneration as Portrayed in Selected Zulu Literature" (University of South Africa (South Africa), 2021).

²² Sebola, Moloto, and Mamabolo, "Leadership and Ethics in the South African Public Sector: Ethical and Leadership Challenges."

²³ Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*.

²⁴ Sanele Mathews Mthembu, "Portraying Political Violence, Rape and Masculinities in Post-Apartheid African Language Literature: The Case of the Novel Ngiyolibala Ngifile," *South African Journal of African Languages* 44, no.3(2024): 306–14.

²⁵ Murphy, "The Impact of Factual versus Fictional Media Portrayals on Cultural Stereotypes."

²⁶ Twikirize, Tusasiirwe, and Mugumbate, *Ubuntu Philosophy and Decolonising Social Work Fields of Practice in Africa*.

Summary of the Novel *Bulayo lo talifhaho*

The novel is set in Mphagane, a territory governed by Chief Mphaga. The royal court comprises four principal leaders: Mr. Mandiwana, Mr. Mukhotho, Pastor Mamidze, and Mr. Lugisani, the latter of whom is the protagonist. Mr. Lugisani, an *induna* in the Tshiozwi village, is depicted as a figure of integrity and diligence. His name, which means "one who rectifies injustices," encapsulates his role within the community. However, his unwavering commitment to justice and the chief's evident favour towards him engender deep resentment among his fellow council members, Mr. Mandiwana, Mr. Mukhotho, and Pastor Mamidze. Their hostility is exacerbated by his significant contributions to community development and his forthrightness in court proceedings, frequently resulting in the accused's acquittal.

Determined to remove him from power, these adversaries orchestrate a scheme to reassign him to Dovahoni, a vastly underdeveloped village under Mphagane's jurisdiction. Aware that such a transfer would be both a psychological and economic blow, forcing him to abandon his prosperous farmland and well-established home, they anticipate his downfall. Their plot succeeds, and Mr. Lugisani is relocated to Dovahoni. Nevertheless, undeterred by adversity, he applies the same dedication and industrious spirit to the new community, helping to foster its development. His continued success, however, further infuriates his enemies, prompting them to devise yet another malicious conspiracy.

To irreparably damage his reputation, they fabricate a letter falsely suggesting that Mr. Lugisani harbours ambitions of usurping Mrs. Nyamalwela, the legitimate chief of Dovahoni. The forged document is strategically disseminated, ultimately turning Chief Mphaga and the local community against him. In a fit of collective outrage, the villagers, incited by these deceptions, burn down his home and, in a tragic culmination of their hostility, kill his young child, Mukandangalwo.

A subsequent investigation exposes the truth: Pastor Mamidze was responsible for forging the incriminating letter, while Tshambenga had typed it. As a result, Mr. Mandiwana, Mr. Mukhotho, and Pastor Mamidze are apprehended and held accountable for their actions. In the aftermath of these revelations, Mr. Lugisani is ultimately vindicated and promoted from *induna* to Chief of Dovahoni, signifying the triumph of justice over deceit and corruption.

Textual Analysis of the Novel *Bulayo lo talifhaho*

This section presents an analysis of the systemic human rights violations endured by Mr Lugisani in Magau, where he crafts a gripping narrative that exposes the injustices inflicted upon him by corrupt members of the royal court committee.²⁷ This analysis highlights the various ways his fundamental rights were violated, using the following as the main themes under which his fundamental rights were violated: Forced removal as a violation of human rights, Political sabotage as a violation of human rights, Economic disenfranchisement as a violation of human rights, and False accusations as a violation of human rights.

A. Forced removal as a violation of human rights

The presentation of textual evidence in the novel, *Bulayo lo talifhaho*, illustrates forced removal as a fundamental violation of human rights, exposing the extent to which individuals may be unjustly displaced due to political manipulation and corruption. In *Bulayo lo talifhaho*, Mr. Lugisani is forcibly relocated to the underdeveloped village of Dovahoni, thereby being deprived of his home, businesses, and legitimate position within the royal court. This act of displacement constitutes a direct infringement upon his right to freedom of movement and residence, while simultaneously functioning as a strategic mechanism to diminish his political influence and economic autonomy. Consequently, the novel underscores the broader implications of forced removal as a systemic instrument of oppression, utilised to consolidate power and suppress dissent. This is observed in the following:

Excerpt 1

Kha ri ite havha Vho Lugisani vha pfuluswe hafha Tshiozwi vha ye u vha mukoma hangei Dovahoni tshiimoni tsha Vho Maḍilonga; Vho Maḍilonga vha ḍe ngeno Tshiozwi. Arali Vho Lugisani vha tshi

²⁷ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

*hana u ya Dovahoni vhukonani havho na Vho Mphaga vhu do thithisea lune zwa do kwama mabindu avho zwinzhi. Hu di nga arali vha tenda, mabindu avho a do thithisea, li la vhengele lavho la zwikambi la si tsha vha hone.*²⁸

Functional translation: "Let us ensure that Mr. Lugisani is relocated to Dovahoni to serve as an induna, replacing Mrs. Maḍilonga. In turn, Mr. Maḍilonga must be relocated to Tshiozwi to assume the role of *induna*, replacing Vho Lugisani. Should Mr. Lugisani refuse the position at Dovahoni, his friendship with the Royal Highness Mr. Mphaga will be severely strained, and his businesses will suffer. Even if he accepts the role, his businesses will still be negatively impacted, and his plan to establish a liquor shop will not materialise.

Gloss: These are Pastor Mamidze's words as he plots with his friends, Mr. Mandiwana and Mr. Mukhotho, about how they must forcefully remove Mr. Lugisani from the royal court as a member and relocate him to Tshiozwi because he is a threat and a stumbling block to their efforts to practice corrupt activities and charge community members unfairly.

The excerpt from *Bulayo lo talifhaho* by Magau reveals a deliberate scheme by Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho to unjustly remove Mr. Lugisani from his position within the royal court.²⁹ Their actions violate his fundamental human rights, particularly those related to freedom of movement, economic security, and protection from political persecution. Grounded in Human Rights Theory, this discussion examines the systematic nature of these violations, demonstrating how abuse of power, coercion, and economic sabotage are weaponised to suppress ethical leadership.

The forced relocation of Mr. Lugisani from Tshiozwi to Dovahoni represents a violation of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states that "*Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.*"³⁰ By compelling Mr. Lugisani to leave his home and established businesses, the conspirators deprive him of autonomy and destabilise his livelihood, effectively punishing him for standing against corruption. According to Mutua, postcolonial African societies have often used forced displacement as a political tool to remove opposition figures, ensuring that power remains in the hands of the ruling elite.³¹ This reflects how coercive political structures manipulate individual freedoms to maintain dominance.

Furthermore, Human Rights Theory asserts that displacement as a form of punishment violates individuals' inherent dignity.³² The relocation of Mr. Lugisani is not based on merit. Still, it is a deliberate act of political victimisation, reinforcing the argument that powerful elites often exploit governance structures to suppress justice and fairness. The excerpt explicitly states that, whether Mr. Lugisani accepts or refuses the relocation, his businesses will suffer, and his planned liquor shop will not materialise. This demonstrates an intentional act of economic sabotage, violating his right to work and own property, as protected under Article 17 of the UDHR, which asserts that "*No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their property.*" As Mutua explains, economic disenfranchisement is a common tool authoritarian regimes use to weaken opposition and silence dissent.³³ By targeting Mr. Lugisani's economic stability, the conspirators seek to strip him of financial independence, rendering him powerless against their corrupt activities. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights also recognises the right to economic and social development, which Mr. Lugisani denies through coercive economic suppression.³⁴

Mr. Lugisani's removal is not merely an administrative decision but an act of political persecution. He is viewed as a "stumbling block" for corrupt activities, leading to a concerted effort to neutralise his influence within the royal court. As articulated by the African Charter on Human and

²⁸ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

²⁹ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

³⁰ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

³¹ Makau Mutua, *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

³² Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (Cornell University Press, 2013).

³³ Mutua, *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique*.

³⁴ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights., "Organisation of African Unity (OAU)," 1981, <https://www.achpr.org>.

Peoples' Rights, Human Rights Theory argues that leaders who uphold justice often face persecution from entrenched systems of corruption, as their moral stance threatens the established hierarchy of power.³⁵

The novel exposes how political sabotage consolidates power, a theme deeply rooted in the postcolonial governance structures of Africa. Crehan similarly explores this in *Petals of Blood*, where individuals advocating for justice are systematically marginalised or eliminated. Mr. Lugisani's forced removal reflects a broader pattern of political oppression, reinforcing the need for literary discourse on governance, ethics, and human rights violations.³⁶

B. Political sabotage as a violation of human rights

The presentation of textual evidence reveals political sabotage as a violation of human rights, illustrating how corrupt leaders, namely Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho, manipulate governance structures to eliminate ethical opposition. Mr. Lugisani becomes a victim of deliberate political manoeuvring orchestrated by corrupt royal court members who perceive him as a threat to their exploitative practices. In Magau, Mr. Lugisani's unjust removal from leadership and defamation through forged letters exemplify the deliberate suppression of fair political participation.³⁷ This is observed in the following:

Excerpt 2

Vhusiku honoho Vhafunzi Mamidze, Vho Mandiwana, na Vho Mukhotho vha dovha vha vhamba mañwe maano hafhu ane hoyu Lugisani a nga pandelwa ngao kana shango ła lwa nae.

Vha tendelana uri hu ñwaliwe luñwalwo nga madzina a Vho Lugisani uri vha khou humbela u aluswa u vha khosi ngeno Vho Nyamalwela Singo vha tukufhadzwe vha vhe mukoma kana shango ɿ fhandulwe nga vhukati. Muñwali wa vhurifhi vho vha vhafunzi Vho Mamidze (Magau, 2008:70).

Functional translation: "During that night, Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho came up with another plan to orchestrate Mr. Lugisani's forced removal as the induna of Dovahoni and to turn the community against him. They agreed to write a letter, pretending it was from Mr. Lugisani, in which he allegedly demanded a promotion from induna to Chief of Dovahoni and insisted that Mrs. Nyamalwela Singo, the current chief, be demoted to an induna or that the village be divided into two."

Gloss: Due to Mr. Lugisani's hard work and the development he brought to the community of Dovahoni, Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho, three members of the Mphagane royal court who had orchestrated his relocation to Dovahoni to facilitate their corrupt activities without hindrance, became jealous. They devised a plan to orchestrate his forced removal as induna and to turn the community against him. They agreed to forge a letter, making it appear as if he had written it, demanding a promotion to Chief and calling for the current chief to be demoted to an induna or for the village to be split into two. This was because the people of Dovahoni had begun to praise him and regarded him as a king rather than an induna, due to the significant improvements he had made in their village.

The presentation of the textual evidence above reveals political sabotage as a violation of human rights, illustrating how corrupt leaders, namely Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho, manipulate governance structures to eliminate ethical opposition. Mr. Lugisani becomes a victim of deliberate political manipulation orchestrated by corrupt royal court members who perceive him as a threat to their exploitative practices. In *Bulayo ɿo ɿalifhaho*, Mr. Lugisani's unjust removal from leadership and defamation through forged letters exemplify the deliberate suppression of fair political participation.

Falsifying a letter to create the illusion that Mr. Lugisani sought to usurp power from the rightful Chief of Dovahoni demonstrates a calculated effort to delegitimise his leadership and justify his removal.

³⁵ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights., "Organisation of African Unity (OAU)."

³⁶ Stewart Crehan, "The Politics of the Signifier: Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 26, no. 1 (1986): 1–24.

³⁷ Magau, *Bulayo ɿo ɿalifhaho*.

This tactic aligns with historical and contemporary patterns of political sabotage, where opponents of corrupt systems are falsely accused of justifying persecution.³⁸ The fabrication of evidence against Mr. Lugisani directly violates Article 21 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees every individual the right to participate in governance without unlawful interference.³⁹

From a Human Rights Theory perspective, such an act is a direct assault on political freedom, which Achebe regarded as fundamental to just governance.⁴⁰ Locke has argued that governance must be based on the consent of the governed and should uphold liberty and fairness. By fabricating false accusations, the conspirators in *Bulayo lo talifhaho* undermine democratic principles and violate Mr. Lugisani's right to due process and fair treatment in leadership affairs.

The deliberate act of framing Mr. Lugisani through a forged letter had severe repercussions. Not only did it strip him of his leadership position, but it also subjected him to public hostility and social alienation, culminating in an orchestrated revolt against him. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966) under Article 25 explicitly protects individuals from unjust political exclusion. As Mutua opined, political sabotage in postcolonial African states has frequently been used to suppress reformist leaders who advocate for ethical governance and accountability.⁴¹ The false accusations levied against Mr. Lugisani mirror historical instances where political dissidents have been targeted and removed under fabricated pretences, reinforcing authoritarian control and undermining democracy.

The conspiracy against Mr. Lugisani not only infringe on his right to political participation but also violated his right to dignity and reputation, as outlined in Article 12 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence, nor to attacks on his honour and reputation."⁴² By falsely presenting him as power-hungry and deceitful, Pastor Mamidze and his co-conspirators engaged in character assassination, a violation that led to public outrage, hostility, and eventual violence against him.

Furthermore, under African human rights frameworks, particularly the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 9, individuals have the right to protection from manipulative misinformation that leads to unjust punishment.⁴³ This aspect aligns with African philosophical perspectives, particularly Ubuntu, which emphasises justice, fairness, and the dignity of individuals within a community.⁴⁴ Therefore, the false accusations against Mr. Lugisani violate not only international human rights standards but also fundamental African ethical principles that advocate truth and fairness.

The ultimate consequence of political sabotage was Mr. Lugisani's violent backlash from the community, which was manipulated into believing he was attempting to usurp power. This incitement to violence led to the destruction of his home and the tragic murder of his daughter, demonstrating the devastating real-world impact of political defamation and manipulation. Article 20 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence, yet Mr. Lugisani was a victim of precisely this kind of political incitement orchestrated by those who sought to remove him from power unjustly.⁴⁵

The events surrounding Mr. Lugisani's persecution bear similarities to historical instances of political sabotage in postcolonial Africa, where ethical leaders who opposed corruption were falsely accused, removed, or even assassinated to maintain authoritarian control.⁴⁶ As Ngũgĩ illustrates in *Petals of Blood*, political sabotage is not merely about silencing an individual leader. It serves as a strategy to instil fear, suppress reform, and maintain corrupt governance structures.

³⁸ Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*.

³⁹ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

⁴⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (Penguin, 2012).

⁴¹ Mutua, *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique*.

⁴² United Nations. . Universal Declaration of Human Rights.(1948) Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

⁴³ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

⁴⁴ Ramose, "African Philosophy through Ubuntu."

⁴⁵ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

⁴⁶ Crehan, "The Politics of the Signifier: Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*."

C. Economic Disenfranchisement as a Violation of Human Rights

The presentation of textual evidence reveals economic disenfranchisement as a significant violation of human rights, demonstrating how financial and material deprivation are used as tools of oppression. In Magau, Mr. Lugisani experiences economic sabotage at the hands of corrupt royal court members who seek to weaken his influence by targeting his financial stability. His businesses are deliberately undermined, and his future economic prospects are obstructed as part of a calculated effort to strip him of his independence and power. This form of economic oppression not only affects Mr. Lugisani personally but also has broader social implications, as it hinders community development and perpetuates economic inequalities.⁴⁷ Through the lens of Human Rights Theory, this analysis underscores the fundamental right to economic security. It highlights how economic marginalisation suppresses dissent and maintains corrupt power structures. This is reflected below:

Excerpt 3

Lugisani ndi muthu we ra aluwa rothe makhuwani. Ro vha ri dzikhonani dzine ra somolana rothe zwa hanwani masiari na vhusiku. Othe madzanga a mbilu yawe ndi a a divha. Vho Lugisani ndi muthu we a vha o diimisela u fhaṭa vhengele la mahalwa a tshikhuwa hu si kale. Vho vha vho no humbela thendelo ya u fhaṭa lenelo vhengele heneṭho Tshiozwi vha tou balelwa nga masheleni a u fhaṭa lenelo vhengele. Tshelede ya u fhaṭa lenelo vhengele vha i wana nga u rengisa mitshelo na miroho u bva tsimuni yavho khulu ya miroho ya dzitshakatshaka (Magau, 2008: 38). (Aya ndi maipfi a Vho Mamidze vha tshi khoulana uri vha nga ita mini u pandela Vho Lugisani kha khoro na shangoni la Tshiozwi.)

Functional Translation: “Mr. Lugisani is someone I grew up with. We were close friends and spent all our time together day and night. I know all the treasures of his heart. Mr. Lugisani was planning to build a liquor store soon. He had already applied for permission to build it here in Tshiozwi but was unsuccessful due to a lack of sufficient funds. The money for the shop came from selling liquor and vegetables from his large farm, which grows various crops.” (Those were the words of Pastor Mamidze as he schemed to harm Mr. Lugisani by forcing him to relocate to the underdeveloped village of Dovhoni, making him abandon his beautiful home, thwarting his plan to establish the liquor shop, and leaving behind his farms in Tshiozwi.)

Gloss: Pastor Mamidze was the mastermind behind all the malicious plans to destroy Mr. Lugisani because he knew him well; they had once been friends. Their goal was to break Mr. Lugisani mentally and emotionally. Pastor Mamidze shared with his accomplices the things Mr. Lugisani cherished most, knowing that if those treasures were taken away or destroyed, he would be devastated to the point of contemplating suicide rather than enduring the pain.

Their plans went on further, as observed in excerpt four below:

Excerpt 4:

Kha ri ite havha Vho Lugisani vha pfuluswe hafha Tshiozwi vha ye u vha mukoma hangei Dovhoni tshiimoni tsha Vho Maḍilonga; Vho Maḍilonga vha de ngeno Tshiozwi. Arali Vho Lugisani vha tshi hana u ya Dovhoni vhukonani havho na Vho Mphaga vhu do thithisea lune zwa do kwama mabindu avho zwinzhi. Hu di nga arali vha tenda, mabindu avho a do thithisea, lila vhengele lavho la zwikambi la si tsha vha hone.⁴⁸

Functional translation: "Let us ensure that Mr. Lugisani is relocated to Dovhoni to serve as an induna, replacing Mrs. Maḍilonga. In turn, Mr. Maḍilonga must be relocated to Tshiozwi to assume the role of induna, replacing Vho Lugisani. Should Mr. Lugisani refuse the position at Dovhoni, his friendship with the Royal Highness Mr. Mphaga will be severely strained, and his businesses will suffer. Even if he accepts the role, his businesses will still be negatively impacted, and his plan to establish a liquor shop will not materialise.

⁴⁷ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

⁴⁸ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

Gloss: These are Pastor Mamidze's words as he plots with his friends Mr. Mandiwana and Mr. Mukhotho, on how they must forcefully remove Mr. Lugisani from the royal court as a member and relocate him to Tshiozwi because he is a threat and a stumbling block to their efforts to practice corrupt activities and charge community members unfairly.

The deliberate economic disenfranchisement of Mr. Lugisani in *Bulayo lo talifhaho* by Magau, (2008) underscores the use of financial sabotage as a means of oppression, reinforcing systemic inequalities and undermining individual autonomy. Economic disenfranchisement, defined as the intentional restriction of an individual's access to financial resources, employment opportunities, and means of economic self-sufficiency, constitutes a severe violation of fundamental human rights.⁴⁹ In the novel, Mr. Lugisani suffers financial destabilisation orchestrated by corrupt royal court members, including Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho, who perceive his economic independence as threatening their influence.

Human Rights Theory, particularly as articulated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, upholds economic rights as fundamental to human dignity. Article 23 of the UDHR asserts the right to work, free choice of employment, and protection against unemployment, while Article 25 emphasises the right to an adequate standard of living.⁵⁰ Mr. Lugisani's calculated economic suppression violates these principles by stripping him of his financial autonomy and means of livelihood.

As reflected in Excerpt 3, Mr. Lugisani's entrepreneurial ambitions were deliberately thwarted by his adversaries, who ensured that he could not establish a liquor shop despite his meticulous financial planning. His relocation to the underdeveloped village of Dovhoni was a physical displacement and a strategic move to destroy his economic stability. By uprooting him from Tshiozwi, where his farming business flourished, and placing him in an area with fewer economic opportunities, his oppressors weaponised economic marginalisation to neutralise his influence. Fanon et.al. argued that economic disempowerment is crucial in maintaining oppressive power structures, as it limits an individual's ability to challenge socio-political injustices.⁵¹

Moreover, Excerpt 4 highlights how Mr. Lugisani's business ventures were deliberately sabotaged, with threats that even if he accepted his forced relocation, his businesses would still suffer. This mirrors broader patterns of economic disenfranchisement observed in various historical and contemporary contexts, where financial deprivation is employed as a strategy to suppress political dissent and social mobility.⁵² Studies on economic oppression further support this argument, asserting that economic deprivation is a form of systemic violence used to reinforce power imbalances.⁵³

The economic persecution of Mr. Lugisani aligns with the broader discourse on economic justice within human rights literature. Sen contends that economic capabilities are essential for realising other freedoms, including political participation and social recognition.⁵⁴

By undermining Mr. Lugisani's economic foundation, his enemies not only inflicted financial harm but also sought to diminish his political agency, thus simultaneously violating his economic and civil rights. Furthermore, African philosophical perspectives, particularly the Ubuntu framework, emphasise communal well-being and economic justice.⁵⁵ Ubuntu, which promotes interdependence and shared prosperity, starkly contrasts with the economic exclusion imposed on Mr. Lugisani. His forced relocation and the subsequent destruction of his livelihood highlight a violation of these ethical principles, reinforcing the argument that economic disenfranchisement is both a human rights violation and a moral injustice.

Mr. Lugisani's experience in *Bulayo lo talifhaho* exemplifies economic disenfranchisement as a deliberate tool of oppression designed to strip individuals of their financial stability and weaken their

⁴⁹ Sen, Amartya. "Development as freedom (1999)." *The globalization and development reader: Perspectives on development and global change* 525 (2014).

⁵⁰ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

⁵¹ Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Constance Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth*, vol. 36 (Springer, 1963).

⁵² Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁵³ Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91.

⁵⁴ Amartya Sen, "Development as Freedom (1999)," *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change* 525 (2014).

⁵⁵ Ramose, "African Philosophy through Ubuntu."

social influence. Grounded in Human Rights Theory, this analysis highlights the significance of economic rights and the broader implications of financial suppression in perpetuating corrupt power structures. By linking literary representation to real-world human rights frameworks, this study highlights how economic disenfranchisement serves as both a narrative and socio-political critique, reinforcing the importance of economic justice as a fundamental human right.

D. False accusations as a violation of human rights

Presentation of textual evidence reveals false accusations as a violation of human rights, illustrating how fabricated claims are weaponised to destroy reputations, exclude individuals from leadership, and justify social persecution. In Magau, Mr. Lugisani falls victim to malicious defamation orchestrated by corrupt royal court members who perceive his integrity and developmental initiatives as a threat to their exploitative agenda.⁵⁶ These individuals forged a letter in his name, falsely accusing him of seeking to overthrow the village leadership, a move that incites public outrage, leading to his violent persecution. This act of character assassination reflects a broader pattern of injustice, in which individuals who challenge oppressive systems are silenced through deception and manipulation. Some of the content of the forged letter in Mr. Lugisani's name, falsely accusing him of seeking to overthrow the village leadership, is observed in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 5

“Nxe Naledzani Joel Lugisani, N.I.NZ3989 mukoma wa Dovhoni kha la Mphagane, Tshitirikini tsha Dalume ndi humbela u bviswa vhukomani nda takuselwa kha u vha khosi nga hezwi:

1. Ndo thoma vhukoma hu na miḁi ya 20, zwino ndi 600, zwi amba u shuma na u pfana na vhatu,
2. Ndo fhatisa tshikolo tshi gumaho kha murole V na kiliniki,
3. Ndo bwisa maḁi manzhi na u fhatisa mabindu e a vha e siho musi ndi sa athu ḁa,
4. Nga u ḁitukufhadza zwi ga vha hani nxe nda tshi takuswa nda vha khosi ngeno Vho Nyamalwelwa Singo N.I.N.V/F P39ZI vha humiselwa kha u vha mukoma,
5. Kana shango li fhandulwe nga vhukati, tshinwe tshipiḁa tshi vhe tsha Vho Nyamalwela Singo ri mahosi rothe kha la Dovhoni,
6. Hu ḁi nga mufarisi wanga Vho Muofhe Lugisani vho thusa zwinzhi kha mvelaphanda ya shango. Vha nga ḁi vha mukoma fhasi hanga.
7. Vho thovhele Vho Mphaga vha nga si hane ngauri ri dziḁhama nahone ndi likhotsimunene la Mphagane.

Functional translation: “I Naledzani Joel Lugisani, N.I.NZ3989, an Induna at Dovhoni under the Mphagane district of Dalume, hereby requests to be removed from an Induna position and be promoted to be a king because of the following:

1. "I resumed my position as an induna with only 20 houses, and now there are 600. This reflects my hard work and strong relationship with the community."
2. "I built a school that goes up to Standard Five (V) and a clinic."
3. "I introduced multiple boreholes for water and facilitated businesses that did not exist before my arrival."
4. "I humbly request to be promoted to the position of king, while Mrs. Nyamalwelwa Singo (N.I.N.V/F P39ZI) be demoted to an induna."
5. "Alternatively, the village should be split into two halves, allowing us both to rule as kings in Dovhoni."
6. "Even my wife, Muofhe Lugisani, has contributed significantly to the village's development, and she can serve as my induna."
7. "His Royal Highness, Mr. Mphaga, cannot deny my request because we are friends, and I am also a prince of Mphagane."

⁵⁶ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

Gloss: This was the content of the forged letter created by Mr. Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho to incite hatred and chaos against Mr. Lugisani and community members. They also aimed to deceive his wife, Mrs. Muofhe, by falsely claiming that she sought the position of induna, create conflict between him and his king, Mrs. Nyamalwelwa Singo, and implicate His Royal Highness, Mr. Mphaga, in nepotism.

The fabrication of false accusations constitutes a grave violation of human rights, as it undermines the dignity, reputation, and legal protections of individuals. In Magau, Mr. Lugisani becomes a victim of political sabotage through the deliberate falsification of a letter designed to incite public outrage, erode his credibility, and justify his removal from power.⁵⁷ This act of manipulation, orchestrated by Pastor Mamidze, Mr. Mandiwana, and Mr. Mukhotho serves as a calculated effort to dismantle his authority and prevent him from challenging corrupt leadership structures. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms in Article 12 that every individual has the right to protection from attacks on their honour and reputation, while Article 7 guarantees equality before the law and protection against discrimination.⁵⁸ Mr. Lugisani's experience exemplifies the devastating consequences of false accusations in political and social contexts, as they not only strip individuals of their positions but also expose them to persecution and injustice.

From a Human Rights Theory perspective, false accusations are a fundamental violation of the right to fairness and due process. According to Donnelly, human rights exist to protect individuals from arbitrary punishment and defamation.⁵⁹ However, when power-hungry individuals fabricate claims against ethical leaders like Mr. Lugisani, they not only violate his rights but also manipulate legal and social frameworks to serve their corrupt agenda. This aligns with Rawls's concept of justice as fairness, which stresses that no individual should suffer undue harm due to deceitful practices.⁶⁰ In this case, Mr. Lugisani's right to a fair reputation is disregarded as his adversaries deliberately construct a narrative that portrays him as power-hungry and disloyal to the monarchy.

Discussion Summary

This discussion critically explored the systemic human rights violations experienced by Mr. Lugisani in Magau's *Bulayo lo talifhaho*, analysed through the lens of Human Rights Theory.⁶¹ The novel presents a compelling narrative of ethical resistance crushed under the weight of corruption, with Mr Lugisani subjected to political manipulation, economic sabotage, forced removal, and malicious defamation. These abuses are framed as deliberate attempts to silence his opposition to corrupt practices and dismantle his positive influence within the community.

The discussion identified four central themes: forced removal, political sabotage, economic disenfranchisement, and false accusations, all of which constitute severe violations of internationally recognised human rights. The coerced relocation of Mr. Lugisani and his economic destabilisation violate his rights to freedom of movement, property, and livelihood as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁶² His exclusion from political leadership through forged documents and public deception further infringes on his right to fair political participation and dignity. The discussion illustrates how such injustices are not only personal but also systemic, designed to perpetuate corrupt power structures at the expense of ethical governance.

Importantly, the discussion also situates these events within broader historical and contemporary contexts. False accusations, as illustrated in the novel, mirror real-world practices used by authoritarian regimes to silence dissent. Notable examples include the McCarthy era in the United States and apartheid-era South Africa, where wrongful allegations served as tools of political repression.⁶³ In *Bulayo lo talifhaho*, the forged letter against Mr Lugisani echoes these strategies, illustrating how

⁵⁷ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

⁵⁸ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

⁵⁹ Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*.

⁶⁰ John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice," in *Applied Ethics* (Routledge, 2017), 21–29.

⁶¹ Magau, *Bulayo Lo Talifhaho*.

⁶² United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

⁶³ Eve Collyer Merritt, *The Extraordinary Injustice of McCarthy's America* (University of Sussex: University Press, 2011), <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/11/03/the-extraordinary-injustice-of-mccarthy-s-america/>.

deception is weaponised to eliminate opposition, create divisions among leaders, and entrench corruption.

Moreover, the psychological and social consequences of such false accusations are far-reaching.⁶⁴ Mr. Lugisani not only suffers emotional and reputational harm but is also alienated from allies, such as His Royal Highness Mr. Mphaga and Chief Nyamalwelwa Singo. This isolation reinforces the novel's critique of how corruption erodes both individual dignity and communal integrity. The discussion underscores the urgent need for legal and ethical safeguards to protect individuals from defamatory political manipulation and to ensure that justice systems are not exploited to serve oppressive agendas.

Bulayo lo talifhaho serves as both a literary and socio-political commentary, exposing how systemic injustices, driven by greed and fear of accountability, violate fundamental human rights. Grounded in Human Rights Theory and supported by literary evidence and real-world parallels, this analysis affirms the novel's significance in promoting ethical consciousness and highlighting the dangers of unchecked power.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that various stakeholders, including policymakers, academic institutions, and non-governmental organisations, integrate the themes illuminated in *Magau* into broader human rights advocacy frameworks. Specifically, educational programmes targeting leadership development should be established to emphasise the importance of ethical governance and accountability. Workshops and community forums could facilitate discussions on corruption, human rights, and the repercussions of political sabotage, collectively empowering individuals to resist oppressive systems. It is essential to raise awareness of the narrative strategies used in literature, as these can serve as tools to challenge and dismantle corrupt practices within societies.

Furthermore, initiatives that promote economic empowerment and financial literacy among marginalised communities should be prioritised. Given the analysis of economic disenfranchisement as a tool of oppression, programmes designed to improve entrepreneurial skills and provide access to resources can boost economic independence and agency. Collaborations with local businesses and international partners could help create job opportunities for those affected by similar injustices, thereby fostering community development and resilience against economic manipulation.

CONCLUSION

This study has achieved its objectives by critically examining the systemic human rights violations experienced by Mr Lugisani in *Bulayo lo talifhaho*. Through the themes of forced removal, political sabotage, economic disenfranchisement, and false accusations, the analysis highlights how literature can reflect and critique corruption and the suppression of ethical leadership in postcolonial societies. Grounded in Human Rights Theory, the study affirms the role of fiction in revealing social injustices and fostering critical engagement. Future research may extend this work through comparative analyses of African literary texts that address similar concerns.

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⁶⁴ Aldert Vrij, *Detecting Lies and Deceit: Pitfalls and Opportunities* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

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