

**ETHNICITY, SUPERSESSIONISM AND LEADERSHIP IN ACTS 6:1-7 AND
BEYOND: ASSESSING, WITH PERSPECTIVES FROM RHETORIC AND
DECONSTRUCTION, THE POSSIBILITIES OF APPROPRIATION IN A
CONTEMPORARY DENOMINATIONAL CONTEXT**

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that:

ETHNICITY, SUPERSESSIONISM AND LEADERSHIP IN ACTS 6:1-7 AND BEYOND: ASSESSING, WITH PERSPECTIVES FROM RHETORIC AND DECONSTRUCTION, THE POSSIBILITIES OF APPROPRIATION IN A CONTEMPORARY DENOMINATIONAL CONTEXT, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



REV. J B EPOMBO-MWENGE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to pose possibilities in addressing the problem of ethnical discrimination, its development into supersessionism and the perpetual discriminatory practices in the contemporary church by engaging Acts 6:1-7 from a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective. The episode in Acts 6:1-7, where the seven men have been selected to deal with the issue of the “daily distribution of food” presents a problem with regard to its interpretation. The problem resides in the fact that the text itself contains a certain number of inconsistencies. The most obvious is the contradiction between the task assigned to the seven and their actual function in the subsequent narrative. The account of the selection of the seven has attracted the attention of many scholars. However, although they have identified the contradictions and incoherencies, the methodologies applied by these scholars to uncover the original meaning, did not enable them to dismantle the hierarchical dichotomies underlying the text, and to question how ethnical discrimination can be prevented as well as how the leadership is differently constructed. The objective of this study is to expose these contradictions and to ask how we can deal with this exposure, and how we can think with a text such as Acts 6:1-7 in addressing the problem of ethnical discrimination, supersessionism and leadership, not only in the church but also in its wider political manifestations. The research methodology used in this study derives from deconstruction and rhetoric within the wider ambit of critical theory. Acts 6:1-7, when read from a conjunction of rhetorical and deconstruction perspectives, demonstrates that there is indeed a problem of ethnicity in Acts 6, reveals how the author of Acts privileges an engendered masculinity ethos, exposes the absence of taking the plight of widows into full consideration, shows that the roots of supersessionism can be found in Acts 6: 1-7, and also infuses the notion of leadership with an ethical overturning that requires rethinking the implications for leadership. The significance of the study lies in considering how a continuation of ethnical discrimination in contemporary denominational context can be resisted via my thinking with Acts 6:1-7.

Key words: ethnicity, supersessionism, leadership, ethnical discrimination, deconstruction, rhetoric, Jews versus Hellenists problematics, early Christian Jerusalem community. Acts 6:1-7.

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THE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD	anno domini “in the Year of our Lord”
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
BCE	Before the Common Era
BibSac	Bibliotheca Sacra
CBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CE	Common Era
ConcJourn	Concordia Journal
CR	Currents in Research
1 Cor	1Corinthians
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
Deut	Deuteronomy
Eph	Ephesians
Exp Tim	The Expository Times
Exod	Exodus
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
HS	Hebrew Studies
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAH	Journal of African History
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JC	Journal of Communication
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JES	Journal of Ecumenical Studies
Jer	Jeremiah
JIA	Journal of International Affairs
JPA	Journal of Public Affairs
JRA	Journal of Religion in Africa
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
Hos	Hosea
HTS	Hervormde Teologiese. Studies
Lev	Leviticus
LXX	Septuagint
Matt	Matthew
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament

NTS	New Testament Studies
Num	Numbers
OT	Old Testament
Pet	Peter
PRSt	Perspectives in Religious Studies
Ps	Psalms
Phil	Philippians
Philm	Philemon
Rom	Romans
1 Tim	1 Timothy
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SCR	Studies in Current Research
SECAM	The African Synod and Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
SJLA	Studies in Judaism and in Late Antiquity
TEEC	Theological Education by Extension College
TMSJ	The Master's Seminary Journal

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the study

The problem of ethnicity and its development into supersessionism is a cause for considerable concern in the world in general, and in the Africa continent in particular. Violence and genocide resulting from ethnic conflicts were perpetrated in the latter twentieth century and in the twenty-first centuries in many parts of the world.¹ Wars are being waged between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, between Muslim Serbs and Christian Orthodox in the former Yugoslavia, between Czechs and Slovaks in the former Czechoslovakia, between Southern and Northern Italians in Italia, and between Flemish and Wallonians in Belgium.² And also in Africa, the ethnic conflicts in Nigeria between Yoruba and Igbo, and between Hutus majority and Tutsis minority in Rwanda, the latter had account for almost 1 million of killings.³ In the development of these ethnic conflicts, the church has played a significant ideological role and has been criticized and even condemned for its involvement in the genocide.⁴ In the first century Palestine also, the distinction between Jews and Gentiles and the conflict between Jews and Christians were of great ideological significance. In Acts 6:1-7 the conflict between Hebrews and Hellenists triggered by the daily distribution of food had a great significance in the development of early Christian Jerusalem community of the first century.

All these conflits, led scholars to ask the question about what ethnicity is, and how one should deal with that concept of group identity.⁵ Some were rising questions about what role did ethnicity play in the history of Judaism both in the post biblical era and prior to it.⁶

¹ Denise Kimber Buell, *Why this New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in the Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 12.

² Paul Drechsel, "Understanding Ethnicity in South Africa in comparison to the inverse process in Europe's recent history." Paper presented at the Conference on *Ethnicity, Identity and Nationalism in South Africa: Comparative Perspectives*. Rhodes University, Graham's town, 20-24 April 1993.

³ Christine L. Kellow and Leslie H Steeves, "The Role of the Radio in the Rwandan Genocide." *J C* (Summer 1998): 107-128.

⁴ See for example, Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in Rwanda Crises 1990-1994* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2005); John Barton, "Confusion and Communion: Christian Mission and Ethnic Identity in Postgenocide Rwanda," *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. 40, no.3 (July 2012); Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁵ Drechsel, "Understanding Ethnicity in South Africa," 4.

In the New Testament, however, scholars have explored the way ethnic and cultural distinctions operated in the first century Palestine, and some addressed the methodological issues and rhetoric challenges for the understanding of ethnic identity in the Greco-Roman antiquity, and analysed the ethnic issues in Paul's letters.⁷ Still others have explored the ethnic cultural and religious identities in the book of Acts.⁸

Many articles and studies that have been written on Acts 6:1-7 from historical-criticism, narrative criticism or feminist criticism, it appears that scholars, who looked at the passage, have been more interested either on the identity of Hellenists and Hebrews, or the nature of the conflict between the two groups, or still on the role of seven.⁹ Scholars have not analysed the major tension between Jewish leadership and the newly formed Hellenist leadership and the breakdown within the early Christian Jerusalem community. Indeed, this study that is made from a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach, seeks to expose the problem of ethnical discrimination in the early Christian community between the Hebrews and Hellenists depicted in Acts 6:1-7, its development into supersessionism and its perpetuation in discriminatory practices in the contemporary church. This first chapter is divided into five main sections including: 1) Introduction to the study, 2) problem statement; 3) literature review; 4) research methodology; 5) definition of key words and 6) structure of the thesis.

1.2 Problem statement: research problem, purpose, objectives, research question, and the significance of the thesis

1.2.1 The research problem

For most scholarship on this passage, the only element that has dominated the discussion is the identity of the "Hellenists" and "Hebrews" mentioned in v.1. But, the problems in this passage are far than merely the identity of Hellenists and Hebrews. The tension recorded in Acts 6:1-7 may have been more than a problem of identity.

⁶ Kenton L.Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiment and their expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 1.

⁷ See for example, Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), Denise Kimber Buell, *Why this New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

⁸ Eric Daniel Barreto, *Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010)

⁹ See for example, Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 152; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 348.

As Penner pointed out “it is therefore worth examining more closely the textual details, as well as the gaps and fissures, which have as much baffled scholars as they have pushed them in particular direction of interpretation.”¹⁰ In the opinion of that author, the problem in Acts 6:1-7 requires an examination not only of identity, but also of aspects that are hidden from the textual gaze, issues underlying what is presented on surface level. Since deconstruction and rhetorical criticism provide with frameworks prompting not only the semantics of textual meaning, but also to pose questions not disclosed by the text itself, this thesis’s point of departure is the apparent ethnical discrimination between the Hebrews and Hellenists, as depicted in Acts 6:1-7. However, it also ventures into its implied supersessionism and then expands this to include the question of leadership. Since the objectives is not to solve historical questions, but rather to use these historical questions and problems to think with, the thesis will also be extend to the question of leadership.

1.2.2 The purpose of the study

This study has several objectives but underlying is the objective to critically appropriate Acts 6:1-7 in matters of ethnical discrimination. Formulating from different perspectives, the overarching purpose of this thesis is to pose possibilities of how we can think with a text as Acts 6:1-7 in addressing the problem of ethnical discrimination, supersessionism and leadership not only in the church but also in its wider political manifestations.

1.2.3 The objectives of the study

If it is possible to frame the thesis within the abovementioned objectives, there are also other objectives that should be taken note of. The study has four objectives:

- To demonstrate how the strategies provided by rhetorical and deconstructive critical approaches enable a more adequate explanation of the ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7, its development into supersessionism, and its still persistent perpetuation in discriminatory practices in the contemporary church;
- To expose these contradictions and to ask how do we deal with this in a world that wants contradictions and promote an egalitarian ethnical relationship, and to infuse the notion of leadership not from above but from below;

¹⁰ Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Hiatoriography* (New York: T&T Clark 2004), 60.

- To show that by using deconstruction as a strategy of resisting hegemonic historical-critical method, we will be contributing to an alternative reading of New Testament by moving away from historical questions to contemporary problems;
- To explore how we can think with a biblical text as Acts 6:1-7 within African context in order to address the problem of ethnic strife and violence, racism, and the effects these have on African contemporary church today.

1.2.4 The research question

The research question in this study is therefore to what extent ethnical discrimination can be constructed to work towards a reversal of engendered social hierarchies, and how we can bring the three categories ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership into a relationship with each other towards a programme of moving away from ethnical discrimination and exclusion.

1.2.5 Significance of the thesis

The study investigates how the strategies generated by rhetorical and deconstructive critical approaches enable a more adequate understanding of these problems. With this view in mind, the significance of this study resides not only in the exposure of ethnical discriminatory problems, the significance of the thesis is teasing out also other possibilities besides ethnical discrimination. I may also consider the possibility that this passage may be complicit in the perpetuation of discrimination; we may also consider the possibility of other hierarchies that are hidden by the text's insistence on an ethnic discriminatory slant, and how the making of hierarchies operates and the way this is perpetuated also by supersessionism and leadership. This process of hierarchialization or superioritization is a construction where two constructed identities are placed in a context where one will be located in a superior position and the other in inferior.

1.3 Literature review

1.3.1 Introduction

This section of the study deals with a review of literature on Acts 6: 1-7. Traditionally dated for the first century,¹¹ the book of Acts of the Apostles has proved a particular interest, and New Testament scholars employ a diversity of methods in their interpretation of that book.

¹¹ See Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*. Trans. by James Limburg, A. Thomas Craabel, and David H. Jules (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), xxxiii.

While the New Testament studies are now flooding with various approaches, only four will be considered here: namely: 1) Historical-critical method; 2) Narrative criticism; 3) Socio-rhetorical criticism; and 4) Feminist criticism. The reason for which we have selected these approaches is that the: historical-critical method had dominated biblical studies as the preferred method of interpretation.¹² However, though historical-critical method dominated the interpretations of texts, it will be discussed here not only because it dominated the interpretations of Biblical studies as such, but also because of its notion of the fixity of meaning that may be found in the text. The last three approaches have challenged the hegemony of Historical-critical method, and have been applied in the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7.

1.3.2 Methodologies applied to the reading of Acts 6: 1-7

Before I start off this section, it is useful to indicate that my objective is not to provide a full-scale literature survey in each and every of these approaches, but only to foreground those scholars who will help me to illustrate the problem I am addressing. So they will function as examples of how meaning is sought behind the text.

1.3.2.1 Historical critical method

Until 1969s, historical critical method dominated biblical studies as the preferred interpretative method.¹³ Indeed, the emphasis on the need to read a text within the context of its time and culture raised the need for a historical criticism. In the nineteenth century the historical-critical method has known a great expansion and many scholars have adopted the historical-critical approach as a mode of interpretation as Malina confirms in the following: “In the nineteenth century the historical-critical method has been applied to the Bible quite successful.”¹⁴ Accordingly, Christian Baur quoted by Piñero and Peláez, produced the first history of the early Christianity written on the basis of historical method. Baur indicated that the task of historical-critical method of the New Testament was to show clearly what were the historical circumstances that brought about the genesis of each writing and what the position it occupied in the history of the early Christianity.¹⁵ The scholars who engaged with the

¹² Anna Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making: Postcolonial and the New Testament studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 59.

¹³ Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making*, 59.

¹⁴ Bruce Malina, “Rhetorical Criticism and Social-Scientific Criticism: Why Won’t Romanticism Leave Us Alone?” *JNTS Sup* 131 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 90.

¹⁵ Antonio Piñero and Jesús Peláez, *The Study of the New Testament: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2003), 27.

historical-criticism method had three main concerns: Firstly, they were interested in when and by whom books were written, what were their intended readerships?

Secondly, they were also interested in the original meaning of the text, that is, what the original author could have meant in his historical period.¹⁶ Finally they were concerned with the reconstruction of the history, that is, to bring out not only the historical development of text, but what happened in the past.¹⁷

Originating in the post Reformation era, the Historical-Critical method has its roots in the Enlightenment philosophy of rationalism that took form in the late eighteenth and early in the nineteenth century respectively in England and Germany.¹⁸ With its threefold criticism: Source Criticism (*Literarkritik*), Form Criticism (*Formgeschichte*), and Redaction Criticism (*Redaktionsgeschichte*), the main task of the historical-critical method was to uncover the meaning, which is supposed to be present in the text.¹⁹ In fact, in the Old Testament, Form criticism can be dated back to Hermann Gunkel's commentary on Genesis in 1901. In the New Testament, however, the Form criticism method was first applied to the Gospels by K.L Schmidt, Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann.²⁰ For those authors, the main purpose was to classify the Gospel pericopae according to their forms and to reconstruct the setting in life (*Sitz im Leben*) in which these form originated. The application of source criticism for example to the Synoptic Gospels was guided by the endeavor to gain a firm historical basis for the reconstruction of the life of Jesus.²¹

In his study in Acts of the Apostles, Adolf Harnack asserted that it was impossible to determine the sources of Acts by using linguistic evidence. For Harnack, the search for the sources must not depend on analysis of the language, but should rather be determined by their identification with places and persons.²² He nevertheless identified five sources of Acts, which may be summarized as follows: Traditional narrative: Source A: Acts 3: 1-5; 16; 8: 5-40; 9:31-11:18; 12: 1-24. Source B: Acts 1-2; 5: 17-42; Jerusalem-Antiochene Source: 6: 1- 8: 4; 11:

¹⁶ Jonathan Barton (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9-10.

¹⁷ R. Grant, *A Short History of Biblical Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 148.

¹⁸ White Shawn, "The Historical-Critical Method: Its Presuppositions, Historical Development, and Evangelical Involvement." *Theological Research Exchange Network: Thesis & Dissertations* (2012), 1.

¹⁹ Randolph W. Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Method, Terms and Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2012), 197.

²⁰ Stephen H. Travis, "Form Criticism," in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (ed. I. Howard Marshall; Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1985): 153-180.

²¹ See David Noel Freedman (ed.) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol.6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 166.

²² Von A. Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Trans. J.L Wilkinson (London: Williams & Norgate, 1909), 163.

19-30; 12: 25-15: 35. Paul's Personal Recollection: Acts 9: 1- 30. Luke's Records and Recollections: Acts 16- 28.²³ However, this was not the view of Martin Dibelius who, some years later, when Form Criticism, was embraced as a method for the reconstruction of historical Jesus, ignored Harnack's source theory for Acts. Instead, Dibelius was intent to distinguish Lukan from no-Lukan materials in order to establish what Luke wrote. For this reason, he was able to identify the materials that did not originate with the author of Acts.²⁴ He claimed that the "we sections" in Acts did not constitute a source used by the author of Acts. The frequent usage of "we" was introduced by the author as evidence that he himself did accompany Paul on his journeys.²⁵ For Dibelius, the author of Acts was using itinerary source in which he inserted speeches of his own composition. The itinerary source included notes of Paul's journeys during the founding of the communities, and the results of evangelization available to the author.²⁶ In brief, we may say that in using historical-critical methods, the common objective of both scholars was to determine the sources that may have been used by the author of Acts in the composition of his text.

The New Testament scholars also have used the historical-critical method in their search for the problem of the sources in the Synoptic Gospels, particularly the question of historical Jesus. For example, in order to understand Jesus, the questions such as who was Jesus? What was his intention? Why did he die? have been formulated, and have to do with the nature of the sources of the Synoptic Gospels.²⁷ Most significant, however, to our research question is that the narrative in Acts 6: 1-7, where the Hellenist widows were neglected in the daily distribution does belong neither to traditional stories nor to the itinerary source, it belongs rather to the source called: The Jerusalem-Antioch source that consists of Acts 6: 1-8:4; 11:19-30; 12:25-15:35.²⁸

However, with postmodernism, new methods arise and the dominance of historical-critical method was challenged.²⁹ For some, the historical-critical method is irrelevant. Fernando Segovia claimed that "the historical-critical method may be described as death, although he

²³ Von Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 164.

²⁴ Martin Dibelius, *Studies in Acts of the Apostles*. Trans. by Mary Ling (ed. H. Greeven; London: SCM, 1956), 39.

²⁵ Martin Dibelius, *The Book of Acts: Form, Style, and Theology* (ed. K.C. Hanson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 29.

²⁶ Dibelius, *The Book of Acts*, 35.

²⁷ See, David N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Dictionary of the Bible*, vol.3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 80.

²⁸ Cf. Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 164.

²⁹ Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making*, 59.

recognized nevertheless, that the method is still alive in the narrative of scholarly discourse.”³⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza for her part challenged the hegemony of historical-critical method in her 1987 presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature.³¹ Nevertheless, the historical-critical method had succeeded to put the text in its historical context.

However, there have been a well number of scholars who have adopted the historical-critical method in their interpretation of Acts 6: 1-7. I will examine only four of them, namely: Ernst Haenchen, V. George Shillington, David Daube and Richard Pervo. I have selected them firstly because of their great contribution on the study of Acts and secondly, how they have specifically addressed the problem we are dealing with namely, the apparent ethnical discrimination between the Hebrews and Hellenists.

1.3.2.1.1 Ernst Haenchen

Over forty-eight years ago, Ernst Haenchen wrote a commentary on Acts of the Apostles (1971) in which he examines the passage of Acts 6: 17 from a historical critical method. He asserted that the size of the community created difficulty with regard to *διακονία*. He further argues that Luke avoids using the title *διακονος* even though v.1 and 4 speak of *διακονία* and v.2 of *διακονεῖ* v.³² Nevertheless, he correctly agrees with the view that Luke does not say that the seven were made deacons. For that good reason, he says, Luke shows them much rather as preachers and missionaries.³³ After examining Acts 8: 1; Acts 9:31 and 11: 19 he strongly claims that it is entirely possible that the Hellenists were more ready than the Hebrews to interpret the Law in Jesus’ sense, and this element in the preaching of the Hellenists must have entangled and repelled the Hebrews who did not adopt it. As result, their immunity from the persecution, and this would explain the shabby treatment of the Hellenist widows.³⁴ This is also the opinion of Penner Todd when he argues that:

The following is historical: the development of early Christianity cannot be understood without autonomous groups of Greek-speaking followers of Jesus with a Hellenistic education; these Hellenists had a distinctive understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus; their

³⁰ Fernando Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A view from the Margins* (Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 2000), 9.

³¹ For more details see David R. Law, *Historical-Critical Method* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2012), 216.

³² Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 262.

³³ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 266.

³⁴ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 268.

Christology was connected with a particular interpretation of law, which brought them into conflict; and they were the first to preach the gospel outside of Palestine.³⁵

The strength of Haenchen's study lays in the fact that he strives to look for the causes of the conflict between the Hellenists and Hebrews in Acts 6: 1-7. However, although, he had examined the term *διακονία*, and looks at the meaning of Hellenist in other passages, and indicated that Luke does not say that the seven were deacons, Haenchen was trying to found the meaning within the text. From a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, the meaning is always deferred. In addition, Haenchen did not observe that the election of the seven was a turning point in the leadership of the Jerusalem community, and see that the appointment of the seven may be regarded as a step toward the equality of Jews and Gentiles in the Jerusalem church, and the launching of the gentile mission. He did not see the discrepancies between the role assigned to the seven and their present activities in the narrative.

1.3.2.1.2 George V. Shillington

George V. Shillington in 2009 wrote a book entitled: *The Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts*, in which he examines Acts 6: 1-7 from a historical critical method. Shillington may be regarded as a strong proponent of historical-critical method. He advocates that even though interpreters regard the historical critical method with suspicion, they are obliged to recognize its place.³⁶ Shillington identifies four groups in the text of Acts 6: 1-7 namely: Hellenists, Hebrews, Widows, and the Twelve belonging to the whole community of disciples.

However, contrary to Bruce who sustained that the distinction was largely social.³⁷ Shillington maintained that the issue is primarily of language, because the language was an important cultural identity marker.³⁸ Shillington is correct in his analysis when he asserts that the complaint had been lodged against the Hebrews because the Hebrews held the balance of power in the community by virtue of their number or their status as Aramaic-speaking Jerusalemites, and that Stephen distinguishes himself as an ardent evangelist and that his open liberal position irritated his more conservative Jewish counterparts.³⁹ The strength of Shillington's work resides in his analysis of the term "Hellenist" and his argument that the

³⁵ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 38.

³⁶ George V. Shillington, *An Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 39.

³⁷ F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 181.

³⁸ Shillington, *An Introduction*, 48.

³⁹ Shillington, *An Introduction*, 50.

appointment of the seven was the launching of the gentile mission. Nevertheless, while I agree with Shillington when he asserts that the complaint had been lodged against the Hebrews because the Hebrews held the balance of power in the community by virtue of their number or their status as Aramaic-speaking Jerusalemites, I do not think that Acts 6:1-7 is merely concerned with linguistic differentiation. The author of Acts is concerned with ethnicity, an identity formation that is specifically constructed in terms of ethnic rhetoric. What indicates to what extent the discourse here is indeed infused by ethnic rhetoric can be seen in how the Jews and Hellenists are differentiated.

1.3.2.1.3 David Daube

Contrary to Haenchen, David Daube (1976) brings out the affinity of the appointment of Joshua with the installation of seven. He further argues that the structure of Acts 6: 3 is reminiscent of the passages in Exodus 18, Deuteronomy 1 and Numbers 11.⁴⁰ Daube admits that the narrative of the seven is far from a perfect copy of its models. He details the wisdom setting of Exodus and Deuteronomy and demonstrates that a trace of it remains in Acts. He argues, however, that it is important to establish the difference between *Samakh*= to learn, which involves the exercise of some force, and *Sim* or *Shimith*= to place, which can be done with the fingers only, and concludes that in both the appointment of Seven and that of Paul and Barnabas, the ceremony is *Samakh*, enjoyed a striking revival in the archaic Christian community.⁴¹

However, although he has mentioned the identical structure of the four texts, and recognizes that two of the seven went on to excel as missionaries and miracles-workers; he does not question the effectiveness of the resolution. From a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, although he has mention of the practice of “lying on of hands” (v.6), Daube did not examine two other discursive practices: “distribution of food” (v.1), and the “the art of oratory” a practice into the foreground, a practice that is not explicitly mentioned but was so steeped in relations of power.

⁴⁰ David Daube, “A Reform in Acts and Its Models,” in *Jews, Greeks, and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity: Essays in Honor of William David Davies* (eds. Robert Hamerton Kelly and Robbin Scraggs; Leiden: Brill, 1976): 156-163.

⁴¹ Daube, “A Reform in Acts,” 160.

1.3.2.1.4 Richard Pervo

Likewise, Richard Pervo (2009) considers that the story in Acts 6: 1-7 is problematic because the men chosen to allow the Twelve to preach rather than to “serve tables” appear later only as preachers and evangelists.⁴² For Pervo, the most prominent inconsistency is the difference between the asserted duties of the seven and their reported activities. His conclusion is that the business of food distribution was Luke’s own contribution, possibly adopted from divergent tradition, but not from any source treating the work of seven. The presumed source, he says, did not view the seven as subordinate to the apostles, and Pervo did not see them as “table servants.” He rather sustains that the seven were leaders of an organized group (the Hellenists) with functions not limited to relief assistance.⁴³

Pervo has indeed identified a valid contradiction, but he then takes his refuge again in identifying a source behind the text. Typical of the historical critical approach, once a source has been identified, the interpretation process stops as if now the performativity of the text has ended. However, this is a problem with deconstruction because deconstruction takes us away from the assumption that meaning is present in the text. Deconstruction would rather have played with this inconsistency to find the meaning. According to Derrida, the meaning is the product of a play of differences, and differences between the words are not to be found in one place, but are rather scattered across a network of language.⁴⁴ Play of difference, Derrida explains, is the possibility of re-reading the text and find new meanings to fill in the empty space in language and speech.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the weakness of Pervo’s study according to my view is his adherence to the traditional view since Irenaeus the Church father that this passage is the foundation of diaconate. The analysis of form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) of the passage and also the scholarly consensus now hold that Luke did not call the seven *διακονοί* in vv. 5f.⁴⁶

⁴² Pervo, *Acts*, 157.

⁴³ Pervo, *Acts*, 154.

⁴⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 158.

⁴⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans with introduction and additional notes by Alan Bass (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278

⁴⁶ See for more details, F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 182; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 266.

To sum up this section, I argue that although historical-critical method had dominated Biblical Studies as the preferred interpretative method, 1) that method fails to analyze adequately the structures of dominations and the ideological function inscribed in the text; 2) the historical-critical method is unable to deconstruct the politics of inequality and subordination inscribed in the reading of Scriptures.⁴⁷ From a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, the problem with historical-critical method is the illusion that origins and the development of the text can be established. Deconstruction denounces this linear line, the existence of an origin that can be discovered without an interpretative framework.

1.3.2.2 Narrative Criticism

It is noteworthy that during the early twentieth century, “literary criticism,” which “Narrative criticism” comes from, was limited to what is called “Source criticism.”⁴⁸ As David Aune argues, toward the 1970s, biblical scholars began to use “Literary Criticism” as an umbrella term for the various critical theories and methods developed by secular literary critics, but often modified to fit the demands of biblical interpretation.⁴⁹ Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the literary critical method began to have an impact on the New Testament scholarship, what the New Testament scholars came to call “Narrative Criticism”, that is, a modified type of literary criticism.⁵⁰ Narrative criticism focuses on the narrative world, which consists of 1) settings, that provides a narrative with a context where the events take place, 2) Plot, which deals with the sequence of events, 3) Characters, who are agents in the plot, 4) Rhetoric, which is related to the concept of implied readers/hearers.⁵¹

However, the fundamental question of narrative criticism is how interrelated characters, settings, and actions of the plot contribute to a narrative meaning for a reader?⁵² The narrative criticism works with the assumption that the focus remains on the narrative world rather than the historical world. There have been scholars who have looked at Acts 6:1-7, using narrative

⁴⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Forenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of the Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 163.

⁴⁸ David E. Aune, “Literary Criticism,” in *Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 116-155.

⁴⁹ Aune, “Literary Criticism,” 116.

⁵⁰ Aune, “Literary Criticism,” 116-117.

⁵¹ David Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism of the New Testament,” in *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge* (ed. Andrew B. McGowan and Kent Harold Richard; Leiden: Brill, 2012): 107-124.

⁵² See Elisabeth Struthers Malbon, “Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?” in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (eds, Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. More; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 23-49.

criticism as a method of interpretation. I will refer to two who have identified inconsistencies in the text and attempted to suggest eventual solutions. I refer to Joseph B. Tyson and Robert C. Tannehill.

1.3.2.2.1 Joseph B. Tyson

In his article entitled “Acts 6: 1-7 and Dietary Regulations in Early Christianity” (1983)⁵³, Joseph B. Tyson observes that the narrative in Acts 6: 1-7, which according to him, is the observance of the common meal, conforms to the four part patterns of a basic linear movement in Acts: 1) an introduction to the movement prior to threat (Acts 6: 1a); 2), a description of the threat (Acts 6:1b); 3), the resolution of the threat (Acts 6: 2-4); and 4, the description of the situation after the threat (Acts 6: 7). For Tyson, the major exegetical questions relate to the meaning of “daily service” (Acts 6: 1b); the distinction between Hebrews and Hellenists (Acts 6: 1b); the meaning of the “widows” (Acts 6:1b); and the nature of the resolution (Acts 6: 2-6).

However, after having provided an appraisal of various commentaries, Tyson asserts that the resolution to the threat was not appropriated, and concludes that “the purpose of the narrative appears to be to trace the succession from the apostles. It serves to introduce Stephen and Philip by legitimating their work and connecting them with the Twelve.”⁵⁴ According to Tyson, Luke’s general view appears to be that the dietary regulations had to be revised in order for the Gentile mission to take place. Tyson also has attempted to identify the inconsistencies within the text by finding the meaning to be present in the text. Whereas, rhetorical and deconstruction move us away from the notion of a fixed meaning.

1.3.2.2.2 Robert C. Tannehill

Thirteen years later, Robert C. Tannehill in his Writing ‘The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation (1990)’ admits as Tyson that one function of Acts 6:1-7 is to introduce Stephen and Philip’s mission in Acts 8.⁵⁵ He argues that there is a change in Stephen’s role for which “we are not prepared by Acts 6: 1-7” The Twelve draw a clear distinction between two types of service: serving tables (*διακονεῖν τραπεζαίς*, 6: 2) and the service of word (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*, 6: 4). Stephen, chosen to serve tables uses the spirit and wisdom not to organize

⁵³ Joseph B. Tyson, “Acts 6:1-7 and Dietary Regulations in Early Christianity.” *PRSt*, vol. 10, no.2 (1983): 145-161.

⁵⁴ Tyson, “Acts 6:1-7,” 152.

⁵⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity in Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol.2: The Acts of the Apostles (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 80.

charity, but to speak and perform wonders. The same Philip appointed to serve in distribution of charity become a missionary.⁵⁶ I may give credit to Tannehill's study, because what he has observed can be seen as inconsistency or discrepancy or oppositions in the text, although not within a deconstructionist framework.

To conclude this section, Narrative Criticism, which emerged in the 1970s, focuses on the narrative world of the text. It represented a paradigm shift in biblical studies, a movement from historical to literary questions in the text. Narrative criticism searches for meaning in the textual relationship of the texts. In other terms, Narrative criticism seeks to find how do the various literary patterns (characters, settings, plots, rhetoric) enable the text to communicate meaning to its readers/and hearers? However, although the narrative critical method enables to identify the contradictions in the text, it is then limited in that the method does not dismantle the hierarchical dichotomies underlining the text since it searches for meaning in the text.

1.3.2.3 Socio-rhetorical criticism

Socio-rhetorical criticism emerged in the 1970s with the Robbins' first socio-rhetorical study of an analysis of the relation of the "we-passages" in Acts to ancient Mediterranean Sea voyages.⁵⁷ During the 1990s, socio-rhetorical interpretation identified multiples textures of texts for the purpose of reading and rereading them in the ways that activated a wide range of literary, rhetorical, historical, social, cultural, ideological and religious interpretations.⁵⁸ Towards the last half of the 1990s, socio-rhetorical interpretation gradually moved towards analysis of different rhetorolects in the early Christian discourse.⁵⁹

In fact, it is in his two books *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, and *Exploring the Texture of the Texts*, written respectively in 1996, that Vernon Robbins describes his approach "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation." He defines socio-rhetorical interpretation as "an approach to the literature that focuses on values, convictions and beliefs both in the text that we read and in the world in which we live."⁶⁰ Drawing upon work from several disciplines; sociology,

⁵⁶ Tannehill, *The Narrative Unit*, 82.

⁵⁷ Vernon K Robbins, "The 'We' Passages in Acts and Ancient Sea Voyages." *Biblical Research* 20 (1975).

⁵⁸ Vernon K. Robbins, "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation," in *Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010):192-219.

⁵⁹ Robbins explains that during the first decades of the emergence of the early Christian discourse, a rhetorolect was a form of the language or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings, and argumentations. See Vernon K. Robbins, "The Dialectical Nature of Early Christian Discourse." *Scriptura* 59 (1996c):357-362.

⁶⁰ Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Textures of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996b), 1.

anthropology, and socio-linguistic, Robbins presupposes that the meaning is multivalent in that words themselves work in complicated ways to communicate meanings that we only partially understand, and that meanings themselves have their meanings by their relation to other meanings.⁶¹ Robbins's socio-rhetorical method then explores the textures of texts in the five following ways: 1) Inner texture, 2) Intertexture, 3) Social and cultural texture, 4) Ideological texture and 5) Sacred texture. Socio-rhetorical method sounds as if it approximates deconstruction in its presupposition that meaning is multivalent. It diverges nevertheless in that he still fixes meaning while deconstruction defixes meaning. I will in the following refer to Ben Witherington because he has unwillingly tried to provide a solution to the discrepancies in the text, by a construction of hierarchy in the dichotomy Hebrews and Hellenists.

1.3.2.3.1 Ben Witherington

In his commentary on Acts of the Apostles written in 1998, Ben Witherington looks at the passage of Acts 6: 1-7 from a socio-rhetorical perspective. Basing exclusively on the term "Hellenist" Witherington argues that "Hellenists" should be dropped from the discussion of Acts 6 and 9 as a technical term, if it signifies something ideological, something more than Greek person.⁶² In fact, I agree with Witherington when he says that Luke does not tell the readers why the Hellenist widows have been neglected. Nevertheless, I disagree with him on a certain number of points. Firstly, I do not think as I have mentioned early that the analysis of the term "Hellenist" alone from its etymological roots provides with a full understanding of this passage. As Todd Penner has well observed "it is therefore worth examining more closely the textual details, as well as the gaps and fissures, which have much baffled scholars as they have pushed them in particular directions of interpretation."⁶³ Secondly, I am not of Witherington's view that there is nothing in the text under examination that suggests the difference mounted to conservative versus liberal views on either theological or ethical and practical matter. For, as Haenchen asserts, the Hellenists had a more liberal sense of the interpretation of the law than the Hebrews who did not adopt it. In addition, the accusations brought against Stephen and his martyrdom was therefore a consequence of his liberal positions.

⁶¹ Robbins, *Exploring the Textures of the Texts*, 132.

⁶² Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 250.

⁶³ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 60.

To conclude this subsection, positively socio-rhetorical method brings together different approaches of reading into an integrated approach of interpretation. Socio-rhetorical method is more useful than the previous approaches since it generates multiple strategies for reading. Still located within the supplemental tradition of the rhetoric, Socio-rhetorical approach has also succeeded to move away from the category of traditional rhetoric. The concern with Socio-rhetorical method as Alan Culpepper has remarked is about relationship between textures or the correlations of multiple textures.⁶⁴ It is more difficult as Van den Heever argues, “in the case of a complex narrative to determine the relationship between textures, intertextures reminiscences, the social and historical context implied by the text and the perspective adopted by it.”⁶⁵ In the context of this study, Socio-rhetorical method is not appropriated for this study that seeks to dismantle the hierarchical oppositions and examine the text’s undecidabilities, because that approach cannot provide the type of site I want to use for the questions that I ask.

1.3.2.4 Feminist Criticism

Jonathan Culler has indicated that Feminist Criticism has had a greater effect on the literary canon than any other critical movement and has been one of the most powerful forces of renovation in the contemporary criticism.⁶⁶ The term “feminist criticism” means a criticism that strives to expose the patriarchal structures within the texts and the legitimating and perpetuating of these structures in the interpretation of the texts.⁶⁷ It may also be defined as the efforts of women to become free from male domination, to act as equals with men in every aspect of social, economic, religious and political life.⁶⁸

From the two definitions above, feminist criticism can be seen as double strategies: first, it endeavors to expose the structures of power, and second, it engages to restore the voices of women and reconstruct their contributions in the past for their vision for the present.⁶⁹ Feminist Criticism assumes that gender relations are linguistically and socially constructed in

⁶⁴ Alan R Culpepper, “Mapping the Textures of the New Testament Critics: A Response to Socio-Rhetorical Critics.” *JSNT* 70 (1998): 71-77.

⁶⁵ G. van Heever, “Finding data in unexpected Places: From text linguistics to Socio-Rhetorical Reading of John’s Gospel.” *Neotestamentica* 33, (1998), 343-363.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge & Regan Paul, 1982), 85.

⁶⁷ See Randolph Tate (ed.), *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2012), 157.

⁶⁸ Shillington, *The Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts*, 102.

⁶⁹ See for example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology* (ed. Richard J Lane; London: Routledge, 2013): 521-529.

the interest of patriarchal power relations.⁷⁰ For the feminist scholars, the common presupposition is that all biblical texts were written in the contexts of patriarchal culture, and these patriarchal contexts have dehumanized and marginalized women, treating them as second class citizens.⁷¹ According to Feminist scholars, many biblical texts such as Genesis 2-3; 1Cor 11: 3-12, 14:34-36; Eph. 5: 22-24; 1 Tim 2: 9-15 and 1 Pet 3: 1-7 have been used to justify the domination of women.⁷² Feminist criticism asks questions such as “can women’s voices be recovered from text?” Can the text be read “against the grain” in order to find “good news” for women? What are the political or ideological interests encoded in the texts, and how might the application of the hermeneutics of suspicion reveal such interests?⁷³

Amy-Jill Levine notes that when she was elected president of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1988, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, in her presidential address “The Ethics of Interpretation: Decentering Biblical scholarship” brought feminist critiques to the center of Biblical Studies.⁷⁴ Schüssler developed a critical feminist reading of the New Testament that accepts the texts that are liberating to women. She then set up four reading strategies, which are hermeneutics of suspicion, hermeneutics of remembrance, hermeneutics of evaluation and proclamation, and hermeneutics of creative imagination and ritualization.⁷⁵ In the following, I will refer to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza because of her contribution to feminist criticism and as a leader of gender criticism.

1.3.2.4.1 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

In her book “In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins” (1994), Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza poses that the conflict between the Hellenists and Hebrews involved the role and participation of women at the Eucharistic meal “serving

⁷⁰ Patriarchy literally means the role of father, the male authority over female and children. It is a gender dualism or the domination and control of man over woman (see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol.2 (ed. David N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992): 783-791.

⁷¹ Janice Capel Anderson, “Feminist Criticism,” in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 103-134; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vo.2 (ed. David N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992): 783-791.

⁷² Amy-Jill Levine, “Feminist Criticism,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 156-165.

⁷³ Levine, “Feminist Criticism,” 108.

⁷⁴ Levine, “Feminist Criticism,” 161.

⁷⁵ Schüssler, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” 290.

tables.”⁷⁶ After having examined the term *διακονία* in its original, New Testament and religious sense, Fiorenza suggests that the notion of *διακονία* (service or ministry) can be reclaimed by feminist theology as a critical category challenging those who have actual power and privilege.⁷⁷ Her conclusion is that the subject under discussion is the contrast between societal structures and discipleship of equals; meaning equality between disciples. The episode challenges those in position of dominance and power to become “equal” with those who are powerless.⁷⁸

Elisabeth Schüssler contributes to the question of “why the Hellenist widows have been neglected?” She exposes the structures of power underlying the interpretative process. The strength of her work lies in that she addresses the issue of the relation of power and challenges who are in power to consider also those who are powerless rather than to please to the solution proposed by Luke, which does not fit with the subsequent episode. As such, Schüssler’s intent is to expose hierarchies that have been produced and the process has to work against the background of uneven and unequal relationships.

To sum up this subsection, feminist criticism strives to expose the patriarchal structures, the structures of power underlying the interpretative process, and the legitimating and perpetuating of these structures in the interpretation of the text. Seen from this perspective, feminist criticism can be seen as a part of a project that investigates Acts 6:1-7.

1.3.3 Overview of methodologies applied in Acts 6:1-7

The passage of Acts 6: 1- 7 is one of the most complex and controversial passages in Acts of the Apostles. The account of the selection of the seven in the context of the conflict between the Hellenists and the Hebrews has attracted the attention of many of scholars. In this section, we have selected four methodological approaches that scholars have applied in their interpretations of Acts 6:1-7, namely: Historical-critical method, Narrative criticism, Socio-rhetorical interpretation, and Feminist criticism. Until the end of the twentieth century, historical-critical method had dominated Biblical Studies as a preferred method of interpretation. The aim was to reconstruct the meaning that is supposed to be present in the text. Narrative criticism searches for meaning in the textual relationship, and seeks to find how

⁷⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

⁷⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons: Exploration in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 219.

⁷⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons*, 220.

various patterns enable to communicate meaning. Socio-rhetorical coordinates multiple approaches into an integrated method of interpretation and generates multiple strategies for reading. Feminist criticism is a multidimensional methodology that applies a variety of approaches. Feminist criticism strives to expose the patriarchal structures, the structures of power, and the legitimation and perpetuation of these structures. However, despite the hegemony of historical-critical method, the more important question is to what extent can that method generated strategies that can be preventing against ethnical discrimination and promote more egalitarian ethnical relationships, performing towards the demolition of supersessionism? Despite Narrative criticism enabling to identify the contradictions or inconsistencies in the text, to what extent can that method provides the strategies to dismantle the hierarchical dichotomies underlying the text? Despite Socio-rhetorical interpretation succeeding to move away from the category of traditional rhetoric, to what extent does that method generate preventive strategies against ethnical discrimination, androcentrism, exclusion and domination? Therefore, I may argue that these approaches that were used in the past do not entirely assist us in answering these questions that I just have posed. In the following section I will offer the proposed methodology, which will be applied in this study, and which is able to provide the strategies for the reading of Acts 6:1-7.

1.4 Research Methodology

The goal of this study is to expose the problem of ethnical discrimination depicted in Acts 6:1-7, its development into supersessionism and its persistent perpetuation in discriminatory practices in the contemporary church leadership. In this fourth section of the chapter, I will be describing the methodological approach which will be applied in the reading of my selected text, in particular rhetorical criticism and deconstruction. However, it is important to indicate why rhetorical criticism may be used in conjunction with deconstruction. There are two reasons for that: firstly, rhetoric is concerned with construction, with production, with creativity, brief rhetoric is concerned with the process of human symbolisation. Secondly, rhetoric can help me in the articulation of hierarchical oppositions, and the notion of problematization can be used to problematize the discursive practices that are within the text. The mechanism of problematization can help me in the discovery of meaning by moving away from a fixed meaning hidden within the text. However, it is important to signify that I will not at this juncture provide a detailed presentation of rhetorical criticism and deconstruction. This will be made in chapter two where I will be presenting the strategies of reading.

1.4.1 Rhetorical criticism

It must be indicated here that some recent studies of Acts have all confirmed the value of rhetoric as framework for the analysis of Acts⁷⁹ Penner particularly has noted that specific trajectories that surface in these recent works have shifted the questions related to Acts from previous discussions. These collections and studies that have focused on social-world analysis, coupled with both rhetorical and social-science investigations.⁸⁰ The point I would like to illustrate here is that rhetoric criticism has become a valid framework for interpreting Acts. Luke's manner of historiography, that is, how he wrote what he deemed history, complied with Hellenistic historiography itself, where the objective is not the historicity of events and person, but most often the legitimation of ideas and/or persons, the propagation of values, the legitimization of groups and communities. Persuasion therefore drives Luke's historiography just as it has driven Hellenistic historiography.

It is important to remind that if the classic or traditional rhetoric with its five parts: the inventio (εὕρεσις), which is the discovery of argument, the dispositio (τάξις), which is the arrangement or division of material, elocutio (λέξις), which refers to the style or manner of expression, memoria (μνήμην), referring to the techniques of memory, and pronuntiatio (ὑπόκρισις), which was concerned with the delivery of the discourse,⁸¹ was restricted to persuasion as the main objective, in modern rhetoric the objective of rhetoric is no longer restricted to persuasion; its scope could include all process of human symbolization.⁸² The human enterprise of generating knowledge, of producing morality, of constructing culture, of manipulating nature and creating technology, all became part of its expanded scope, producing what has now come to be known as the rhetoric of inquiry.⁸³

However, a more suitable model can be seen in Vorster's rhetorical critical interpretation, specifically his constructing of rhetorical situation. Indeed, the way in which rhetorical

⁷⁹ Cf. Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004); Todd Penner, "Contextualizing Acts," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (eds. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Stichele; Atlanta: SBL, 2003): 1-22; Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of the Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996b); Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998); Denise Kimbe Buell, *Why this New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

⁸⁰ Penner, "Contextualizing Acts," 9.

⁸¹ Johannes Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *Focusing on Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and Methods* (ed. Andrie du Toit; Pretoria: Protea, 2009): 505- 578.

⁸² Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 533.

⁸³ Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 535.

situation is constructed by Vorster is more suitable, and significant for my purpose. It is suitable in so far as his notion of problematization can help me to move away from a fixed meaning to be discovered in the text by a constructive approach. Further the notion of problematization can also help me to question and articulate the binary oppositions that are inscribed within the text. It is significant in so far as the mechanism of problematization foregrounds the social, discursive practices, that is, a problematization of practices, principles and power relations operating within the categories.⁸⁴ Rhetorical criticism is more adequate than those I have discarded because it pays attention to the manner in which the person has been constructed, and it is constituted of gender, ethnicity and all related categories.

Vorster's rhetorical critical model can simply be summarized as follows:

Constituents of the rhetorical situation:

Although the rhetorical situation according to Vorster pivots around the construction of the problem encapsulated in the act of problematization, detecting the discursive practices at work allow for its construction. For that reason, it becomes important to identify these practices in the initial stages of the analysis.

1) Steps 1-6: Identification of discursive practices or principles: the critic has to determine the practices and principles generating the particular discursive practices.

2) Steps 7-8: The rhetorical situation also consists of the construction of persons. However, in the case of a historiographical narrative such as Acts, the construction of persons will happen on several levels. There is the implied author and implied audience who are not explicitized in the text, but then there is also what literary criticism has called the "characters" participating in the making of the story. There are also constructions but have to be distinguished from the implied author and implied audience, although the values that constituted these latter two categories will most probably (although not necessary) also regulated the construction of persons in the text. So, in the construction of person: the critic has to identify persons who functions as problematizing agents and have to make a decision. It pays attention to the manner in which person has been constructed and is constituted of:

⁸⁴ Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 548.

- a) Gender
- b) Ethnicity
- c) Education and training
- d) Construction of author's role
- e) Construction of the audience

3) Step 9: the act of problematization: the way in which the argument is structured and presented.

Therefore, in this study, I apply rhetoric criticism to Acts 6: 1-7. Rhetoric criticism equips me to construct a situation where persuasion takes place, and enables the identification of persuasive strategies, and that methodology can function as a kind of portal towards deconstruction, that is, as a framework within which I will read the text from a deconstructive point of view. Briefly, I will be using Vorster's the rhetorical situation model. That is, I will use certain aspects of his model, namely: the notion of problematization, the construction of persons, and the act of problematization, that is, analysis of the argumentation related to problematization and practices.

1.4.2 Deconstructive reading

Deconstruction is a mode or a strategy of reading that takes its name from the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. The theory of deconstruction that was inaugurated in the late 1960s became a major influence on the literary studies during the late 1970s.⁸⁵

Deconstruction has been regarded as postmodernism in that it constitutes a reaction against structuralism's ideology. As Rorty has observed, most of Derrida's work continues a line of thought, which begins with Friedrich Nietzsche and runs through Martin Heidegger. This line of thought is characterized by a radical opposition of Plato-apparatus of western philosophy, which the West inherited from Plato, which has dominated the European thought.⁸⁶ In this view, western philosophy for Derrida has privileged speech over writing, and the privileging of speech over writing has perpetuated what he calls "metaphysics of presence" or

⁸⁵ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 201.

⁸⁶ Rorty, "Deconstruction," 169.

“logocentrism,” which is pervasive in western culture. ⁸⁷Logocentrism is the assumption that a pre-existing “logos” is at the basis and the origin of all beings. ⁸⁸

From this view, the term ‘deconstruction’ first refers to the way in which the occidental’s features of a text can be seen as betraying, subverting its purported essential message. ⁸⁹ Derrida insists that “deconstruction” is not a simply overturning of traditional philosophical prejudices or “violent hierarchies.” It is rather conceived as a double gesture of unseating the privileged motifs within texts. ⁹⁰ A deconstructive reading for Derrida:

Must always aim at a certain relationship unperceived by writer between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of language that he uses. That relationship is a signifying structure that critical [i.e. deconstructive] reading should produce... [That is, a] production [which] attempts to make the not seen accessible to sight. ⁹¹

As Critchley points out, what takes place in deconstruction is reading of a text. He argues that what distinguishes deconstruction, as a textual practice is a double reading. ⁹² According to Critchley, briefly, the first reading is a scholarly reconstruction of dominant interpretation of a text, its “*vouloir-dire*” its intended meaning in a guise of a commentary, while the second reading is the destabilization of the dominant interpretation. In Critchley’s words, the first reading is a movement of traversing the text, which enables the reading to obtain the position of alterity from where the text can be constructed. The second brings the text into contradiction with itself, opening its intended meaning into an alterity, which goes against what the text wants to say. ⁹³

To sum up this section, deconstructive reading shows hows a text is dependent upon the presuppositions of “metaphysics of presence” (binary oppositions) or logocentrism that the text attempts to overthrow or dismantle by a double gesture or double reading. I want to use deconstruction as an interpretative tool strategy to investigate the problem that I am dealing

⁸⁷ Habid, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 653 (see also John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (London: Pearson, 2001), 74.

⁸⁸ Tom Cohen, Claire Colebrook, and J. Hillis Miller (eds.), *Theory and Disappearing Future on de Man, on Benjamin with a manuscript by Paul de Man* (London: Routledge, 2012), 2.

⁸⁹ Richard Rorty, “*Deconstruction*,” in *From Formalism to Post Structuralism* (ed. Raman Selden, vol. 8 of the Cambridge History of Literary Criticism; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 166-196.

⁹⁰ See Simon Critchley and Timothy Mooney, “Deconstruction and Derrida,” in *Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy* (ed. Richard Kearny, vol.8 of the series Routledge History of Philosophy; London: Routledge, 1994): 441-473.

⁹¹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 163.

⁹² Critchley, “Deconstruction,” 443.

⁹³ Critchley, “Deconstruction,” 446.

with in Acts 6: 1-7. Deconstruction is more adequate in that it generates the strategies that can be preventing against ethnical discrimination and promote more egalitarian ethnical relationships, performing towards the demolition of supersessionism. Deconstruction also provides the strategies to dismantle the hierarchical dichotomies underlying the text, to prevent ethnical discrimination, endocentric exclusion and domination. I will be using Derrida's strategy of deconstruction, which will be developed and explained in details in chapter two: Strategies of reading and other strategies derivated from other deconstructionists, and other approaches that are in dialogue with deconstruction in my reading of Acts 6:1-7. I will use deconstruction in conjunction with rhetorical criticism specifically some aspects of Vorster's rhetorical situational model since rhetoric can help in problematizing and enables a more adequate explanation of the problem I am dealing with.

1.5 Definition of key terms

In this section, I will define the key terms that relate to the problem that this thesis deals with, namely: ethnicity, supersessionism, leadership, Jew and Hellenist. However, I will be discussing with these last two in more detail later.

1.5.1 Ethnicity

The term ethnicity derives from the Greek word '*ethnos*', meaning 'people' or 'nation'.⁹⁴ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word 'ethnicity' was first used in the 15th century to mean 'pertaining to nations not Christian or Jewish, Gentiles, Heathen, Pagan.'⁹⁵ Ethnicity is a complex concept since scholars have not reached a consensus on its precise meaning. However, Borgatta and Montgomery argue that despite definitional disagreement, there is general recognition that a number of characteristics appear as the hallmarks of ethnicity, not all of them will be present in every case, but many will be. They include features shared by group members, such as the same or similar geographic origin, language, religion, foods, traditions, folklore, music, and residential patterns.⁹⁶ I have deliberately selected ethnicity as an interpretative category not to solve the problem of the identity of Hellenists and Hebrews, but it allows for an interpretative framework that takes us beyond the first century context; it offers the possibility to think with the text within a contemporary

⁹⁴ Joseph M. Palmisano, ed., *World of Sociology*, vol. 1 (New York: Gale Group, 2001), 206.

⁹⁵ "Ethnicity" Oxford English Dictionary (Cited from the online version: <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu> Access on 2012-12-04).

⁹⁶ Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhoda J. V. Montgomery eds. *Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Mc Milan Reference, 2000), 841.

situation. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective I might pose such as “how stable this category of interpretation is?” “Would be possible to speak of ethnicity as a category of interpretation when our categories of interpretation are unstable and unfixed?” I may argue that I depart from a limited definition of ethnicity since that term is unstable, fluid and subject to change. Even in the Roman imperial period “Greekness” is defined and negotiated in relation to “Romaness” and conversely “Greekness” served as a model for definitions of “Romanness.” It is misleading, Buell says, to think that the terms such as Hellene, Egyptian, and Judean (or the group to whom they referred to) were stable. They meanings underwent continual negotiation and revision in antiquity.⁹⁷ In fact, if I consider all these to Acts 6, I can assert that we indeed have a problem of ethnicity in our hands. To take Acts 6:1-7 as an instance of ethnicity is legitimate and valid, and simultaneously to cast doubt to those who want to turn this only into a linguistic problem, even though “hellenists” in this context may refer to “greek-speaking Jews.” Therefore, my definition of ethnicity is not one that aligns only with nationality, but an ethnicity that is constructed, that is unfixed, that is not rigid, that forms part of identity formation and just as in the case of identity formation is fluid, is discursive and amount to marginalization and to superiorization or privileging. Buell’s term of “ethnic reasoning” comes in very handy because the implication of its use is that ethnicity cannot be fixed, is constructed, and is a particular way of rhetorically promoting one group while devaluing another in term of adherence to a differentiation of values that are hierarchically opposed. And the author of Acts is consistently working within the paradigm of “ethnic reasoning.”

However, I will therefore be using ethnicity as a category of interpretation. It is in this respect that the work of Denise Buell comes to the fore. Although her focus is mainly on the category “race” and though she does not make the difference between “race” and “ethnicity” whereas I am dealing with the later, she also introduces the category “ethnic reasoning” to challenge the view that ethnicity and race were irrelevant to early Christianity, a view that also influenced some recent interpretations of Acts 6:1-7 arguing that the difference between Hellenists and Hebrews is rather linguistic but not ethnic.⁹⁸ What makes her work useful for my project is the recognition that this is a category of interpretation and although modern, is also

⁹⁷ See Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 63.

⁹⁸ See for example, Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Acts* (Grand Rapids/Michigan: Zondervan Academic Press, 2012); Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2010);

appropriate for analyses of early Christianity since it enables how racism and ethnicity have unwittingly performed in the production of racism and the construction of anti-Judaism in the reception history of biblical material, even as specially the notion of ethnicity was deployed as counter strategy. It is specially her conceptualization of ethnicity as “ethnic reasoning” that allow for an accommodation of rhetoric in the making of ethnicity while at the same time also opens the possibility of its investigation in the reception history of biblical material. However, since my methodology in any case includes rhetorical criticism, I will refrain from using her articulation, but will be working within the same frame of conceptualization. Therefore, it becomes clear that the category “ethnicity” can no longer be seen as a fixed and rigid demarcation of a group of people. In fact, it should be seen as product of identity formation, but here with a focus on the collective. As a matter of fact, in order to give expression to ethnicity as a product of identity formation, using “ethnic” as a qualifier as in “ethnic identity,” would perhaps more appropriate since this allows for understanding not only the multiple constituents in the formation of identity, but also open space for theoretical intervention of intersectionality in the conceptualization of identity.

1.5.2 Jews

The English word “Jew” is the translation of the Hebrew word “*yehud m,*” and the Greek word “*Ioudaioi.*”⁹⁹ But, as Smith and Fuller argue, in the latter history, the term was also used to denote the members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin without distinction as it is evident in Esther 2: 5, where Mordecai, who though of the tribe of Benjamin, is called a Jew.¹⁰⁰ However, scholars today divide the Jewish history in threefold period.¹⁰¹ In the first century Christianity, the Hebrews are Aramaic-speaking Jews of Jerusalem.¹⁰²

1.5.3 Hellenists

“*Hēllēnistē*” is formed from the Greek verb “*hellēnizo*” which means “speak Greek”.¹⁰³ But the origin of the word can be traced back to “Hellenization”, an epoch from the Alexander

⁹⁹ John J. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 491.

¹⁰⁰ William Smith and Fuller J. M., *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 5* (New Delhi: Logos, 2004), 1705.

¹⁰¹ Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary*, 100-102.

¹⁰² Christopher R. Matthews, “Acts and the History of the Earliest Jerusalem Church,” in *Redescribing Christian Origins* (eds. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: SBL, 2004):157-179.

¹⁰² Ronald D. Cameron and Merrill P. Miller (eds.), *Redescribing Christian Origins* (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 156.

¹⁰³ Freedman, *The Anchor Bible*, 136.

the Great's conquest (356-323 BCE), to the Roman imperial rule (30 BCE).¹⁰⁴ As Noel Freedman argues, there could have been a degree of separation between Aramaic-speaking Jews and Greek-speaking Jews, though the boundaries were not rigid, as some Greek-speaking Jews may have known Aramaic, and Aramaic-speaking Jews almost certainly knew some Greek.¹⁰⁵ So, the argument I wish to pursue, that is irrespective of the historical situation that may have been in Jerusalem is that the author of Acts distinguished between two different groups of which the one has been constantly related to a particular construction of Jews, whereas the other group has been given more porous boundaries, that could include, Jews, that could include Greek-speaking Jews, but that could also include non-Jews, whether they are proselytes Acts 6:5, god-fearers Acts 2:5; 5:34; 10:1; 10:22;13:49 or newly acquired non-Jewish adherents of the Christian faith Acts 10:45; 11:21; 13:16; 14:1; 14:5. However, the author of Acts specifies another group, known owing to a different identity, but an identity that has been specified in terms of ethnic rhetoric, namely the “Hellenists.” Furthermore, if one reads through Acts from references to Hellenists in Acts 9: 29 and 11: 20, it is obvious that this group is not designated as Greek-speaking Jews, but simply Greek-speaking, which implies that they could include Greek-speaking Jews but need not necessarily do so. Therefore, the point I would like to demonstrate is that ethnicity was precisely what was on the Acts author’s spirit, the only difference being, there was no such category within which he could have presented his thoughts-it is indeed a modern category of identity, just as gender for example, with which we attempt to scrutinize a particular problem of identity formation that elevates some and downcasts others. I would like to adapt Buell’s “ethnic reasoning,” to “ethnic rhetoric,” for Acts 6: 1-7 as indeed concerned with “ethnicity” and not merely with the rather politically neutral linguistic differentiation that has been made by some New Testament scholars.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Freedman, *The Anchor Bible*, 127.

¹⁰⁵ Freedman, *The Anchor Bible*, 135.

¹⁰⁶ See for example, Eckhard Schnabel, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic Press, 2010); Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998); George V. Shillington, *An Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2010).

1.5.4 Supersessionism

Supersessionism from supersession means the state of being superseded. And superseded might mean to take the place of.¹⁰⁷ Williamson Clark comments that the term “‘supersessionism’ comes from two Latin words: *super* (on or upon) and *sedere* (to sit), as one person sit on the chair of another, displacing the latter.”¹⁰⁸ Michael Vlach who has made an overall evaluation of “supersessionism” has noted, “‘supersessionism’ or ‘replacement theology’ in the context of Israel and the church, is the view that the New Testament church is the new Israel that has forever superseded national Israel as the people of God.”¹⁰⁹ I have selected “supersessionism” as a category of interpretation because it helps us to understand the relationship between Israel and the church and how Jewish identity is constructed in relation to Christian identity. From a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, the problematization of that category leads to the questions such as how that category has been made, what were the politics behind the making of this term? And how a more egalitarian relationship can be promoted within the church while at the same time the moving towards the demolition of supersessionism?

1.5.5 Leadership

Leadership is an ancient phenomenon, and the discussion about leadership can be traced back to the writings of the authors such as Plato, Caesar, and Plutarch. Plato offered three types of leaders: 1) the philosopher statemen, 2) the military commander, and 3) the businessman.¹¹⁰ However, the word “leadership” did not appear until the first half of the nineteenth century in the writing about political influence and control of British’s Parliament.¹¹¹ One of the earliest definitions of leadership is from Tead (1929), as a combination of traits that enable an individual to induce others to accomplish a given task.¹¹²

We may define leadership as an interaction between the leader on the one hand, and the members of the group on the other hand for the achievement of a common objective. Although leadership can also be seen as a modern category I will function as another

¹⁰⁷ Philip Babcock Gove, *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of English Language Unabridged* (London: Bell, 1961), 2296.

¹⁰⁸ Williamson Clark M. *A Guest in the House of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993), 269.

¹⁰⁹ Michael J. Vlack, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009), 29.

¹¹⁰ Ralph Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, review ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 17.

¹¹¹ Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 7.

¹¹² Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 8.

category of interpretation and will be used to allow for an interpretation of how hierarchical communal order was structured in Luke's depiction of the early Christian community. In the triad ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership it functions as a third intersecting component. Yet, I have selected leadership as a category for interpretation because the triad ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership are related to each other, the three categories structure the thesis. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach one might pose the question: how can the notion of leadership be developed in the hierarchy of contemporary church?

1.6 Structure of chapters

The first chapter: *Introduction*, introduces the study; it provides the purpose, the objectives, the research problem/question of the research, as well as the literature review. It examines the methodological approaches that have been used to the reading of Acts 6:1-7, and then introduces the methodological approach applied into this study. It therefore provides the definition of the key terms and concludes with the outlines of the chapters.

The second chapter: *Strategies of Reading*, describes the methodological considerations, that is, the methodological approach used in this study (rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach); it identifies the interpretative strategies which will be used in the analysis of the Acts 6:1-7 in chapter four.

The third chapter: *Ethnicity, supersessionism in Acts 6: 1-7 and the change of leadership*, examines the key categories: ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership that form the structure of the chapter. It describes the definitions, the theory of each category and demonstrates how these categories are related.

The fourth chapter: *Reading Acts 6:1-7 according to a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach* consists of an eisegesis (reading into) in which rhetorical criticism is used in conjunction with deconstruction and in which the strategies provided by these two approaches enable a more adequate explanation of ethnic problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7.

The fifth chapter: *Implications of the study for the African context*, contextualizes the study in African contemporary churches. It examines how the African churches deal with the problems of ethnical discrimination, supersessionism, and leadership. The chapter deals with the question of how we can think with a text as Acts 6:1-7.

Finally, the sixth chapter: *Conclusions*, the last in its turn concludes the study. It summarizes the research and concludes the study by presenting the findings. Finally, the chapter provides the suggestions for further researches.

All these chapters relate to each other in order to address the problem that I am dealing with in this thesis, namely: to expose the ethnical discrimination depicted in Acts 6-1-7. In the next chapter, I will reflect on strategies of reading.

CHAPTER TWO: STRATEGIES OF READING

2.1 Introduction

The historical critical method has dominated Biblical Studies as a preferred method of interpretation with the objective to determinate the sources that may be used by the author in the composition of the text. Later several approaches have been invented and have challenged the hegemony of historical-critical method in the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7. However, the question we may ask is to what extent the scholars who used these methods have explored the question of ethnic discrimination, its development into supersessionism in that text? This study however, argues that the strategies provided by rhetorical criticism and deconstruction enable a more adequate explanation of the ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7, its development into supersessionism, and its perpetuation in discriminatory practices in the contemporary church.

The passage of Acts 6: 1-7 presents an exegetical difficult with regard to its interpretation. The difficulty is due to the fact that the text itself contains a certain numbers of inconsistencies. It is not clear, for example why the Hellenist widows were neglected, and how the choice of the seven members of Hellenist group would satisfactory provide for the widows of both parts, that is, Hellenist and Hebrew widows?¹¹³ In addition, it is not clear why the men selected to deal with the daily distribution of food, appear later as preachers and evangelists.¹¹⁴ Another crucial problem in this episode is the rapport between the role assigned to the seven and their actual function in the narrative. While many scholars have focused their research either on the identity of the Hellenists and Hebrews or on the meaning of the word “*διακονία*,”¹¹⁵ no attention has been paid to whether the problem cannot be constructed as ethnical, that is, as ethnical discrimination and a subsequent development of supersessionism that can be attributed to Acts 6.

¹¹³ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 157.

¹¹⁴ See Henry J. Cadbury, “The Hellenists” in *The Beginnings of Christianity, vol.5: The Acts of the Apostles* (eds. F. J. Foakes and Kirsopp Luke; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002): 59-74.

¹¹⁵ See e.g. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 262; Henry J. Cadbury, “The Hellenists” in *The Beginnings of Christianity, vol.5: The Acts of the Apostles* (eds. F. J. Foakes and Kirsopp Luke; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002): 59-74; C.F.D Moule, “Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?” *ExpTim* 70 (1958): 100-102; Joseph B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), iii; V. George Shillington, *An Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 48; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 344.

It is in this respect that this study would attempt to offer a more adequate explanation of the confrontation in Acts 6:1-7 by arguing in favour of a persistent and lingering ethnicity as a problem in the presentation or making of Acts 6:1-7. The question I address in this study is: how the strategies provided by rhetoric and deconstruction within the wider frameworks of ethnic studies and supersessionism may enable a more adequate explanation of the problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7. However, this question is complemented by another. If ethnicity can indeed be identified as underlying the presentation of Luke in Acts 6:1-7, to what extent can it be traced in the development of supersessionism and the persistent perpetuation of discriminatory practices in the contemporary church? My objective is not an empirical enquiry, but rather to create an awareness of the possibility of how Acts 6:1-7 could have been complicit in the creation of ecclesial ethnic discriminatory practices, when reading with strategies from the perspective of rhetoric and deconstruction.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the interpretative strategies that I will be using in my analysis of Acts 6:1-7. However, it is instructive and important to explain that I will not use a specific recipe in the analysis of that text, but rather the strategies of interpretations derived from the paradigms that I will look at here. That means that, I will not necessarily be implementing in exactly the same manner as in these paradigms. My approach will be eclectic, that is, from a combination of paradigms particular strategies of interpretation will be selected appropriate to the problem I wish to address. The objective here is not a fixed methodological approach, but rather a fluid apparatus that may both allow for recognizing an interaction of signs and strategies and enable an alternative understanding of Acts 6. Such an approach departs from a recipe like analysis, departs from a rigoristic “application” of strategies towards an interplay that would allow for constituents enabling thinking with Acts 6 within a contemporary situation. I am aware of the fact that deconstruction and rhetoric overlap, but I would like to keep them separately owing to the fact that specific terminologies may assist me in reading. Furthermore, though deconstruction and rhetoric will be given priority, feminist and postcolonial criticism will feature within the ambit of deconstruction and rhetoric.

I would like to introduce this chapter with the critique of Stephen Moore on biblical scholarship, and methodology. My reason is that Moore and also Sherwood want to emphasize that historical criticism and later the insistence on methodology became an escape for biblical scholars not to question the morality of the Bible. In other words, historical

criticism has pushed biblical scholarship away from contemporary ethical and moral problems by focusing only on historical questions. Moore and Sherwood contend that the history of biblical interpretation in the early modern period offers a more compelling illustration of the “*épistémè break*.”¹¹⁶

According to these scholars, this “*épistémè upheaval*” is due to the fact that from the second century apologists to the sixteenth century Reformers, it was the rule of faith that determined the work of biblical scholarship. The biblical scholars were dealing with ethical and moral issues. But, in the late seventeenth century, the question of the immorality of biblical text emerged (moral unbelief), the anxiety about miracles, considered as a violation of the general laws of nature, was matched.¹¹⁷ Early modern European scholars engaged with the Bible as a social, political and theological force and cultural exemple were concerned above all with the question of “moral unbelief.”¹¹⁸ In response to that threat to biblical authority (that is, when the Bible ceased to be source of morality), the defenders of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment forged the Enlightenment Bible¹¹⁹. However, despite of its publication, the Enlightenment Bible did not register a significant disjunction between eighteenth and nineteenth century biblical criticism around the issue of morality. Thence, Moore and Sherwood’s argument that contemporary biblical scholarship is still fundamentally predominated and contained by the Enlightenment *épistémè*¹²⁰ After the eighteenth century, note these scholars, the investigation of biblical morality was dropped from the job of biblical scholars. This was because the moral questions put to the Bible by the early rationalists were deemed to be irresolvable, whereas historical questions were imagined to be resolvable. Gospel scholars in particular, have been concerned in their research for the problem of sources in the Synoptic Gospels particularly the question of historical Jesus.

¹¹⁶ *Epistémè* is a term coined by Michel Foucault meaning a set of prescriptions and assumptions that regulate the production of knowledge in a given historical period, and that enables the finite set of statements that are acceptable in that epoch. So, when an era’s *épistémè* does not correspond with the “*episteme*” of the succeeding era, it illustrates an “*épistémè break*.” (See Stephen D Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, “Biblical Studies ‘after’ Theory: Onwards Towards the Past: Part Two: The Secret of the Biblical God.” *Biblical Interpretation* 18, no.2 (2010): 87-113.

¹¹⁷ Moore and Sherwood, “Biblical Studies ‘after’ Theory,” 90.

¹¹⁸ “Moral unbelief” is said when morality is considered to have another source than the Bible (see Stephen D Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, “Biblical Studies ‘after’ Theory: Onwards Towards the Past, Part Two: The secret vices of Biblical God.” *Biblical Interpretation* 18 (2010): 87-113.

¹¹⁹ Enlightenment Bible is a Protestant Reformation Bible in the Sixteenth century Europe, whose insistence was on three principles of Reformation: “*sola gracia*,” “*sola fides*,” “*sola Scripture*.” Enlightenment Bible was an engine of political, religious and a theoretical force to the reform movements (see Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1.

¹²⁰ Moore and Sherwood, “Biblical Studies ‘after’ Theory,” 90.

Questions such as who was Jesus, why did he die? have been formulated in understanding Jesus in the background of the nineteenth century scholarship.¹²¹ Therefore, despite this reversal to the historical paradigm, and despite the multiplication of methods, and intensification of interdisciplinary in biblical studies, Moore and Sherwood maintain that no fundamental rupture of the biblical *épistémè* has yet occurred.¹²²

However, what is important for this study, and what we can underline is that this insistence on methodology has shifted the focus away from dealing with ethical and moral questions to the contemporary social issues. Biblical scholarship has now started to look at what might happen in biblical studies under the heading of theory.¹²³ A shift that has already occurred away from the insistence on methodology. That shift had a great impact not only in the field of biblical scholarship, but also in the field of literary scholarship. The proliferation of technicals in biblical scholarship provided a new kind of the authoritative mediation, and now, general public was less and less interested in what the professional biblical scholars have to say.¹²⁴

Therefore, I am raising this issue because in this study I am dealing with ethnicity and supersessionism and, I would like to show that this shift allows me to consider that the insistence on methodology, historical critical method for example, does not provide me with the recipe for the responses to the questions that I pose in the analysis of Acts 6:1-7. But, the strategies of interpretation derived from the paradigms that I consider here, will help me in the reading of the text, and equip me to answer the questions that I wish to pose here.

As I mentioned above, in this chapter, I want to articulate my theoretical position and show how deconstruction, that is, the umbrella, and also rhetorical criticism, that is, the framework of the entire chapter relates to critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism, feminist criticism, postcolonialism. The analysis of these categories will provide with some strategies that I will use in my reading of Acts 6:1-7. I am now going to start with critical theory.

For that reason, this chapter comprises two sections. The first section is concerned with the theoretical issues, while in the second section, I will consider the approach used in this study,

¹²¹ See David N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol.3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 800.

¹²² Moore and Sherwood, "Biblical Studies 'after' Theory," 90.

¹²³ Stephen D. Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 14.

¹²⁴ Moore and Sherwood, "Biblical Studies 'after' Theory," 111.

namely: deconstruction and rhetorical criticism, and I also will look at two modern criticisms: feminist criticism and postcolonialism. I chose these two approaches because as rhetoric and deconstruction, they are the critical approaches that read the text against the grain.

2.2 Theoretical position

As I have previously indicated, first, I wish to use deconstruction in conjunction with rhetorical criticism as a broad theoretical framework because the strategies derived from a combination of these two approaches allow me to answer the questions that I pose and enable a comprehensive understanding of the problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7. Second, I will embed deconstruction and rhetorical criticism and other approaches (feminist criticism and postcolonialism) within a theoretical framework that has been formed by Critical theory, Poststructuralist and postmodernism in order to provide with a fluid apparatus that may allow me to respond to the question I am dealing with here.

2.2.1 Critical theory

It is noteworthy to indicate that the objective for this section is not to provide with a detailed theoretical discussion of Critical theory, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism, but only to set the scene for the deconstructive approach I wish to follow. Dealing with Critical theory, Huw Jones has indicated the difficulty in defining critical theory as mentioned in his introductory paragraphs. He argues that the vagaries of intellectual fashion and also the displacement and the marginalization of some theoretical strands that were central to critical theory is what make the definition difficult.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, the key theoretical lineage of Critical theory lies in the nineteenth century, and its modern incarnation can be dated to the work of the so-called Frankfurt School in 1930s.¹²⁶ As Aileen Marsha asserts, it is Johannes Baptist Metz who first, introduced the term “critical theory” as it is used today in 1966.¹²⁷ But in theology, Max Horkheimer may be considered as the Founder of Critical Theology since he was interested in re-interpreting religious traditions, and offered one of the most subtle dialectical analyses of the tension between opposition and accommodation, resistance and compromise within the Christian religion.¹²⁸ Yet, for the members of Frankfurt school, “critical theory” is a critique

¹²⁵ Huw Jones, “Theory, History, Context,” in *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed. (eds. Simon Malpas and Paul Wake; London/New York: Routledge and Francis Group, 2013): 3-11.

¹²⁶ Jones, “Theory, History, Context,” 3.

¹²⁷ See Marsha Aileen Hewitt, “Critical Theory,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Political Theology* (eds. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh; Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 455-470.

¹²⁸ Cf. Roland Boer, *Critique of Theology: On Marxism and Theology III* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 12.

of Marxism developed in contrast to the crude materialist that was became orthodox in the Soviet Union.¹²⁹ What characterizes the work of the Frankfurt School is its virulent critique of capitalism. As Jones has indicated, capitalism is subjected to critique not only in terms of the manifest injustices inherent in such an economic system but rather in relation to the degraded intellectual culture and the art which are associated with it.¹³⁰

From this view, Johannes Metz has considered “Political theology” as kind of “critical theory”. I think it is legitimate to consider Political theology here since Political theology and Critical theory pursue the same objective which is to bring about change and to make the world a better place to live. For Metz, “Political theology” is the effort to formulate the eschatological message of Christianity in the condition of the present day of society.”¹³¹ In this sense, Political theology can be seen as a force of social change. It involves a critical correction of the prevailing tendency to separate private faith from the public realm of social action.¹³² As Aileen Marsha argues, “for both critical theory and political theology, the task of the theorist/theologian is to organize his/her thought in terms of what is needed to bring into being the right kind of society or make the world a better place to live.”¹³³ However, though both critical theory and political theology have the same goal to make the society and the world a better place to live, Marsha argues, critical theory however, rejects some “religious consolations,” because these “religious consolations” support the status quo. It is for instance, the religious consolations that “in the end sufferings will be overcome and justice established not in the history, but in a future beyond history.”¹³⁴

But this is not the view of Horkheimer, one of the trenchant criticisms of religion. For Horkheimer, Christianity or Judaism honest with itself stands in opposition to the ways of the world. Religion is not to be conformed to this world; it resists such conformity in the name of another, higher and more just order. Conversely, when either expression of faith makes some deal with the world or manifests itself in a way that justifies the status quo, then it is a lie for it has betrayed its initial and authentic impulse (mission). Religion is at the same time a

¹²⁹ Jon Simons, *Contemporary Critical Theorists: from Lacan to Said* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2004), 2.

¹³⁰ Jones, “Theory, History, Context,” 3.

¹³¹ Johannes Baptist Metz, *Theology of the World*, trans. William Glen-Diesel (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 35.

¹³² Metz, *Theology of the World*, 35.

¹³³ Hewitt, “Critical Theory,” 460.

¹³⁴ See Hewitt, “Critical Theory,” 461.

protest against injustice, against things as they are, for they are not as they should be.¹³⁵ Indeed, Horkheimer's theory of religion may be considered "deconstructive" as it strives to overturn all the injustices and inequalities in social relationship in order to make this world a better place to live.

To sum up, critical theory analyzes the societal contradictions and acts itself as a force to stimulate the change. It rejects all philosophy whose interest resides in the realm of the ideas rather than in the concrete reality in which interest is directed toward concrete human happiness.¹³⁶ Therefore, critical theory includes the trends of Marxism, Semiotics and discourse analysis, Structuralism and Poststructuralism, Critical ideology, Deconstruction, Feminism, Queer theory, Psychoanalysis, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism. Critical theory relates to deconstruction in that deconstruction moves away from the metaphysical notion of a fixed meaning supposed to be present in the text. Likewise, critical theory wants to focus on how practices shape our ways of thinking and doing and move away from injustice practices and societal contradictions. Therefore, although critical theory and deconstruction overlap Critical theory can be seen as the umbrella that covers deconstruction. In the following section, I will be looking at another paradigm which is Poststructuralism.

2.2.2 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is defined as a cultural movement characterized by a strong rejection of structuralism and its methods, as well as the ideological assumptions that lie behind them.¹³⁷ Structuralists sought to explain literature by reference to a logical code lying beneath the text.¹³⁸ The Structuralists also take linguistics as a model and attempt to develop grammar that would account for the form and meaning of literary work.¹³⁹ In this sense, instead of approaching the text with a view to unlocking and discovering the mind of the author, the structuralist interpreters strive for a discovering of the overall system which gives meaning to the text.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Boer, *Criticism of Theology*, 15-17.

¹³⁶ Herbert Marcuse, *Negotiations: Essays in Critical Theory*. Trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1968), 142.

¹³⁷ Stuart Sim (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 3rd. (London: Routledge, 2011), 4.

¹³⁸ See Gerald West, "Interesting and Interested Readings: Deconstruction, the Bible, and the South Africa Context." *Scriptura* 42 (1992): 35-49.

¹³⁹ For this quotation, see Gerald West, "Interesting and Interested Readings: Deconstruction, the Bible, and the South African Context." *Scriptura* 42, (1992): 35-49.

¹⁴⁰ P.T. Hartin, "Angst in the Household: A Deconstructive Reading of the Parable of the Supervising Servant (LK 12: 41-48)." *Neotestamentica* 22, no. 2 (1988): 373-390.

In fact, Structuralism takes its origin from the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure. For Saussure, language is a System of differences. Linguistic meaning accordingly is then also the product of linguistic differences. In this sense, elements of language have no meaning, no essence in and of themselves.¹⁴¹ As Sim Stuart writes, Saussure's major concern was that the language is made of signs, and signs consisted of two parts: a signifier (word), and a signified (concept) which combined in an act of mental understanding to form the sign.¹⁴² To sum up, we may say that with structuralism there is the possibility to determine a fixed structure in the text, although difference produces meaning it cannot not be seen to reside in the text, a sign cannot be equated with signified but there is a fixed relationship that can be determined. As such, the meaning is then produced by difference, by interaction of opposites.

The poststructuralists will illustrate how meaning is the product of a play of differences, how meaning is scattered across the network of language, and how the meaning is always deferred.¹⁴³ An example of this is Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, which is centered against the structuralist ethos. For Derrida, signs were not the predictable entities, and there was never any perfect conjunction of signifier and signified to guarantee unproblematic communication.¹⁴⁴ Linguistic meaning was unstable phenomenon at all times and all places, and meaning is therefore a fleeting phenomenon that vapors almost as soon as it occurs in spoken or written language.¹⁴⁵ Derrida contends that all Western philosophy is based on the premise that the full meaning of a word is present in the speaker's mind such as it can be transmitted without any significant slippage to the listener. This belief is what he calls "metaphysics of presence," and this is an illusion.¹⁴⁶ Derrida remarks that the most influential philosophical discourses from Plato to Heidegger tend to privilege the spoken word (*parole*) and to regard writing (*écriture*) with suspicion or even to suppress it.¹⁴⁷ One reason why "spoken word" is privileged is that it was seen as close to the person who speaks, close to the truth. So, there is an immediacy in oral communication that is not present in the writing, writing is always removed away from the "real situation." Hence, the suspicion.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Stephen D. Moore, *Poststructuralism the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 90.

¹⁴² Sim, *The Routledge Companion to Poststructuralism*, 4.

¹⁴³ Cf. Adam Sharman, "Jacques Derrida (1930 -)," in *Contemporary Critical Theorists: From Lacan to Said* (ed. Jon Simons; Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2004): 85-101.

¹⁴⁴ Sim, *The Routledge Companion*, 5.

¹⁴⁵ Sim, *The Routledge Companion*, 5.

¹⁴⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978): 278-293.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Peter V Zima, *Deconstruction and Critical Theory* (London: Continuum, 2002), .31.

In a similar sense, another poststructuralist to oppose the structuralist ethos was Michel Foucault. His work was intimately bound with the social construction of meaning and identity. He developed a notion of discourse that examines the ways in which discourses of truth and power develop through different historical periods and the social and institutional consequences of this.¹⁴⁸ In Foucault's view, there is a particular interest in marginalized groups whose "otherness" differences keeps them excluded from political power. In fact, as Stuart argues, what interests Foucault foremost is social differences, the inequalities that characterize human interactions. Foucault describes how these norms were implemented in seventeenth and eighteenth century Western Europe.¹⁴⁹ As Stephen Moore has pointed out, in the second period of his career, Foucault shifts his attention to the ways in which discourse of knowledge works through the bodies. He became preoccupied with putting into language something irreducible to language, the power that brings poststructuralism into a peculiar relationship with theology.¹⁵⁰ According to Foucault, "power" is not an absolute entity that people either have or do not have, instead it is, a property of the interactions between individuals, groups, and institutions.¹⁵¹

In view of the above, it can be argued that if critical theory wanted to focus on how practices shape our ways of thinking and doing by moving away from injustice practices and societal contradictions on one hand, poststructuralism wants to move away from the structuralist ideology as elaborated by Ferdinand de Saussure in his notion of language on the other hand. The poststructuralism will illustrate how the language is unstable and that the meaning in fact, is always deferred. So, deconstruction becomes one of the expressions of the poststructuralism in so far as it was directed against the structuralism system.¹⁵²

2.2.3 Postmodernism

In a most general sense, postmodernism represents a critique of modernity, its aims and assumptions, and modernity refers to the post- Enlightenment era in which society is assumed

¹⁴⁸ Jones, "Theory, History, Context," 8.

¹⁴⁹ Sim, *The Routledge Companion*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament*, 90.

¹⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), 85.

¹⁵² Sim, *The Routledge Companion*, 5.

to be based on rationality progress towards humanist goals and development of universalizing and totalizing theory.¹⁵³

Postmodernism then rejects these universal theories which life in the West has been structured over the past couple of the centuries.¹⁵⁴ However, a classic and most accepted definition of postmodernism comes from Jean-Francois Lyotard in his book titled “Postmodern Condition : A Report of Knowledge” as “incredulity towards metanarratives.”¹⁵⁵ In that book, which is considered the rhetorical expression of postmodernism, Lyotard urges that we must reject “the grand narratives”, that is, “universal theories” of Western cultures because they have now lost all their credibility.¹⁵⁶ Lyotard’s concern is to demolish the authority wielded by “grand narratives, which for him are repressive of individual credibility.¹⁵⁷ In brief, what postmodernism does is to argue against the modernist ethos. In this sense, the modernist view therefore stands in opposition to the postmodernist epistemology.¹⁵⁸

There have been some critiques leveled against the postmodernist ethos. A striking example is that of religious fundamentalism (Islamic fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism), which for the former, has struggled against Western imperialism, and the latter, has been very active as witness of the infiltration of the Republican party in America by the Christian right.¹⁵⁹ In a similar sense, Neil Thompson has leveled a critique against Lyotard’s theory. He argues that while Lyotard’s theory does have its strengths, his complete rejection of metanarratives can be seen to be both inaccurate and excessive. It is excessive he says, in so far as a grand theory of metanarratives does not necessarily suppress difference, and it is inaccurate in so far as it fails to distinguish between different type of metanarrative and the diversity of thought and culture they represent.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Neil Thompson, *Promoting Equality: Working with Diversity and Difference*, 3rd. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 68.

¹⁵⁴ Sim, *The Routledge Companion*, vii.

¹⁵⁵ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

¹⁵⁶ These “grand narratives” or “universal theories” are theories that claim to be able to explain everything, and to resist any attempt to change their form (see Sim Stuart, *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 3rd. (London: Routledge, 2011), 7.

¹⁵⁷ Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 8.

¹⁵⁸ See Denis Hlynka, “Postmodernism: A Twenty-First Century Primer to Problem-Based Learning,” in *The Role of Criticism in Understanding Problem-Solving: Honoring the Work of John C. Belland* (ed. Brian R. Belland; Washington: Spring, 2002): 35-42.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Sim Stuart, *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, x, xi.

¹⁶⁰ Thompson, *Promoting Equality*, 62.

In conclusion, we may note that postmodernism can be understood as a criticism of modernist view. Postmodernism has transformed the cultural image of modernity by its commitment to cultural difference and the deconstruction of reason, the dissolution of moral agency, and the delegitimations of scientific and political authority.¹⁶¹ However, it is right to say that its complete rejection of “universal theories” and his replacement by “little narratives” seems not, as Sim argues, to have the answers to all society’s problems.¹⁶²

Therefore, how does the critical theory, poststructuralism and postmodernism relate to my problem? First, the notions of critical theory, poststructuralism and postmodernism are relevant in this study, because all these categories form with deconstruction a fluid apparatus and important tools that will help in the analysis of Acts 6:1-7. Second, they are related in that all three pursue the same goal, that is, are critiques that are susceptible to provoke change. In the following, I will now look at deconstruction, which is the overall umbrella of my theoretical framework.

2.2.4 Deconstruction

In the preceding sections I have treated Critical Theory, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism. Before I move to Deconstruction it is crucial that we draw their tendencies in order to approach deconstruction. For that, I have pointed out that Critical theory analyzes social contradictions, and by doing that, it may be considered as a force to stimulate change. I said that Poststructuralism was characterized by a strong rejection of structuralism with its conviction that there is possibility to determine a fixed structure within the text. While Postmodernism represents a critique of modernity, a rejection of grand narratives, that is, the universal theories of western culture.

However, it is noteworthy in this introduction, that the work of Marx Horkheimer among others was very significant in the development of critical theory as we have discussed. If the 1950s witnessed the development of structuralism as a theoretical methodology for analysis, taking its origin from the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure in his division of sign into signifier and signified and the distinction between langue and parole, the movement of

¹⁶¹ Hlynka, “Postmodernism: A Twenty-First Century Primer to Problem-Based Learning,” 35.

¹⁶² According to Lyotard, “little theories” are the tactical basis put together by small groups of individuals to achieve some particular objectives. See Sim Stuart, *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 12.

colonization was a huge influence on the direction of critical theory during 1960s.¹⁶³ Derrida demonstrated that philosophical discourse was structured and the relation between signifier and signified was not arbitrary.¹⁶⁴ His pioneering work: *Of Grammatology* (1967) addresses the “metaphysics of presence” in Western philosophical tradition. Derrida then had criticized the Western tradition for its logocentrism, and the critical approach that he used is called “deconstruction.”

In this section, I will identify, and explain the interpretative strategies that I will use in my reading of Acts 6:17. For that, I will respectively define the term deconstruction, examine Derrida’s, De Man’s and Foucault’s strategies of deconstruction, look at the critiques leveled against deconstruction, give some examples of how authors have used deconstruction as a strategy for reading, and I will be concluding the section.

2.2.4.1 Defining deconstruction

In fact, to understand the term deconstruction, we need to ask the question “what is deconstruction?” There have been many answers. Deconstruction is: a method, a theory of reading or a strategy of critical analysis associated with the French philosopher Jacques Derrida,¹⁶⁵ a critical mode of discourse,¹⁶⁶ a way of doing philosophy,¹⁶⁷ the experience of impossible,¹⁶⁸ a method applied to the text for locating excluded points in the text.¹⁶⁹ From this view, it is not hard to see that the term “deconstruction” is not easy to define in adequate conceptual terms.¹⁷⁰ The problem is not about the impossibility of definition, but rather the difficult character of Derrida’s writings that make defining deconstruction complicated. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to define deconstruction. As Andrew Benjamin argues, Derrida makes repeat use of the term “contestation.” He locates part of the particularity of deconstruction as “contesting the authority of linguistic, and of language, and of logocentrism. Contestation involves a refusal to accept, and what is not being accepted is then being contested.”¹⁷¹ The implication is that the conventional distance between the object to be

¹⁶³ See Jones, “Theory, History, context,” 3-8.

¹⁶⁴ Jones, “Theory, History, Context,” 8.

¹⁶⁵ See Nicholas Royle (ed.), *Deconstructions: A User’s Guide* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 3.

¹⁶⁶ Edward, L. Greenstein, “Deconstruction and Biblical Narrative,” *Prooftexts* 9 (1989): 43-71.

¹⁶⁷ Jeff Collins and Bill Mailing, *Introducing Derrida* (London: Icon Books, 2005), 4.

¹⁶⁸ John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 31.

¹⁶⁹ George Aichele et al, *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 120.

¹⁷⁰ Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 31.

¹⁷¹ For this quotation see, Andrew Benjamin, “Deconstruction,” in *Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed. (eds. Simon Malpas and Paul Wake; London/New York: Routledge, 2013): 85-95.

contested and the position of contestation is equally refused. Hence, the language and terms that forms part of the tradition being contested forms part of the definition of deconstruction.¹⁷²

However, as Leonard Lawler reminds us when Derrida introduced the term “deconstruction” in 1971, he did not define it in a formal way. Yet as his career extended, he developed three definitions of deconstruction. The first appears in the interview “Positions” (1971), the second in “Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of authority” (1992), and the third in “Et Cetera” (2000) where Derrida presents the most general definition of deconstruction. In this last work, Derrida declares,

Each time I say “deconstruction and X” (regardless of the concept or theme), this is at the prelude to a very singular division that turns this X into, or rather makes appears in this X, an impossibility that becomes its proper and sole possibility, with the result that between the X as possible and the “same” X as impossible, there is nothing but a relation of homonymy, a relation for which we have to provide an account.¹⁷³

What we can grasp from Derrida’s definition is that the possibility to say something about “X” is relative, meaning that the relation between the “impossibility” and the “possibility” is never a relation of fixity, but a relation of fluidity. We may well define a “black” in relation to “white.” Deconstruction is the condition of impossibility. That is, the conditions under which something is made possible in deconstruction are also the conditions under which it is impossible. Love is love when we love unlovable; faith is faith when it is impossible to believe.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it is crucial to point out that deconstruction is not a method. Derrida himself was not keen on referring to his approach as method. In a “Letter to a Japanese Friend” he pointed out that deconstruction is not a method, an analysis, an act or an operation. Instead, deconstruction takes places (*‘a lieu’*), and it does so wherever there is something (*où il y a quelque chose*).¹⁷⁵ Again this background, it is reasonable to say that deconstruction is not a method, it is rather a strategy and a mode of inquiry.

¹⁷² Benjamin, “Deconstruction,” 94.

¹⁷³ Leonard Lawler, “Deconstruction,” in *A Blackwell Companion to Derrida* (eds. Zeynep Direk and Leonard Lawler, Malden: John Wiley&Sons, 2014): 122-131.

¹⁷⁴ See John D Caputo, “Derrida and the Trace of Religion,” in *A Blackwell Companion to Derrida* (eds. Zeynep Direk and Leonard Lawler; Malden: John Wiley&Sons, 2014): 464-479.

¹⁷⁵ Jacques Derrida, “Letter to a Japanese Friend,” in *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion: A Selection of Critical Readings* (ed. Carl Olson; Belmont: Wadsworth, 2003): 581-591; see also David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *Derrida and Difference* (Evanston, IL: North Western University, 1988), 1-5.

To sum up this section, we may say that deconstruction is not a method. Although Anna Runesson states that the term has been developed into a method within the field of comparative literature,¹⁷⁶ the term strategy is preferable and Derrida himself avoids the term method.¹⁷⁷ The reason is that the term method presupposes an already fixed set of rules or procedure to follow in order to accomplish a certain task. The complicatedness of defining deconstruction is from the tension between the “impossible” and the “possible.” Deconstruction may be defined as a strategy or a mode of inquiry aiming the dismantling of hierarchical oppositions within a text or a system.

2.2.4.2 The deconstructive approach

In this section, I want to limit my examination to Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and Michel Foucault for two relative reasons. First, because these scholars are considered as the leading proponents of Poststructuralism in general and exponents of deconstructivism in particular. Second, because, I would like to see how the thoughts of these scholars can be applied to Biblical Studies in general, and the book of Acts in particular. However, although deconstruction is not a method as already stated above, we can nevertheless observe certain aspects of Derrida’s strategy of deconstruction.

2.2.4.2.1 Derrida’s strategies of deconstruction

In fact, as Royle has correctly observed, whether many have written on deconstruction, but Derrida remains the key figure for an understanding of what deconstruction is all about.¹⁷⁸ In fact, Derrida’s deconstruction was centered against the system building by structuralism, which holds that meaning is present in the language. Derrida was concerned to demonstrate the instability in the Saussure system of language. For Derrida, there is neither transcendental signifier nor transcendental signified to stabilize the system of meaning.¹⁷⁹ Objecting to the primacy Saussure accords to speech, Derrida sees in this hierarchy that Saussure is bound to metaphysics of presence with which speech has traditionally been associated.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, Derrida’s point is that the meaning is the product of a play of differences, and differences

¹⁷⁶ Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making*, 40.

¹⁷⁷ Derrida says that there is something like rule, a privileged procedure in a deconstruction which is however, neither a method nor an appropriate technique, but an event or a style (Jacques Derrida, “Et Cetera...” in *Deconstructions: A User’s Guide* (ed. Nicholas Royle; London: Palgrave, 2000): 283-305.

¹⁷⁸ Royle, *Deconstructions*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 158.

¹⁸⁰ Katherine N. Hayles, “Speech, Writing, Code: Three Worldviews,” in *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies* (ed. Robert D. Parker; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 159-179.

between the words are not to be found in any one place, but are rather scattered across the network of language.¹⁸¹ Derrida contends that all Western philosophy is based on the premise that the full meaning of a word is present in the speaker's mind, such as it can be transmitted without slippage to the listener. That belief is what he calls "metaphysics of presence" or "logocentrism".¹⁸² According to Derrida, that "metaphysics of presence" is utterly pervasive, oppressive, profoundly mistaken assumption in Western philosophy infecting all areas of life and thought.¹⁸³ Adam Sharman reinforces this argument pointing out that, from Plato through Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Saussure, the most influential philosophical discourse tend to privilege the spoken word (*parole*), which is assigned the value of spontaneity, immediacy, authenticity, originality, self-presence, and to consider writing (*écriture*), as secondary, derivative, impersonal, the product of technique, and machination.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Derrida had contested this Western metaphysical opposition, inverts these hierarchical relations of word (*parole*) and writing (*écriture*), and claims that writing far from being a supplement of spoken word in Rousseau's sense, forms the precondition of every oral statement.¹⁸⁵

In his article "Four Protocols: Derrida, His Deconstruction," John Leavey provides Derrida's strategy of deconstruction. Leavey states that in an interview with Jean Louis Hondebine and Guy Scarlet in 1971, Derrida speaks directly and in detail of his "general strategy of deconstruction" which consisted of "a two-step process." The first phase is called "reversal" and the second is called "displacement" or inscription.¹⁸⁶ In the "reversal" the hierarchy of the text and its intertexts is overthrown, turned upside down, overturned, reversed. In other words, the term that was suppressed in the speech/writing opposition becomes powerful. But as Patrick Chatelion says, after such reversal one still finds oneself in the deconstructed terrain within the deconstructed system. This is why a second move is required, namely determining the distance between the old hierarchy and the new "concept" which comes with the reversal. The new concept forms in relation with the old hierarchy an incompatible meaning.¹⁸⁷ This is an essential step, Derrida insists, but only a step. Deconstruction must

¹⁸¹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 158.

¹⁸² In a more general sense, "logocentrism" is the assumption taken for granted that 'spoken language' is a more adequate of ideas already in the mind, and that 'writing language' inhabits in a realm of derivative, supplementary signs removed from the living presence of the logos. (See Ted Honderch, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 511.

¹⁸³ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*. Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 41.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Adam Sharman "Jacques Derrida (1930-)," 92.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Peter V Zima, *Deconstruction and Critical Theory*. 31.

¹⁸⁶ John P. Leavey, "Four Protocols: Derrida, His Deconstruction." *Semeia* 23 (1982): 42-57.

¹⁸⁷ Patrick Chatelion Counet, John, *A Postmodern Gospel: Introduction to Deconstruction Exegesis to the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 129.

continue through a double gesture, a double science, a double writing put into practice, a reversal of the classical opposition and general displacement of the system. It is on that condition alone that deconstruction will provide the means of intervening in the field of oppositions it criticizes and which is also a field of non-discursive forces.¹⁸⁸ In the second moment “displacement” or “inscription,” Derrida uses a variety of means to achieve displacement. For example, undecideability, paleonymy (paleonymics) or erasure.¹⁸⁹ In his deconstruction of Plato in “The Pharmakon of Plato,” Derrida summarizes the term undecideability from his reading of Western tradition. He states that “The Pharmakon is neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing.”¹⁹⁰ In a similar sense, Miller quoted by Peter Zima, explains that the concept of undecideability is based on the idea that literary texts contain irreconcilable elements, so that the reader cannot decide which meaning is the correct one.¹⁹¹ Another term Derrida uses to achieve displacement is Paleonymy. John Leavey has correctly summarized the process of paleonymy. He argues that:

The operation can be stated simply as retaining the old concept’s old name for the emerging new concept in order to communicate. Paleonymy (paleonymics) presupposes that the old name is read under erasure (*sous rature*). This means that the old conceptual or metaphysical opposition or situation, which gives the old name meaning no longer, operates. The opposition is overturned in the erasure that retains the old name and its erasure (either physically marked or crossed out,) such as being or thing, or marked out in the style of “quotation marks” in order to communicate.¹⁹²

The function of displacement is to work alongside reversal so that the old hierarchy do not become the new dominant terms. The old hierarchy and the new must be kept in tension so that each is subverted by a sense of the alternative.¹⁹³

Deconstruction seeks to subvert these hierarchies in order to recover the effects of the suppressed elements.¹⁹⁴ As Critchley argues, what takes place in deconstruction, what distinguishes deconstruction as a textual practice, is “double reading.” The first is the dominant interpretation of the text, its “*vouloir dire*” its intended meaning in the guise of a

¹⁸⁸ See Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1982), 86.

¹⁸⁹ For a more details on Derrida’s “Two-Step Process”, see Jacques Derrida, *Positions*. Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981): 41-42.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. John Leavey, “Four Protocols,” 52.

¹⁹¹ See Zima, *Deconstruction and Critical Theory*, 121-122.

¹⁹² John P. “Four Protocols,” 52.

¹⁹³ Yvonne Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea’s Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective*. *JSOT* 212 (Sheffields: Sheffield University Press, 1999), 174.

¹⁹⁴ See T.M.S. Long, “Deconstruction and Biblical Studies in South Africa.” *Scriptura* 42 (1992): 50-64.

commentary, and the second is the destabilization of the stability of the dominant interpretation.¹⁹⁵

In brief, we may note that deconstruction does not consist of moving from one concept to another but of reversing and displacing a conceptual order as well as a non-conceptual order with which it is articulated.¹⁹⁶ However, dismantling, overthrowing, or reversing Derrida emphasizes, does not mean a simple overturning of the violent hierarchies or a simple destroying of metaphysical structures of oppositions which are at work in the text, but rather to reinscribe them in another way, showing that by acknowledging their dependence one create something new.¹⁹⁷

As Yvonne Sherwood has also remarked, one of his strategies, Derrida reads the texts of Plato and Rousseau by seizing on words that can be oppositionally interpreted, and pursues the interpretation in both directions: One interpretation is conservative; it is that which has been traditionally upheld by the academy-while the other is subversive, unexpected, undermining, and deconstructive.¹⁹⁸ Likewise in the essay “The Tower of Babel,” one of the Derrida’s texts on religion, he discusses the undecideable “Babel” which could signify at the same time “confusion” and a “proper name.” “Babel” is a proper name and a “common name” in that it is a signifier that refers to a specific place or meaning (the city of God), and signified that evokes multiple meanings and creates a state of confusion.¹⁹⁹ As a proper name, “Babel” raises confusion of language and resists translation. With Babel, Derrida says, we have a sense of the impossibility of deciding whether this name belongs properly and simply to one tongue, in so far as at once translates and does not translate it, belong without belonging to a language.²⁰⁰ Seen from a deconstructive point of view, “Babel” is an undecideable because it produces an effect of indefinite fluctuation between two possibilities.

Therefore, Derrida remains the key figure for what deconstruction is all about. His deconstruction which was centered against the structuralism in Western philosophical discourse consists of two steps: reversal and displacement.

¹⁹⁵ For this quotation see, Simon Critchley and Timothy Mooney, “Deconstruction and Derrida” in *Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy* (ed. Richard Kearney; London: Routledge, 1994): 441-473.

¹⁹⁶ Culler, *On Deconstruction*, 141.

¹⁹⁷ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, lxxv.

¹⁹⁸ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 153.

¹⁹⁹ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 201.

²⁰⁰ Jacques Derrida, “The Tower of Babel,” in *Global Literary Theory* (ed. Richard J. Lane; London: Routledge, 2013): 769-785.

2.2.4.2.2 De Man's strategies of deconstruction

Paul de Man was a leading North American exponent of deconstruction. However, it is in his essay entitled "Derrida and de Man: Two Rhetorics of Deconstruction" that J. Hillis Miller contrasts Derrida's strategies of deconstruction with Paul de Man. In a brief summary, Miller asserts that de Man's *Allegory of Reading* (*Profession de foi*) is an example of his rhetorical strategy. He argues that de Man's essay proceeds in four logically progressive steps: 1) first a summary of what previous critics have said about a given text; 2) then a close reading of the text that show how the previous critics were often absurdly wrong; 3) then a conclusion about what the text may say drawn from his reading, and 4) finally a challenging generalization.²⁰¹

As for Derrida, De Man's deconstruction aims to overcome the oppositions of literary and philosophy with the rhetorical process such allegory and irony for theory.²⁰² In his reading of Proust, de Man performs a deconstructionist double reading: the figural (metaphoric) reading, which assumes that the question be rhetorical, is naïve and the literal (conventional) reading, which leads to greater complication of theme and statement. It is such because it turns out the entire scheme set up by the first reading, can be undermined or deconstructed in terms of the second, in which the final line is read literally as meaning.²⁰³

In fact, what is remarkable here, and what we can note is that deconstruction, for both (Derrida and De Man), proceeds by double readings. The difference lies in that for de Man, reading means the interpretation of figurative language, that is, texts are figurative and will inevitably be misread as consequence. While for Derrida, reading is the reversal and displacement of oppositions within the text. De Man's strategies of deconstruction are more rhetorical where the terms literal or better conventional and figural or metaphoric are the hierarchical oppositions that form the basis of the whole system of his deconstruction.

2.2.4.2.3 Michel Foucault's strategies of deconstruction

Michel Foucault was another leading exponent of Poststructuralism who turned against the system building of Structuralism. As Stephen Moore has noted "what distinguishes Foucault from Saussure and Derrida, is that the differences and relations that preoccupy him are first

²⁰¹ J. Hillis Miller, "Derrida and de Man: Two Rhetorics of Deconstruction," in *A Blackwell Companion to Derrida* (eds. Zeynep Direk and Leonard Lawler; Malden: John Wiley&Sons, 2014): 345-361.

²⁰² Cf. Peter V. Zima, *Deconstruction*, 11.

²⁰³ Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 12.

and foremost social differences and relations, inequalities and “disequilibriums” that characterize human interaction.”²⁰⁴ Sim Stuart, in a similar view has observed that in Foucault’s case, there is a particular interest in marginalized groups, whose difference keeps them excluded from political power, groups such as mentality ill, prisoners, and homosexuals.²⁰⁵ Foucault demonstrated how sexual difference has been demonized in modern society; he described how the great institutions of power were developed and functioned as principle of right during the seventieth or eightieth century. For Foucault, these institutions are expressions of political power, and represented themselves as agencies of relations regulations.²⁰⁶ Foucault finally became preoccupied with power, he described the manner in which power was and is exercised in the body, which according to him, is not an external force we deploy, but rather individuals are themselves effects of power.²⁰⁷ Therefore, for Foucault reading is the interpretation of inequalities within social relations that characterize human interaction.

In concluding this section, we may say that these three thinkers have been very influential in the cultural, philosophical and literary studies in the later twentieth century. In fact, what is common to all three is the way their criticism is turned against the system building of the Structuralist ethos. However, they differ, however, in their attitudes and strategies in reading the text. For Derrida, reading is reversal and displacement of hierarchical oppositions. For de Man, it is conventional and metaphorical hierarchical oppositions, while for Foucault reading is the equalities and inequalities oppositions in the social relations. The strategies provided by these deconstructionists will enable a more adequate explanation of ethnical discriminatory problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7.

2.2.4.3 Deconstructionism criticized

In this section, I will be focusing on one point of critique namely the disappearance of philosophy and its so-called apathy towards socio political problems. Concerning the critique of deconstruction, we may note that there have been abundant criticisms of Derrida’s deconstruction. In his article titled “The Disputed Ground: Deconstruction and Literary Studies,” J. Hillis Miller discusses the way in which deconstruction had been falsely

²⁰⁴ Cf. Stephen D. Moore, *Poststructuralism and Hew Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 90.

²⁰⁵ Sim, *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 5-6.

²⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol.1: An Introduction* (New York: Random House, 1978): 86-87.

²⁰⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 88.

identified. He argues that for some, deconstruction had to be falsely identified as nihilistic, as concerning only with an enclosed realm of language cut off from the real world, as destroying ethical responsibility by undoing faith in personal identity and agency, as ahistorical, quietist, as fundamentally elitist and conservative.²⁰⁸

The most virulent is Pierre Bourdieu, who, although acknowledging that Derrida brings to light some of the hidden presuppositions of Kant's approach to taste, accuses Derrida of not leaving the realm of idealist philosophy and having failed to go beyond the intellectual field and philosophical idealism as developed by Kant.²⁰⁹ In a similar direction, Peter Zima criticizes Derrida to be unable to reflect on the function that Philosophy fulfills in the context of intellectual field and institutions legitimated by the state.²¹⁰ The Marxist critique of Derrida is that Derrida pays insufficient attention to the condition of production of knowledge. Marxists have criticized deconstruction for ignoring the historical dimension of texts while pursuing a new-New-Critical formalism that autonomises literature and deifies rhetoric.²¹¹ In addition, the Marxist Terry Eagleton accuses Derrida and the American deconstructionists of glossing over political issues and rejecting the social issues.²¹² The last critique leveled against Derrida's deconstruction that we consider here is from Frankfurt School. Jürgen Habermas, a representative of Frankfurt School criticizes Derrida for dismissal of social sciences.²¹³

Globally, Derrida has been accused for having neglected the role that Philosophy fulfills in the intellectual field and having paid insufficient attention to the political issues and having neglected the historical and sociological dimension of the text. In contrast to all these accusations, Christopher Norris encourages reading Derrida, and contends him for his engagement to political issues.²¹⁴ In addition to this, Derrida himself had responded to these

²⁰⁸ Hillis J. Miller, "The Disputed Ground: Deconstruction and Literary Studies," in *Deconstruction is/in America: A New Sense of Political* (ed. Anselm Haverkamp; New York: New York University Press, 1995): 79-86.

²⁰⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgments of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice (London: Melbourne and Henley, 1984), 495.

²¹⁰ Zima, *Deconstruction and Critical Theory*, 169.

²¹¹ See Michael Ryan, "The Marxism Deconstruction Debate in Literary Theory" in *Deconstruction: A Critique* (ed. Rajnath; London: Macmillan 1989), 123-137.

²¹² Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From Spectator to the Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984), 99.

²¹³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 58.

²¹⁴ Christopher Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism: Critical Theory and the Ends of Philosophy* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 140.

accusations, arguing that “those who accuse me of reducing philosophy to literature or logic in literature have visibly and carefully avoided reading me.”²¹⁵

Therefore, as Stephen Moore says, deconstruction certainly evokes difficult procedures and complex methodology.²¹⁶ Partly, because of the difficult character of Derrida’s writings, and perhaps because those who accuse Derrida did not engage directly with the texts of Derrida. Nevertheless, rather than criticize deconstruction for these shortcomings, deconstruction can be appropriated as a powerful hermeneutic tool, in so far as it offers strategies, which enable to look anew what has become familiar.²¹⁷

2.2.4.4 Some examples of deconstructive reading

In his article titled “Deconstruction and Biblical Studies in South Africa,” Rev. T.M.S. Long starts by way of a summary of the essentials of Derrida’s thought, following by its application to a discussion of Paul’s letter to Galatians initiated by Prof. Bernard Latagan.²¹⁸ Starting by showing that the hierarchy at work in the traditional reading was Paul/Galatians, and that in the contemporary reading was Gentiles/Christians; Gospel present/gospel absent; Abraham/Abraham father of all believers, Long took the new situation of gentiles becoming Christians to demonstrate that what the Gospel was for them was absent, since after beginning with the Spirit, they are now trying to attain their goal through human effort.²¹⁹ He pointed out the way Paul’s use of Abraham overturns the traditional understanding of Abraham as man of faith, and Abraham as the father of all who believes, whether Jew or not. Using a contextual hermeneutics, Long moves from Galatians to the socio-political situation of South Africa. The essence of argument offered from his deconstructive reading of Galatians is that “South African socio-political crisis throws into a high relief an absence of the Gospel. What was thought to be the Gospel (Apartheid gospel) have been absent of “presence” as some black theologians have pointed out.”²²⁰

²¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Points...Interviews, 1974-1994* (ed. E. Weber; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 218.

²¹⁶ Stephen D. Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, “Biblical Studies ‘after’ Theory: Onwards Towards the Past Part One: After ‘after theory’ and other Apocalyptic Conceits.” *Biblical Interpretation* 18 (2010): 1-27.

²¹⁷ Cf. P.J. Hartin, “Angst in the Household: A Deconstructive Reading of the Supervising Servant (Lk 12: 41-48).” *Neotestamentica* 22, no. 2 (1988): 393-390.

²¹⁸ T.M.S Long, “Deconstruction and Biblical Studies in South Africa.” *Scriptura* 42 (1992): 50-64.

²¹⁹ Long, “Deconstruction and Biblical Studies,” 58.

²²⁰ Cf. Long, “Deconstruction and Biblical Studies,” 60.

I think that Rev. Long has interpreted Derrida correctly because we may see the hierarchical oppositions at work as his strategies of deconstruction. He capsizes the oppositions in the new situation of Gentiles become Christians in which the reversal is seen in the overturning of Paul's use of Abraham. The displacement can be seen in his contextualization of the South African socio-political crisis. I consider that this is an act of paleonymy because the old name "Gospel" is not eradicated or erased but displaced in another term.

Patrick Chatelion also offers a deconstructive reading of John 8 in his article titled "No Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel: A Deconstructive Reading of John 8." In his analysis of the text, Chatelion disagrees with Jonathan Culpepper, who, in his deconstruction of the anti-Jewishness of John's Christology, sets in opposition the anti-Jewish elements against the Jewish elements.²²¹ For Counet, the deconstruction of the anti-Jewish theology of John is not a matter of setting in opposition the anti-Jewish elements against the Jewish elements; it is rather by showing that its supposed anti-Jewish elements are in fact Jewish elements.²²² In fact, Culpepper's main argument on John's deconstruction of anti-Judaism is that there is a possible opposition anti-Jewish elements against Jewish elements in the Fourth Gospel. While Counet's main argument on John's deconstruction of anti-Judaism is that there is no possible opposition anti-Jewish elements against Jewish elements in the Fourth Gospel. From a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, it is possible to see in Culpepper's argument a tendency that anti-Jewish elements supersede Jewish elements.

Counet employs the hierarchical oppositions Anti-Jewish elements and Jewish elements as his strategies of deconstruction of this text. However, in his deconstructive reading of John 8 he did not interpret Derrida correctly. My reason to say that is that after doing the first moment "reversal," he does not clearly show how he proceeds with the second step which is "displacement."

Further as he says himself, "after reversing the hierarchical opposition anti-Jewish elements/Jewish elements, one still finds oneself in the deconstructed system. This is why a second move is required, namely determining the distance between the old hierarchy and the new concept which come with the reversal.

²²¹ Patrick Chatelion Counet, "No Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel: A deconstruction of Reading of John 8." In *One Text, A Thousand Methods: Studies in Memory of Sjef van Tilborg* (ed. Patrick Chatelion Counet; Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005): 197-226.

²²² Counet, "No Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel," 216.

The new concept forms in relation with the old hierarchy an incompatible meaning.²²³ In brief, we still have pain to see the distance between the old hierarchy and the new concept after reversing the hierarchical opposition anti-Jewish elements/Jewish elements.

Similarly, Bruce Longenecker in his article “Evil at Odds with Itself (Matt 12: 22-29): Demonizing Rhetoric and Deconstructive Potential in Matthew Narrative,” reflects on the text of Matt. 12: 22-29 in which Pharisees are in disagreement with Jesus on the depiction of evil, after he finished to drive out demons from a demon-possessed man.²²⁴ Longenecker argues that for the Pharisees, Jesus’s exorcism of evil is showing itself to be at odds with itself. While in Jesus’ words, the Pharisaic charge involves at odds with itself.²²⁵ Longenecker concludes that previous interpretations have failed to probe the significance of the Pharisee’s view as depicted in Matt 12:22-24. He concludes that in Matt 12:22-29 the strong central protagonist (Jesus) and his main antagonists (the Pharisees) are shown to hold different view in the character of evil.²²⁶ However, on one hand, I agree with Longenecker that Jesus and the Pharisees hold different views on their depiction of evil. While on the other hand, I do not think that he has interpreted Derrida correctly on his deconstruction of the text. In my view, the deconstruction of this passage should show how the hierarchical oppositions in the text (Pharisees’ view/ Jesus’s view) are overthrown (reversal), and determinate how the new concepts which come with the reversal, form with old hierarchy an incompatible meaning (displacement). As for Chatelion, Longneck also has limited his deconstruction at the first step (reversal), but he did not proceed with the second step of deconstruction process (displacement).

Before I end by Moore’s deconstruction, I want here to look at Yvonne Sherwood’s deconstruction of Hosea 1-3. Indeed, it is precisely in chapter three of her book “The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea’s Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective” that Sherwood proceeds with her deconstructive reading of Hosea 1-3. After a long introduction to deconstruction in which she considers various aspects of the theory and strategies of deconstruction, Sherwood, deconstructively reads the text of Hosea 1-3.

²²³ Counet, John, *A Postmodern Gospel*, 129.

²²⁴ Bruce W. Longenecker, “Evil at Odds with Itself (Matthew 12:22-29): Demonizing Rhetoric and Deconstructive Potential in the Matthew Narrative.” *Biblical Interpretation* 11, no. 3&4 (2003): 503-514.

²²⁵ Longenecker, “Evil at Odds with Itself,” 505.

²²⁶ Longenecker, “Evil at Odds with Itself,” 513.

Her analysis of the text is divided into two major sections. In the first section she considers similarities between Derrida's writings and prophetic style, while in the second section she examines the three specific violent hierarchies: Innocence-Deviance; Yhwh-Baal; Love-Hate and shows how they are deconstructed in the text. In the first two violent hierarchies, she applies 'reversal's strategies, while in the last hierarchies, she uses the strategies of displacement. (She calls it "violent hierarchy" because one of the two terms of binary oppositions dominates the other).

In the first violent hierarchy, Innocence-Deviance, Yvonne shows that the text of Hosea begins with memories of beginnings where Yhwh declares that Israel has forsaken him. Hosea's marriage to a wife of harlotry foregrounds an image in which the memories of beginnings are denied.²²⁷ Read reconstructively, the text jeopardizes its own claim that the woman will respond with response of love because the previous wilderness scenario has led to mistrust her male aggressor/love.

In the second violent hierarchy Yhwh-Baal, Sherwood demonstrates her attempt to establish the violent hierarchy Yhwh-Baal and to convince apostate Israel that Yhwh will expel Baal and emerge as her victorious first love once again. The divine hope (that Israel will return when she sees sense) is deconstructed by a poignantly human hopelessness in which the husband seems to acknowledge the only way he can keep his woman is by threatening her that no-one will rescue her out of his hand (vv. 2,8). The text's argument is that Yhwh is original in that he is Israel's 'first husband' and he can be distinguished from his rival (Baal). Read deconstructively, by ascribing to Yhwh the more sexual role as husband, he recasts Baal as relatively detached, a mere master.²²⁸

In the last violent hierarchy Love-Hate, Sherwood applies the strategies of displacement (paleonymy). She argues that in Hos 1:4-6 Yhwh instructs Hosea to give his children negative names, and promises in Hos 2:1 that 'in the place where it was said to them "You are not my people" it shall be said to them, "Sons of the Living God"'. The name of children, which symbolize the destruction of the relationship between God and his people, will be reversed so that at the end they will symbolize the reparation of relationship and realization of an Edenic existence earth.

²²⁷ Yvonne Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective*. *JSOT Sup*, 212 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 210.

²²⁸ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 224,235.

Yhwh turns the tables on Israel and by deconstructing the violent hierarchy love-hate. As reversal, the old name is not repudiated or eradicated, but retained. This is an act of paleonymy, because, the curse ‘Not my People’ is neither erased, nor allow to dominate. The first act of paleonymy puts positive assumptions under erasure and the implied term ‘My people’ is not triumphantly re-established, but displaced in another term.²²⁹ From this deconstructive reading, I may see that Sherwood, in her analysis of Hos. 1-3 has interpreted Derrida correctly without however making exactly the same subtle linkages. However, I may observe in her strategies of deconstruction the use of the strategies of reversal as well as displacement as illustrated by the use of paleonymy.

The last example is from Stephen D. Moore “Deconstructive Criticism: Derrida at the Samaritan Well and, later, at the Foot of the Cross. (John 4).” This is a second chapter of his book titled “Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross.”²³⁰ In fact, Moore proceeds his deconstruction as follows:

1) Sizing the oppositions. Here he demonstrates the incapacity of the Samaritan woman to distinguish the literal and material (spring water) from the figurative and spiritual (living water) oppositions (John 4:15).

2) Capsizing the oppositions. He states that there, at the Samarian well, the earthly, material, literal level represented by the thirst for spring water, was declared superseded by the heavenly, spiritual reality represented by the living water (reversal).

3) Drowning the oppositions. In this phase, Moore shows that there is an emergence of new concepts (living water, the word of God, the Holy Spirit), which cannot be included in the previous hierarchies (displacement).

The essence of the argument offered from Moore’s deconstructive reading of John 4 is that, at the Samaritan well, the literal earthly water was declared superseded by figurative living water (John 4:13-14), which was later interpreted as the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), which

²²⁹ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 243.

²³⁰ Stephen D. Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

became available through Jesus's death as symbolized both by his living up the pneuma as he expires (John 19:30) and by the flesh flow of water from his side.²³¹

Stephen Moore's strategies of deconstructions are a combination of de Man and Derrida. As do often many deconstructionists, he uses his own strategies. In the reversal, he overturns the violent hierarchies that take the form of literal and figurative. And in the displacement, he overthrows the terms that were reversed in a way that the old structure does not function as the new, and there is the appearance of new concepts. In this text, Moore does not use paleonymy in the displacement, rather plays with the undecidable terms used as literal and figurative. In another article, entitled "The 'Post-' Age Stamp: Does It stick?: Biblical Studies and Postmodernism Debate," Moore plays with presence and absence as two hierarchical oppositions with which he considers as his strategies of deconstruction. He argues that the movement of signification is possible only if each "present" element is related to something other than itself, thereby constituting the present by means of this relation to what is not.²³²

To sum up this section, I may say that a deconstructive reading of a text generally proceeds by two phases: the first is "reversal," in which the terms in the hierarchical oppositions are overthrown, overturned, and the second is "displacement" of the newly reversal hierarchy such as the new hierarchy does not function as the old did. This is certainly at that level that there is, an emergence of new concepts, which cannot be included in the first hierarchy. This last phase can be done by a variety of means, namely: undecideability, paleonymy or (writing a word under erasure).

In this particular point of the chapter, have considered Derrida, De Man and Foucault as the three proponents of deconstruction who, however, differ in their attitudes and strategies in reading the text. We saw equally that deconstruction has been violently criticized, especially for not paying sufficient attention to historical and sociological dimensions of text, and political issues. Finally, I have looked at some examples of a deconstructive approach. I will in the following present my strategies of deconstruction.

²³¹ Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament*, 58.

²³² Stephen D. Moore, "The 'Post-' Age Stamp: Does It Stick?: Biblical Studies and the Post Modernism Debate." *JAAR* vol.57, no.3 (1989): 543-559.

2.2.4.5 My own strategies of deconstruction

As I have pointed out during the introduction of this study, I will not use a specific recipe in the analysis of Acts 6:1-7. But, I want to distill a number of strategies derived from the deconstructionists that I looked at here in this chapter to solve my problem. For that reason, my deconstructive analysis strategies have four steps: 1) Identification of possible oppositions; 2) Reversal; 3) Displacement and 4) Contribution.

1) Identification of possible oppositions: Here we will indicate which the oppositions in the text are. Since this identification is not easy because binary oppositions are not easily identifiable;

2) Reversal: In the reversal I will firstly, capsize the oppositions that I have identified in the text which means that I will overturn the terms that are oppositionally interpreted. Secondly, drowning the oppositions, here there is emergence of new concepts. That means that I will identify the “new concepts” which cannot be included in the previous hierarchies, but come with the reversal. In other words, the terms that were absent in the old hierarchy becomes present in the new hierarchy.

3) Displacement: In the displacement, we will consider the two versions of displacement: undecidabilities and paleonymy that the text rests on. On undecidability, I will look at the “terms that ‘contain irreconcilable elements’” within the text, that is, the terms that prevent us to make a possible choice between two possibilities. On paleonymy, I will be reading the old name in the hierarchical opposition or situation “*sous rapture*” (under erasure), that is, in the hierarchical opposition, the old opposition that gives the old name meaning will no longer operate. It is overturned in the erasure such as the old name is retained and crossed, to allow the emergence of new concept in order to give a new meaning. It would, for example be possible to find a hierarchical opposition in Acts 6:1-7 in the presentation of “Hellenists versus Hebrews” as implied in “hellenist widows versus hebrew widows.” However, it is important to make it clear that the referent *Ἑλληνιστην* refers to something such as “Hellenistic” or “Grecian,” something that is associated with being Greek. A particular group is given the connotation of a Greek orientation. It can indeed therefore be seen as “Greek speaking” but not necessarily so; it does not only denote language, but would also include those who have adopted Hellenistic customs, conventions, and Greek or Hellenistic lifestyle. At the same time, it may also refer to non-Jews, to those who have been deemed.

4) Contribution: Here it will be indicated which contribution deconstruction will make to the analysis of Acts 6:1-7.

In the following section, I want to look at the three approaches: Rhetorical Criticism, Feminist Criticism and Postcolonialism. My reason to add these critics is that the interpretative strategies that I will use to read the text do not necessarily need to derive from pure deconstruction. They can also be brought in from the perspective of rhetorical criticism, feminist criticism and postcolonialism. Rhetorical criticism can be used in conjunction with deconstruction especially the notion of problematization. The categories such as ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership need to be problematized when I will look at the problem of ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership in Acts 6:1-7 and in Africa. Likewise, for feminist criticism with its notions of subjectivity, gender, and class relations as constituents in the formation of identity, and postcolonial with its interest to expose the hierarchies and ethnicity which is one of its major aspects.

2.2.5 Rhetorical criticism

Rhetoric is the art of composition for the purpose of persuasion.²³³ For the Greeks and Roman rhetoricians, rhetoric refers to the theory and the practice of speaking well.²³⁴ Surely there were many more that made up corpus of authors responsible for the establishment of rhetoric as a discipline in antiquity. Plato was the first to use the term ‘rhetoric’ in 385 BCE, but both Plato and Aristotle were responsible for the development of traditional rhetoric or classical rhetoric.²³⁵ Already there were certain ideas from philosophy and literary critics that there is no reality beyond the perceptions or beliefs we have about reality. The idea from this view is that there is no objective reality whether acknowledged explicitly or not.²³⁶ But during the Middle Ages and through Renaissance, it was possible in literature and in the visual arts to represent the reality in a serious and significant context.²³⁷ For example, the knowledge was required and used for the comprehension of reality. This problem of representation was picked up later with the crisis of representation that erupted in nineteenth century art and

²³³ Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation*, 389.

²³⁴ Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 508.

²³⁵ Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 414.

²³⁶ See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 171.

²³⁷ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The representation of the Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 555.

literature (aesthetic modernism).²³⁸ In addition, it must be indicated that as deconstruction, rhetoric also disputes the fixity of meaning, discusses the existence of one universal truth. Already during the first phase of sophists there was the question whether appearances should be the criterion of what is in opposition to the fact that the reality can be known.

However, rhetorical criticism was introduced into biblical studies in particular the Old Testament by James Muilenberg in his presidential address of 1968 to the Society of Biblical Literature, "After Form Criticism What?"²³⁹ In the New Testament however, Betz's commentary on the letter to the Galatians was the reintroduction of rhetorical criticism to the New Testament studies.²⁴⁰ He utilized Greco-Roman rhetoric to determine the genre of the letter, and supposed that Paul's letters were composed using classical categories of invention, arrangement, and style and that these categories could aid interpretation.²⁴¹ However, rhetorical criticism was extended in the New Testament to refer to method of analyzing argumentative texts based on the assumption that the works of early Christian's authors were written using the compositional and argumentative standards, categories, and assumptions of Greco-Roman rhetoric.²⁴² George A. Kennedy was the first, to provide a methodology using Greco-Roman rhetoric to analyze New Testament texts. His methodology was influential and has five steps: 1) the determination of rhetorical unit, 2) the identification of the rhetorical situation, 3) the arrangement of material, 4) the analysis of each part of the argument, and 5) the evaluation of rhetorical criticism as a whole (review/conclusion).²⁴³ However, though influential, Kennedy's methodology is not immune from problems. Vorster for example, rebukes him for not carefully establishing a direct link between rhetorical arrangement, that is, the *dispositio*, and the rhetorical genres. The problem with Kennedy, Vorster adds, is that he still adheres to an essentialistic philosophy of meaning. Accordingly, language conveys and is vehicle for knowledge, while modern rhetoric argues that language performs, it does, it constructs, and it produces.²⁴⁴

²³⁸ Moore, The "Post-" Stamp, 546.

²³⁹ Wilhelm Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" CBQ 49, No. 3 (July 1987): 448-463.

²⁴⁰ Hans D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

²⁴¹ Duane F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 165-176.

²⁴² See David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetorical* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 416.

²⁴³ George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 1984.

²⁴⁴ Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 539.

From there, it is important to clearly indicate the change away from Kennedy and his followers. As David Aune points out, since 1970 rhetorical criticism has developed into two separate types of criticism: 1) diachronic rhetorical criticism and 2) synchronic rhetorical criticism. Critics who use diachronic rhetoric regard rhetoric as an aspect of historical criticism and try to understand the rhetorical features of early Christian discourse within the context and categories of Greco-Roman rhetoric. Critics who use synchronic rhetorical criticism reinterpret Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions as a subset of literary criticism.²⁴⁵ However, current rhetorical analysis of the New Testament has consisted of a variety of methodologies falling into three categories: 1) one branch that utilizes only Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions, 2) another branch weds Greco-Roman rhetoric more linguistically or socially oriented methods developed within one vein of the New Rhetoric, and 3) a last branch that applies postmodern more philosophical and critically oriented method deriving from another vein of the New Rhetoric.²⁴⁶

In fact, as Johannes Vorster reminds us, modern rhetoric has not fully divorced from the categories of traditional rhetoric, but has located them within new. That is, Rhetorical criticism of the New Testament has used these categories to respond to questions deriving from historical criticism of the New Testament.²⁴⁷ However, this dependency of New Testament rhetorical criticism upon traditional rhetoric, has led some scholars to conclude that rhetorical criticism using Greco-Roman rhetorical convention is too limited for a suitable rhetorical model for analysis. They consider ancient rhetoric to be inadequate for modern hermeneutic, because it does not address all theoretical and practical issues posed by speech. For these scholars, Kennedy's methodology does not work for the study of a gospel as a single unit, because of limitation in Greco-Roman rhetoric, and the nature of the gospel as narrative. In brief, Greco-Roman rhetoric lacks a theory of narrative that discusses plot with issue, and resolution of the issue.²⁴⁸ This has led scholars to pursue other rhetorical avenues.

One of the avenues is a critical rhetorical model for analysis proposed by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza who, insisted on a conceptualization of biblical studies in rhetorical terms by deconstructing the kyriarchal rhetoric and practices and politics of inequality and

²⁴⁵ Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament*, 417.

²⁴⁶ See Gabriella Gelardini, "Rhetorical Criticism in Hebrews Scholarship: Avenues and Aporias" in *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge* (eds. Andrew B. McGowan and Kent Harold Richards; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 216.

²⁴⁷ Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 537.

²⁴⁸ For this quotation see, Duane F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 165-176.

subordination that are inscribed in the Bible.²⁴⁹ She insisted that a critical rhetorical understanding of interpretation investigates and reconstructs the discursive arguments of the text, its socio-religious location, and its diverse interpretations in order to underscore the text's possible oppressive as well as liberative performative actions, values, and possibilities in ever changing historical-cultural situations.²⁵⁰ As such, Fiorenza is a feminist sympathetic of deconstruction in the sense that her approach is best understood as a deconstructive practice that is concerned with gender inequalities and marginalization and that address all forms of domination which she seeks to dismantle.

However, a more suitable model can be seen in Vorster's rhetorical critical interpretation, specifically his constructing of rhetorical situation. Indeed, the way in which rhetorical situation is constructed by Vorster is more suitable, and significant for my purpose. It is suitable in so far as his notion of problematization can help me to move away from a fixed meaning to be discovered in the text by a constructive approach. Further, the notion of problematization can also help me to question and articulate the binary oppositions that are inscribed within the text. It is significant in so far as the mechanism of problematization foregrounds the social, discursive practices, that is, a problematization of practices, principles and power relations operating within the categories.²⁵¹

Vorster's rhetorical critical model can simply be summarized as follows:

Constituents of the rhetorical situation:

- 1) Steps 1-6: Identification of discursive practices or principles: the critic has to determine the practices and principles generating the particular discursive practices.
- 2) Steps 7-8: Construction of person: the critic has to identify persons who functions as problematizing agents and have to make a decision. It paid attention to the manner in which person has been constructed and is constituted of: a) gender; b) ethnicity; c) education and training; d) construction of author's person; e) construction of audience.

²⁴⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethics: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 47.

²⁵⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rethinking the Educational Practices of Biblical Doctoral Studies," *Teaching Theology and Religion*, vol.6, no.2 (2003): 65-75.

²⁵¹ Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 548.

3) Step 9: the act of problematization: the way in which the argument is structured and presented.

Therefore, in this study, I will be using rhetorical criticism in Acts 6: 1-7. Briefly, I will be using Vorster's rhetorical situation model but not in full. But I will use certain aspects of his model, namely: the notion of problematization, the construction of persons. Because rhetorical criticism can provide with tools to articulate binary oppositions, and help me from finding meaning within a text, and from the hegemony of historical critical method.

2.2.6 Feminist criticism

Jonathan Culler has indicated that Feminist Criticism has had a greater effect on the literary canon than any other critical movement and has been one of the most powerful forces of renovation in the contemporary criticism.²⁵² The term "feminist criticism" means a criticism that strives to expose the patriarchal structures within the texts and the legitimating and perpetuating of these structures in the interpretation of the texts.²⁵³ It may also be defined as the efforts of women to become free from male domination, to act as equals with men in every aspect of social, economic, religious and political life.²⁵⁴ From these two definitions, feminist criticism can be seen as a double strategy. First, it endeavours to expose the structure of power and second, it engages to restore the voices of women and reconstruct its contribution in the past for its vision of the present.²⁵⁵ One of the main issues feminist criticism deals with is the issue of "phallogocentrism" or "phallogocentrism" which is considered as an ideology or a symbol of male dominance. According to feminist theory, phallogocentrism is a structure or a style of thought considered as a form of traditional Western philosophy, culture, expressing both male attitudes and reinforcing male dominance. The idea behind this conception is that the phallus (male sexual organ) is the central element in the organization of social world.²⁵⁶ Madeleine Gagnon, cited by Stephen Moore, expresses her negative attitude towards the phallus as follows: "the phallus, for me... represents repressive

²⁵² Culler, *On Deconstruction*, 85.

²⁵³ See Randolph W. Tate (ed.), *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts*, 2nd (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2012), 157.

²⁵⁴ Shillington, *An Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts*, 102.

²⁵⁵ See for example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology* (ed. Richard J. Lane; London: Routledge, 2013): 521-529.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Ilona Rashkow, "Phallogocentrism and Logocentrism," in *Psychological Insights into the Bible: Texts and Readings* (eds. Wayne G. Rollins and D. Andrew Kille; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007): 51-52; Arthur Asa Berger, *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 2nd Ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2011),:107-108; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. (New York: Routledge, 1993), 89.

capitalist ownership, the exploiting bourgeois, the higher knowledge... that watches, analyzes, sanctions... Everything that wants regimentation and representation... I am a foreigner in my own language and I translate myself by quoting all the others.”²⁵⁷ It is this perspective that Julia Kristeva distinguishes two kinds of women’s writing: the first tends to valorize phallic dominance, and the second frees everything considered “phallic” in order to find refuse in the valorization of the silent underwater body.²⁵⁸ From a deconstructive point of view, phallogocentrism refers to the privileging of masculine (phallus) in the construction of meaning. For Derrida, the term phonocentrism refers to the priority of speech over writing, while phallogocentrism is used to describe the way logocentrism has been gendered by a masculinist phallus and patriarchal ethos. Derrida intentionally, merges the two terms as phallogocentrism.²⁵⁹

Further, as Stephen Moore indicates, there are at least two kinds in feminism. There are French feminist critics and American feminist critics. French feminist critics emerges from the tradition of aesthetic modernism, while American feminist critics tend to emerge from the iconoclastic aesthetic of nascent modernism, which was characterized by a rejection of the early modern épistémè and the canon of representation that it legitimated. American feminists are engaged in resurrecting lost women, reconstructing the past, and filling gaps in cultural sciences and hole in discourse. Nevertheless, both critics engage for a change in language of patriarchy that they need to destroy.²⁶⁰

Feminist Criticism assumes that gender relations are linguistically and socially constructed in the interest of patriarchal power relations. For the feminist scholars, the common presuppositions is that all biblical texts were written in the contexts of patriarchal²⁶¹ culture, and these patriarchal contexts have dehumanized and marginalized women, treating them as second class citizens.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ Moore, The “Post-” Stamp, 552.

²⁵⁸ Julia Kristeva, “Oscillation Between Power and Denial,” in *New French Feminisms* (eds. E. Marks and I. de Courtivon; Brighton: Harvester, 1981): 165-167.

²⁵⁹ For more details on “phallogocentrism” and “logocentrism” see Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (eds. Julia Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Malden: Blackwell, 1998): 529-550.

²⁶⁰ Moore, The “Post-” Age Stamp, 554.

²⁶¹ Patriarchy literally means the role of father, the male authority over female and children. It is a gender dualism or the domination and control of man over women (see Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Hermeneutics” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.2 (eds. David Noel et al; New York: Doubleday, 1992): 783-791.

²⁶² Janice Capel Anderson, “Feminist Criticism” in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992): 103-134; Elisabeth Schüssler

According to Feminist scholars, many biblical texts such as Genesis 2-3; 1Cor 11: 3-12, 14:34-36; Eph. 5: 22-24; 1 Tim 2: 9-15 and 1 Pet 3: 1-7 have been used to justify the domination of women.²⁶³ Feminist criticism can work in conversation with deconstruction since it is a reading strategy, a critical analysis that interrogates biblical texts, not only for their depictions of women and constructions of gender, but also for their ideological views of sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, practice belief and other categories of social oppressions.²⁶⁴

In fact, when she was elected president of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1988, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, in her presidential address “The Ethics of Interpretation: Decentering Biblical scholarship” brought feminist critiques to the center of biblical studies,²⁶⁵ she developed a critical feminist reading of the New Testament that accepts the texts that are liberating to women. She then set up four reading strategies, which are hermeneutics of suspicion, hermeneutics of remembrance, hermeneutics of evaluation and proclamation, and hermeneutics of creative imagination and ritualization.²⁶⁶

In her book “In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins” (1994), Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza poses that the conflict between the Hellenists and Hebrews involved the role and participation of women at the Eucharistic meal ‘serving tables’²⁶⁷ After having examined the term *διακονία* in its original, New Testament and religious sense, Fiorenza suggests that the notion of *διακονία* (service or ministry) can be reclaimed by feminist theology as a critical category challenging those who have actual power and privilege.²⁶⁸ Her Conclusion is that the subject under discussion is the contrast between societal structures and discipleship of equals. The episode challenges those in position of dominance and power to become “equal” with those who are powerless.²⁶⁹

Schüssler’ study really is interesting because she engages in exposing structures of power underlying the interpretative process. The strength of her work lies in that she addresses the

Fiorenza, “Feminist Hermeneutics” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol.2 (eds. David Noel et al; New York: Doubleday, 1992): 783-791.

²⁶³ Amy-Jill Levine, “Feminist Criticism,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (eds. David E. Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 156-165.

²⁶⁴ Levine, “Feminist Criticism,” 156.

²⁶⁵ Levine, “Feminist Criticism,” 161.

²⁶⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Hermeneutics”, 290.

²⁶⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

²⁶⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons: Exploration in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 219.

²⁶⁹ Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons*, 220.

issue of the relation of power and challenges those who are in position of power rather to please to the solution proposed by Luke, which does not fit with the subsequent episode. Nevertheless, although she has demonstrated Luke's engendered, masculine-privileged ethos, Schüssler has not scrutinized the knowledge that has been produced from the margins, and that supersessionism (Christianity over Judaism) can find its roots back in Acts 6. Schüssler does not pursue the issue of the Greek names, nor does she address the question of the discrepancies between the role assigned to the seven, and their present activities in the narrative.

Likewise, in her article "The Power of the Widows and How to suppress It?" written in 2004, Barbara E. Reid examines the episode of Acts 6: 1-7 from a feminist hermeneutics perspective. According to her, the issue in Acts 6: 1-7 is a struggle-involving ministry, that is, the conflict over the exercise of ministry by widows. Reid argues that the part of Luke's aim is to show the controversies engendered by the widows' attempt to exercise their power.²⁷⁰ She correctly agrees with Joseph B Tyson "the function of Acts 6: 1-7 is to trace the succession from the apostolic leadership, and to introduce the extension of the mission outside Jerusalem."²⁷¹

The strength of Reid's study resides in its analysis of power structures. Her critical analysis enables her not only to ask questions rarely asked, but also to address the issue of the relation of power. She asks the question how this episode addresses Luke's concern for universality and overcoming of cultural, theological and social conflict.²⁷² Nevertheless, although she was really concerned with the issue of power, Reid did not demonstrate how supersessionism in terms of gender has taken place in Acts 6 by shifting women completely out and privileging leadership role for men.

In conclusion, the Feminist criticism's main concern is its attention to the dialectical and contradictory forces inherent in the social relations. Feminist critics are characterized by a strong rejection of patriarchal structures, and are intent on exposing the structures of power underlying the interpretation process. Feminist critics deal with the issue of power, exclusion, marginalization, domination, and all structures of inequalities.

²⁷⁰ Barbara E. Reid, OP "The Power of the Widows and How to suppress it? (Acts 6: 1-7)," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* (eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstatt; Cleveland: T&T Clark, 2004): 71-88.

²⁷¹ Reid, "The Power of the Widows," 71.

²⁷² Reid, "The Power of the Widows," 72.

Feminists sympathetic of deconstruction criticize masculinist ideology, and believe that deconstruction is a useful resource for feminist interpretation in so far as deconstruction provides the strategies for dismantling the hierarchical oppositions within the system. They credit Derrida and argue that feminist criticism can find a common cause with him insofar as Derrida develops strategies that they want to appropriate for feminist projects.²⁷³ In contrast, certain feminist critics think that “deconstruction remains a male enterprise,”²⁷⁴ Therefore, rather than to criticize deconstruction because of its masculine connotations, feminist criticism can work in conversation with deconstruction as an indispensable ally, in so far as deconstruction criticism can bring to light a hidden logic of power and domination and expose the hierarchical dichotomies.

2.2.7 Postcolonial criticism

In popular perception, the term postcolonial signifies a period, which began in the 1960s after the demise of formal European colonialism, following the struggle for independence waged by the colonized people.²⁷⁵ But a more detailed definition of Postcolonialism can be seen in *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology*’ edited by Richard Lane. In part 7, he asserts that “postcolonial’ is in many respects a “writing back” against the Eurocentrism literary canon that was used by colonists (educators, missionaries, government functionaries, and so on) both during and after colonization in the Third World, to maintain European hegemony or dominance.”²⁷⁶ But Sugirtharajah makes it a little bit clear. He says that when it is used with hyphen ‘post-colonial’, the term indicates the historical period aftermath of colonialism, and when used without hyphen ‘postcolonial’ it signifies a reactive and resistance discourse of the colonized who interrogate the dominant knowledge systems of the colonizers in order to recover the past from the Western misinformation of the colonized period and continue to interrogate the neo-colonizing tendencies after the declaration of independence.²⁷⁷

²⁷³ Ellen T. Armour, “Crossing the Boundaries Between Deconstruction, Feminism and Religion,” in *Feminist Interpretation of Jacques Derrida* (ed. Nancy J. Holland; Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997): 193-214.

²⁷⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Displacement and the Discourse of Woman,” in *Feminist Interpretation of Jacques Derrida* (ed. Nancy J. Holland; Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997): 43-71.

²⁷⁵ R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12; see also W. Randolph Tate, *The Handbook of Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to methods, Terms and Concepts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2012), 329; V. George Shillington, *An Introduction to the study of Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 86.

²⁷⁶ Richard J. Lane (ed.), *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology* (London: Routledge, 2013), 487.

²⁷⁷ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 13.

Seen from this last sense, it is possible to say with Sugirtharajah that postcolonial is not simply a direct critique of colonial devastation, but it is also a reaction against the failure of the newly independent nation's states to initiate pluralistic democratic structures and environmental balanced development to bridge the gap between rich and power.²⁷⁸ However, 'postcolonial' must also be understood differently from 'postcolonialism' and 'postcoloniality,' in so far as the latter is "a condition that exists within, and thus contests and resists the colonial moment itself with its ideology of domination."²⁷⁹

In fact, it is the Edward Said's book 'Orientalism' (1978) that paved the way to postcolonial theory as Richard Lane argues in the following quotation, "colonialism, then, is not just a brute material force, but it also functions through its discursive formations, the power-knowledge semiotic networks and narratives that inculcate the ideology of the colonizer in and through subject. This process has been mapped most thoroughly-through what is called colonial discourse analysis- by Edward Said, in his books *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)."²⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the key figures in the postcolonial criticism are: Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak.²⁸¹ The three are therefore considered as the proponents of postcolonial theory. In his book, 'The Location of Culture,' Homi Bhabha presents his interpretation of 'hybridity' in the postcolonial discourse where he sees hybridity as paradigm identity that made the colonial master ambivalent. For him, 'hybridity' is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal. It is the production of discriminatory identities that secure the original identity of authority.²⁸² In this sense, hybridity can be seen as a colonial doubling, which Bhabha describes as strategic displacement of value through the metonymy of presence, which presence is no longer a representation of an essence; it is a partial presence, a strategic device in a specific colonial engagement, an appurtenance of authority.²⁸³

From a deconstructive point of view, hybridity can be seen as an act of deconstruction in that it reverses the formal process of disavowal, so that the violent dislocation of the act of

²⁷⁸ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 23.

²⁷⁹ Françoise Lionnet, *Postcolonial Representations: Women, Literature, Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 4.

²⁸⁰ Lane, *Global Literary Theory*, 487.

²⁸¹ Tate, *The Handbook of Biblical Interpretation*, 329.

²⁸² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), 112.

²⁸³ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 114.

colonization becomes the conditionality of colonial discourse. So that, the presence of colonialist authority is no longer immediately visible, its discriminatory identifications no longer have their authoritative reference to the culture of the people perfidy.²⁸⁴ In view of above, it is possible to say that there is still discrimination, unequal relationships, and domination within the process of hybridation where we can see one culture (traditional culture) is being usurped by the other (colonial culture), and will have to accept the idiom of the other.

Another word that Bhabha uses is “mimicry”. According to Bhabha, “mimicry” is “the sign of a double articulation,” a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the Other as it visualizes the power. Mimicry emerged as an elusive strategy of colonial power, a mode of representation, where regulation of the native subject meets an evasive slippery of repetition and difference. Colonial mimicry is then the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that almost the same, but not quite. The menace of mimicry is that it discloses the ambivalence of colonial discourse and also disrupts its authority.²⁸⁵

In biblical studies, however, postcolonial criticism offers a relevant theory to be applied to biblical texts.²⁸⁶

As Sugirtharajah puts it:

What postcolonial biblical criticism does is to focus on the whole issue of expansion, domination, and imperialism as central forces in defining both the biblical narratives and biblical interpretation. The overlapping areas, which biblical scholars cooperate with postcolonial agenda, include race, nation, translation, mission, textually, spirituality, and representation.²⁸⁷

For this reason, Elisabeth Schüssler urges that a critical feminist socio-political analysis understands Western classical and modern society and biblical religions as determined by the tension between on one hand kyriarchal exploitative structures of domination and exploitation and, on the other hand, radical democratic vision of equality and well-being for all, which has been partially realized in history through emancipatory struggles and

²⁸⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 114.

²⁸⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology* (ed. Richard J. Lane; London: Routledge, 2013): 540-546.

²⁸⁶ Randolph, *The Handbook of Biblical Interpretation*, 332.

²⁸⁷ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 25.

movements. Such an analysis indicates that there are no postcolonial spaces that are free of exploitation, domination, and dehumanization.²⁸⁸

In sum, postcolonialism can be seen as a strategy employed by the native oppressed where the goal is to expose the hierarchies that have been produced by colonialism. The relationship between colonizers and colonized has been characterized by a system of inequality, domination and oppression. These authors have by their writings, exposed the functioning of the whole colonial apparatus. In this view, postcolonialism can function in conversation with deconstruction, especially its notion of hybridity, and mimicry which can be considered as a strategy of deconstruction, specifically when it comes to the analysis of hierarchy, discrimination, unequal relationship, and ideology of domination which are of concerns in Acts 6:1-7.

2.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the interpretative strategies that I will use in my reading of Acts 6:1-7. I have considered the categories such as Critical theory, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism because they form with deconstruction and rhetorical criticism a fluid apparatus useful for the analysis of Acts 6:1-7.

I have indicated that Derrida's deconstruction which is centered against Western philosophical ideology is a dismantling of the binary oppositions in the text with the assumption that the meaning is never fixed, but always floating. Rhetorical criticism which will be used in conjunction with deconstruction will use Vorster's situational model since his notion of problematization provides with tools for the analysis of the text.

Feminist criticism which is characterized by a rejection of patriarchal structures resists all contradictory forces of exclusion and domination in the social relations. Likewise Postcolonialism, exposes and resists the hierarchies that have been produced by colonialism and its incarnation in the contemporary context. All two will be in conversation with rhetoric and deconstruction in eisegesis of the text.

In fact, as it has been indicated in the introduction of this chapter, I will not use a specific recipe in my reading of this passage. Rather I have distilled a number of strategies from the

²⁸⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethics*, 37.

paradigms that I looked here to solve my problem. For that reason, I will be using rhetorical criticism in conjunction with deconstruction, specifically some aspects of Vorster's rhetorical situational model because rhetoric concerns with construction, with discourse acts of network of power. Rhetorical criticism can also provide me with tools to articulate binary hierarchical opposition. Likewise, I will be using feminist criticism, and postcolonialism in so far as these critics function in conversation with deconstruction. Feminist criticism is more interested with the issue of gender and social inequalities and its notions of phallogocentrism and phallogocentrism, which are of concerns in the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7. Postcolonialism will be part of the project that investigates Acts 6:1-7 in terms of ethnicity as long as ethnicity is one of the major aspects within postcolonialism, especially Bhabha's notion of hybridity.

Finally, to address adequately the problem of ethnicity and supersessionism in the early Christian Jerusalem community, I need to engage in a critical mode of reading that seeks not only to investigate the structures of inequality, which produce exclusion and marginalization, what Gerald West has called "a negative moment of deconstruction,"²⁸⁹ but also a mode of reading that exposes the ideological nature of the text, a mode that Elisabeth Schüssler has called "a hermeneutics of suspicion" which has the task of disentangling the ideological function of the text and commentary²⁹⁰. By using my strategies of deconstruction in conjunction with rhetorical criticism, and some aspects derived from feminist criticism and postcolonialism, this approach will provide something more fruitful, something new that the traditional approaches were often unfamiliar to reveal, and I will be seeing what contribution my approach can afford to the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7. Finally, after examining the strategies of reading, which provided me with tools that enable a more adequate explanation of the text, I will in the following chapter deal with the three categories: ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership that form the backbone of the study.

²⁸⁹ West, "Interesting and Interested Readings: Deconstruction, the Bible, and South African Context," 47.

²⁹⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethics: The Politics of biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 51.

CHAPTER THREE: ETHNICITY AND SUPERSESSIONISM IN ACTS 6:1-7 AND THE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that there is an interrelationship between these three terms: ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership. Behind the supersessionist attitude, a construction of ethnicity that differentiates between superior and inferior can be detected. Just as this differentiation can be exploited by leadership. However, the problematization and theorizing of ethnicity will demonstrate that ethnicity should not be seen as a fixed category, which will render support and modify already existing model of ethnicity. Rhetoric and deconstructive critical approach do not see the category ethnicity as a fixed identity, but as a construction, it is something invented, unstable concerned with identity formation, fluidity and insider & outsiders. The chapter further argues that within the framework of Christianity, supersessionism represents an antithetic relationship between Israel and the church thereby opposing what should not be put into opposition to each other. As far as my third category, leadership is concerned, the double-barrelled approach of rhetoric and deconstruction will shift us away from a fixed notion of leadership reflecting an adherence to superior versus inferior value-systems and allow us to alternatives via an acknowledgement of discursivity in societies. Rhetoric and deconstruction move us away from the type of leadership advocated by Luke-Acts, where a leader is made according to a model fixed in advance, but move us into the sphere of discursively, in which a leader is created or constructed.

In fact, since I want to demonstrate how ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership function as hidden script in Acts 6:1-7, my attention has been focused on these three categories that form part of the spectacles that I will put to read Acts 6:1-7 with the strategies derived from my critical apparatus, which consists of insights from deconstruction, rhetorical criticism, postcolonialism, and feminism. What I want to indicate is the constructedness of these categories, how they have been constructed, and how they can be problematized and discussed, and their need in the reading of Acts 6:1-7 in the next chapter.

I will also explore briefly their use within Early Christianity and the writings of the New Testament in the Roman antiquity in the first century CE.

3.2 Ethnicity

3.2.1 Problematizing ethnicity

According to Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, the term “ethnicity” first appears in the English language in the 1950s. It is first recorded in a dictionary in the Oxford English dictionary of 1953.²⁹¹ Indeed, although “ethnicity” seems to be a new term in the English language, the notion of “ethnicity” already originated in the Greece antiquity. In ancient Greek, as Hutchinson and Smith remind us, Homer used the term “ἔθνος Ἡταῖρον” to mean (a band of friends), “ἔθνος Λυκίων” to mean (a tribe of Lycians), and “ἔθνος μελισσῶν or ορνιθῶν” to mean (a swarm of bees or birds).²⁹² Yet, the English adjective “ethnic” derives from the Greek term “ἔθνος” and in biblical translation it is used as a synonym of gentile, that is, non-Christian and non-Jewish pagan.²⁹³ Although the referent of ethnos has usually demarcated in terms of an essentialist paradigm where both a group and its properties were seen as fixed, this has changed and a redefinition of it is required. The term may mean “the essence of an ethnic group” or “the fact or sense of belonging to a particular group.”²⁹⁴

Indeed, many authors are not interested in defining the term “ethnicity.” Ronald Cohen had asserted that most people using the term “ethnicity” find definitions unnecessary and few are those who bother define it.²⁹⁵ Isajiw who looked at 65 studies of ethnicity in Sociology and Anthropology, found only 13 that defined the term.²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, although it is correct to assert that most of those who wrote “ethnicity” do not bother to define it, the extant number of definitions is high and it is growing.²⁹⁷ One of the reasons why a definition or redefinition of the category “ethnicity” has not received its due attention could be on the inexactness that encompasses that “category.”

²⁹¹ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (eds.) *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 1.

²⁹² For this quotation see John Hutchinson and Antony D. Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

²⁹³ Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 4.

²⁹⁴ Cf. Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 4.

²⁹⁵ Ronald Cohen, “Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology.” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 7 (1978), 379-403.

²⁹⁶ W. Isajiw, “Approaches to Ethnic Conflict Resolution: Paradigms and Principles.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24 (1) (2000): 105-124.

²⁹⁷ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 11.

However, although for some authors it is not necessary to define the term “ethnicity,” others however, were interested in defining it. I will discuss two leading scholars who have already made significant contributions to the study of “ethnic groups” and the demarcation of the term “ethnicity.” They are Max Weber and Fredrik Barth. In Sociology, Max Weber defines ethnicity” as a common descent extending beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-à-vis other groups, and common customs, language, religion, values, morality and etiquette.²⁹⁸ In Anthropology, Fredrik Barth, for his part, maintained that four elements must be considered in order to define the term ethnicity, namely: 1) a biological self-perpetuating population; 2) a sharing of cultural values and forms; 3) a field of communication and interaction; and 4) a grouping that identifies itself and is identified by others.²⁹⁹

The difference between the two authors is that while the former emphasizes the group’s belief in common descent and the political aspects of ethnic group, the latter in contrast focuses not merely on cultural aspects but also on cultural boundaries and social interaction of the ethnic group. From this comparison, we may deduct that for Barth, the focus is in the study changes from its contents (language, customs, and religion) to the cultural boundaries and social interaction, while for Weber, the focus is on the effectiveness of social action and political aspect of group action that inspire belief in common descent.

Indeed, since the colonial era, countries were demarcated according to ethnicity. South Africa has been counted by ethnicity in all its censuses since 1904.³⁰⁰ The people in the Democratic Republic of Congo were demarcated by ethnicity from 1955-1958.³⁰¹ In contrast, France has not yet counted individuals by race or ethnicity since 1978. The reason for this is that many French people consider asking someone about ethnicity or race is to be a contradiction of their principle of equality and equal treatment for all French people.³⁰²

Yet, in the former Soviet Union for example, ethnic division between the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats has divided Yugoslavia and culminated to the war in Bosnia in 1991. In

²⁹⁸ Max Weber, “Ethnic Groups,” in *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory* (ed. Parsons Talcott; New York: Free Press, 1961): 301-309.

²⁹⁹ F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 13.

³⁰⁰ *Institutionalized Ethnicity: South Africa*. (Retrieved from the online version: <https://institutionalizedethnicity.net/country-narratives/South Africa>, 12 April 2017).

³⁰¹ Ethnicity: A Review of Data Collection and Dissemination. PDF. United Nations Statistics Division. August 2003. (Retrieved from the online version: <https://unstats.un.org> on 12 April 2017).

³⁰² Marie des Neiges L. “Census and Racial Categorization in France: Invisible Categories and Color-Blind Politics.” *Humanity & Society*, 38 (1) (2014): 67-88.

Rwanda, the ethnic conflict between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi erupted and led to the genocide of 1994. Much of the conflicts in the world today appear to have ethnic roots. As Philip Yang writes, almost five millions of people lost their lives in the ethnic conflicts between 1990 and 1996.³⁰³ In addition, even here in South Africa, the racial tension remains in spite of abolition of apartheid. As it is currently, the ethnicity is becoming a worldwide social fact and, no one can doubt of its existence today. Ethnicity affects the opportunities of members of different ethnic groups in jobs, schools, and politics.³⁰⁴ So that, owing to how ethnicity was demarcated especially during the colonialist period, and owing to the numerous ethnic conflicts that have taken place, the notion of ethnicity has become a major source of academic reflection.³⁰⁵

However, although the term ethnicity originally signified cultural differences, it acquired a different sense of meaning in the Anglo-American and European traditions: While in the Anglo-American tradition “ethnicity” is used to refer to a minority group, the European tradition adopted it as a synonym for nationhood defined by descent.³⁰⁶ Thomas H. Eriksen confirms this when he notices that “the term acquired a racial characteristics in the nineteenth century, and was used in the twentieth century US as a way to refer to those immigrants northern or western European descent.”³⁰⁷ In this sense, the term ethnicity refers more to the identification of a particular group.

In the field of theology and Biblical Studies, however, “ethnicity” is a complex social phenomenon especially concerning the question of how it is constructed and maintained. David Pao asserts that in the first century Judaism, the issue of ethnicity was at the very centre of its identity.³⁰⁸ Indeed, Israel, Jews was defined herself in terms of her separation from the Gentiles (nations), and the category “Gentiles” was understood as the enemies of God and his people. For that reason, anyone who was willing to embrace the God of Israel had to leave his/her family, homeland, and household deities and join the family of God of

³⁰³ Philip Q. Yang, *From Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches* (New York: The State University of New York Press, 2000), 41.

³⁰⁴ Yang, *From Ethnic Studies*, 41.

³⁰⁵ Martha L. Cottam et al. (eds.), *Introduction to Political Psychology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 356.

³⁰⁶ Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 1

³⁰⁷ Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 4.

³⁰⁸ David Pao, “Family and Table Fellowship in the Writings of Luke,” in *This side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith* (eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvano L. Nieves; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 181-194.

Israel.³⁰⁹ Therefore, as Tite Tiénou had rightly observed “the most common markers of ethnic identity as- language, and phenotypical appearance- played no vital role in Israelite ethnicity; instead “religious identity centred in the person of Yahweh was the determining factor; circumcision, the Torah, and the Temple were central markers of Jewish identity.”³¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the Torah did not play the same role throughout in the first century. In the two books she reviewed, Himmelfarb pointed out that “there can be little doubt that the Torah was central to Jewish identity in the Diaspora. For one of the most pieces of evidence for this, the translation of the Torah into Greek for the Jews of Alexandria also demonstrates that Hebrew did not play the same role in the Diaspora that it did in Palestine.”³¹¹ Therefore, it may be correct to agree with Cohen, quoted by Himmelfarb that, “Jewish identity transcends ideology and practice and that Jews in antiquity were transformed from a ethnic group into an ethno- religion.”³¹²

From a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, Michael Fischer has captured the paradoxical sense of the term “ethnicity.” He noted that “ethnicity” is something invented in each generation by each individual, and that it is often something quite puzzling to the individual, something over which he or she lacks control. Ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned; it is something dynamic, often unsuccessfully repressed or avoided.³¹³ From that complexity, the postmodernists have approached the question of “identity formation” as a favourite ground for their analysis of the category “ethnicity.” Judith Butler re-asserts that the process of identification is in part at least the definition and re-definition of the ‘Other’ in relation to the ‘Self.’ The construction and the re-construction of the “Self” with reference to the “other” and the “we,” takes place on the ongoing basis and is representative of the shifting and complex nature of identity formation.³¹⁴ In its article in which he examines the potentials of the concept of “othering” to describe identity formation among ethnic minorities, Sune Jensen argues that:

³⁰⁹ Pao, “Family and Table Fellowship,” 183.

³¹⁰ Tite Tiénou, “The Samaritans: A Biblical Mirror for Understanding Racial, Ethnic, and Religious identity?” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith* (eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvano L. Nieves; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 211-222.

³¹¹ Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism in Antiquity: Ethno-Religion or National Identity.” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol.99, no.1 (Winter 2009): 65-73.

³¹² Cf. Himmelfarb, “Judaism in Antiquity”, 67.

³¹³ Michael M. J. Fischer, “Ethnicity and Post-Modern Art of Memory,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus; Los Angeles: University of California, 1986): 190-197.

³¹⁴ Cf. Nide Mockler “What works: Understanding Teacher Identity as a Practical and Political Tool.” *Teacher and Teaching Theory and Practice*, vol.17, no.5 (2011): 5-20.

The theory of identity formation inherent in the concept of othering assumes that subordinate people are offered, and at the same relegated to, subject positions as others in discourse. In these processes, he continues, it is the centre that has the power to describe, and the other is constructed as inferior.³¹⁵

In this sense, the concept of othering is well suited for understanding the power structures. A theoretical example of this is from postcolonial theory. Edward Said in his important book “Orientalism” describes how the West was able to produce or construct the Orient as other in a reductionist way.³¹⁶ In addition, we may argue that even if “othering” plays an important role in the identity formation, it is not the only category, there are other categories constituting the notion of identity formation. For example, the notion of “intersectionality” that encompasses the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually multiplicative vectors of race, gender, class, sexuality and imperialism. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has pointed out that the theory of intersectionality seeks to illuminate how identity is constructed at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and imperialism. Intersectionality emerged as a key theoretical tool in feminist criticism for subverting race, gender and other structures of oppression and domination.³¹⁷

Another example of this is the category “whiteness.” David Horrell has noted that “one facet and crucial identity which shape the way we see and construct through these categories, “whiteness” is one racialized identity that needs to be considered much than other categories.³¹⁸ “Whiteness” is then the production of an autonomous white/Western self, in contrast with other racial and cultural categories with which racially and culturally dominant category is constructed.³¹⁹ In effect, the colonial discourse was the way in which whiteness, as a racialized identity is constructed and maintained.

But the sense of ‘identity formation’ is well explained by Judith Butler in the following quotation:

³¹⁵ Sune Qvotrup Jensen, “Othering, Identity Formation and Agency.” *Qualitative Studies*, vol.2, no.2 (2011): 63-78.

³¹⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Pennsylvania University Press, 1978).

³¹⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Exploring the Intersection of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies,” in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies* (eds. Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010): 1-23.

³¹⁸ David G. Horrell, “Paul, Inclusion and Whiteness: Particularizing Interpretation.” *JSNT*, vol.40, no.2 (2017): 123-147.

³¹⁹ Horrell, “Paul Inclusion and Whiteness”, 132.

Identifications belong to the imaginary; they are phantasmatic efforts of alignment, loyalty, ambiguous and cross-corporeal cohabitations, they unsettle the “I”; they are the sedimentation of the “we” in the construction of any I...Identifications are never fully and finally made; they are incessantly reconstituted and as such, are subject to the volatile logic of iterability. They are that which is constantly marshalled, consolidated contested, and on occasion, compelled to give way.³²⁰

As we may see from the Butler’s quotation, from a postmodernist perspective, ethnicity (identities) is never fully and finally established. Instead, they are always in process, always in a relative state of formation, and any closure around a particular identity is seen as provisional and conditioned by specific social contexts.³²¹ Moreover, still other scholars have tried to define ethnicity in line with nationality. Jan Pieterse has pointed out that nationality itself is often defined in terms of the “majority ethnicity” and that the ethnicisation of the state is a familiar process in many countries North and South. In this sense, the nation takes the form of mono-cultural control and it may be regarded as a form of ethnicity or ethnography. The ethnicisation of the state can be made in the recruitment of the bureaucracy and armed force where the state becomes an instrument of domination by privileged ethnic groups.³²²

3.2.2 Theorizing ethnicity

Although definition presupposes theorizing, this section will explore how theories concerned with ethnicity emerged from theoretical paradigms. I will focus on only three such paradigms namely: primordialism, constructionism, and instrumentalism. Since I have indicated that ethnicity cannot carefully be defined as a static category, I will explore how it may function from a constructivist approach. In the following, I would like to look at each of the approaches, and try to present the main idea of each of them.

3.2.2.1 The primordialist approach

The dominant paradigm until the 1970’s has been Primordialism. This approach has been associated with Eduard Shils and Clifford Geertz.³²³ According to primordialists, “ethnicity

³²⁰ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 5.

³²¹ See Ali Rattansi and Ann Phoenix, “Rethinking Youth Identities Modernist and Postmodernist Frameworks.” *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, vol.5, no.2 (2005): 97-123.

³²² Jan Pieterse, “Deconstructing/Reconstructing Ethnicity.” *Nations and Nationalism*, vol.3, no.3 (1997): 365-395.

³²³ Edward Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations of Sociological Research and Theory.” *British Journal of Sociology*, no.8 (1957), 130-145; Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution,” in *Old Societies and New States* (eds. Clifford Geertz; New York: Free Press, 1963).

is a deeply rooted and durable affiliation based on kinship, shared territory and tradition.”³²⁴ The Primordialists consider that a common ancestry determines ethnicity, which is an ascribed identity, and that ethnic boundaries are fixed or immutable/static.³²⁵ There are, however, two perspectives within the primordialist approach: The first, sociobiological perspective emphasizes the importance of biological factor (kinship) in determining ethnicity, in this sense, ethnicity is then an extension of kinship. The sociobiological theory explains ethnicity as a natural expression of our genetic nature, a nature that is to be found in the structure of the gene itself.³²⁶ The second, cultural perspective emphasizes on the importance of the cultural factor in determining ethnic group. According to this view, a common culture (language, religion, customs), are the main factors in the determination of ethnic group.³²⁷ However, Primordialism has been criticized first, for not recognizing that “ethnic groups” do not exist autonomously, but are also constructed and defined through their boundaries with other groups. Second, primordialism fails to explain why ethnic identities of individuals or groups change. Third, the primordialist approach overlooks the economic and political interests associated with ethnic sentiment.³²⁸

3.2.2.2 The constructivist approach

The Constructivist approach is associated with Fredrik Barth, who in the 1960s had levelled a critique at the traditional cultural primordialist’s tendency to think that the cultural markers of ethnic identity are more or less “objective.”³²⁹ Barth argued that the defining feature of an ethnic group is not the particular elements of cultures or kinship that differentiate it from other groups, but rather the mere fact that boundaries are maintained or constructed. This is because for Barth, the cultural features that signal those boundaries change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likely be transformed.³³⁰ Barth’s constructivist approach plays a vital role in my argument in the extent that for him “biological” is not a constant propriety for a definition of an ethnic group but focuses on cultural boundaries and social interactions.

³²⁴ Brett, “Interpreting Ethnicity,” 12.

³²⁵ Philip Q. Yang, *From Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 42.

³²⁶ Richard H. Thompson, *Theories of Ethnicity: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 11.

³²⁷ Yang, “From Ethnic Studies,” 43.

³²⁸ See Dennis C. Duling, “Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean Ethnos.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, vol.35 (2005): 125-143; Philip Q. Yang, *From Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches*. (New York: State University of New York, 2000), 43; Richard H. Thompson, *Theories of Ethnicity: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Greenwood, 1989), 180.

³²⁹ Duling, Ethnicity, “Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean Ethnos,” 127.

³³⁰ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 14.

As Ronald Cohen has observed, “Barth’s contribution was in that he viewed ethnicity as a subjective process of group identification in which people use the ethnic labels to define themselves and their interaction with others.”³³¹ By doing so, Barth reorients anthropological thinking from the dominant conception of “ethnic groups as cultural units” to the new prevailing view of ethnicity as social organisation.³³²

Indeed, the constructivists have advanced three arguments: First, ethnicity is a socially constructed identity. Second, ethnic boundaries are fluid, flexible or changeable. And three, ethnic affiliation is determined by society.³³³ The constructivists categorically reject the primordialist notion that ethnic identity is biologically given. Instead, they argue that ethnic identity is a social construction that results from human action and choices.³³⁴ In this context, the constructivist approach stresses the importance of the social construction of ethnic group rather than the cultural and sociobiological factors of the ethnic group.

Yet, as for the primordial, critique has also been levelled against the constructivist approach. It is reproached in that that it tends to ignore the ancestral basis of ethnicity and deemphasizes the limitation of social construction.³³⁵ In addition, as for the primordialist approach, constructivists neglect economic and political interests closely associated with the ethnic sentiment and practice. I can respond to that critique by pointing out that “ancestry” is itself also a construction. For example, the Christians refer to Abraham as their father in faith by adoption. Likewise, as Denise Kimber Buell asserts, Roman identity was based to an unusual degree on membership in a political and religious community. It was not an option to freeze an inherited identity of the Romans based on the “*mos maiorum*,” the ancestral way was always disputed and changing.³³⁶ Therefore, as we can see, ‘ancestry’ cannot always be a basic feature for an ethnic group for it is also a social construction. In addition, many ancient historians and classicists are now articulating “fluidity and fixity” as characteristics of ancient ethnicity and cultural identities.³³⁷

³³¹ Ronald Cohen, “Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology.” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 7 (1978): 379-403.

³³² Richard H. Thompson, *Theories of ethnicity: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Greenwood, 1989), 8.

³³³ Yang, *From Ethnic Studies*, 44.

³³⁴ Rajah Gangulu (ed.), *Ethnic Conflicts*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), xviii.

³³⁵ Yang, *From Ethnic Studies*, 46.

³³⁶ Cf. Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 20.

³³⁷ Buell, *Why This Race?*, 20.

3.2.2.3 *The instrumentalist approach*

An instrumentalist approach differs from primordialist and constructivist in that it views ethnicity as an instrument or strategic tool to gain resources. It is also a means of political mobilization for advancing group interests.³³⁸ Instrumentalist approach is well explained by Anthony Smith who argues that:

Instrumentalist approach “came to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, in the United States in the debate about (white) ethnic persistence in what was supposed to have been an effective melting pot.” The approach sought to explain such persistence as the result of the community leaders’ actions, “who used their cultural groups as sites of mass mobilization and as constituencies in their competition for power and resources, because they found them more effective than social classes.”³³⁹

As Hutchinson and Smith comment, the instrumentalists treat ethnicity as a social, political, and cultural resource for different interests and group’s status. One of the central ideas of the instrumentalists is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity, and the ability of individuals to ‘cut and mix’ from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to forge their own individual or group identities.³⁴⁰

However, as Philip Yang observes people assign one ethnicity over another because of the utility or cost of such affiliation. But not all ethnic choices are rational and materialistic. Some people assign an ethnic affiliation not for material gains, rewards, or access to resources and services, rather for psychological satisfaction, which includes emotional fulfilment, social attachment or recreational pleasure.³⁴¹ This type of ethnic option is thus symbolic but not material or rational. Nevertheless, as for primordialist and constructivist, instrumentalist approach also has its critics. The approach has been criticized for having largely defined ethnic groups in terms of interests, which are materials and rationales, and fails to take seriously the ancestral or the sociobiological and cultural basis of ethnicity.

From a deconstructive and rhetorical perspective, there is a possibility to relate the instrumentalist approach to the constructivist approach. My reason for this is that the

³³⁸ See Hossea Mohammadzen, “The Causes of Ethnic Conflict in Multi-Ethnic Societies.” *World Scientific News* 42 (2016); Philip Q. Yang, *From Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 46; Rajat Gangulu (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict*, vol.1 (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), xviii.

³³⁹ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001): 54-55.

³⁴⁰ Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 8-9.

³⁴¹ Yang, *From Ethnic Studies*, 47.

instrumentalization of ethnicity is a strategy and then a strategy is construction. Therefore, I do think that instrumentalist approach can simply be seen as part of constructivist approach. Therefore, as I have indicated in the introduction of this chapter, I will be pursuing a constructivist approach. This is because as we came to see from our analysis, while we can see some ethnicities that trace their origins over several centuries, we at the same time observe the rise of new ethnicities. In addition, the category ethnicity always entails fluidity, it is always unstable and it is not always defined in the same ways in all contexts. For this reason, it is correct to sustain the constructivist approach because primordialist and even instrumentalist approach are all constructions. However, it is important at this stage before we look at theories of ethnicity, to mention the relationship between ethnicity and race. Although some sociologists do not make a great distinction between race and ethnicity.³⁴² Jan Pieterse argues that

There is no clear dividing line between race and ethnicity. The common distinction is that “race” primarily refers to somatic differences, while ethnicity refers to a combination of culture (language, religion), place (region), descent (claim to common descent), and differences often along with some degree of somatic difference: But since “race” discourse also spills over into culture, the difference is a matter of degree rather than principle.³⁴³

Others scholars in contrast maintain that the two terms are not synonymous. Robert Priest and Alvanos Nieves argue that “race” and “ethnicity” overlap although not completely. An ethnic category may not coincide with race category. For example many individuals categorized “black” within a system of racial categories (recent arrivals from Nigeria or Brazil), would not be “African American” because they lack the shared heritage that this ethnic category implies.³⁴⁴ In a similar vein, Michael Benton argues that “we need to distinguish race from ethnicity, race refers to the categorization of people, while ethnicity has to do with identification.”³⁴⁵ Thomas H. Eriksen also admits that modern genetics tends not to speak of race, because there is a greater variation within a “racial” group than there is systematic between two groups.³⁴⁶ Others scholars, however, insist that “race” is an inappropriate category to use for early Christian history, because it does not appear in surviving ancient

³⁴² Pierre van den Berghe, for example, regards race as a special case of ethnicity (Pierre v. Berghe, “Class, Race and Ethnicity in Africa.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.6 (2), (April 1983): 221-236.

³⁴³ Jan Nederven Pieterse, “Deconstructing/Reconstructing Ethnicity.” *Nations and Nationalism*, vol.3, no.3 (1997): 365-395.

³⁴⁴ Robert J. Priest and Alvano L. Nieves (eds.), *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9.

³⁴⁵ Michael Banton, *Racial and Ethnic Competition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 117.

³⁴⁶ Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 4.

Mediterranean texts. They however, consider “ethnicity” as a suitable category for analysis of Mediterranean antiquity.³⁴⁷ Nonetheless, this study sustains the view that the categories “race” and “ethnicity” although they function together, are not synonymous. “Race” has to do with categorization of a particular group, while “ethnicity” has to do more with identification of a particular group, it is fluid and it may be constructed and reconstructed.

In biblical perspective, “race” is a concept absent from the biblical world. Janell W. Paris argues that the idea of “race” developed in piecemeal fashion, emerged first in sixteenth century Europe, North America, and South America as an informal ideology that legitimated slavery and oppression of Africans and indigenous people.³⁴⁸ According to this view, “race” is a human construction, and “black” is a racial category, a symbol for slavery unintelligent, whom many people still take for granted today. In her book entitled “Why this New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity,” Denise Buell intentionally uses the two terms (race/ethnicity) interchangeably though she thinks they are not synonyms. However, despite of the fact that “ethnicity” and “race” are modern concepts, she nevertheless opts for the notion of “race” because according to her “ethnicity” cannot be understood without reference to “race” insofar as it is a term coined in the mid-twentieth century specifically as an alternative to biologically based understanding of “race.”³⁴⁹

Hence, the term “race” must be deconstructed and other racialized interpretations such as Genesis 9: 18-28, that attribute the curse of Canaan to the black people. Fortunately, as Brett says, contextual and cultural hermeneutics have been developed in the Third World as a form of resistance to that hegemonic Western theology and exegesis.³⁵⁰ The black writers such as W.E.B. DuBois and Toni Morrison have taken up the critique of whiteness as a form of racial privilege. So, though the category “race” can indeed also have been used by her as she does, my focus is the category “ethnicity” since it leads the main question posed in this study whereas “race” is not.

³⁴⁷ For this quotation, see Denise Kimber Buell, *Why this New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 14.

³⁴⁸ Janell W. Paris, “Race: Critical Thinking and Transformative Possibilities,” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith* (eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvano L. Nieves; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 19-32.

³⁴⁹ Buell, *Why this New Race*, 17.

³⁵⁰ For this quotation see Mark G. Brett, “Interpreting Ethnicity: Method, Hermeneutics, Ethics,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996): 3-24.

Therefore, if we relate this with Acts 6 we might see how the author of Acts constructs its implied audience. The implied audience is most probably Hellenist owing to the “othering” of Jewish leadership and the positive connotations given to the Hellenists and to models such as Stephen. It cannot be excluded that there might have been Jews as part of the Hellenistic oriented implied audience since scholarship has shown that there was more integration of Jews and Gentiles that writings such as Acts allows for; it cannot be excluded that there were Jewish Hellenistic sympathisers who have voluntarily associated with the Hellenists and would therefore also have been negatively orientated towards their own leadership. The construction that the author of Acts made however demarcates between Hellenists and Hebrews and it indeed reflects a hierarchy between Jews and Hellenists and a gendered hierarchy. If I can bring the instrumentalists and the constructivists here in interaction with each other, this dichotomy leads to hierarchization or superioritization as a strategy of supersessionism where the superior dominate the inferior. And this is what my analysis will demonstrate, I will show how this combination of constructivist and instrumentalizing in the making of ethnicity work in the analysis of chapter. In the following I will look at the causes of ethnicity.

3.2.3 The Causes of Ethnic conflict

In the recent past, there have been many examples of ethnic conflicts around the world.³⁵¹ The conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, Christians and Muslims in Central Africa Republic, Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria, Flemish and Wallonians in Belgium, Israelis and Palestinians in Middle East for just to quote a few. However, it appears that certain countries are open to ethnic conflicts, while others experience none. As Hossen Mohammadzen argues, in developed countries conflict was low and in the developing severe. The developing countries manage ethnic conflict by participation. Their policies of justice show that equality is the best way to solve this kind of problem.³⁵² But this does not mean that ethnic conflicts are exclusively in developing countries because they occur everywhere in the world, in Africa, in Europe, and in America as well. However, the political sociologists and political scientists refer to the concept of ethnic war as a myth, because they think, “the root causes of ethnic conflict do not involve ethnicity, but rather institutional, political, and economic factors.”³⁵³ These can be namely the cultural, political and economic factors, as the case of

³⁵¹ Cf. page 1, the introduction to the study.

³⁵² Mohammadzen, “The Causes of Ethnic Conflict,” 156.

³⁵³ Mohammadzen, “The Causes of Ethnic Conflict,” 158.

Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan for instance to name just a few. In addition, we may add the discrimination or marginalization, inequality and injustice which are also some important causal factors. Hutchinson and Smith point out that “when economic inequalities are superimposed on ranked ethnic groups, severe conflict often results, especially when societies are undergoing rapid industrialization.”³⁵⁴

From a deconstructionist viewpoint, several events, practices, discourses would in a pluralistic manner affect (effect) ethnic conflict, and it is difficult to pinpoint “exact causes.” Countering the argument of the author here with the “root causes” it will be possible to argue that institutions quite often produce and reinforce ethnic boundaries. In most of the institutions, it is difficult to appoint a foreigner than a citizen in a permanent position despite the propaganda against xenophobia. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that it is not only these factors per se that lead to ethnic conflict, but the political ideology and economic goals of international actors, regardless whether these actors are states or ethnic groups.³⁵⁵

Therefore, following the discussion of ethnicity so far, it may be possible to say that the category ethnicity can no longer be seen as a fixed and rigid demarcation of a group of people. In fact, it should be seen as a product of identity formation but with a focus on the collective. So although categories such as gender, class or ethnicity all assist in structuring the process of identity formation, these categories are not fixed, and each of them allow for change and modification. However, to avoid the pitfalls of homogeneity and replication of the power relations a recognition of identity formation, would bring my construction of ethnicity within the wider field of identity formation, should be seen within the framework of discursivity. As such it does not regard ethnicity as a given, a datum, with essential proprieties and a group of people that can be carefully demarcated as belonging together. So, not disregarding, how is then structured also by regionality, nationalhood, kinship, language, customs, and conversions, lifestyle and embodiment, the discursivity of these constituents have to be taken into account allowing thereby to recognize the relations of power at play in “othering,” in “consolidating,” in “excluding and including,” in privileging,” and “marginalizing.”

³⁵⁴ See Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 3.

³⁵⁵ Mohammadzen, “The Causes of Ethnic Conflict,” 165.

3.2.4 Ethnicity in the Early Christianity

In her interesting book entitled “Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity” Denise Kimber Buell argued that “ethnic reasoning” was the way that Christians defined themselves in terms of ethnic group. She pointed out that “Ethnic reasoning” help us to explain early Christian self-definition to think both how we understand the relationship between “Christians” and “Jews” in Roman antiquity, and how we understand early Christian participation in ancient ways of thinking about identity and difference. She goes on to assert that “ethnic reasoning” offered Christians both a way to define themselves relative to “outsiders” and to compete with other “insiders.”³⁵⁶ Buell does not make the difference between “race” and “ethnicity.” By using race interchangeably with ethnicity, Buell’s argument is that race/ethnicity does not mark the dividing line between Jews and Christians. Christians depicted Christianness as having an “essence” (a fixed content) that can be acquired and the conversion is seen as a transformation of one’s ethnicity and the restoration of one’s identity, and this transformation as available to all, Christians universalized this ethnic racial transformation.³⁵⁷ Almost in the same strategy as Buell is Paul Trebilco. In his writing³⁵⁸ in which he investigated how the NT authors referred to members of communities to whom they were writing and how would these members have referred to each other, He pointed out that the Self-designations by a group (insiders & outsiders) have an impact on the group identity. Trebilco’s contribution resides in that it enables us to see the significance of various facets of early Christian identity, and how it is constructed and asserted but not fixed. In a similar view, Daniel Boyarin, a Jewish scholar, correctly suggested that the border between Judaism and Christianity has been historically constructed, and the notion of identity is achieved. It is not given by birth, history, language and geographical location and this was the “*novum*” that produced religion, having an impact overall system of identities within the Mediterranean world.³⁵⁹ The implication is that “Jews” and “Christians” identities were fluid in the early Christianity, and that Christianity was a construct.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ Buell, *Why This New Race*, ix.

³⁵⁷ Buell, *Why This New Race*, 9.

³⁵⁸ Paul Trebilco, *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁵⁹ Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), xiv, 10.

³⁶⁰ Cf. Mary C. Boy, “Turn It and Turn It Again: The Vital Contribution of Krister Stendahl to the Jewish-Christian Relations.” *J E S*, vol.51, no.2 (2016): 281-296.

One of the elements often neglected on discussions on the construction of identity is gender. It is from the perspective that one should also take notice of Schüssler Fiorenza's notion of kyriarchal relations. Schüssler, leader in gender, argues that kyriarchal relations of domination are built on elite male property rights on the exploitation, dependency, inferiority, and obedience of wo/men who signify all those subordinate.³⁶¹ All these help us to see how and in what extent early Christian communities constructed, developed, and asserted their identity in various social, cultural and religious contexts.

Therefore, taking Acts 6:1-7 as a reflection of a conflictual situation in the early Christian community, we may argue that a rhetorical and deconstructivist critical approach can help us to understand the relationship between Hebrews and Hellenists in the early Christian Jerusalem community, and to dismantle the opposition Hebrews and Hellenists by showing that the difference between Hebrews and Hellenists centred on a constructivist ethnicity was the greatest challenge faced that early Christian community, which culminated to the change of the leadership within that community. In the following, I will look at the second category, which is supersessionism.

3.3 Supersessionism

After discussing the term 'ethnicity' in the preceding section, I will here look at our second term, which is supersessionism. As ethnicity, supersessionism is important in this study because it helps us to understand the relationships between Israel and the church, and how Jewish ethnic identity is constructed in the church. However, it is important to note that my purpose in this section is not to offer a systematic presentation or an analysis of the doctrine of supersessionism. Instead, I will look at the five theories of supersessionism as discussed by Kendall Soulen and Michael Vlach. My reason is that the first has moved the discussion further by drawing a distinction between "economic supersessionism" and "punitive supersessionism" and the latter I found that he has more analysed the term "supersessionism". I will also look at another theory "post-Supersessionism", which contrasts with supersessionism. I will need to problematize the term supersessionism, that is, will look at how that category has been made, what were the politics behind the making of this term, and what are the assumptions that supersessionism functions on. I will finally bring Romans 9-11

³⁶¹Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Introduction: Exploring the Intersections of Race, Gender, Status, and Ethnicity in Early Christian studies," in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies* (eds. Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza Studies; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010): 1-23.

into relationship with Acts 6:1-7 in order to problematize the use of the categories, ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership.

3.3.1 Problematizing supersessionism

I would like to start with Fr  d  rique Apffel-Marglin because he provides me with an advanced argument on where supersessionism comes from. In his writing entitled “Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World” Marglin wrote the following:

All the natives’ deities and spirits are labelled “*demonios*” or demons. All of Spaniards who arrived in the “Indies” knew these laws, which in any case were almost natural for them due to the affirmation of the “Truth” of Catholicism. The norm was to destroy temples and bring down everything that smelled of idolatrous practices. Over the ruins of the religious pre-Hispanic past one had to build Catholicism.³⁶²

In this quote, Marglin states a fundamental example of the ‘religious supersessionism’ in which all the Indian native deities and spirit pre-Hispanic were rendered obsolete and mistaken by the Spaniards, in order to build the Catholicism. As such, Catholicism has superseded the native deities. The same author, tells another example of supersessionism in Agriculture in Peru, where all the previous agricultural practices were rendered obsolete and backward by the event of scientific agriculture of Europe at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.³⁶³ In this sense, the agricultural practices of the pre-scientific have been replaced or superseded by the scientific agriculture of the Europe.

From a Sociological point of view, with a belief of late modern society in secularist myth of replacement, the technological assistance for coping with the subsequent crisis have superseded the faith of earlier ages in God, fate, or superhuman powers.³⁶⁴ The idea behind this view is that the success does not derive from God, instead depends on the risk-awareness. But what is supersessionism?

According to Clark Williamson, the term “‘supersessionism’ comes from two Latin words: *supra* (on or upon) and *sedere* (to sit), as when one person sits on the chair of another

³⁶² Fr  d  rique Apffel-Marglin, *Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 100.

³⁶³ Apffel-Marglin, *Subversive Spitualities*, 94.

³⁶⁴ Niels H. Gregersen, “Beyond Secularist Supersessionism: Risk, Religion and Technology.” *Ecotheology* 11, no.2 (2006): 137-158.

displacing the latter.”³⁶⁵ Marglin, elaborates that supersessionism’ refers to the Roman Catholic Church doctrine stating that the event of Christ has superseded, or rendered obsolete and mistaken, traditions antedating that events, such as Judaism, and what Christians call “paganism, which was named “animism” by a later secular tradition. From a Christian point of view, members of these traditions stand in need of instruction.³⁶⁶ In a similar sense, Aaron Hughes observes that Muhammad and the subsequent creators of the Islam foundation narrative made claim that “Islam superseded both Judaism and Christianity.”³⁶⁷ According to Islam, the Quran represents the pure unadulterated account of revelation and it has always been immune from textual distortion. Islam asserts that various mistakes crept into the Old and New Testaments with the result that these two texts ceased to remain reliable source of divine revelation. It is for this reason that God sent Muhammad to the Arabs to restore the original uncorrupted version of earlier revelation.³⁶⁸ We may conclude from this that Islam’s belief is a claim to a superiority based on a supersessionist argument, which is far from being true.

Supersessionism also called “replacement theology” is the Christian belief that the New Testament church is now the true Israel that replaces or supersedes the Jewish people.³⁶⁹ According to this view, the Jewish people are thought to have been replaced by Christians. The Jews are no longer God’s chosen people and that God has rejected them because of their rejection of Jesus. Ethnic Israel is abandoned by God in favour of the new Israel, the church.³⁷⁰ According to this teaching, God chose the Jewish people after the fall of Adam in order to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Saviour. After Christ came, however, the special role of the Jewish people came to an end and its place was taken by the church, the new Israel.³⁷¹ When comparing these definitions, it appears that ‘supersessionism is based on two key assumptions: 1) Israel has then accomplished its mission and will never

³⁶⁵ Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993), 268.

³⁶⁶ Apffel-Marglin, *Subversive Spirituality*, 92.

³⁶⁷ Aaron W. Hughes, *Abrahamic Religions: On the Uses and Abuses of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37.

³⁶⁸ Cf. Hughes, *Abrahamic Religion*, 37.

³⁶⁹ See Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009), 13; Kayko Driedger Hesslein, *Dual Citizenship: Two Natures Christologies and the Jewish Jesus* (London: Bloomsburg, 2015), 13; Frederique Apffel-Marglin, *Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 91; Bruce Longenecker, “On Israel’s God and God’s Israel: Assessing Supersessionism in Paul.” *JTS*, vol. 58, no.1 (2007): 26-46; Maren Tova Linett, *Modernism, Feminism, and Jewishness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62.

³⁷⁰ Bruce Longenecker, “On Israel’s God and God’s Israel: Assessing Supersessionism in Paul.” *JTS*, vol. 58, no. 1 (2007): 26-46.

³⁷¹ Kendall R. Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 1-2.

again possess any function or role apart from the church. 2) The church now is the new Israel that has superseded Israel as the true people of God.³⁷²

Indeed, the issue of the relationship between Israel and the church can be traced back to the apostolic era in the first century of the church. However, the debate or the discussion concerning the doctrine of supersessionism is more recent.³⁷³ Two factors have greatly contributed to the rise of supersessionism, namely: the failed second Jewish revolt against the Romans under Bar-Kokhba in A.D. 132-135, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 and in 135, which were viewed by the church as God's judgment against Israel.³⁷⁴ As Vlach notes, these two destructions, especially the one in A.D. 135, caused many in the church to believe that God had permanently rejected Israel and that the church was the new Israel.³⁷⁵ These two events contributed not only to the rise of supersessionism, but they also contributed to the declining Jewish influence in the church, and affected in the same time the leadership of the church. In addition, the decree of the Roman leader Hadrian who forbade Jews from entering Jerusalem after rebellion, affected significantly the leadership of the Jerusalem church.³⁷⁶ During this period, Jewish influence in the church decreased and became irrelevant. So, several political, historical and cultural developments converged that contributed to the belief that the church had permanently superseded Israel as the people of God.³⁷⁷ In addition, the recent events, such as "the Holocaust" says Kendal Soulen, have pushed the Christian church "to consider anew its relation to the God of Israel and the Israel of God in light of the Scriptures and the gospel about Jesus."³⁷⁸

3.3.2 Theorizing supersessionism

Scholars have identified at least five forms of theories for the term "supersessionism": 1) Punitive supersessionism or retributive supersessionism,³⁷⁹ 2) Economic supersessionism,³⁸⁰ 3) Structural supersessionism,³⁸¹ 4) Dispensationism,³⁸² and 5) Post-Supersessionism.³⁸³

³⁷² Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 27.

³⁷³ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 13.

³⁷⁴ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 44, 46.

³⁷⁵ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 47.

³⁷⁶ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 44.

³⁷⁷ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 42.

³⁷⁸ Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, x.

³⁷⁹ See Kendall R. Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009).

3.3.2.1 Punitive supersessionism or “retributive supersessionism”

According to Vlach, “punitive supersessionism” emphasizes Israel’s disobedience and punishment by God as the reason for its displacement as the people of God. The Jews are then being punished for having rejected Jesus and his claim for his divinity. This form of supersessionism holds that the rejection of Christ both eliminates Israel from God’s covenant love and provokes divine retribution.”³⁸⁴ In almost a similar sense, Kendall Soulen adds that punitive supersessionism is the more negative category in that Israel has been superseded because of its sinfulness. That is, the Jews rejected God’s action in Christ and God in turn rejects and punishes them by creating the church in order to take their place.³⁸⁵ As we might see, this form of supersessionism has as objective the exclusion and elimination of Jewish ethnic in the church. From a rhetorical and deconstructivist perspective, Israel (old and sinful) is seen as a category separated and distinct from the church (new and true people of God). In this sense, the relationship between Israel and church is that of binary oppositions (Israel/church; Jews/Gentiles; sinfulness/spiritual; old/new).

3.3.2.2 Economic supersessionism

If “punitive supersessionism” is founded on sinfulness, “economic supersessionism” in contrast is based on obsolescence. Economic supersessionism is the view that “carnal Israel’s history is providentially ordered from the outset to be taken up into the spiritual church.”³⁸⁶ Then, Christ’s advent “brings about the obsolescence of carnal Israel and inaugurates the age of the spiritual Israel.”³⁸⁷ It is called “economic” because Israel as an ethnic entity had a transient significance, in that its role in the economy of redemption is to prepare for the salvation of its spiritual and universal form.

³⁸⁰ Cf. Kendall R. Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996; Kaykio Driedge Hesslein, *Dual Citizenship: Two Natures Christologies and Jewish Jesus* (London: Bloomsburg Publishing, 2015)

³⁸¹ See Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009; Kendall R. Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

³⁸² Kaykio Driedge Hesslein, *Dual Citizenship: Two Natures Christologies and Jewish Jesus* (London: Bloomsburg Publishing, 2015).

³⁸³ Joel Willitts, “The Re-Newed Perspective: Post-Supersessionist Approach to the New Testament.” *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016), 377-380.

³⁸⁴ Cf. Michael J. Vlach, “Various Forms of Replacement Theology.” *TMSJ*, vol. 20, no.1 (2009): 57-69.

³⁸⁵ Soulen, *The God of Israel*, 30.

³⁸⁶ Soulen, *The God of Israel*, 181.

³⁸⁷ Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 29.

Then, everything that characterized the economy of salvation in its Israelite form becomes obsolete and replaced by its ecclesial form.³⁸⁸ Driedger Hesslein, a little more explicit, elaborates that “supersessionism is the Christian belief that the Christian church replaces the Jewish people because the arrival of Jesus superseded the covenant that God established with the Jewish people through Abraham, often justified by an appeal to Hebrews 8: 6-13.”³⁸⁹ In this view, Israel is no longer necessary to prove the trustworthiness of God’s promise since God now has the church.³⁹⁰ Therefore, the economic supersessionists believe that because of the arrival of Christ, the Jewish covenant with God became obsolete. As we have said for “punitive supersessionism” from a deconstructive point of view, “economic supersessionism” represents a relationship of duality oppositions between (Jewish covenant/Christians covenant; economy of salvation in Israelite form/ economy of salvation in spiritual and universal form.) It is simply an antithetical relationship rooted in dualistic patterns.³⁹¹

3.3.2.3 Structural supersessionism

Whereas punitive and economic supersessionism are concerned with doctrinal perspectives, structural supersessionism is more of a hermeneutical approach that concerns how the standard canonical narrative as a whole has been perceived.³⁹² According to Kendall Soulen, “structural supersessionism refers to the narrative logic of the standard model whereby it renders the Hebrew Scriptures largely indecisive for shaping Christian conviction about how God’s work as Consummator and a Redeemer engage humankind in universal and enduring ways.”³⁹³ The standard canonical model is constituted of: 1) God’s intention to create the first parents; 2) the fall; 3) Christ’s incarnation and the inauguration of the church; and 4) the final consummation. This standard canonical model tells how God engaged Adam and Eve as consummators, and how God’s consummating plan for them was disrupted at the fall. The foreground of the standard model first emphasizes God’s engagement with human creation, and second, the foreground of this model completely neglects the Hebrew Scriptures with exception of Genesis 1-3.³⁹⁴ In a more explicit sense, “structural supersessionism” has more to do with the standard narrative that Christians constructed on the basis of Scriptures from

³⁸⁸ See Terence L. Donaldson, “Supersessionism in Early Christianity.” *Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* (2009): 1-27.

³⁸⁹ Hesslein, *Dual Citizenship*, 13.

³⁹⁰ Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 31

³⁹¹ Donaldson, “Supersessionism in Early Christianity,” 15.

³⁹² See Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 31.

³⁹³ Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 31.

³⁹⁴ Soulen, *The God of Israel and The Christian Theology*, 31.

the fall of humankind in Adam to its redemption in Christ, without assigning any essential role to Israel and its history. In this sense, Israel and its place in the biblical history of salvation is simply ignored rather than seen as having been taken over by the church.³⁹⁵ Accordingly, this had led certain authors to point out the negligence from the church fathers concerning Israel's role in God's plan as explained in the Old Testament. For example, Vlach disagrees with Soulen's assertion that the church fathers completely neglected the vast majority of Old Testament witness. For him, the church fathers did indeed grapple with the Old Testament on many occasions and they linked a future of Israel with the Old Testament promises. Nevertheless, he agrees with him that there is a lack of treatment from the church fathers concerning Israel's role in God plan as explained in the Old Testament.³⁹⁶ As Driedger Hesslein writes, structural supersessionism describes the narrative persistent in Christian story of God that completely ignores the contribution of the Hebrew Scriptures.³⁹⁷

However, there is a variation within the supersessionism. Indeed, while some hold to strong form of supersessionism in which there is no special significance granted to Israel as a nation, not all supersessionists affirm that form of the supersessionism. Some supersessionists, which Michael Vlach calls 'moderate supersessionists,' while holding that the church is now a new Israel that has superseded Israel assert that ethnic Israel, in some sense, still has a special place and future hope in God's plan.³⁹⁸

3.3.2.4 Dispensationism

There is also another form of supersessionism called "dispensationism" or "non-supersessionism" that holds that Israel will be restored in the future dispensation. The non-supersessionists, says Driedger Hesslein, adopt a singular approach to reversing supersessionist theology, an approach that focuses exclusively on covenant and the concept of Israel. They have sought to overcome supersessionism by reconciling the differences between Jewish and Christian interpretation of God's action in history.³⁹⁹ The theological argument of non-supersessionism is that 1) the New Testament keeps Israel and the church distinct; 2) the New Testament affirms a future restoration for national Israel; 3) salvific unity between Jews and Gentiles does not cancel historical and functional distinction of the two

³⁹⁵ Terence L. Donaldson, *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations* (London: Baylor University Press, 2010), 9.

³⁹⁶ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 32.

³⁹⁷ Hesslein, *Dual Citizenship*, 14.

³⁹⁸ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 33.

³⁹⁹ Hesslein, *Dual Citizenship*, 6.

groups; and 4) the new covenant is to be fulfilled with both Israel and the church.⁴⁰⁰ This form of supersessionism can be considered as one of the effects of deconstructionist approach inasmuch as it overthrows the supersessionist assumptions.

3.3.2.5 Post-Supersessionism

According to Joel Willitts, “Post-Supersessionism” is a reading strategy that is characterized by intentionality in reading the New Testament in order to cultivate a habit of the church where Jewish identity is cultivated and not erased. Post-Supersessionist reading of the New Testament is characterized by four key assumptions⁴⁰¹:

- 1) God’s covenant relationship with the Jewish people is present and future;
- 2) Israel has a distinctive role and priority in God’s redemptive activity through Messiah Jesus;
- 3) By God’s design and calling, there is a continuing distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the church today;
- 4) For Jews, distinction takes shape fundamentally through Torah observance as the God of Israel and the Messiah Jesus.

As Dispensation form, Post-Supersessionist strives to read the New Testament in seeking to deconstruct the Christian tradition that the church has superseded the Jewish people by celebrating the diversity (a circumcised/uncircumcised), fighting culture hegemony, and support diverse ethnic expression of the faith in Jesus whether they are Jews or Gentiles.⁴⁰²

Therefore, in light of the preceding, I will argue that the seeds of supersessionism can already be detected in Acts 6. I will in the following section discuss Romans 9-11 to further illustrate the problem biblical discourse poses to us, namely that these chapters can be interpreted as evidence of how some biblical passages deny supersessionism, whereas others again appear to cultivated the discrimination and exclusion that goes hand in hand with supersessionism.

⁴⁰⁰ Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel*, 32.

⁴⁰¹ See Joel Willitts, “The Re-Newed Perspective: Post-Supersessionism Approach in the New Testament,” *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016), 377.

⁴⁰² Willitts, “The Re-Newed Perspective,” 378.

3.3.3 Romans 9-11

It is important to indicate that I use Romans here because of my theoretical issues and discussions in order to problematize the use of categories ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership in Early Christianity. Indeed, the letter of Romans, particularly chapters 9-11 is the most suited example of my discussion on supersessionism in the New Testament and tells more about the relationship between Jews and Christians and the issue of Israel's salvation. The early Christian Roman community was truly an example of hybridation, since it clearly consisted of both Jewish and Hellenist groups. Without succumbing to mirror reading, this can clearly be seen from the letter to the Romans, although the so-called implied audience of the letter itself was apparently Gentile Christians. Paul's concern is that they (Gentile Christians) have become proud in their salvation to the point of despising their Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ. He warns them not to be arrogant but to fear (God-fearers) who are indebted to the Israelites who are the original recipients of God's spiritual blessings which they only recently came to share.⁴⁰³ But, on the other hand, Paul also is profoundly troubled about the opposition to the gospel by his fellows Jews. The threefold attestation of Paul's sorrow in (Rom 9: 1) concern the continued unbelief of many of his fellows Jews, and this calls into question the power of the gospel concerning God's impartial grace expressed in Christ, which should come to Jews first and then to Greeks.⁴⁰⁴

According to Robert Jewett, the flow of Paul's argument is found in the three following assertions that God's promise has not failed (Rom 9:6), that God has not abandoned Israel (Rom 11:1), and that in the end "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26).⁴⁰⁵ I will briefly deal with these issues as described by Jewett.

3.3.3.1 *God's promise has not failed (Rom 9:6)*

Robert Jewett has suggested that in saying that "God's promise has not failed" Paul appeared to build on this tradition of Israel's having been chosen by God as his children. This is definitively confirmed by (9:4), which makes it clear that *υιοθεσία* (sonship), which had earlier been promised to believers, belongs first and foremost to Israel.⁴⁰⁶ He continues that when Paul employs the present tense verb "who are Israelite," he evokes the blessings (v.4b)

⁴⁰³ See Jonathan Kim, *God, Israel, and Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9-11* (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 114.

⁴⁰⁴ Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 556.

⁴⁰⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 573.

⁴⁰⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 562.

that were given to the people in the past and reinforces the abiding validity of their place as the people of God. The term “Israel” or “Israelite” which occur twelve times in chaps 9-11 in contrast to “Jews” in the earlier chapters are therefore deliberately chosen by Paul to evoke his people’s sense of being God’s elect, the covenant people of the one God.⁴⁰⁷ According to Jewett, the point of the denial is not “the impossibility of God’s word failure, but on avoiding a potential misunderstanding of Paul’s grief as justifying the inference that God’s word had in fact failed.”⁴⁰⁸ However, a distinction has to be made between what this Roman community originally consisted of (a mixture of Jews and Gentiles) and the addressed of the letter. It is true that “Jews” or “Israelites” are indeed God’s chosen people, but he told this to his implied audience.

3.3.3.2 *God has not abandoned Israel (Rom 11:1)*

Augustine, quoted by Gregory Lee, asserted that:

the Jews at the time of Jesus has already been adumbrated, except for having failed to recognize Christ’s divinity and therefore put him to death...Contemporary Jews are like blind librarians, perceiving books that bring credibility to the Christian message, while failing to recognize the meaning of their own Scriptures. God has thus preserved the Jews for the express purpose of building up the church.⁴⁰⁹

Against this Augustine’s assertion, Paul says that God has not rejected his people (11:1-10). In his discussion of *παράπτωμα* (stumbling), he asks the question whether that stumbling caused Israel to fall and lose in the race completely. Paul’s response is that Israel’s *παράπτωμα* served as a springboard for the Gentiles to be saved but eventually God’s purpose is to save Israel also. Israel’s transgression is only temporary but she will soon catch up in the race toward the goal line.⁴¹⁰ As Beale and Carson argue, Paul already has made it clear that Israel’s “fall” is not final, that God will finally accept them again Romans 11:11-16.⁴¹¹ Abbah Zabda also in the same direction said that “although he had sinned, he was still called an Israelite.” Their experience, sooner or later, permitted them, some secretly and some openly, to renounce the vows imposed upon them by the crusaders or the Inquisition. Upon return to Judaism, they were seen as Jews who have sinned, with conversion as

⁴⁰⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 562.

⁴⁰⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 573.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Gregory W. Lee, “Israel between the Two Cities: Augustine’s Theology of the Jews and Judaism.” *J ECS*, vol.24, no.4 (2016): 523-551.

⁴¹⁰ Kim, *God, Israel and the Gentiles*, 137.

⁴¹¹ G. K. Beale and D.A. Carson (eds.) *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapid: Baker Academic, 2007), 672.

experience not present reality.⁴¹² What we can see here is that Paul is indeed battling against supersessionism desiring to see the Gentiles incorporated within the real Israel, that is, an Israel that is universally included.

3.3.3.3 *All Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26)*

As Jonathan Kim has noted, “the identity of *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ* (all Israel) has been hotly debated, but it should be clearly understood to denote “historic ethnic Israel,” Israel as a whole but not necessary including every individual Israel.”⁴¹³ Some interpreters have proposed that “all Israel” refers to the elect believers, whether Jews or Gentiles.⁴¹⁴ According to Robert Jewett, it seems most likely that Paul’s mystery was believed to include all members of the house of Israel, who without exception, would be saved. There is also nothing in this context that supports an interpretation of “most, with a few exceptions” because v.27 goes on to argue that “all” of Israel’s sins will be taken away and v.32 concludes that God will show mercy “to all.”⁴¹⁵

From the discussion above, it appears that in all of the earlier references to Israel in Romans, the ethnic Israel is in view. Paul does not cast aside his affirmation of the priority of Israel: salvation remains “for the Jews first, and also for the Greek (Gentiles).”⁴¹⁶ With regards to the election, the Jews are still children of God for the sake of their ancestors, for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. However, concerning the question whether Paul was a supersessionist or not, J Lionel North on one hand, suggested that the denial may “imply that some Jews believed that in identifying Jesus as the Messiah and preaching this to the Gentiles, Paul had severed himself from his Jewish heritage and lost all affection for Jews and Judaism.”⁴¹⁷ Boyarin, in the other hand, argues “For Paul, the Christian community stands in continuity with and not against the historical Israel. There has been, moreover, no rejection of Israel owing to the faults or flaws, as in some other New Testament theologies.”⁴¹⁸ In addition, Isaac Oliver has also pointed out “it is now widely accepted that Paul did not teach a replacement theology in which the Jewish people lost their divine

⁴¹² For this quotation, see Zev Garber, “Perpetual Dilemma.” *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016), 393-401.

⁴¹³ Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 138.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 701.

⁴¹⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 702.

⁴¹⁶ Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 673.

⁴¹⁷ For this quotation see, Robert, Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 557.

⁴¹⁸ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 22.

election for rejecting Jesus as their Christ.”⁴¹⁹ It is clear from these scholars that, Paul did not assert that once the Gentiles accepted the Gospel of Jesus, God has finished with Jewish people. In contrast, salvation and restoration for Israel remained in the Pauline purview.⁴²⁰ It is then correct to argue that the Bible does not endorse supersessionism. However, the tendency of the NT scholars today is both: those who replicate supersessionism by favouring a Pauline interpretation and neglecting to study those who resisted Paul or wanted to maintain their Jewishness. So, despite of Paul’s constant sparring with and about Jews, he cannot be accused of supersessionism as modern scholarship attempted to demonstrate. But it would be safe to see Paul as expanding the identity of Jewishness.

However, one of the problems is the way in which we think or we construct in homogenous terms “Jews” and “Gentiles,” two separate ethnic identities with particular identity markers and boundaries. This dichotomizing always lead to hierarchization or superioritization, a process of construction where one will be located in a superior position and the other in a inferior position. This is the structure of supersessionism, where these two constructed identities are placed in a context where the superior replaces the other. This is why Paul without using or thinking of these categories, struggled and wrestled with the problematic nature of these constructions and although he might have experienced that there were Jews who thought more liberally and open-minded and others who maintained exclusivism. However, although he did not succeed the superiority vs inferiority matrix (Jews are superior because they have been privileged by God), this is the problem he struggled with and the solution he wanted to provide was that non-Jews be integrated into being Jewish, but without identity markers such as circumcision.

To sum up this category, we might say that “supersessionism” with respect to Jews and Christians relations has been understood as referring to the idea that the Christian church has superseded Israel as God’s people, and that Israel has been rendered obsolete and has been cut off Scriptures losing all legitimacy. From a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, “supersessionism” represents an antithetical relationship between Israel and the church, a relation characterized by the duality oppositions (old or Jewish covenant/new or Christians covenant; economy of salvation in Israelite form/ economy of salvation in spiritual and universal form; Israel as sinful people/church as the true people of God). In this sense,

⁴¹⁹ Isaac, W. Oliver, “Messianic Jews and the Early Jewish Followers of Jesus.” *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016): 367-375

⁴²⁰ Oliver, “Messianic Jews,” 372.

Christian supersessionist doctrine is merely a reversal of the Jewish messianic expectations. The Christians by asserting that the church has superseded Israel as the true people of God reverse all the promises made by God for Israel who are the first heirs of these promises. However, this study does not support the view that the church has superseded Israel as the true people of God. I therefore argue that although the Bible does not endorse supersessionism as modern scholarship has attempted to demonstrate, this study asserts that the first traces of supersessionism may be found in Acts 6:17.

3.4 Leadership

There is a relationship between ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership. Leadership and ideologies play important role in the scenario of emergent ethnicity, and supersessionism often affects the leadership of the church. In the case of Acts 6:1-7, we may see the problem of ethnical discrimination between Hebrew widows and Hellenist widows, and its development into supersessionism. We may also detect some seeds for supersessionism in Acts concerning the leadership where the Hellenist leaders came to occupy the position of leadership in the early Christian community. We will come back to this later in our discussion for leadership in early Christianity especially in Acts 15. However, before moving on, I will respectively look at the problematization of leadership, its different theories, and biblical leadership.

3.4.1 Problematizing leadership

Leadership is an ancient phenomenon. The discussion about the subject can be found in the writings of the authors such as Plato, Caesar, and Plutarch. Ralph Stogdill had noted that “Plato offered three types of leaders: 1) the philosopher statesman to rule the republic with reason and justice; 2) the military commander to defend the state and enforce its will; and 3) the businessman to provide for citizens’ material needs and satisfy their lower appetites.”⁴²¹ Leadership also is a universal human phenomenon because it occurs universally among all people regardless of cultures.⁴²² However, as John Nirenberg has argued “there is no single accepted definition of leadership. Some researchers have gone far as to say that it is impossible to define leadership in words, but people know it when they see it.”⁴²³ In fact, it is

⁴²¹ See Ralph M. Stogdill, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 17.

⁴²² Stogdill, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*, 5.

⁴²³ David V. Day “Leadership Development,” in *Encyclopaedia of Leadership*, vol. 2 (eds. George R. Goethals, Georgia J. Sorenson, and James MacGregor Burns; London: SAGE Publications, 2004): 840-844.

worth noticing that the word “leadership” did not appear until the first half of the nineteenth century in writings about political influence and control of British Parliament.⁴²⁴ In spite of this fact, many scholars have attempted to define the concept leadership. One of the earliest definitions of leadership is that of Tead (1929), who regarded “leadership” as a combination of traits that enables an individual to induce others to accomplish a given task.⁴²⁵

Ronald Goodnight takes this one-step further. For him, leadership is defined as an interactive process that provides needed guidance and direction. Leadership involves three interacting dynamic elements: a leader, a follower(s), and a situation. The leader’s role is to influence and provide direction to his/her followers and provide them needed support for theirs and the organizational’s success.⁴²⁶ James Burns conceived leadership as a “reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political and others resources, in the context of competition and conflict, in order to realize the goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers.”⁴²⁷

What is common from the two authors is that leadership is conceived as a process of interaction between the leader on one hand, and the members of the group on the other hand, for the achievement of a common objective. Case may be more correct when he maintained that “leadership is produced by a conjunction of three factors: 1) the personality traits of the leader; 2) the nature of the group and of its members; and 3) the event (change or problem) confronting the group.”⁴²⁸ The concept of personality is captured by Ralph Stogdill who regarded it as a form of influence relationship. He maintained that personality appealed to early theorists who sought to explain why some people are better able than others to exercise leadership.⁴²⁹ In a similar sense, John Nirenberg observed that the success in the leadership depends on the effectiveness. He defined “leadership effectiveness” in terms of personal influence for accomplishment of group goals and satisfaction of needs.

According to him, one inclusive definition of leadership effectiveness is “the successful exercise of personal influence by one or more people that results in accomplishing shared

⁴²⁴ Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 7.

⁴²⁵ See Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 8.

⁴²⁶ Ronald Goodnight, “Laissez-Faire Leadership,” in *Encyclopaedia of Leadership*, vol. 2 (eds. George R. Goethals, Georgia J. Sorenson, and James M. Burns; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2004): 820-823.

⁴²⁷ James M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1978), 425.

⁴²⁸ See Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 28.

⁴²⁹ Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 8.

objectives in a way that is personally satisfying to those involved.”⁴³⁰ Therefore, effective leadership depends upon the leader’s ability to solve the kinds of complex social problems that arise in organizations.⁴³¹ Nevertheless, the problem with effective leadership is that, it ignores the role of the members of the group within the success in the leadership.

However, from the above discussion on leadership, we may describe leadership as a process in which the leader motivates, inspires, influences, and transforms the members of the group to achieve a common goal. As such, the leader needs to pay attention to three other dimensions namely: 1) maintaining managerial goal emphasis and clarity; 2) having the ability to provide the necessary support for individuals to do their work and achieve their objectives; and 3) facilitating followers’ interaction with one another to create efficiencies, good feelings, and teamwork.⁴³² Therefore, if we can analyse a bit the three dimensions that I have unpacked above, we can see that the concept of leadership functions as a product of Neoliberalism, inasmuch as the ultimate goal in the “managerial goal” is not the redistribution for all, but rather for the leader’ profits. For most of cases, there is no dialectic between the group (followers) and the leader that facilitate a mutual synergy. The group often has not any say, but must execute the orders that come from above, as we will see within the different theories that I want to look at. This puts into question the dimension 3, which advocates facilitating followers’ interaction, good feeling, and teamwork.

3.4.2 Theorizing leadership

A theory is a way that attempts to understand fact. In this sense, theories of leadership attempt to explain either the factors involved in emergence of leadership or the nature of leadership and its consequences.⁴³³ Ralph Stogdill had observed that the earliest literature on leadership was concerned specifically with theoretical issues. In this context, the theorists sought to identify different types of leadership and to relate them to the functional demands of the society.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ John Nirenberg, “Leadership Effectiveness,” in *Encyclopaedia of Leadership* (eds. George R. Goethals, Georgia J. Sorenson, James M. Burns; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2004): 844-853.

⁴³¹ Michael D. Mumford “et al” (eds.), “Leadership Skills for a Changing World solving Complex Social Problems.” *The Leadership Quarterly* vol. 11, no. 1 (2000): 11-35.

⁴³² Nirenberg, “Leadership Effectiveness,” 844-853.

⁴³³ Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 26.

⁴³⁴ Stogdill, *Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, 26.

Indeed, several theories on the leadership have been proposed. However, it is not my intention here to examine all of them. Nevertheless, I will look at some of them that are currently used today.

3.4.2.1 Autocratic leadership

According to Ronald Goodnight, the autocratic leadership style thrives in highly structured, hierarchical chain-of commands environments such as the military or every bureaucratic organization.⁴³⁵ The autocratic leader exercises almost absolute power and commands strict compliance and conformity. Autocratic leaders are usually rigid in their thinking and perceptions; they have a well-defined and controlled disciplinary process with an emphasis on punishments for noncompliance.⁴³⁶

As we can see, this model of leading has little to do with teamwork, but rather the leader gives orders and others must do as they are told and listen to the leader.⁴³⁷

However, although autocratic leadership is not considered as a good model of leadership method, it is however, a preferred style in the military, police, and other similar organizations.⁴³⁸

3.4.2.2 Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership is a style of leadership in which the democratic leader places a strong emphasis on teamwork, while functioning as a facilitator to develop a mutual synergy among the group. Contrarily to autocratic leadership model, the democratic leader places a high emphasis upon rewards rather than punishment.⁴³⁹ A democratic leader requests the opinions of the group and encourages discussion to reach the consensus. This type of leadership is based on a 'team player' approach.⁴⁴⁰ In the context of political leaders, the democratic leader does not use the power for personalizing political power, but deploys the power in a rational way to influence political outcomes based on rules, procedures and democratic values.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁵ Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership," 820.

⁴³⁶ Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership," 821.

⁴³⁷ TEEC. *Christian Leadership and Management*, WB1. (Turffontein: TEEC, 2011): 2.6-2.11.

⁴³⁸ Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership," 821.

⁴³⁹ Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership," 821.

⁴⁴⁰ TEEC. *Christian Leadership & Management*, 2.6-2.11.

⁴⁴¹ *African Government Report III: Elections & The Management of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 59.

3.4.2.3 Charismatic leadership

Contrarily to autocratic and democratic leadership, Charismatic leadership is more authoritarian or more democratic. In the charismatic model of leadership, leaders are inspired leaders. They have lots of energy, and often the charismatic leaders are great orators, they can speak well, and they draw people's attention.⁴⁴² According to Stogdill, such a leader tends to sponsor causes and revolutions and is supported by charismatic authority.⁴⁴³

3.4.2.4 Transformational leader

The transformational leader is identified with change. He/she helps those in the group to make change. Therefore, this type of leader motivates the team to be effective and efficient in their tasks.⁴⁴⁴ In today's leadership challenges, the transformational leader is needed because we are living in a time of rapid change: Globalization. So, one of the practical implications of this cultural shift for leaders is the need for change.⁴⁴⁵

3.4.2.5 Laissez-Faire leadership

The French term 'laissez-faire' was originally used relative to mercantilism, and is defined in economics and politics as an economic system that functions best when there is no interference by government, and is considered a "natural" economic order that procures the maximum well-being for the individual and extends to the community.⁴⁴⁶ In the context of leadership, "laissez-faire" leadership is the type of leadership that believes in freedom of choice for the members of the group, leaving them alone so they can do, as they want. According Ronald Goodnight, there are however, double motivations for the 'laissez-faire' leadership: First, there is a belief that the members of the group (the employees) know their jobs, so leave them alone to do their jobs. Second, the leader may be a political, election-based position and may not want to exert power and control for fear of not being re-elected.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴² TEEC. *Christian Leadership and Management*, 2.6-2.11.

⁴⁴³ Stogdill, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*, 18.

⁴⁴⁴ See Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership", 821; see also TEEC. *Christian Leadership and Management*. WB 1 (Turffontein: TEEC, 2011): 2.6-2.11.

⁴⁴⁵ Overstreet, J. "Leadership," in *Global Dictionary of Theology* (eds. William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen; Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008): 482-485.

⁴⁴⁶ Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership," 820.

⁴⁴⁷ Goodnight, "Laissez-Faire Leadership," 822.

However, as it is, this kind of leadership is not good for an organization that wants to reach the fixed goal, because it can simply lead to inefficiency and disorder.

3.4.2.6 Servant leadership

It may be noteworthy that this category of leadership is different from the preceding, because it is a category apparently espoused by the church. It is a construction these days since that not only the product of the church, but even educational institutions also espouse this type of leadership. In fact, the servant leader is one of the most difficult leadership models, and is too rare in the church throughout history. This is because it has always been countercultural.⁴⁴⁸ As A. D. Clarke argues, this leadership was not only costly and self-giving, but also involved a rejection of personal glory (Phil 2: 6-8).⁴⁴⁹ Therefore, the value of this leadership model resides in that it deconstructs the notion of greatness (Mark 9: 33-37). Therefore, this type of leadership is not about using power for self-interests, but it is about serving people with humility.

3.4.3 Biblical leadership

3.4.3.1 Leadership in the Old Testament

It is worth noticing that 'leadership' in the bible, is structured within the context of God's sovereignty in the sense that all leaders are accountable to God.⁴⁵⁰ However, Block's remark is very important for any discussion concerning the leadership in the Old Testament. Indeed, Block has observed that discussion of leadership office and roles in the ancient world generally and Israel in particular is complicated for several factors. First, in ancient societies, leadership was exercised by persons playing many different roles. Second, the boundaries between these offices were not always clearly defined, and many individuals exercised more than one kind of leadership. Third, the biblical texts, in particular Pentateuch texts do not speak with one voice, the manner in which leadership was to be exercised.⁴⁵¹ In addition, the same author admits that in the Old Testament, the concept of leader is expressed by a longer series of roles for specific designations. For instance, *ro'sh* "head, leader," *rav*

⁴⁴⁸ Overstreet, "Leadership," 483.

⁴⁴⁹ Andrew, Clarke D., "Leadership," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (eds. T. Desmond Alexander 'et al'; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000): 636-640.

⁴⁵⁰ Clarke, "Leadership," 636-637.

⁴⁵¹ Daniel I. Block, "Leader, Leadership, Old Testament," in *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3 (eds. Katherine Boob Sakenfeld 'et al'; Nashville: Abingdon, 2008): 620-626.

“royal official, military commander, professional supervisor,” *adhon* “master, Lord”...⁴⁵² However, the leadership within family was focussed on the male head. The patriarchal narratives of Genesis, as well as the prologue and the epilogue of the book of Job portray the heads of household and clans as unrivalled leaders, having jurisdiction over religious, economic, and military (Gen 14).⁴⁵³ Nevertheless, the categories as kings and priests were anointed before God to perform their task of leadership (Ex. 28: 41; 1Sam 15: 1, 1 Kings 1: 34). As Block points out, Leadership in the Old Testament involved primarily the exercise of responsibility, rather than the exercise of power. The primary role of leader is to embody righteousness and promote justice within the community.⁴⁵⁴ It is therefore reasonable to conclude that in the Old Testament, and in the patriarchal context, women were generally excluded from the leadership.

3.4.3.2 Leadership in the New Testament

Richard Beaton revealed that there are two general approaches to the topic of leadership in the New Testament: 1) How the leadership was exercised within the early Christian communities and surrounding cultures, and 2) what the New Testament has to say about leadership in general.⁴⁵⁵ Concerning the first question, the traditional approach to the topic of leadership indicated that some of the most frequently used terms for leader in secular texts were not adopted by the New Testament authors to refer to the leaders of the church. Instead, numerous titles were used, to refer to their tasks of the church leaders, rather than the notion of their status, authority, and power.⁴⁵⁶ In the book of the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul, numerous titles are used focusing on the task: apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist, deacon, bishop, elder (Acts 7: 1-53; 8: 5-13; 13: 1-5; Phil. 1: 1; Phlm). However, although Philippians 1: 1 suggests that there were the leaders with a model of leadership in the church, the New Testament texts tell little about what their exact role were, and it seems even that certain titles may have been used interchangeably.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵² Block, “Leader, Leadership, Old Testament,” 621.

⁴⁵³ Block, “Leader, Leadership, Old Testament,” 622.

⁴⁵⁴ Block, “Leader, Leadership, Old Testament,” 623.

⁴⁵⁵ Richard Beaton, “Leader, Leadership, New Testament,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3 (eds. Katherine Boob Sakenfeld et al’; Nashville: Abingdon, 2008): 617-620.

⁴⁵⁶ Beaton, “Leader, Leadership, New Testament,” 617.

⁴⁵⁷ For more details see A.D. Clarke, “Leadership” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (eds. Desmond Alexander ‘et al’; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000): 636-640; Richard Beaton, “Leader, Leadership, New Testament,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol.3 (eds. Katherine Boob Sakenfeld ‘et al’; Nashville: Abingdon, 2008): 617-620.

Indeed, most of the fascinating issue within the leadership in the New Testament is the place of women in the leadership positions. That is, how women's leadership in the church has been limited following the warning in (1Tim 2: 11-14). On this issue, scholars remain divided on whether women might have had a role in the leadership. Certain authors maintain that women must be prohibited from the position of leadership, because no Israelite woman is designated queen in the courts of Jerusalem or Samaria. The office of kingship, priesthood, judgeship, and eldership were overwhelmingly reserved for men only.⁴⁵⁸ Others, however, believe that women might always occupy a place in position of leadership. Because, they think, of the significant role played by certain women in the Old Testament and in the New Testament as well. For the feminist scholars, the debate about the leadership in a particular biblical text must be understood as the "power-over" of empire, as a power of domination of men over women.⁴⁵⁹ Nevertheless, we may suggest that the passage such as 1Tim 2: 11-14 must always be read in tension with other passages that place women in significant positions of leadership (Acts 16: 11-15; Rom 16: 1, 7).⁴⁶⁰

Therefore, the servant leadership was recommended by Jesus to his disciples. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructivist point of view the leaders in fact did not lead by serving. Instead of serving, we see Stephen or Philip for example immediately started preaching rather than serving (Acts 7-8). In the following, I will do a critique of the leadership styles that I have examined.

3.4.4 Critique of the types of leadership

In this section, I will have to problematize the various types of leadership that I have enumerated and discussed. That is, I will criticize and see what is good or wrong according to a rhetorical and deconstructivist perspective.

3.4.4.1 Autocratic leadership

Hierarchical chain of commands, exercised an absolute power with a well-defined disciplinary process and emphasis on punishment is not what can make an autocratic leadership a good leadership. From a rhetorical and deconstructivist perspective, this type of leadership must overthrow the notion of the absolute power. In addition, it is a leadership in

⁴⁵⁸ Block, "Leader, Leadership, Old Testament," 626.

⁴⁵⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 66.

⁴⁶⁰ Beaton, "Leader, Leadership, New Testament," 619.

which the model is fixed in advance, and this is what both rhetoric and deconstruction oppose.

3.4.4.2 Democratic leadership

From a rhetorical and deconstructivist perspective, this type of leadership is problematical in that although it deconstructs the notion of personalizing power for personal interests and the notion of the “Self”, it is difficult because of the abusing use of the term “democracy” by those in the group.

3.4.4.3 Charismatic leadership

Although in that leadership, the leader is inspired and can draw many people, this type is a model fixed in advance, and may embody an absolute power, and no one knows if he/she can draw people to a good direction or a bad one.

3.4.4.4 Transformational leadership

As for the democratic leadership, the transformational leader is needed. Nevertheless, it is problematical because the notion of change must also be deconstructed. That means we have to know what change we are talking about, and what the politics behind this change are.

3.4.4.5 Laissez-faire leadership

From a rhetorical and deconstructivist perspective, this type of leadership must be problematized. That means, we have to deconstruct the notion of “freedom.” We have to know the boundaries of this freedom, how we can use that freedom. Because, if this notion is not deconstructed, it can undoubtedly and merely lead to disorder and anarchy.

3.4.4.6 Biblical leadership

Servant leadership is a biblical leadership where the Bible recommends the leader to serve and not to be served (Matthew 20:28). The typical example is Jesus himself who asked his disciples to follow that model of leadership. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructivist perspective, this type of leadership must be problematized. That means that we have to ask if all the leaders in the New Testament have exercised the servant leadership. We have to look at if Paul, Peter, James, Barnabas, Silas and others deacons or elders were the servant leadership. This could asks for another research, may be time and space do not allow us to do

it now. However, we may assert that not all these leaders were innocent and devoid from power. Paul is a typical example (Rom 1:1; 1Cor 9:1).

It is worth noting that there is a difference between the exercise of leadership in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the OT, the model of that leadership was fixed by God, while in the NT; Jesus gave to his disciples the model to follow. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructivist point of view, the biblical leadership has to be problematized. That is, we have to ask whether these leaders were, democratic leaders, were innocent and devoid from power- seeking, from conflicts and disagreements, from ethnical discrimination and marginalization. The response is no. Paul for example was not devoid of power (Rom1: 1; 1Cor 9:1). Conflicts were at the order of the day in early Christianity (Gal 2:11-14; Acts 15:36-41) and it is doubted that the biblical leadership was democratic. Because from a rhetorical and deconstructivist point of view there is still an inherent problem of (phallus) in the biblical leadership, where women are still marginalized in the leadership position (1Tim 2:11-14). This type of leadership is to be deconstructed where the notions of “self” and “other” have to be put “under erasure”.

3.4.5 Leadership in the Early Christianity

The book of Acts of the Apostles, especially Acts 15-16 vividly illustrate to what extent leadership was rife in early Christianity and how confrontations, group formations, strife, and conflict were the order of the day in early Christianity. It is important to remind that before the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Jewish leadership in the Jerusalem temple was under the leading of the high priest who played a great role in the Jerusalem temple, and in the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin (Acts 4). However, a great change took place following the death and resurrection of Jesus. The church has now centred in Jerusalem under the leadership of the Twelve, with Peter as the pre-eminent figure of the leaders.⁴⁶¹ In the following section, I will look at Acts 15-16 to show how confrontations and conflicts were in rife in early Christianity.

3.4.5.1 Acts 15-16 and Galatians 2:1-10

The Jerusalem council in Acts 15 had as goal to settle the issue of the admission of the Gentiles into Christian church. That council was a turning point and many scholars think that

⁴⁶¹ Richard Bauckham (ed.), “James and the Jerusalem Church,” in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995): 415-480.

it is the center of Acts' writings; the rest of the book carries forward the Gentile mission that the council approved.⁴⁶² Indeed, as certain people who came from Judea to Antioch were teaching that the Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses in order for them to be saved (Acts 15:1), the assembly in Antioch selected Paul and Barnabas as leaders of Antioch delegation to see the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Luke underlines the relationship between the Antioch and Jerusalem church. In fact, the conclusion of this church leaders' meeting in Jerusalem was that a letter should be written to them telling that they (Gentiles) must abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals, and blood (Acts 15:20). So, Judas and Silas along with Paul and Barnabas were sent with the letter from Jerusalem to Antioch, Syria and Cilicia to confirm what was written. However, the church was encouraged not only by the written letter, but also by exhortation of Jerusalem's representatives (Acts 15:31).

Scholars have debated the issue of the difference between the account of the conference in Acts 15 and Gal 2:1-10. Although agreeing on basic points, Luke emphasizes continuity with the law, while Paul emphasizes his role as apostle to the Gentiles (the uncircumcised).⁴⁶³ However, the greatest difference between Acts 15 and Gal 2:1-10 is that Paul omits the decrees of Acts 15:20, 28-29.

3.4.5.2 Conflict with Barnabas over Mark

As Keener has observed, Luke does not portray the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas positively, but neither does he suppress it. He treats it briefly, explaining why the two missionaries separated.⁴⁶⁴ For this scholar, Luke need not feel obliged to report the incident in Gal 2:11-14 may be, he viewed it as a merely temporary step back from the agreement in Acts 15.⁴⁶⁵ In this disagreement, Barnabas undoubtedly viewed Mark's failure less severe than did Paul who maintained loyalty.⁴⁶⁶ Here we can see two types of leadership: Paul is applying an "autocratic leadership," while Barnabas a "laissez-faire leadership." But Bruce argues that probably family feeling would have influenced Barnabas to some extent. Mark was his cousin (Col 4:10) and to fail to support him would greatly disappoint Mark.⁴⁶⁷ In my view, ethnic

⁴⁶² Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol.3 (Grand Rapid: Baker Academic Press, 2014), 2297.

⁴⁶³ Keener, *Acts*, 2202.

⁴⁶⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 2299.

⁴⁶⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 2304

⁴⁶⁶ Keener. *Acts*, 2300.

⁴⁶⁷ See F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and commentary*, 3th ed. (Grand Rapid: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 349.

feelings have greatly influenced Barnabas in this conflict. However, scholars suggest that the primary reason for the split was not Mark, but a more serious conflict that Luke preferred not to mention: namely, the disagreement reported in Gal 2:13.⁴⁶⁸ Nevertheless, as Keener correctly argues, God used the conflict (which is not portrayed positively) to produce two ministries teams with at least two new colleagues, first Silas and then Timothy.⁴⁶⁹

Therefore, from the perspective of rhetoric and deconstruction, we may retain first that our approach move us away from the type of leadership advocated in Luke-Acts where a leader is made according to a model (design) intended in advance, but move us into the sphere of discursivity of which a leader can be created or constructed. Leader construction in Acts happens by means of rhetorical potential, endurance, or charismatic and courageous. Stephen was fabricated as a leader, but no attention is given to his role as great orator may be because of his ethnical stereotype as Hellenist (Acts 7). Second, leadership was gendered male privileging of masculine (phallus) where there is no possibility of women included into organisation, where there is still discrimination between the two sexes (Acts 6:3, 5). In addition, there was also a leadership rife in the early Christianity with the conflicts in order between those in Jerusalem and those outside Jerusalem (Acts 15:36-41; Gal 2:11-14), and these leaders were not devoid from power seeking. Paul for example, claimed to be an apostle in the same title than the Twelve (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 9:1). Finally, leadership in early Christianity was also a product of discourse and the discourse as an act of power.⁴⁷⁰ Act of the council in Acts 15:20 illustrates how the discourse (power) has to be circulated among communities in early Christianity. In the following, I will look at the relationship between ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership.

3.5 Conclusion

The present chapter examined the three key words: ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership that form the structure of the chapter. By the way of summarizing, I can retain the following as the conclusion of our discussion.

In the analysis, I have indicated the constructedness of these categories. I have pursued the constructivist approach of ethnicity because deconstruction moves us away from the notion of fixity. I have supposed that all the approaches of ethnicity are then constructions that evoke

⁴⁶⁸ Dunn, *Acts*, 209.

⁴⁶⁹ Keener, *Acts*, 2299.

⁴⁷⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 85.

the notion of difference. The difference between Jews and Hellenists centered on a constructivist ethnicity does not only denote language, but would also include those who have adopted Hellenistic customs, conventions and a Greek or Hellenistic style. At the same time it may also refer to non-Jews.

It has been demonstrated that the combination of constructivist and instrumentalist model of ethnicity serves in the making of the re-definition of the “other” in the process of “othering.” In that construction, the dichotomy leads always to hierarchialization or superiorization as a strategy of supersessionism where the superior dominates the inferior.

It cannot be denied that the Bible does not endorse supersessionism as modern scholarship has attempted to demonstrate, but this study indicates that the traces of supersessionism can be found in Acts 6. Leadership in Luke-Acts is constructed or created, engendered male privileging of masculinity. This study has also demonstrated that the leadership in the early Christianity was characterized by confrontations and conflicts. Acts 15-16 vividly illustrates to what extent leadership was rife in early Christian community. Moreover, this study has raised the question of whether these leaders were the servant leaders as recommended by Jesus because we can see that they were not at all devoid from power seeking. Thus, scholarship has indeed picked this up, but they did not always bring the three categories into a relationship with each other in working towards a programme moving away from ethnical discrimination and exclusionary practices. The problematization of these categories will form a framework with which I will, in the next chapter, read the text of Acts 6:1-7 from a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach.

CHAPTER FOUR: READING ACTS 6:1-7 ACCORDING TO A RHETORICAL AND DECONSTRUCTIVE CRITICAL APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

Luke was writing to his audience to respond to the conflict that existed between Jews and Christians in the early Christian community. This chapter in which rhetorical criticism has been used in conjunction with deconstruction enables a better understanding of the problem of ethnical discrimination and its development into supersessionism as depicted in Acts 6:1-7. The chapter argues that the author of Acts develops a speech of discrimination directed against the Hellenists. At the same time, I attempted to reach a conclusion that Luke (Acts) instead of being the solution to the problem of widows in Acts 6:1-7 could itself have enhanced the problem of ethnical discrimination and supersessionism. The category of masculinity as a social and oppressive category is well present in Acts's agenda.

After having examined the key categories: ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership in chapter three which form part of the spectacles, that we will put on to read the text with, I will in this chapter deal with the reading of Acts 6:1-7 according to a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach. As we have indicated in chapter 2: "Strategies of Reading," rhetorical criticism will be used in conjunction with deconstruction in this study. The reason for that is that rhetoric concerns with construction, with production, with effect, with creativity. Owing to the fact that construction is dependent on the dynamics of discursive practices in an ever changing modus, the act of construction can never be fixed, will always be open ended. In addition, rhetoric will be used in conjunction with deconstruction because rhetoric also helps us to stay away from providing the meaning within the text, to visualize what the text could have done, or to put it differently, to the probable performativity of the text, thereby enhancing the possibility to "think with the text." The strategies generated by these two approaches enable a more adequate explanation of the ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7, its development into supersessionism, and its persistent perpetuation in discriminatory practices in the contemporary church. The chapter comprises three sections: In the first section, I will be using rhetorical criticism approach into Acts 6:1-7, in which I will apply Vorster's rhetorical situation model, that is, I will use certain aspects of his model namely: problematization, construction of persons, and construction of the audience and

argument. In the second section, I will be using a deconstructive critical approach of Acts 6:1-7, in which I will be applying my own strategies of deconstruction, that is, I will use two components of deconstruction: reversal and displacement with some strategies generated from feminist criticism or postcolonialism. . In the last section, I will show the contribution our reading can afford to the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7. The main reason is that the approaches used in this study -rhetorical-critical and also deconstructivist critical reading- requires problematizing how the exigency or problem has been constructed for the audience in order to perform persuasion, that is, to achieve a particular purpose. However, in order for us to proceed with the eisegesis of the text, it is necessary, first to review briefly the purpose of Luke-Acts, the speeches in Acts, and the structure of Acts in order to see how the problem has been constructed by the author.

4.1.1 The Purpose of Luke-Acts

It is in order to notice firstly that the objective is not to discard or reject what has been done by historical-critical method. The objective is rather to investigate how what has been done within the realm of a historical critical approach can also be deployed in a modified version within a rhetorical reading of these writings. This is being done with the caveat that historical understanding is possible and also theologically necessary in the process of interpreting the Bible.⁴⁷¹ Secondly, it is not my intention to provide with a comprehensive overview of all who have analysed the subject, but only to present those who may provide with insights that may contribute to advancing my argument. From this view in mind, it is noteworthy to recall the remark of Penner when he pointed out that specific trajectories that surface in the recent works have changed the questions related to Acts from the previous discussions. These studies that have focused on social-science world analysis, coupled both rhetorical and social-science investigations.⁴⁷²

The question of the purpose of Acts had been raised and discussed in the last century, and many attempts have been made to formulate it.⁴⁷³ However, a more elaborate discussion about the purpose of Acts can be seen from Van Unnik, who mentioned various answers to the question of the purpose of Acts, which are still current and including the following: 1)

⁴⁷¹ David Wenham, "The Purpose of Luke-Acts: Israel's story in the Context of Roman Empire," in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation* (eds. Craig C Bartholomew, Joel B. Green and Anthony C Thiselton; Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 2005): 79-103.

⁴⁷² Penner, "Contextualizing Acts," 9.

⁴⁷³ See for example, Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963): 325-327; Martin Dibelius, *Studies in Acts of the Apostles* (ed. Henrich Greeven; London: SCM Press, 1956), 3.

that Luke wanted to describe the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome; 2) that Acts was intended to show the disciples preaching the Word to the whole world; 3) that Luke's intention was apologetic and his work designed to prove to Roman officials that Christianity should be regarded as a *Religio licita*; 4) that he intended to recommend Christianity at the expense of Jews; 5) that his aim was to instruct and edify the Christian communities; 6) that he wished to show by the example of the apostles, especially Peter and Paul, how the Christian message should be preached.⁴⁷⁴ However, Van Unnik did not comment on any of these answers.

But, the general scholarly view on the purpose of Acts now has been widened under the heading of the purpose of Luke-Acts, that is, the twofold Lucan work. The reason they do is that by phrasing the subject of inquiry as "the purpose of Luke-Acts" this implies that the two volumes are indeed a single work, which therefore can be regarded as sharing a common purpose.⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, the preface of Acts 1:1 gives a very good indication for believing that Luke-Acts are two volumes of a single work. Henry Joel Cadbury, one of the great pioneers of modern Lucan studies, had suggested what seemed to be the purpose of Luke-Acts: the demonstration of the "divine intervention as one of the credentials of the Christian movement," and the demonstration of "the legitimacy of Christianity from both the Jewish and the Gentile point of view."⁴⁷⁶ Hans Conzelmann made also an initial study in that sense. He views the salvation as consisting of three periods 1) the period of Israel: 2) the period of Jesus's ministry; and 3) the period of the church. Conzelmann identified Luke's purpose as that of seeking to solve an alleged crisis of faith in the church due to the delay of the Parousia.⁴⁷⁷ Conzelmann's work has been carried on by Ernst Haenchen who argued that Acts has one ultimate purpose: to plead in favour of the political correctness of Christianity, and in this view, "Acts was an apologia pro ecclesia."⁴⁷⁸ However, the great problem with the identification of the purpose of Luke-Acts as W. Gasque has remarked is that suggestions made are so numerous and diverse that one is readily tempted to scepticism about the possibility of a convincing solution or about the reality of the question.⁴⁷⁹ For this reason the theory that Luke wrote to defend Christianity, that is, to establish Christianity as a *Religio*

⁴⁷⁴ For this quotation see C. Kingsley Barrett "The Third Gospel as a Preface to Acts? Some Reflections," in *The Four Gospels* (ed. Festschrift Frans Neirynck; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992): 1451-1466.

⁴⁷⁵ See Henry Joel Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1927): 303-316.

⁴⁷⁶ Cadbury, *The making of Luke-Acts*, 303.

⁴⁷⁷ Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 11.

⁴⁷⁸ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Blackwell 1971): 78-81.

⁴⁷⁹ See Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1982), 19.

licita cannot be accepted as it stands, because Christians were not politically subversive at all in the Roman Empire context. That view is also shared by C. K Barrett when he argues that Acts was not addressed to the Emperor with the intention of proving the political harmlessness of Christianity in general and of Paul in particular.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, to see Acts as a defence of Paul or Christianity is too restrictive. Nevertheless, the suggestion of Robert Maddox is really helpful on the question of Luke-Acts' purpose. He suggested that "we shall be greatly helped toward defining Luke's purpose if we can determine the audience to which he primarily aimed his work and the natural place to begin is the preface, Luke 1:1-4 with its dedicatory address to 'your excellency Theophilus.'"⁴⁸¹ In the line with this, it is then possible to agree with Jerry Lynn that "any effort to ascertain the purpose of Luke's writings must reflect on the preface to his story."⁴⁸² In addition, as Philip Esler says, it would be unsatisfactory, of course, if the analysis produced results which conflicted with the general Lucan purpose enunciated in the preface.⁴⁸³

However, Penner's concern about the purpose of Luke must be taken into account here. He challenges the traditional notion of Lukan purpose understood merely in terms of goals set out by modern scholars.⁴⁸⁴ As Penner, I am also moving away from finding a unified theological purpose in Luke-Acts as has been done in traditional scholarship. My objective also is to access some of the varieties of discursive practices that have been grounded in the text of Acts. Therefore, from our discussion of Luke-Acts purpose so far, it is important to say that the theories of the Purpose of Luke-Acts as proposed by scholars cannot be accepted as such. Most of them of course have insights that are partially valid. But, I have to see if these insights may be adapted in another form in order to propose a valid theory. It must be suggested that Luke is writing his narrative in the context of the Roman Empire where there were the conflicts between Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire. From this view in mind, Luke concern was double: Firstly, in the context of Luke's preface, he was writing about recent events that Theophilus and also his audience had heard about and wanted to correct historical misunderstanding. Secondly, Luke also was writing about the conflicts that existed between Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire and wanted to respond to these

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburg: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 28.

⁴⁸¹ Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 12.

⁴⁸² Jerry Lynn Ray, *Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts: The Paradoxical Interaction of Prophetic Fulfilment and Jewish Rejection* (Lewiston: Mellen Biblical Press, 1996), 172.

⁴⁸³ Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1987), 25.

⁴⁸⁴ Penner, "Contextualizing Acts," 71.

issues by the questions about the Christian movement and its relationship to Judaism (Acts 15:6-11).⁴⁸⁵ But from a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective scholars have attempted to provide the purpose of Luke-Acts from the historical informations, while deconstruction has a problem with the results of historical analysis. Deconstruction will see the purpose of Luke-Acts as problematical. After having examined the issue of the purpose of Luke-Acts, I will in the following look at the speeches in Acts.

4.1.2 The Speeches in Acts

The speeches in the Acts of the Apostles form a large proportion occupying almost one-fifth of the whole writing approximately 300 of the 1000 verses.⁴⁸⁶ They are a crucial factor in the coherence of Acts' account, and explain to the readers the meaning of the events.⁴⁸⁷ However, a survey of scholarship reveals that scholars are not in full agreement concerning the number of speeches in Acts. Dibelius⁴⁸⁸ identified 24, Cadbury⁴⁸⁹ also discussed 24, Kennedy⁴⁹⁰ recognizes 25, and Bruce⁴⁹¹ distinguishes four groups which are: 1) evangelical speeches, 2) deliberative speeches, 3) apologetic speeches, and 4) historical speeches.

In fact, as Janusz Kucicki writes, the unity of the narrative and the speeches section of the Acts' writing was not the subject of any controversy or in-depth study until the second half of the twentieth century.⁴⁹² The major issue in discussion was concerning the historicity of these speeches. The scholars have focussed their attention to the question whether Luke could have been the author of these speeches. Indeed, the first step in that direction was taken by W. De Wett in 1826. De Wett suggested that the written source on which Acts was based was used in a free manner by Luke. For De Wett, there was evidence of written sources behind Acts,

⁴⁸⁵ Wenham, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 101.

⁴⁸⁶ Ian R. Walker, *Faith and Belief: A Philosophical Approach* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 29.

⁴⁸⁷ Henry J. Cadbury, "The Speeches in Acts," in *The Beginnings of the Christianity, vol.5: The Acts of the Apostles*, (eds. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake; Eugene: Wipf and Stoke, 2002): 402-427.

⁴⁸⁸ Martin Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography," in *Studies in The Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM Press, 1958): 138-185.

⁴⁸⁹ Cadbury, "The Speeches in Acts," 402.

⁴⁹⁰ G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

⁴⁹¹ F. Bruce, "The Speeches in Acts-Thirty Years After," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L.L. Morris on his 60th Birthday* (ed. Robert Bank; Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1994): 53-68.

⁴⁹² Janusz Kucicki, *The Function of the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles: A Key to Interpretation of Luke's Use of Speeches in Acts* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 2.

and if Luke used written sources, it is thus probable that he did not freely compose the speeches of the apostles.⁴⁹³

The De Wett's thesis was contradicted by Overbeck who argued that the speeches are the Luke's own creation.⁴⁹⁴ In a similar sense, another scholar to oppose Wett's hypothesis was Eichhom who suggested that the speeches themselves, even though they have been placed in the mouths of different persons, follow one and the same type, are of the same character, make use of one form of proof, and have so much in common that they present themselves as speeches of one and the same author.⁴⁹⁵

Nevertheless, a significant shift of direction on the discussion was taken by Martin Dibelius and H. Joel Cadbury who introduced a literary approach to the speeches. For Cadbury, Luke created the speeches as the ancient historians invented the speeches.⁴⁹⁶ The Cadbury's hypothesis was opposed by F. F. Bruce who thought that Luke did not invent these speeches but included his own account of the original speaker's speech.⁴⁹⁷ Dibelius for his part showed that "the speeches without doubt as they stand, are inventions of the author. For they are too short to have been actually given in this form, they are too similar to one another to have come from different persons, and in their content, they occasionally reproduce a later standpoint."⁴⁹⁸ Dibelius' point as Kucicki has remarked is that ancient historians did not feel obliged to present a record of the speech, but they used the speech as a device to indicate the importance of something that which they have chosen to underline.⁴⁹⁹

But, as Marion Soards had observed, although Cadbury's work preceded that of Dibelius, and while their positions are similar, Dibelius' essay had a determinative effect on German exegesis.⁵⁰⁰ The following quotation of F. F. Bruce is also illustrative in this regards: "Dibelius influence may be seen in much subsequent work produced on the speeches in Acts, especially by German speaking scholars."⁵⁰¹ Dibelius, who has recognized the complexity of

⁴⁹³ For this quotation see Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster, 1994), 2

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. Kucicki, *The function of the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles*, 3.

⁴⁹⁵ For this quotation, see Soards, *The Speeches in The Acts*, 2.

⁴⁹⁶ Henry Joel Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 3.

⁴⁹⁷ F. Bruce, *The Speeches in Acts* (London: Tyndale Press, 1944), 6.

⁴⁹⁸ Martin Dibelius, *Studies in The Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM Press, 1958), 138.

⁴⁹⁹ Kucicki, *The function of the speeches in Acts*, 4.

⁵⁰⁰ Marion, *The Speeches in Acts*, 7.

⁵⁰¹ See F. Bruce, "The Speeches in Acts-Thirty Years After," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L.L. Morris on his 60th Birthday* (ed. Robert Bank; Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1994): 53-68.

the question of the historicity of the speeches, and although he has stated that Luke was the author, argues that “if we deny the historicity of the speeches, but we cannot go far.”⁵⁰² Therefore, view from above; the objective for these scholars was historical. That is, it was to indicate that though he modified them they could be seen a historical core or the research for origin. In so doing, they wanted to link the author to the speeches.

From a deconstructive perspective, it may be argued that even if Luke had written Acts and if he had used the original speeches or even if he had changed them, his authorship does not matter. Deconstruction, however, works with the “Death of the Author” or “Disappearance of the Author.” For the deconstructionists, the author even if he has written the writing, there is no possibility to link the author with the writing. As Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield remind us, “our aim will be to explain how in contemporary cultural theory we do no longer see the author as the main source and measure of a text’s meaning.”⁵⁰³ In his article entitled “The Death of the Author” published in 1968 and 1971 Roland Barthes argues “we shall never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing.”⁵⁰⁴ For Barthes, to give a text an author is therefore to impose a limit on the text... to close the writing.⁵⁰⁵ So, from a deconstructive point of view the origin or the centre cannot be established.

From a rhetorical perspective, we have to ask the question how these speeches have been inserted into the narrative, and why have these speeches been used? In order for us to answer to those questions, we have to look at Stephen’s speech. We have chosen it because the speech of Stephen is by its calling a piece of rhetoric; it deserves to be studied by rhetorical principle.⁵⁰⁶ In addition, Stephen’s speech is the longest and perhaps most complexing address in Acts with interpretive problems.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰² Martin Dibelius, “The speeches in Acts,” In *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. H.Greewen; New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1956): 138-185.

⁵⁰³ Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield, *Cultural Studies and Critical Theory* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56.

⁵⁰⁴ Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Readings in the Theology of Religion: Map, Text, Body* (eds Scott S. Elliott and Matt Waggoner; London: Equinox, 2009): 141-145.

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield, *Cultural Studies and Critical Theory*, 64.

⁵⁰⁶ See John J. Kilgallen, “The Function of Stephen’s Speech (Acts 7: 2-53)” *Biblica*, vol. 70, no.2 (1989): 173-193.

⁵⁰⁷ Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 58.

Indeed, Luke records that the suggestion of the Twelve to the other disciples to select Seven men pleased the whole group (v.5) One of the Seven (Stephen) was especially effective among the people. His wisdom and his oratory skills brought him into conflict with other Jews who were not Christians who brought the public accusations of blasphemy against him. The three stages of accusations against Stephen were: 1) He is faulted for speaking against Moses and God (Acts 6:1, 2). He is accused of speaking against the Holy place (Acts 6: 11), and 3) He claimed that Jesus said he will destroy the Holy place and change the Law (Acts 6: 14).⁵⁰⁸ It is then these accusations that provoked the speech of Stephen. Stephen's speech begins with the account of God dealing with Abraham (Acts 7: 2-8). Then the speech tells about the rejection of Joseph because of jealousy, following Israel's story in Egypt (Acts 8: 9-35). Stephen continues the account of their forefather's rejection of God (Acts 7: 39-44). The story tells about Israel's apostasy, Israel had consistently opposed the Holy Spirit of God. The father's rejection of Moses, that led them to the worship of idols. And finally, the story tells about the fathers's killing of the prophets Acts 7:51-53. As we can see, Stephen's speech is a review of Israel's history that shows that the children like their fathers are always in opposition to the Holy Spirit of God. From a rhetorical perspective, what Stephen is trying to accomplish with his audience, as Kilgallen has correctly noted, is that Stephen presents his listeners as stubborn and insensitive as their forefathers who had always opposed God and killed his prophets, and all sections of the speech are a contributing force to Stephen's argument.⁵⁰⁹ Therefore, we may discern opposition first of Israel to God and second opposition of Jews to Stephen which was translated to the conflict that led to his martyrdom. Because of his wisdom and his oratory skills pushed his opponents to ask the similar question "who gave you the authority (power) to do what you are doing?" I now turn to the last point of our introductory section which is the structure.

4.1.3 The Structure of Acts

Several plans have been presented by scholars in order to determine the outline of the book of Acts of the Apostles.⁵¹⁰ G. Schneider for example opts for a threefold structure in which after the introductory material in Acts 1: 1-26, there are: (1) the witness of Christ by the Apostles

⁵⁰⁸ Kilgallen, "The Function of Stephen's Speech," 183.

⁵⁰⁹ Kilgallen, "The Function of Stephen Speech," 182.

⁵¹⁰ See for example, Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 1-5:42), (2) the witness to Christ going forth from Jerusalem and taking on his way to the Gentiles (Acts 6: 1-15:35); and (3) the Christian witness on the way to the ends of the earth (Acts 15: 36- 28: 31).⁵¹¹ However, some scholars estimate that Acts 1: 8 gives a summary of the book of the Acts. It is notably the case of Delbert Burkett, who indicates that the three stages of testifying constitute the three major divisions of the story of Acts, namely: (1) Preliminaries: waiting for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1); (2) Testifying in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-8:3); (3) Testifying in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8: 4-12: 25); and (4) Testifying to the ends of the earth (Acts 13: 1-28: 3).⁵¹² In the similar vein we can cite Charles Talbert who, also offers a threefold structure with (1) Receiving and preparing for mission (Acts 1: 1-25); (2) Fulfilling the mission: Phase one (Acts 2: 1-12: 25); and (3) Testifying the mission: Phase two (Acts 13:1-28: 31).⁵¹³

From the three structures presented above it is easy to see that the three scholars agree on the threefold structure of Acts' writing. But they diverge however in that while the first two speak of testifying, the latter speak of mission. However, in terms of deconstruction's view of structure, it is worth noting that deconstruction opposes the notion of structure. The very structurality of structure is always illusive and that the claim to a structure is a derivation a claim to a centre, and that is never central to the object of inquiry, because it is given from the outside. From the three scholars cited above: for one the centre is "witnessing", for the other "testifying", and for still other "mission." Then, the centre becomes difficult to find. Therefore, from a deconstructive point of view, we may argue that although scholars used the term "structure" to provide with a framework that will give the meaning of the text, they actually imposed from an outside a structure (centre) that could provide with a meaning. Having framed the Acts as writing, utilizing some of the information historical criticism has yielded, and having pointed to where rhetoric and deconstruction may take us, attention will be paid to the specifics of a rhetorical and deconstructive approach.

⁵¹¹ Cf. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998): 74-75.

⁵¹² Delbert Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of the Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 276.

⁵¹³ Talbert, *Reading Acts*, i.

4.2 Rhethorical critical approach of Acts 6: 1-7

4.2.1 Introduction

As it has been mentioned above, in this particular point of the chapter, I will be doing rhetorical critical approach of Acts 6: 1-7. I have chosen rhetoric not only because it is a form of critique that explores “the particular historical uses in specific social political situations,”⁵¹⁴ but also because rhetorical critical reading requires problematizing how the exigency (problem) has been constructed for the audience, and that the mechanism of problematization will help to foreground the social discursive practices, principles, and power relations operating within the text are posed as problem.⁵¹⁵ I will discuss five points: the first is the identification of discursive practices, second, is the construction of the person’s role, third, is the construction of the audience, fourth, is to reveal the rhetorical situation, fifth, finally, is to proceed with the analysis of argument.

Yet, it is important to point out that in so doing, I am not concerned with the rhetorical analysis that aims at the historical reconstruction of the text as in Schüssler’s model,⁵¹⁶ but rather I will attempt to construct the rhetorical situation of Acts 6: 1-7 in Vorster’s model since rhetorical interpretation of that model is able to provide us with the techniques and strategies that can help us to know the particular type of situation and the audience in order to analyse the argumentation and respond to the question that I pose in this study.⁵¹⁷ But before that, it is important to consider some preliminary considerations.

4.2.2 Some preliminary considerations

It is worth to notice that the notion of the rhetorical situation derives from Lloyd F. Bitzer in his essay entitled “Rhetorical Situation” written in 1968.⁵¹⁸ In this essay, Bitzer argued that:

A rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations, which present an exigence that, can be completely or partially removed if

⁵¹⁴ Schüssler, “Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Cor.” *NTS*, vol. 33 (1987): 386-403.

⁵¹⁵ See Vorster Johannes, “Rhetorical Criticism,” in *Focusing on Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and Methods* (ed. Andrie du Toit; Pretoria: Protea, 2009): 505-578.

⁵¹⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza though still posing “the exigency” as something that the text responds to, her model differs from Vorster’s model in that that she does not pay attention on the fact that the text itself constructs a rhetorical situation via its positing a problematization. She proposes nevertheless four stages in her critical rhetorical analysis: 1) Identifying the rhetorical interests, 2) delineating the rhetorical arrangements, 3) establishing the rhetorical situation, and 4) constructing common historical situation. Schüssler Fiorenza E. “Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Cor.” *NTS*, vol.33 (1987): 386-402.

⁵¹⁷ Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 505-578.

⁵¹⁸ Lloyd F. Bitzer, “Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), 1-14.

discourse –introduced into the situation- can influence the audience thought or action as to bring about positive modification of the exigence.⁵¹⁹

According to Bitzer, a discourse is rhetorical if, and only if, it is called forth a particular type of situation, “a rhetorical situation” to which it is offered as a response.⁵²⁰ Scholars unanimously agree that there are three constituents of any rhetorical situation: (1) an exigence, (2) an audience, and (3) a set of constraints. Therefore, for a situation to be rhetorical, the exigence must be capable of positive modification, the audience must be in a position to affect this modification, and there must be a set of constraints accessible to the rhetor by which he/she can move the audience to modify the exigence.⁵²¹ Of these three constituents, exigence is the necessary condition of a rhetorical situation. For if there were no exigence, says Bitzer, there would be no need for rhetorical inquiry to require change in the audience.⁵²² However, the Bitzer’s situational theory faced the most rigid critique in Richard E. Vet’s essay “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation.”⁵²³ According to Vatz, meaning does not reside in situations or events as Bitzer contends, but rather as a consequence of rhetorical creation. In other words, the meaning is not intrinsic to the situation, but is created by rhetors.⁵²⁴ I agree with Vatz’s view that meaning is a consequence of rhetorical creation for the simple reason that as Vorster puts it, “the rhetorical situation as analytic category is not a fixed category, but it is constantly changing relative to the context in which it is used.”⁵²⁵

In fact, for Vorster, the main constituent of the rhetorical situation is called “problematization.” He argues that to problematize is to call a rhetorical situation into existence.⁵²⁶ Vorster’s situational model can simply be summarized as follows:

1. To establish the problematization: Identification of practices and principles pervading in the text;
2. The construction of persons participating in the rhetorical situation;
3. The construction of the implied audience;
4. How the argument is constructed.

⁵¹⁹ Lloyd F. Bitzer, “Functional Communication: A Situational Perspective,” in *Rhetoric in Transition: Studies in the Nature and Users of Rhetoric* (ed. Eugene E White; University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980): 21-38.

⁵²⁰ Bitzer, “Rhetorical Situation,” 5-6.

⁵²¹ See for example, Lloyd Bitzer, “The rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol.1 (1992): 1-14.

⁵²² Bitzer, “Functional Communication, 26.

⁵²³ Richard E. Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 6 (1973): 154-161.

⁵²⁴ Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” 157-158.

⁵²⁵ See Vorster, “Rhetorical Situation,” 543.

⁵²⁶ Vorster, “Rhetorical Situation,” 543.

After these preliminary considerations, I would like now to start with the construction of the rhetorical situation of Acts 6: 1-7 by applying Vorster's model not in full but by using some aspects of this model.

4.2.3 Construction of the rhetorical situation in Acts 6: 1-7

4.2.3.1 Identification of discursive practices

At the present stage, the first objective is to identify the discursive practices pervading Acts 6: 1-7. For that, it is possible to identify three practices in our text: the practice of the “daily distribution of food” (τῆ διακονίᾳ καθημερινῇ v.1); the practice of “oratory” (ῥητορικῆ) although not explicitly mentioned; and the practice of “laying on of hands” (ἐπέθηκαν χεῖρας v.6).

4.2.3.1.1 The practice of the daily distribution of food (τῆ διακονίᾳ καθημερινῇ v.1)

The practice of “daily distribution of food” was not a practice only within early Christianity. That practice has its origin in the Old Testament where the concern with the widow, the orphan, and the poor was part of the covenant made between God and the people of Israel. The widow (χήρα) and the poor (πτωχός) were under God's protection, and a special charge of God. God as “a defender of the widows, a father to the fatherless (Ps 68:5-6; 146:9; Deut 10:18; Prov 15:25; Jer 49:11). This was a prominent theme throughout the Old Testament: He has pity and comforts them (Isaiah 49: 13). He cares for them (Job 5: 15; Ps 107: 41).

In the New Testament, however, the widow and the poor also were object of great concern. Widow appears eight times in the Synoptic gospels: three times in Mark (Mark 12: 40,42, 43), and nine times in Luke (Luke 2:37; 4:25,26; 7:12; 18:3,5; 20:47; 21:2, 3). In Acts, the term ‘widow’ appears only three times (Acts 6:1; 9:39, 41). One time in the first epistle of Corinthians (1Cor 7:8), but eight times in 1 Timothy (1 Tim 5:3-14) in which Paul gives some instructions concerning the widows. In James widow appears once, where to visit orphan and widows is considered as a model of piety and true religion (Jas 1:27). The last mention of widow in the New Testament appears in Revelation (Rev 18:7).

First in the gospels, the widow was depicted by Jesus as a model of genuine generosity (Luke 21:1-4; Mark 12:41-44). In (Acts 9:39-44, and in 1Tim 5:3-16), we then see how the widows were to be cared for by the early church. However, the question to be asked is that: what was the motif behind that practice?

It is in order to recall that the ancient Mediterranean world was characterized by grinding poverty and social inequalities. And in this context, particularly exposed was the widow who after the death of her husband could either return to her parent's home or might remain with children if she had children.⁵²⁷ Therefore, Paul's instruction to Timothy concerning the care of widows in Ephesus (1 Timothy 5:3-16) presents an attempt of the early Church to address this social evil and the decision of the church in Ephesus to offer financial support to its widows represents a beautiful example of early Christian social concern.⁵²⁸ Indeed, from a deconstructive perspective, this must lead to the question how this functioned in the Graeco-Roman world or more exactly how poverty and the alleviation of poverty were dealt with the Roman Empire?

It is noteworthy to remind that Jerusalem, in the first century AD, was a moderate-sized urban centre with a socially and culturally pluralistic population.⁵²⁹ In this view, Tessa Rajak argues that "we might regard Palestine, more than elsewhere, as a region divided between Greeks and Jews."⁵³⁰ The Palestinian Jews were extensively hellenized, and the older rigid distinction between "Palestinian" and "Hellenistic" Judaism can no longer be maintained.⁵³¹ Consequently, many of them became bilingual. And as David Fiensi asserts, the predominantly Jewish city of Jerusalem was bicultural, most of the residents spoke and understood only Aramaic, some were bilingual, and still others could probably speak only Greek, although the mother tongue of most Palestinian Jews was Aramaic.⁵³² Similarly, in this environment, the Jerusalem church also was distinguished by its two groups: the Hebrews and the Hellenists, Acts 6:1. Thus, the Jerusalem church had two factions separated by language and culture. However, the distinction between these two groups was probably linguistic in the first instance, and the precise significance of these two terms has been much disputed.⁵³³ According to John Stambaugh and David Balch, the most important source of

⁵²⁷ Moyer V. Hubbard, *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 216, 218.

⁵²⁸ See Hubbard, *Christianity in Greco-Roman World*, 216.

⁵²⁹ David A. Fiensi, "The Composition of the Jerusalem Church," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1995): 213-236.

⁵³⁰ Tessa Rajak, "The Location of Cultures in the Second Temple Palestine: The Evidence of Josephus," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1995): 1-14.

⁵³¹ Eugene M. Boring, *An Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature, Theology* (Louisville: Westminster, 2012), 95.

⁵³² Fiensi, "The Composition of the Jerusalem Church," 230.

⁵³³ See for instance, H. J. Cadbury, "The Hellenists" in *The Beginnings of Christianity, vol.5: The Acts of the Apostles* (ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979): 59-74; C. C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992): 22-24; C.F.D. Moule, "Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?" *ExpTim* 70 (1958-59): 100-102.

revenue for the most cities of the Roman Empire was the state.⁵³⁴ The state asserted its right mainly through levying taxes. Taxes of course, were an important source of revenue. In the Republic, direct taxes were not levied on Roman citizens, but were collected from the conquered territories in the provinces.⁵³⁵ However, the rich of Jerusalem had property in the country and evidently among these, Herod's chancellor. The priestly also and several members of Sanhedrin belonged to the wealthy class.⁵³⁶ Jeremias asserts that polygamy also was a sign of wealthy. Because, he argues, in general we find polygamy only among the rich, for the maintenance of a household with several women involved such heavy financial burdens⁵³⁷ However, it is worthy to note that not everyone who was rich had a corresponding high social status, but all members of the social elite had plenty of money.⁵³⁸

Here, Stambaugh and Balch assert "that every main street in ancient city was lined with shops, some run by slave or free for a rich entrepreneur, but many run by people who themselves operated a small business."⁵³⁹ These were: the bakers, butchers, greengrocers, barbers, fullers cobblers, auctioneers', moneylenders, and innkeepers. Beside these were the crops. The crops included vegetables, olives, grapes, figs and chick-peas. The most important fruit in Judea was the olive. But the oil needed for the Temple was brought from Tekoa in Judea and from Regab in Perea.⁵⁴⁰ Stambaugh and Balch reports that moneylending was a profession in which small businessmen were involved. They functioned as banks receiving money at fixed rates of interests and lending it out to other borrowers as it is the cases in the gospels (Matt 25: 27; Luke 19: 23).⁵⁴¹ Therefore, the most important business of local trade was to supply Jerusalem with foodstuffs, and after that to provide raw material of the city. But the temple was the most important factor in the commerce of Jerusalem. By means of the temple treasury, to which every Jew had to pay his annual dues, the whole of worldwide Jewry contributed to the commerce of Jerusalem.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁴ John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 74.

⁵³⁵ Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament*, 77.

⁵³⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (London: SMC Press, 1969), 92, 96.

⁵³⁷ Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 93.),

⁵³⁸ Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament*, 65.

⁵³⁹ Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament*, 115.

⁵⁴⁰ Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 45.

⁵⁴¹ Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament*, 117

⁵⁴² Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 57.

To sum up, as noted at the beginning of this section, the most important source of revenue was the land. The temple of Jerusalem, however, was the most important factor of revenue in the commerce in Jerusalem. The land produced food, which was the one indispensable commodity. Hence, the wealth of the elite was based on land. They owned the vast proportion of the land and resources, while the mass of the population had to do with moderate means to survive. Therefore, the material wealth of the Greco-Roman world was distributed unevenly.

As Robin Osborne argued “poverty” in the pre-industrial world was largely determined by access to land.⁵⁴³ The consequence of this is that those who owned, the inhabitants with sufficient property or money, rich people have better life and could secure their substances and could have meat for a meal as a sign of political power.⁵⁴⁴ While people with minuscule plots of land, small incomes or without a family were completely dependent and entitled to regular help.⁵⁴⁵ Gildas Hamel writes that the situation of poor people in Roman Palestine during the first three centuries CE was of great concern. Water was the most important drink, but not everyone could readily have access to it, except in normal times in the cities where there were public wells. Meat was certainly not an everyday dish and was relatively common only on the wealthier people’s tables. Only vegetables were more easily accessible than meat.⁵⁴⁶ Peter Garnsey, a prominent scholar who has worked most on the problem of poverty, had noted that “the absence of meat from his diet is one of several indicators of his extreme poverty.”⁵⁴⁷

From the quotation above, we may see how was there poverty and how widespread was it. As Gildas Hamel, has observed, the real difference between rich and poor people was in term of security. Richer people had a wide margin of safety, while the poor were to be dependent on barley, legumes of less desirable quality.⁵⁴⁸

But if so, what were their real causes? Indeed, it was argued that the major factor here concerns the burden caused by Roman occupation. It is true that the taxing power of the Roman Empire was a major cause of misery.⁵⁴⁹ In the view of Dominic Rathbone, poverty

⁵⁴³ Robin Osborne, “Introduction: Roman Poverty in Context,” in *Poverty in the Roman World* (eds. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 1-20.

⁵⁴⁴ Gildas Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 28.

⁵⁴⁵ Hamel, *Poverty and charity in Roman Palestine*, 33.

⁵⁴⁶ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine*, 18, 21, 22.

⁵⁴⁷ Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risks and Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 56.

⁵⁴⁸ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine*, 59.

⁵⁴⁹ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine*, 111.

was the result of other social and economic changes: the extrusion of poor from control of land in favour of large estates, the virtual disappearance at the everyday level of a monetised economy providing cash wages for casual labouring, a heavier and less user-friendly from state.⁵⁵⁰ Nevertheless, we may be inclined to conclude with Hamel that “what appears to us as a great weakness was not perceived as such by the people of time. They thought that poverty was the result more of lack of justice than of lack of resources.”⁵⁵¹ The existence of poverty and wealth was first of all a political problem. There is a second practice “the laying on of hands,” it is which we can turn now.

4.2.3.1.2 The practice of the laying on of hands (*ἐπέθηκαν χείρας ν.β*)

Aside of “the distribution of food,” there is a second discursive practices, namely that of “the laying on of hands.” It is worth noting that the practice of “laying on of hands” was not a practice only within the Second Testament (early Christianity). In the Old Testament we also find the passages that refer to “the laying on of hands” in a certain number of contexts, and the meaning of this practice is not always the same. In an essay entitled “Laying on of hands in the Old Testament” M.C. Sanson had noted five contexts in which “the laying on of hands” is used. Namely: (1) In the sacrificial rites (Lev 1; 3; 4); (2) In the day of Atonement (Lev 6) (3) In the appointment of Joshua (Num 27, Deut 34), (4) In the consecration of the Levites (Num 8), and (5) In the passing of sentence upon a blasphemer (Lev 24)⁵⁵² He argues that in both contexts: the sacrificial rites and the Day of Atonement rites, “the laying on of hands” signifies transference. In the case of the appointment of Joshua, the laying on of hands signifies official investiture, and in the case of consecration of the Levites, it also signifies transference, while in the last case the passing of sentence upon a blasphemer, he considers the case totally inexplicable. According to him, two basic meanings of “the laying on of hands” emerge: transference on the one hand, and acknowledgment or identification on the other hand.⁵⁵³

As in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, we may also identify a number of instances referring to “the laying on of hands” in different contexts in the Gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Paul’s epistles. Scholars have identified at least 5 different meanings

⁵⁵⁰ Dominic Rathbone, “Poverty and Population in Roman Egypt,” in *Poverty in the Roman World* (eds. Margaret Atkins and Osborne; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 100-114.

⁵⁵¹ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine*, 164.

⁵⁵² M.C. Sanson, “Laying on of Hands in the Old Testament.” *Exp Tim* (1983): 324-326.

⁵⁵³ Sanson, “Laying on of Hands,” 326.

connecting with the laying on of hands.⁵⁵⁴ I will attempt to clarify the meaning of the term by examining some passages in which the laying on of hands is mentioned:

4.2.3.1.2.1 In the Gospels

According to Matthew 19:13 and 15 children were brought to Jesus and although the disciples rebuked those who brought them, Jesus had placed his hands on them. In this context the laying on of hands may signify “blessing.” For Mark 1: 41-42; 8:25, filled with compassion, Jesus reached his hand and touched the man. I am willing, he said. “Be clean.” Once more Jesus puts his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. In both contexts the meaning of the laying on of hands signifies “healing.”

4.2.3.1.2.2 In Acts of the Apostles

In Acts 6:6, they presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them. In this case the laying on of hands signifies “ordination” or “commissioning.” According to Acts 8:17, Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. In this instance, the laying on of hands signifies “initiation.” As shown in Acts 9:17, placing his hands on Saul, he said Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you....you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. In this context, the laying on of hands signifies also “initiation.” Luke says in Acts 13:3, after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and send them off. Here, the laying on of hands means “ordination” or “commissioning.” When Paul placed his hand on them, the Holy Spirit came to them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6). In this instance, the laying on of hands signifies “initiation.” Again according to Acts 28:8, Paul went in to see him, and after praying, placed his hands on him and healed him. In this context, the laying on of hands signifies “healing.”

4.2.3.1.2.3 In Paul’s epistles.

Paul writing to Timothy says “Do not neglect your gift, which was given to you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (1 Tim 4:14). In this instance, the laying on of hands signifies “ordination” or “commissioning.” “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sin of others. Keep yourself pure,” (1 Tim

⁵⁵⁴ See, J. K. Parratt, “The Laying on of Hands in the New Testament.” *ExpTim* (1959): 210-214.

5:22). In this particular context, the meaning is so obscure and more enigmatic.⁵⁵⁵ Again in 2 Timothy 1:6 Paul says, “For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” In this case, the meaning of laying on of hands has to do with “ordination” or “commissioning.”

From our analysis of the term “laying on of the hands” in New Testament we may argue that the term is used to signify either the healing as in Matt 19; Mark 1, Mark 8 and Acts 28, either ordination or commissioning as in (Acts 6 and 13; 1 Tim 4; and 2 Tim 1), or either initiation as in Acts 8, 9 and 19. The laying on of hands in the appointment of seven Acts 6:6), it is quite clear that it does signify the ordination or commissioning, and it cannot be confused with the bestowing of the Spirit or initiation, because v.3 states that they must be filled by the Spirit and of wisdom (*πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας*).

4.2.3.1.3 The practice of oratory ((*ῥητορικὴ*))

There is a third practice that is not explicitly mentioned but it is into the foreground. It is the art of oratory or rhetoric. I will look at its invention, its emergence and its meaning as discursive practice in the context of problematization.

4.2.3.1.3.1 *Rhetoric: its invention and emergence*

Rhetoric as the art of oratory originated in Western culture during the 5th century BCE in Greece.⁵⁵⁶ Plato was probably the first to use the term “rhetoric” and it could simply signify “the art of persuasion.”⁵⁵⁷ However, as Vorster has pointed out, rhetoric was not only structured to language as function of symbolization. It (rhetoric) was often seen as a catalyst in the formation of human civilisation and was necessitated by the changed political situation in Greece during the first part of the 5th century BCE that had an impact on the way in which the judiciary was implemented.⁵⁵⁸ Schüssler-Fiorenza, in a similar sense, has noted that “the science of rhetoric was particularly identical with advanced education and was conceived of as public discourse.”⁵⁵⁹ So, those who had the necessary skills for effective discourse were called “the Sophists” and the more influential were Protagoras⁵⁶⁰ Cicero, one of the great

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. Parratt, “The Laying on of the Hands in the New Testament,” 211.

⁵⁵⁶ For this quotation see Johannes Vorster in “Rhetorical Criticism,” in *Focussing on Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegetics, and Methods* (ed. Andrie du Toit, Pretoria: Protea, 2009): 505-578.

⁵⁵⁷ Vorster, “Rhetorical Critical,” 508.

⁵⁵⁸ Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 509.

⁵⁵⁹ Schüssler, *Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction*, 386.

⁵⁶⁰ See Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 511.

rhetoricians, explains the significance of the art of oratory. He argued that “the most knowledgeable and just people had an obligation not just to be smart and true, but to become effective orator,” and “the true orator must be a man of vast learning and experience.”⁵⁶¹ Cicero had understood that the power of such an orator to improve the welfare of the Republic is immense in that his eloquence gives him the power to throw culpable and guilty men to the wrath of their own fellow countrymen: to suppress crime, by ensuring that it is punished.⁵⁶² He estimates that the absence of such an orator constitutes a vacuum that the evil could take place. In *De Oratore* and elsewhere, Cicero offers a definition of the orator “as a good man skilled in speaking.” Not only is eloquence not possible without virtue, he suggests, but virtue is not possible without eloquence. In the way, he observes and supervises himself and allows himself to be observed by others. Cicero’s *Orator Perfectus* recalls the ideal statesman of *De Respublica* 2.69 who is a mirror (speculum) for his fellow citizens.⁵⁶³ Therefore, as we may see from the above, to be able to speak signified status, it signified a symbol of status, a character and it was also an act of power.

Quintilian, one of the most influential Roman rhetoricians defined “rhetoric” as the science of “speaking well” that is, “well speaking.” For him, this definition includes all the virtues of oratory and the character of the orator. That is, an orator reflects a good character. As such, a “well speaking” a “good orator” will respond to the goodness of people.⁵⁶⁴ However, when Stephen is foregrounded as character in this narrative, nothing is said concerning “the distribution of food” the very practice for which he has been appointed to. But what I see from the text, what is more important and what carries more value is his virtue as great orator, “...those men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the spirit by which he spoke (Acts 6: 9-10).” The practice of oratory (the art of oratory) as power, a power to speak well, was a practice reserved exclusively for males. In an essay entitled “The language of gender in Acts” Christian Petterson has drawn the attention to the way direct speech (first person) and indirect speech (third person) is gendered in Acts,

⁵⁶¹ For this quotation see, Dennis Glover, *The Art of Great Speeches and Why We remember Them* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4; Johannes Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 515.

⁵⁶² Cf. Glover, *The Art of Great Speeches*, 29.

⁵⁶³ See Joy Connolly, “Border Wars: Literature, Politics, and the Public.” *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, vol. 135, no.1 (2005): 103-135.

⁵⁶⁴ See Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 513.

highlighting the power of the speaker, by considering to what extent the use of direct and indirect speech tells us about the production of the character.⁵⁶⁵

4.2.3.2 *Construction of person*

The construction of person is crucial in the making of the rhetorical situation, because rhetoric is impossible without the moral character of the agents participating in the construction of the rhetorical situation. According to Vorster, in the construction of a person's role some constituents formed part of person construction in the writings of the early Christianity, namely: gender, education and training, and the acts of a person.⁵⁶⁶

4.2.3.2.1 Gender

As all the other authors of the New Testament, Luke personhood from a male perspective. The implied author will be male engendered and will ensue in phallogocentric discourse. In the choice of the seven, no mention has been made of women: "Therefore friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we might appoint to this duty" (Acts 6: 3). In the analysis of how masculinity functions in the construction of the author's person, it can be noted how women have been marginalized via the first criterion of selection, and second by the persons actually selected to deal with the matter. It is worth quoting Acts 6: 5-6 in full to see how the scene is set with terminologies providing males: "what they said pleased the whole community and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them." (vv.5-6). The entire community is pleased with a selection of persons who are all males, the taken-for grantedness giving away just how the official privileging of masculinity was accepted; Stephen's constructed person, reflecting not only in dedication but also in that quintessential component of masculinity namely the spirit; the seven who are all males; and these seven males stand before the 12, and the 12 who function as intermediaries all pray to a male God; and a hint that the power of God is extended via the laying of hands of males on to the seven. From a deconstructive perspective,

⁵⁶⁵ Christina Petterson, "The Language of Gender in Acts," in *Reading Acts in the Discourse of Masculinity and Politics* (eds. Eric D. Barreto, Matthew L. Skinner and Steve Walton; London: Bloomsburg T & T Clark, 2017), 3.

⁵⁶⁶ Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 557.

there is in the construction of the person, an ideology of male dominance. There is still the phallocentrism in the construction of the person, the privileging of masculine (phallus) in the criteria of choice and in the selection of the persons to be dealing with that business of the “distribution of food.” The consequence for this first is that there is no possibility of women included into organization and second, there is still a distinction made between role differentiations which are never allocated to a particular group (women).

4.2.3.2.2 Ethnicity

Since my project is driven by the notion of ethnicity and since one of my main arguments concerns how a construction of ethnicity performs in a divisive manner in Acts, it may be possible to say that the category ethnicity can no longer be seen as a fixed and rigid demarcation of a group of people. In fact, the conceptualization of ethnicity as an ethnical reasoning allows for an accommodation of rhetoric in the making of ethnicity. The relation of power at play in othering, in consolidating, in excluding and including, in privileging and marginalizing (discursive marginalization) indicates how then ethnicity is structured. Here, the author of Acts distinguishes between two different groups of which the one has been constantly related to a particular construction of Jews, whereas the other group has been more limits that could include non-Jews. This setting of differentiation locates us within what can be seen as ethnic rhetoric, what indicates to what extent the discourse here is indeed infused by ethnic rhetoric which can be seen in how the Hebrews and Hellenists are differentiated. The author of Acts then specifies another group, known owing to a different identity, but an identity that has been specified in terms of ethnic rhetoric, namely the Hellenists.

So, whatever the “real” historical situation could have been, Luke’s construction is that of an ethnical grouping that is not Hebrew that aligns with Hellenists. In Acts 6: 1-7, the author of Acts depicts the Hellenist widows as “neglected” and “marginalized” while Hebrew widows were well provided. There is still this problem of “Other” within that early Christian Jerusalem community. It is not only a question of reversing the status quo where Hebrew masculinity dominated via the dominant position of the Twelve this is gradually reversed by giving a presence to seven Hellenist males. Yet what is not said but lies hidden, is the fact that the Hebrew females were also positioned on a hierarchical higher level, higher than the Hellenist women, with the widows within their circle at the lowest level of this social construction.

4.2.3.2.3 Education and training

An argument has been made that in the Jerusalem community, the Hebrews had a sense of superiority over the Hellenists.⁵⁶⁷ As Aramaic was the language of worship, the Hellenists who did not speak it were considered as inferiors, and had even difficulties to contribute their views and having access to decision-making. This argument is well supported by Shillington, when he asserts, “the complaint has been lodged against the Hebrews because the Hebrews held the balance of power by virtue of their number or their status as Aramaic-speaking Jerusalemites.”⁵⁶⁸ Therefore, that linguistic difference could result to the injustice and unequal measures in that community. The Twelve would have had at least a basic training (childhood type) of the Torah, but they were also in the close proximity with Jesus would have counted favourably. However, from a deconstructive viewpoint, in the construction of the person, no attention is given to the role of Stephen as rational, courageous and a great orator.

4.2.3.3 Construction of the author's role

Vorster has indicated that the person influences acts performed by her/him, which may function to establish her/his stability, whether that stability be negative or positive.⁵⁶⁹ In case of Acts of the Apostles, the construction of the author's role can be seen in the presentation of Luke's account to his addressee Theophilus in the prologue of the first volume: “Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I too decided after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,” (Luke 1:1-3). Indeed, Luke begins his account as no other New Testament author does. He is the only one who sets forth in a prologue 1) his purpose “to compile a narrative” (*διήγησιν*) about the events that have taken place among us, 2) his subject matter “the events that have been fulfilled among us” (*πράγματα*), and 3) his method “after investigating everything carefully from the beginning, to write to you in an orderly way (*ἀνατάξασθαι*).⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ See Hansung Kim, “Reading Acts: 1-7: Lessons for Multicultural Mission Organization.” (Cited from the online version: <http://www.emisdirect.com/emq/issue-306/2213>). Access on 02/03/2018.

⁵⁶⁸ Shillington, *An Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts*, 50.

⁵⁶⁹ Vorster, “Rhetorical Situation”, 562.

⁵⁷⁰ Michal B. Dinkler, *Silent Statements: Narrative Representations of Speech and Silence in the Gospel of Luke* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 53.

Richard Thompson has indicated that Luke followed the tradition of the Greek historian Thucydides, in that he investigated the details, did his work “carefully” (ἀκριβῶς), and he offered an “orderly” (καθεξῆς) narrative.⁵⁷¹ And no other New Testament author has claimed such reality written with such reliability (ἀσφάλεια). In this way, Luke criticises his predecessors for having undertaken to compile an account of the events that circulated, instead the product of those who have been the eyewitnesses (αὐτόπται). For Luke, their work was not precise and carefully enough (ἀκριβῶς), and they did not pay enough attention to composition in their work (καθεξῆς, “orderly” in consecutive order).⁵⁷² Finally, Luke considers his account as better and more reliable.

4.2.3.4 Construction of the audience

An audience can be defined as “the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation.”⁵⁷³ Although this can be a general definition of what constitutes an audience, one should perhaps also ask whether such an “ensemble” is at any time anything but a construction. Can a group of people be designated as an “audience” if that designation is not in itself a construction? As such an audience will always be “visualized,” will always an extent be “implied,” will be “presupposed” where that act of presupposing is at the same time a construction. In the case of rhetorical criticism, the speaker’s perception of the audience and the ways chosen to influence it contribute to an understanding of the rhetorical situation.⁵⁷⁴ In fact, it is worth noticing that unlike Pauline epistles, which were addressed to Christian communities with specific situations, and usually to specific audience, Acts have no explicit audience.⁵⁷⁵ This means that Paul addresses an audience, but that audience is no less constructed, than Luke’s audience. In Paul’s case, the implied audience is just sometimes made explicit as in when he directly addresses them, and that does not make them less of a construction. Nevertheless, in Acts 6: 1-7, an exploration of the audience may lead to the conclusion that both the Hebrews and the Hellenists, two groups of the Jerusalem community, were addressees and women might have been present as part of the implied audience. Thus, as all the New Testament writings, the Acts’ audience is engendered as male.

⁵⁷¹ Richard P. Thompson, “Luke-Acts: The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed, David E. Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 321.

⁵⁷² Francois Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1: 1-9: 50*. Trans. by Christine M Thomas (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 19.

⁵⁷³ For this quotation see Johannes N. Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 565.

⁵⁷⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza, “Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians,” 387.

⁵⁷⁵ Jakob Enberg, Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, Anders Klostergaard Pitersen (eds.), *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 205.

Schüssler-Fiorenza has drawn attention on the way ancient rhetoric distinguished three types of oratory: the deliberative, the forensic, and the epideictic which correspond respectively to an audience engaged in deliberating, an audience engaged in judging, and an audience that is merely enjoying the orator's unfolding argument without having to reach a conclusion on the matter in question.⁵⁷⁶ Seen from this perspective, Acts 6:1-7 seems to support the understanding that the oratory is deliberative, it is an audience engaged in deliberating. As we can see, the apostles had hitherto the directing of the matter. But, they did not determine anything without associating community. The twelve called together the whole community (*πλῆθος*), and gave them the the whole responsibility to select the seven men among them (vv. 2-3). Therefore, it may be deducted that Acts have no explicit audience and as all New Testament writings, Acts' audience is gendered male. From a deconstructive point of view, it is virtually impossible to establish the precise constitution of Lukan audience. There is however, in that audience a problem of masculinity (patriarchy) where no attention is paid to the role of women within organization. In addition, there is still a problem of perpetuation of hierarchies where a group is represented (men) and the other (women) are not.

4.2.3.5 *The rhetorical situation of Acts 6:1 -7.*

In order to adequately analyse the argument, we need first to know the type of the situation and audience in which the argumentation is intended to function. To put differently, it is more useful to search for the type of the situation in which the text appears to function as appeal or argument, that is, its rhetorical situation.⁵⁷⁷ From this, after problematizing, that is, identifying the discursive practices or principles, and the construction of the author's role and audience, the rhetorical situation of Acts 6: 1-7 can be conceived as follows: In Acts 6: 1-7 the audience is composed of Hebrews, Hellenists as part of the implied audience. In that community, the practice of "daily distribution" (*τῆ διακονία τῆ καθημερινῆ*) posed problem (exigence) in that there was an unfair treatment: the Hebrew widows were well provided for while the Hellenist widows were neglected. This situation led to the Hellenist's complaint (constraints) (v.1). The cause of their complaint is the lack of the just treatment in the community, under the leadership of the Hebrews who held the balance of the power. The apostles' strategy to remove the constraints is to call the whole community that must select seven men (vv.2, 3). Four rhetorical problems can be identified in the strategy of the apostles:

⁵⁷⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation," 390.

⁵⁷⁷ Thurán Lauri, "Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis." *JSNT Sup.* 144 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 32.

1) All the seven come from the Greek community, there is a problem of ethnicity. 2) All the persons chosen are men; there is here a problem of gender inequality. 3) The hierarchy is presented as the Hebrew Twelve being in a position of leadership, the Hellenists not, not before the selection of the seven. 4) That social hierarchy is replicated in the value bestowed on a differentiation of roles that is linked to two discursive practices, namely the distribution of food (on a lower level) and oratory (on a high level). Therefore, though the constraint has been removed, we may pose questions how appropriate was this solution to the problem? Was the daily distribution of food really foregrounded as a problem at all? To what extent has the discrimination against Hellenist widows not be constructed as a jumping board to work towards a reversal of engendered social hierarchy?

Virtually, the practice of oratory was a symbol, a status, character and act of power. When Stephen is foregrounded as character, the function in which he has been appointed disappears, but what is foregrounded is his art of oratory.

4.2.3.6 The analysis of argument

Since the rhetorical situation has been constructed, the argumentation can now be analysed related to the problematization and practices. For that, each argumentation consists of certain elements, which are identified on the basis of their function, which can help to describe the structure of argument.⁵⁷⁸ At this stage, the categories provided by traditional rhetoric such as: invention, τόποι or loci are important and can assist in the discovery of argument.⁵⁷⁹ Vorster has indicated that there are loci pertaining to a person and loci concerning with things. These τόποι or loci are thus “search formula” or tactical aids or moves in which argument can be slotted.⁵⁸⁰ First in Acts 6: 1-7, we may identify loci concerning with person in which argument pertaining to ethnicity is used. Indeed, the author depicts the Hellenists (*Ἑλληνιστῶν*) as another group in the Jerusalem community different from the Hebrews (*Ἑβραίων*). The Hellenists saw that their widows were being overlooked in the “daily distribution” (v.1), while the Hebrew widows were well provided for. The loci of ethnicity functions here as the place from where the argument is conducted. Perhaps the Hebrew who were in charge for relief did not with impartiality.

⁵⁷⁸ Lauri, “Argument and Theology in 1Peter,” 12.

⁵⁷⁹ Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 519.

⁵⁸⁰ Vorster, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 519.

Second, the exordium (*προοίμιον*) that serves to inform the audience of the topic which will be presented is not found in Acts, but rather a reminder of the topic of his first volume (1.1). Nevertheless, the narration (*διήγησις*), which the objective is to prepare the scene for the submission of proposition can be found in this section, namely in 6: 2-4, where the apostles are submitting a proposition (v.2). And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables.v.3 Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, v.4 while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving word.”

To conclude this section, we may say that a rhetorical analysis of Acts 6: 1-7 shows that the practice of “daily distribution of food” practiced in the early Christian Jerusalem community composed of the Hebrews and Hellenists was problematized: the Hebrews widows were well provided for while the Hellenist widows were overlooked. The apostles’ strategies to remove the constraint posed four problems; all seven come from the Hellenist community; all the persons chosen are engendered men; the hierarchy presents the Hebrews being in a position of leadership; and the hierarchy is replicated by bestowing two discursive practices: distribution of food (lower level) and oratory (high level). We also see how the privileged practice (oratory) functions in the text whereas the daily distribution of food carries less value in that community.

4.3 Deconstructive critical approach of Acts 6: 1-7

4.3.1 Introduction

There have been a number of studies that have applied either rhetorical criticism or deconstructive approach in both Old Testament and New Testaments. In the New Testament, the majority of these studies have been on Paul’s letters and other epistles for rhetorical criticism, and synoptic gospels and the Gospel of John for deconstruction. However, there are few on Acts of the Apostles. Vernon Robbins’ “The ‘we’ passages in Acts and Ancient sea voyages” was the first socio-rhetorical study that has been done on Acts of the Apostles.⁵⁸¹ We might also add Ben Witherington’s socio-rhetorical commentary on Acts of the Apostles.⁵⁸² Yet, while many interpretative approaches have produced studies on Acts 6:1-7,

⁵⁸¹ Vernon K. Robbins, “The ‘We’ passages in Acts and Ancient Sea Voyages.” *Biblical Research* 20 (1975).

⁵⁸² Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998).

no one has used a deconstructive reading as approach. A general survey of the recent studies indicates that the majority of these studies have been made from the historical critical method. Examples of these are: Haenchen (1971), Conzelmann (1987), Bruce (1990), Penner (2004), Shillington (2009), Pervo (2009), Fitzmyer (2010). The intention of these authors was to uncover the meaning, which is supposed to be present in the text. However, from a deconstructive viewpoint, this is the main problem of Historical-Critical method: the meaning either resides in the text as the text is seen for the making of history, a source from which information can be excavated albeit in a critical fashion, or meaning resides in the development of the text. In both case scenarios meaning is seen as fixed. Deconstruction moves away from the notion of a fixed meaning which can be discovered within the text. For Derrida, the signifier can only acquire its meaning in its interaction with other signifiers. And this interaction is always dynamic, always in fluidity.

There is however another problem. For the adherents of rigorous Historical Criticism, interpretation halts at the so-called discovery of meaning caught up in the first century, or encaptured in the development of the text during the first centuries. For that reason, no questions are asked as to what the text could have performed. Interpretations that halt in antiquity excluded questions concerning supersessionism from the outset. It therefore also stands to reason that it becomes impossible to pose questions of a preventative nature, such as how ethnical discrimination can be prevented, how a more egalitarian ethnical relationship can be promoted within the church while at the same time moving towards the destruction of supersessionism.

For this reason, in this study I will be using deconstruction as a strategy of resisting hegemonic historical criticism and that at the same time also enables a more adequate explanation of ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7. My deconstructive approach is threefold: 1. Acts 6:1-7 within the broader framework; 2. Deconstructing Acts 6:1-7; and 3. The contribution that deconstructive critical approach can make to the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7. Yet, before I proceed with deconstructive critical reading of the text, it is important to review Acts 6:1-7 within its broader context.

4.3.2 Acts 6:1-7 within the broader framework

Indeed, the episode in Acts 6: 1-7 contrasts with the accounts in the preceding chapters in a certain number of ways. Whereas in (Acts 4:32) Luke depicted the early Christian Jerusalem

community as that of “one heart”, a sign of unity, the episode in Acts 6:1-7 describes a conflict between the Hellenists and Hebrews disturbing the peace and harmony previously described within that community, a sign of division. Indeed, the account in Acts 6:1-7 contrasts with the previous account where the apostles after doing many signs (*σημεία*) and wonders (*τέρατα*), were arrested and put in prison (5: 18). There they were miraculously brought out by the angel of the Lord (5: 19). Again arrested by the officers who brought them before the great priest and the council, they will be released this time thanks to the wise counsel of Gamaliel, a “respected man” in the council (5: 35-39). In this account, “the practice of preaching and teaching the word” (*διακονία λόγου*) such as made by the hands of the apostles contrasts with “the practice of the distribution of food,” “serving tables” (*διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*). While in the first account, “the practice of signs and wonders” which was demonstrated by “signs and wonders” provokes the furious and the jealous (*ζήλου*), in the second “the practice of food’s distribution” provokes a complaint (*γογγυσμός*). While in Acts 5: 12-42 the issue involved the men, in Acts 6:1-7 the issue involves the women. In the first account, the conflict is over the exercise of ministry by the apostles (men), in the second the conflict is over the exercise of ministry by the widows (women). In addition, whereas in the first episode the counsel comes from one person (Gamaliel), in the second the counsel comes from the Twelve. In a similar way, the episode in Acts 6:1-7 contrasts equally with the following account of Stephen in (Acts 6:8-7:1-60) where Stephen chosen for the ministry of “serving tables” (*διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*) becomes preacher for “the ministry of word” (*διακονία λόγου*), performing signs and wonders, pushing him into the role of an orator rather than the distributing food. While in Acts 5:17-41 the apostles are arrested, tried, beaten and released, in Acts 6: 11-7:1-60 Stephen is arrested, tried, and killed (Acts 7: 55-59).

Therefore, to sum up this section it is reasonable to conclude that the broader framework of Acts 6:1-7 shows that the episode gives a different image of reality in the early Christian Jerusalem community where the unity and the peace described in the preceding chapters (Acts 4:32, 34, and 35) are threatened by internal division, leading to the ethnical conflict and the problem of perpetuating hierarchies where the distinctions are made between privileged and less privileged, between women and men. For now, I will go to the next point which is deconstructing Acts 6:1-7.

4.3.3 Deconstructing Acts 6:1-7

Derrida has convincingly defended that deconstruction is a dismantling of the binary oppositions in a metaphysical structure.⁵⁸³ But, it is worth noting that deconstruction cannot be simply reduced to “hierarchical oppositions.” As Richard Rorty has pointed out, dismantling of the binary oppositions is not simply overturning of violent hierarchies which are at work in a text. But rather to investigate what happens when the given “common sense” arrangement is reversed.⁵⁸⁴ Dismantling, overturning, or reversing Derrida emphasizes, does not mean a simply overturning of the violent hierarchies or a simple destroying of metaphysical structures of oppositions which are at work in the text, but rather to reinscribe them in another way, showing that by acknowledging their dependence one creates something new.⁵⁸⁵ Owing the fact that deconstruction cannot be reduced to a simple overturning of the violent hierarchies I will in this section proceed with a deconstructive critical reading of Acts 6:1-7. The analysis would be concentrated on two main points: reversal and displacement of the text. In the first point, I will be dismantling the binary oppositions, that is, I will be seizing and capsizing the terms that can be oppositively interpreted, and in the second point, I will be firstly examining the undecideabilities that our text rests on, and secondly, I will be reading the old names in the hierarchical oppositions under erasure. And finally, I will be showing what contribution deconstruction can make to the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7.

4.3.3.1 Dismantling the binary oppositions: (*servicing tables-servicing word*)

As we noticed earlier in this chapter, different approaches have been made in order to grasp the meaning of the Acts 6:1-7. Indeed, despite the substantial differences of approaches the common burden of most readings, have been the conflict between the Hellenists and Hebrews and how to address the ill-treatment that the Hellenist widows have undergone from the Hebrew leadership. Several frameworks, however, have been invoked to illuminate the meaning and the significance of Acts 6: 1-7. These include the authors such as Ernst Haenchen, F. F. Bruce, Ben Witherington III, Todd Penner, David W. Pao, and Hansung

⁵⁸³ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*. Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 41.

⁵⁸⁴ Richard Rorty, “Deconstruction,” in *From Formalism to Post structuralism* (ed. Raman Selden, vol.8 of *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 166-196.

⁵⁸⁵ See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Geyatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972), lxxv.

Kim.⁵⁸⁶ These authors have scrupulously noted Luke's failure to present a coherent and sustained account and many scholars have resorted to various forms of historical reconstruction.⁵⁸⁷ Accordingly, these scholars were more interested in historical facts behind the text, that is, a literal reading which aims to the apparent meaning that must be found within the text, rather than a critical reading that appears to grasp the figurative meaning of the text that derives from a dismantling of the violent hierarchies within the text. Deconstruction can help us to grasp the meaning not from the text but from a strategy of reversal and displacement of the hierarchical oppositions within the text. For this reason, two structures of a hierarchical opposition can be erected from our selected text. At ground level, is the apparent meaning in which the Hellenists are chosen to serve tables (*διακονειν τραπεζαις*) v.2 and at the higher level, the figurative meaning in which they will be serving word (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*) Acts 7-8. At the apparent level, Hebrew leadership, and at high level Hellenist leadership. At the apparent level, Stephen chosen to serve tables, at the high level he becomes preacher and missionary. Likewise, at the apparent level, Philip chosen to serve tables, at the high level he becomes preacher and evangelist. At the apparent level the Twelve and at the high level the seven.

4.3.3.1.1 Feminist debate on Acts 6:1-7

Feminist criticism has tended to view the issue in Acts 6:1-7 as a typical example of the exclusion or marginalization of women to exercise their power. In her reading of the episode in, Barbara Reid asserts that the issue in Acts 6:1-7 is a struggle involving ministry, that is, the conflict over the exercise of ministry by widows. She convincingly argues that the part of Luke's aim is to show the controversy engendered by the widows to exercise their power.⁵⁸⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza likewise, in her interpretation of Acts 6:1-7, contends that the conflict between the Hebrews and Hellenists involved the role and participation of women at the Eucharistic meal 'serving tables'.⁵⁸⁹ While I tend to agree with Barbara Reid that: "the

⁵⁸⁶ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 260; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998); Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 32. Hamsung Kim, "Rereading Acts 6:1-7: Multicultural Mission Organization," cited from the online version at: <http://www.emisdirect.com/emq/issue-306/2213>. Access on 02/3/2018.

⁵⁸⁷ David W. Pao, "Waiters or Preachers: Acts 6:1-7 and the Lukan Table Fellowship Motif." *JBL*, vol.130, no.1 (Spring 2011): 127-144.

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. Barbara Reid OP, "The Power of the Widows and How to Suppress It?" in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* (eds. Anny-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstatt; Cleveland: T&T Clark, 2004): 71-88.

⁵⁸⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 219.

function of Acts 6:1-7 is to trace the succession from the apostolic leadership and to introduce the extension of the mission outside Jerusalem,⁵⁹⁰ what remains unquestioned in these readings, however, is the meaning of the hierarchical opposition “serving tables” (*διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*) and “serving word” (*διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου*). The issue can be refocused as follows: two kinds of service, the literal symbolized by “the tables” and figurative symbolized by “the word.”

4.3.3.1.1 Seizing and capsizing the oppositions

If I go back to our selected text, the complaint raised by the Hellenists against the Hebrews had as solution that the seven men might be chosen whom the purpose is “to serve tables” (*διακονεῖν τραπεζαῖς*), in order to allow the apostles to be entirely devoted to the prayer and the word of God “*διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου*” (6:3). We can now capsize the hierarchical oppositions that established the relation between the two services: literal and figurative. The literal meaning “to serve tables” is superseded by figurative meaning “to serve the word.” Norman Nagel made an observation when he drew attention that: “the specific task allocated to them is not called “*diakonia*” nor are they “*diakonoi*.”⁵⁹¹ I may respond to Nagel’s observation by arguing that the distinction between “*diakonia*” and “*diakonoi*” does not validate an erasure of the very disconcerting hierarchy that has been foregrounded by the text. The following quotation from Robert C. Tannehill is truly illustrative:

The Twelve draw a clear distinction between two types of services: serving tables (*διακονεῖν τραπεζαῖς* 6:2) and the serving the word “*διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου*” (6: 4). Stephen chosen to serve tables uses the Spirit and wisdom not to organize charity, but to speak and perform wonders. The same Philip appointed to serve distribution of charity became a missionary. Indeed, preaching the gospel, that is, the business of feeding souls with the bread of life supersedes the business of relieving the body.⁵⁹²

In Matthew 4:4, Jesus refused to comply at the Satan’s temptation replying that “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Jesus here is quoting Deuteronomy 8: 3 where God would let the children of Israel know that they could not live because of the manna which they fed in the wilderness, but if they heard and obey his word. It is by the same motivation that Jesus rebukes Martha for giving more importance in

⁵⁹⁰ Barbara Reid, “The Power of the Widows and How to Suppress It?” 71.

⁵⁹¹ Cf. Norman E. Nagel, “The Twelve and the Seven in Acts 6 and the Needed.” *ConcJourn* 31 (2005): 103-126.

⁵⁹² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 82-83.

“serving tables” rather than listening his teaching.⁵⁹³ Likewise, Jesus said to the crowd “do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of the Man will give to you (John 6:27). Here, Jesus reverses the crowd’s understanding of food, so the material, literal food is superseded by the figurative and spiritual food which is God’s word.

I can also capsize the hierarchical oppositions between the Hebrew leadership and the Hellenist leadership. In the use of ministry (*διακονία*), the seven leadership (Hellenist leadership) overthrows the use of ministry in the apostles’ leadership. In the Hebrew leadership, the Twelve have neglected the word of God in order to serve tables (Acts 6:2). In the Hellenist leadership, the seven will use spirit and wisdom to perform wonders and great signs. We may also capsize the hierarchical oppositions between “Hebrew widows” and “Hellenist widows.” The Hellenists were not represented in the leadership of the community; the community’s leadership was in the hands of the Hebrews. So, while the Hebrew widows were well served in the food distribution, the Hellenist widows were neglected. It is also possible to capsize the opposition between the discursive practices “distribution of food” (on a lower level) and “the preaching of word or oratory” (on a high level). The Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.” (6:2). And the Twelve to respond “therefore, brothers select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task while we will ourselves devote to prayer and to serving the word.” (6:3-4). The hierarchical opposition “literal” represented by the Hebrews, is superseded by “figurative” represented by the Hellenists. However, Shillington’s argument that “the appointment of seven was the launching of the gentile mission,”⁵⁹⁴ is of great contribution. For him, they should be well qualified for that purpose: they must be men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom (*πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας*) (6:3).

4.3.3.1.2 Drowning the oppositions

It is worth noticing that to be satisfied simply with overturning a hierarchical opposition is not sufficient, deconstruction requires yet another phase. A second phase is necessary which will entail “the irruptive emergence of a new concept, which would inhabit the opposition to

⁵⁹³ Luke 10: 38-42.

⁵⁹⁴ . Shillington, *An Introduction*, 50

resist and paralyze it.”⁵⁹⁵ In Acts 6:1-7, “the ministry of food distribution” (Acts 6:2) is followed by the emergence of “ministry of word” (Acts 6:4). At the conflict between the Hellenists and Hebrews, the discursive practice of “ministering food” was declared superseded by ministering word. This word becomes source of life (John 6:63). The ministry of food distribution no longer gives life, but the ministry of word gives life (Acts 8: 4-8).

4.3.3.2 Examining the text’s undecideabilities

In this section, I will be examining the undecideabilities that our text rests on. Indeed, as Andreas Rasche had argued that “to deconstruct something is to turn oppositions into supplementary relations and by doing so to expose aporias.”⁵⁹⁶ An aporia is an undecideable situation in which one is unable to justify a side of the opposition. Undecideability, however, is not as Jacques De Ville says “Relativism”: it is not an oscillation or tension between two different approaches to a matter or two different interpretations of the same rules or between the universality of the law and the singularity of the unique situation.”⁵⁹⁷ Undecideability rather entails going beyond a simple opposition between universality and singularity. It is a motif of being impossible to distinguish between or false, or correct or incorrect, a situation in which one is unable to justify one side of the opposition. This is because there is no pure moment of undecideable, but always a differential relation between undecideable and decideable which needs to be negotiated in singular instances.⁵⁹⁸ Derrida himself uses the undecideability of *pharmakon* to demonstrate that *pharmakon* is undecideable because it is neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither inside nor outside, neither speech nor writing.⁵⁹⁹

From a biblical scholarly perspective, the term aporia refers to a passage or writing presenting a difficulty or doubt.⁶⁰⁰ Our text, however presents some undecidabilities/aporias. The most obvious is the inconsistencies in the role assigned to the seven and their present activities in the subsequent narrative (Role-Function). There is no connection between the seven’s purported role and their actual function within the narrative. In other words, the role

⁵⁹⁵ Derrida, *Positions*, 42.

⁵⁹⁶ Andreas Rasche, “Organizing Derrida Organizing: Deconstruction and Organization Theory.” *Philosophy and Organization Theory*, vol. 32 (Mars 2015): 251-280.

⁵⁹⁷ Jacques de Ville, *Jacques Derrida: Law as Absolute Hospitality* (New York: Routledge 2011), 150.

⁵⁹⁸ De Ville, *Jacques Derrida*, 150.

⁵⁹⁹ Derrida, *Positions*, 36.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Moore, *Poststructuralism and New Testament*, 72.

assigned to the seven does not fit with the subsequent episode in Acts.⁶⁰¹ The question that I may ask is therefore: why the seven men chosen to serve tables two are transformed to be preachers and evangelists? Stephen chosen to serve tables becomes a great orator performing signs and wonders. Likewise, Philip chosen to serve tables becomes a great preacher and evangelist, evangelizing the whole Samaria. Yet, to discover the answer to that question, we have to go back to the solution suggested by the twelve, and to deconstruct the binary oppositions “serving tables” (*διακονεῖν τραπεζαίαις*) (Acts 6:2) and “serving the word” (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*) (Acts 6:4). So, after having dismantled, that is, capsizing and drowning that binary opposition, our deconstruction shows that the ministry of food was declared superseded by the ministry of word. That is, the seven men were chosen not to serve tables, but to serve the word. The metaphoric meaning of “waiting tables” (Acts 6:2) is therefore the means through which the word of God can be proclaimed.

The second undecideability is the inconsistencies between the function and the criteria of the choice (Role-Criteria). “Therefore, friends select from among yourselves seven men of good understanding (*μαρτυρομενους*), full of the spirit and wisdom.” (*πλήρεις πνεοματος και σοφιας*) (Acts 6:4). The question we might ask is that “why the men chosen for distributing food must be “of good understanding and full of spirit and wisdom?” In fact, the qualification of “full of spirit” is not common in the biblical story. We find some cases where certain persons were filled with spirit. The first mention can be found in the Old Testament where Bezabel has been filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge in all manner of workmanship (Exod.1:2-4). A similar mention can also be found in the New Testament where an announcement has been made to Zechariah by an angel that Elisabeth his wife will bear him a son John, who will be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb (Luke 1:11-17). It is also mentioned that at Jesus’ baptism, the Spirit of God descended like a dove and coming down on him (Matt 3:16). However, as Haenchen has argued, there may be a possibly connection in (Acts 6:1-7) and a Jewish institution for in Jewish communities, the local council usually consisted of seven men known as “the Seven of the Town” or “Seven Best of the Town.”⁶⁰² However, the problem here is that these criteria in Acts 6:3 differ significantly with these demanded for Judas’s replacement, and do

⁶⁰¹ See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 344.

⁶⁰² Haenchen *The Acts of the Apostles*, 84.

not fit with Paul's definition of apostleship.⁶⁰³ In the case of Judas's replacement, the three criteria are: 1) the man must be with us the whole time Jesus was living; 2) he must be with us when Jesus was baptizing until the ascension of Jesus; 3) he must be witness to his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). In the case of Paul, the first two criteria do not fit with his definition of apostleship. For Paul, the most important was the role of the apostle as missionary and safe guarder of the authoritative tradition.⁶⁰⁴ This was the condition for which a man must fulfill to be qualified as an apostle. Thus, it is possible to argue the criteria in Acts 6:1-7 are the qualities required for someone to be a bishop (1 Tim 3:2-4).

As Dunn argues, the choice of the seven would mean that the seven were seen as representative leaders of the Hellenists believers, analogous to the leadership provided by the Twelve of the church as a whole (Acts 21:8) in parallel to or some equivalence to the twelve (Acts 6:2).⁶⁰⁵ From a deconstructive view point, the criteria in (Acts 6:3) are undecidable in that they correspond neither with the criteria demanded for a deacon, nor with Paul's definition of apostleship, and still less with Peter's criteria for the replacement of Judas.

4.3.3.3 Reading the old name (*Paleonymy*)

It is noteworthy that "Paleonymy" or "Paleonymics" in the context of deconstruction is the second step of "displacement" in which a word or an assumption is read under erasure. In that operation, the old name or the old assumption is overturned in the erasure, and this entails a reversal of the situation.

Yet, after having made the first component of displacement (undecidability) it is now possible to reflect on the last stage which is Paleonymy. I will be reading under erasure the violent oppositions: (Neglect-Devote). Indeed, the Twelve have instructed the multitude of the disciples to select seven men who will be dealing with food distribution in order for them to be entirely devoted to the prayer and the service of the word (Acts 6:4). Here, the Twelve express a prioritization of prayer and the ministry of word over the ministry of tables, whereas in Acts 4: 35 the apostles formerly presided over distribution of food.⁶⁰⁶ The reason for this is that the task has come to require more attention than they can offer without

⁶⁰³ James G Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol.2 (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996), 20.

⁶⁰⁴ Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 84.

⁶⁰⁵ Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 84.

⁶⁰⁶ Christopher M. Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 217.

neglecting their priority task of prayer and the ministry of word.⁶⁰⁷ The prioritization of teaching over food distribution is also a concern for Luke in Luke 10:38-42, where Jesus rebukes Martha for prioritizing “serving food” rather listening to his teaching.

However, the deconstruction of the previous assumption “it would not be right for us to neglect the word of God” symbolizes the deconstruction of the relationship between the Twelve and the multitude of the disciples. As reversal, at the place where it was said “it would not be right for us to neglect the word of God” it shall be said “we will continue to devote ourselves to prayer and the service of word” (Acts 6:4). This is an act of paleonymy because the old name (old assumption) is overturned in the erasure, and the old assumption “it would not be right for us to neglect the word of God” is read under erasure and the implied term “the word of God” is neither erased nor allowed to dominate, but rather displaced in another sense.⁶⁰⁸ In the similar sense, it is also possible to see paleonymy in the hierarchical opposition (Twelve-Seven). The old name the 12 is read under erasure and there is now the emergence of a new name 7. And that is an act of paleonymy.

4.4. Contribution that deconstruction can make in the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7

We can ask the question “what might deconstruction contribute to the scholarly debate on the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7?” Indeed, the critics have tend to grasp the meaning of Acts 6:1-7 from the original text and its setting in life (Sitz im Leben), suggesting that there is a fixed meaning present in the text.⁶⁰⁹ However, Acts 6:1-7 is interpreted by most of scholars as referring to the formation of the ministry if deacons, but there are some who differ. Rhetorical and Deconstructive critical approach has shown that in Acts 6:1-7 the seven are not deacons, and they were chosen not to “serve tables” but rather to “serve word” and to supersede the Twelve in the apostolic leadership. Deconstruction has also revealed that the author of Acts develops a speech of ethnical discrimination against the Hellenists since that hierarchy presents the Hebrews being in apposition of leadership. Further deconstruction has shown how the practice of oratory is foregrounded in the text. Stephen, one of seven, when he is foregrounded as a character no one could stand before him because of his oratory skills. Still from the perspective of deconstruction, the text of Acts 6:1-7 expose the masculinity

⁶⁰⁷ Hays, *Luke's Health's Ethics*, 227.

⁶⁰⁸ Derrida, *Positions*, 36.

⁶⁰⁹ See Randolph W. Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2012), 197.

where women is idealized by men and excluded from the official hierarchical organization. The discrimination against Hellenist widows has been constructed as a jumping board to work towards a reversal of engendered social hierarchies. This thesis makes a distinctive contribution to scholarship by depicting ethnicity as a discriminatory problem in Acts 6:1-7 through a rhetorical and deconstructivist critical reading. While ethnicity is what gives African a sense of belonging, a sense of life, it becomes just a problem when it is fuelled by antagonist differentiations based on a fixed identity which has been formed by different values systems. It can be added that in my knowledge, no study has been made on Acts in general and Acts 6:1-7 in particular from the perspective of a rhetorical and deconstructivist approach. This study which is first a conjunction of deconstruction with rhetorical criticism has revealed that the issue in Acts 6:1-7 in which the seven men have been chosen to help the Twelve to be entirely devoted in the ministry of word, also makes a contribution by asserting that ethnicity is indeed present in Acts 6:1-7, and by considering the possibilities of how ethnical discrimination can be prevented and how egalitarian relationship can be promoted.

4.5 Complementarity of rhetorical criticism and deconstruction

It has been noted somewhere in this study that most of social theories deal with the social facts, and the constraint associated to them. Deconstruction, which is one of the social theories, has as goal to overthrow “the binary oppositions” that impose that constraint. Similarly, rhetorical criticism can work together with deconstruction because it deals with construction of the “rhetorical situation,” that is, a complex of relations which present an exigence capable of positive modification.⁶¹⁰

In Acts 6:1-7 however, while the rhetorical situation has shown that the strategy suggested by the twelve to remove the constraint posed two serious problems: ethnicity and gender relations, deconstruction has exposed the problem of “supersessionism” which traditional readings have not still discussed in this passage. Therefore, the combination -social theory and rhetorical criticism- brings something new which has never been done before.

4.6 Conclusion

Here, in this last point of the chapter, I would like first to summarize the main points discussed so far in this chapter. Second, I will highlight the argument presented in this

⁶¹⁰ See Bitzer, “Functional Communication,” 21.

chapter, and third finally, I will be concluding the chapter. Six points have constituted the structure of the chapter, namely: 1) Preliminary considerations, 2) a rhetorical critical approach of Acts 6:1-7; 3) Acts 6:1-7 within its broader framework; 4) a deconstructive critical approach of Acts 6:1-7; and 5) the contribution that deconstruction can make in the interpretation of Acts 6:1-7; and 6) Complementarity of rhetorical criticism and deconstruction. We may retain the following: in its broader framework, Acts 6:1-7 contrasts with the accounts of the previous chapters as well as the following chapters on a certain number of points. Whereas the episode in Acts 5:34-35 the practice of peaching provoked the furious and jealous, in Acts 6:1-7 the practice of “food distribution” provoked the complaints. Rhetorical critical analysis of Acts 6:1-7 has shown that the practice of “daily distribution of food,” the practice of laying on of hands as well as the practice of oratory such as practiced in the early Christian community, have all been problematized. A deconstructive critical reading of Acts 6:1-7 has proceeded to the dismantling of the hierarchical oppositions within the text.

By way of concluding, it is significant to note firstly, that the author of Acts could produce a sort of anti-Semitism: In the sense that it develops a speech of discrimination directed against the Hellenists by privileging one group (Hebrew widows) and neglecting another (Hellenist widows) in the daily distribution of food. Secondly, we may also note how the privileged practice, the practice of preaching (oratory) is performed in the text. Indeed, according to a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach, the Twelve did not solve the problem; they merely shifted their responsibility by calling to a group that does not exist in reality, for we do not see how the seven were busy with their new function. They contrast their work (praying and preaching) with (waiting on tables) which is less valorized than the oratorical work they are doing. The daily distribution of food is not again mentioned and becomes almost forgotten issue. But what we see, what is mentioned is the work of the Twelve, the oratorical work. Two of the seven (Stephen and Philip) will be illustrated as highly competent in oratorical practice empowered by the masculine trait described as “full of wisdom and spirit” as we can see the result of their oratorical work by the increasing the number of disciples. Thirdly, and finally, we may also note the real target of oppression in the text. We are then tempted to reach the conclusion that Luke Acts instead of being the solution to the problem of widows is itself the problem. It is the problem because there is a border between men and women in this text and we need to cross the border. As Turid Seim has convincingly argued, “this is why an explicit criterion of gender is introduced in Acts to exclude women from the responsibility of being elected to the service of leadership, whether of the word or of

the tables. Both a new apostles and the seven-who according to the list of names given are all men- had to be elected from among the men.”⁶¹¹ While women are idealized by men in this way, this justifies a masculinization in Acts’ presentation of the organization of the Christian group. In this view, the category of masculinity, as a social and oppressive construction is well present in Acts’ agenda. Therefore, I may conclude that the first step has been to replace Hebrew with Hellenist, the seven encroaching on the sphere of the Twelve. Hellenists and Hebrews are stereotyped as two homogenous groupings, a community dichotomized into two competing fixed factions. These ethnical overturning also has implications for leadership. After reading Acts 6:1-7 from a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach, I will in next chapter, contextualize the study in the African context.

⁶¹¹ According to Turid Karlsen Seim, the Lukan Construction contains a double, mixed message: while he presents strong traditions about women on the one hand, at the same time there is certain ideological control telling them to be silent and promote male dominance in positions of leadership on the other. (Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke –Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1994), 24.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

5.1 Introduction

The chapter contextualised the study, and considered the question how the text as Acts 6:1-7 can be appropriated or how I can think with Acts 6:1-7 in an African context. This chapter argues that for the church in Africa to be effective, the church must not embrace or legitimate ethnic discrimination. Church leaders must critically take distance with the state and avoid to be allied to civil authorities in power in order to speak against oppression, violence, exclusion and all sorts of discrimination. One of the implications of this study has been to create an awareness of how deep seated discriminatory practices may even reside in attempts of remediation.

After dealing with the reading of Acts 6:1-7 according to a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach in the previous chapter 4 in which I have considered the identification and the problematization of the discursive practices, dismantling the binary oppositions and the examination of the text's undecideabilities, I will in this chapter contextualize the study. That is, I will reflect on the problem of ethnicity and leadership within the African churches context. I will do so firstly, by examining how the African church deal with the problem of ethnic conflict, and leadership, and secondly, by looking at how the text as Acts 6: 1-7 can be appropriated in the African context. To put differently, how we can think with a biblical text such as Acts 6:1-7 within the African context in order to address the problems of ethnic strife and violence, racism, "superioritization," and the effects these have on the church in Africa. To do this, I will be dealing with three issues.

5.2 The problem of ethnicity and leadership in the African church

5.2.1 The problem of ethnicity in the African church

5.2.1.1 Background of the problem of ethnicity in the African church

It is noteworthy that before the arrival of colonizers and missionaries in Africa, African identity provided with a sense of solidarity, a sense of community to a group of people.

As Peter Nyende has observed, an aspect of African context is that of ethnic identities. The ethnic group is what gives African an identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of life.⁶¹² This sense of solidarity and community is well expressed by what is called “Ubuntu” meaning: “I am because we are; I can only be a person through others.”⁶¹³ In this sense, African communities lived in peace and harmony and even if there were wars or conflicts, they managed their inter-ethnic conflicts fairly well.⁶¹⁴ In brief, the African worldview, people and their dignity are of the highest significance.⁶¹⁵ However, the introduction of colonial rule gradually changed this sense of African worldview. It has been observed that the missionary enterprise in Africa was the link between colonial state and the African cultural and religious heritage. In that relationship, the impact of Christianity has been the most influential.⁶¹⁶ The missionaries made abandon some of the African positive values and introduced Western concept of life.⁶¹⁷ Christian missions in Africa were an integral part of colonial project; they often developed a close relationship with colonial authorities promoting Western culture while undermining indigenous systems.⁶¹⁸ In addition, the missionaries also maintained and perpetuated ethnicity in Africa. In Rwanda for example, the Catholic missionaries favoured the minority Tutsis for the entrance in catholic seminaries with a view of producing a large group of Tutsi priests.⁶¹⁹ From a supersessionist perspective, it would be possible to say that the positive values of Africa have been superseded by the Western culture.

However, nowadays, there is a kind of attitude that I can call “ethnicness” or “ethnicalization,” an attitude that has become so embodied that the hierarchies of the church and appointments in the hierarchic structure of the church are determined by the violence that “ethnicness” produces. The quotation from Shorter below is truly illustrative:

It would be surprising if the church were not both a victim and accomplice of .ethnocentrism. Up till now, Catholics have been reticent about the ways in which they have been affected by “ethnic diseases”. Church authorities approach the ethnic problem with extreme caution, creating ethnically encapsulated dioceses, and aligning

⁶¹² Peter Nyende, “Ethnic Studies: An Urgent Need in Theological Education in Africa.” *International Review of Mission*, vol.98, no.1 (2009): 132-146.

⁶¹³ J. Mugumbate and A. Nyanguru, “Exploring African Philosophy: The Value of Ubuntu in Social Work.” *African Journal of Social Work*, vol. 3, no.1 (2013): 83-100.

⁶¹⁴ See, Ike Udogu, *Leadership and the problem of Electoral Democracy in Africa: Case Studies and Theoretical Solutions* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 16.

⁶¹⁵ Ebben van Zyl, “The Difference between Leadership and Management,” in *Leadership in the African Context* (ed. Edden van Zyl; Cape Town: Juta and Company, 2015): 21-43.

⁶¹⁶ Jesse N. Mugambi, “African Churches in Social Transformation.” *JIA*, vol.50, no.1 (1996): 194-220.

⁶¹⁷ Maake Masango, “Leadership in African Context.” *The Ecumenical Review*, vol.55, no.4 (2003): 312-321.

⁶¹⁸ Jeff Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1996), 24-45.

⁶¹⁹ Rene Marchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Prager, 1970), 137.

with ethnically oriented governments. Even so, it was not always possible to avoid appointing bishops and priests who were from ethnic groups. In the 1960s Catholics in a Ghana diocese burnt their bishop's Episcopal outside the cathedral, because he was not of their ethnic group. In a number of other African dioceses the clergy have boycotted their newly-appointed bishop and in other cases missionary administrators have been appointed because of incurable ethnic rivalries among the diocesan clergy.⁶²⁰

The quotation above demonstrates a few things, namely: an awareness of church authorities of ethnicness as problematic, a deepseated embodied ethnicnes even up to the level of the clergy, and at the same time the quotation demonstrates a kind of unskillness in dealing with the issue. In view of the above, in spite of the Catholic authorities' strategy to deal with the issue, it is undoubtedly true that ethnicity is a crucial problem not only in the African church but also in African continent which threatens its very survival. From the above, it will be argued that the church is both victim and complier in the perpetuation and maintenance of ethnicity and that church leadership is actually at a loss. As Nyende argues "virtually all wars and conflict in Africa can be more or less traced to the forces of ethnicity. Invariably ethnicity has bred instability and violence in Africa, and is altogether a threat to the survival of African statehood."⁶²¹ Nyende goes on to point out that ethnicity is a life and death issue that is totally against God's telos, which he considers as more deadly than HIV/ .AIDS.⁶²²

In fact, there have been a number of the ethnic conflicts across the African continent. These includes: the Angola conflict, the resource avarice and conflict in Eastern DRC, the Rwanda genocide of 1994, the north and south Sudanese civil war, the Biafra war in Nigeria, just to name a few. However, I will be focusing on Rwanda genocide because of the ferocity of violence had produced: within one hundred days between April and July 1994, an estimated of one million people were massacred in great scale.

5.2.1.2 *The Church and Genocide in Rwanda*

The term genocide was first used by Raphael Lemkin to explain Hitler's policy of the destruction of Jews during the World War II, known generally as "Holocaust." According to him, genocide signifies "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups

⁶²⁰ A. Shorter, "The Curse of Ethnocentrism and the African Church," in *Ethnicity: Blessing or Curse*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1999): 28-29.

⁶²¹ Nyende, "Ethnic Studies," 134.

⁶²² Nyende, "Ethnic Studies," 140.

themselves.”⁶²³ From this view, the church in Africa has also been involved in a number of actions supporting or favouring genocides. I can actually cite for example the case of Christians and Muslims in Central Africa, and the case of Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda.

However, people still remember the ethnic violence between the Hutus and Tutsis that has led to the Rwandan genocide in 1994. We may not have the exact statistics of people who have been killed, but it is fairly conclusive that the violence that devastated the country killed around 1 million of victims.⁶²⁴ It has often been noted that at the time of genocide, Rwanda was the most Christianized country in Africa with 90 percent of the population professing Christian faith.⁶²⁵ Unfortunately, several sources confirm that the Christian churches, Catholic and Protestant played an important role in the development of the ethnic ideology which led to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.⁶²⁶ From this view, John McCauler has argued that “Rwandans are not only members of the Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities; they are also members of religious groups and other social identities. Why was the Rwandan genocide not a different story of majority Catholics launching an attack against Muslims”?⁶²⁷

The perception of the author here is that Christians actually cannot submit to that type of violence. However, I may argue that violence is a natural reaction to frustration or oppression.⁶²⁸ And the history recalls us that Christians were responsible for the crusades, holocaust led Christians murdering millions of Jews, and Christians played an enormous role in enforcing the Apartheid system in South Africa. The fundamental question is rather can we reject violence? My response is we cannot totally reject violence. Because violence is a natural reaction to frustration and oppression.⁶²⁹ Jesus whipped the merchants and drove them

⁶²³ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rules in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Law, 1944), 79.

⁶²⁴ See Christine L. Kellow and Leslie H. Steeves, “The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide.” *JC* (Summer 1998): 107-128.

⁶²⁵ The Rwandan government census of 1991 reported that 62.6 percent of the population declared themselves Catholics, 18.8 percent Protestants, 8.4 percent Seventh-Day Adventists, 1.2 percent Muslims, 1.1 “traditional.” (See Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4; John Barton, “Confusion and Communion: Christian Mission and Ethnic Identities in Postgenocide Rwanda.” *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. XL, no.3 (July 2012): 229-248).

⁶²⁶ See for example, Israel Akanzi review of Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwanda Crises 1990-1994* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2005), 100.

⁶²⁷ John F. McCauler, *The Logic of Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 4.

⁶²⁸ Dirk van Keulen and Martien E. Brinkman (eds.), *Christian Faith and Violence, vol.1* (Amsterdam: Meinema-Zoetermeer, 2005), 13.

⁶²⁹ See Dirk van Keulen and Martin E. Brinkman (eds.), *Christian Faith and Violence, vol.1* (Amsterdam: Meinema-Zoetermeer, 2005), 13.

from the temple.⁶³⁰ As Dirk and Keulen argue religion does not always oppose violence. Religion can also be a strong motor of violence, especially, if it is connected to other fields of life, such as nation, social group or ethnic community.⁶³¹ However, the important thing the Christian must do is to be realistic. Christian realism demands that one must understand exactly what one is doing, why one is doing it, and what the results of his/her doing will be.⁶³²

5.2.1.3 *The background of Rwandan genocide*

Briefly going back into history, it is told that the Batwa settled in the sixth century, the Bahutu in the seventh and the Batutsi in eighth and ninth centuries. According to available information on the demographics of these communities, the Batwa consisted of one percent, the Bahutu of eighty five and that Batutsi of fourteen.⁶³³ The Hutus were predominantly crop cultivators, the Tutsis were the cattle farmers, and the Twas were the hunter-gatherers and inhabited in the forest, isolated from the Hutus and Tutsis.⁶³⁴

Historically, Rwanda was first colonialized by the Germans from the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. The Germans did not exercise a direct power on the Rwandans colonized, but established a colonial rule via local leaders, the “mwani” from the Tutsi community. One should note that the Germany colonizers chose the Tutsi over the Hutu and reinforced that predominant position based on the Hamitic theory.⁶³⁵ After, the First World War, League of Nations decided to place Rwanda and Burundi under Belgian rule.⁶³⁶ The Germans made that following a widely held belief in the western world that everything of value ever found in Africa was brought by these Hamites, a people inherently superior to the native populations.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁰ Mk 11:15-19.

⁶³¹ Van Keulen and Brinkman, *Christian Faith*, 13.

⁶³² Jacques Ellul, *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 82.

⁶³³ Maria van Haperen, “The Rwanda Genocide, 1994,” in *The Holocaust and Other Genocides: An Introduction* (eds. Maria van Haperen et al; Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012): 97-119.

⁶³⁴ Van Haperen, “The Rwanda Genocide, 1994,” 98.

⁶³⁵ The Hamitic theory states that the Hamites are a branch of the Caucasian race, a superior race, which came to Nord Africa during the Stone Age, and spread to the rest of the continent from there. According to this theory, the Tutsis were a Hamitic people who had conquered Rwanda through their superior military organization (See Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 62.

⁶³⁶ Van Haperen, “The Rwanda Genocide, 1994,” 99.

⁶³⁷ Sanders R. Edith, “The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Function in Time Perspective.” *JAH*, vol.10, no.4 (1969): 521-532.

Tharcisse Gatwa, who examined the role of the churches in the development of the ethnic ideology which led to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, states that ethnic rivalry developed through the influence of the colonial powers, missionaries and local elites.⁶³⁸ As did the Germany colonizers, the Belgian government reinforced that predominant theory based on the Hamitic theory by only appointing members of the Tutsi elite as officials or mayors as only the Tutsi had access to schooling.⁶³⁹ One should also note that in spite of theological difference between Catholic and Protestant missionaries, the approach of both towards political power and ethnicity did not differ substantially. The White Fathers favoured the Tutsis for entrance in Catholic seminaries with a view of producing a large group of Tutsi priests with a significant social and political influence.⁶⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as Bartrop observes, while the relationship between the Hutus and Tutsis prior to the 1950s had essentially been based on hierarchy of dominance, Hutu-Tutsi relations were for the most part relatively peaceful.⁶⁴¹

However, this attitude of the missionaries and colonial administrators changed after the World War II. As Longman notes, the missionaries created opportunities for Hutus within church institutions fostering a new Hutu elite who challenged the Tutsi supremacy. And this is what we want to demonstrate. This change had a profound impact on the Rwandan society because it helped to make possible the rise to power of the Hutu majority.⁶⁴² Yet, one should note that this change was due to the fact that a number of newer missionaries were affected by the terrible contrast between the growing poverty of the Hutu majority and the wealth and opportunity of the Tutsi elite.⁶⁴³ Nevertheless, as Longman pointed out, in spite of this counter version of the supremacy ideology from promoting the Tutsi supremacy into promoting a new master the Hutu, the church in Rwanda continued to engage actively in ethnic politics without challenging the central principles at the root of Rwanda's ethnic conflict.⁶⁴⁴

Rwanda gained its independence from Belgium in 1962. When Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu became President of Rwanda in 1973, he based his politics on ethnic divide and rule. The system of identity cards from the colonial period was retained as a means of discrimination in

⁶³⁸ See Israel Akanzi review of Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwanda Crises 1990-1994* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2005): 100-101.

⁶³⁹ Van Haperen, "The Rwanda Genocide, 1994," 100.

⁶⁴⁰ Rene Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970): 136-137.

⁶⁴¹ Paul R. Bartrop, *Encountering Genocide: Personal Accounts from Victims, Perpetrators, and Witnesses* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 199.

⁶⁴² Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, 66.

⁶⁴³ Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, 66.

⁶⁴⁴ Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, 66.

favour of Hutu majority. By early 1990, an extensive plan was established to carry out a campaign of extermination of Tutsis and their Hutus allies.⁶⁴⁵ As Gatwa writes, Habyarimana institutionalized ethnic discrimination between Hutus and Tutsis and enjoyed church loyalty.⁶⁴⁶ Timothy Longman states that the leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches were all close associates of president Habyarimana and his government, and local pastors and priests were often closely allied with local mayors and communal councillors.⁶⁴⁷ Des Forges has said that “the Catholic Archbishop was well known for his anti-Tutsi attitude and his cosy relationship with the regime.”⁶⁴⁸ In this sense, religious discourse played a significant role in cultivating ethnic discrimination in that this religious discourse has been used to define an ethnic religious identity based on discrimination and supremacy ideology.

However, the assassination of President Habyarimana on April 6, 1994 by a missile that shot down the airplane while he flew back from negotiations in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) was the starting of a long-plan operation of eliminating the Tutsi population in Rwanda. It is reported that after the announcement of the death of the president, a group of senior military officials quickly seized power, and immediately organized massacres of Tutsi and moderate Hutu began, initiated by the Rwandan National Army, the Police, the Presidential Guard, and the Interahamwe and Impunzamuambi youth militia.⁶⁴⁹

After that brief description of Rwandan prior and after genocide, the question is if the church bears responsibility of the ethnic violence that led to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The Pope John Paul II said that “Church is not to blame in Rwanda.” The Pope contended that individual Christians acting on their own initiative were culpable for the genocide but that the church as institution bears no responsibility.⁶⁵⁰ The reaction of the Pope to genocide may seem interesting, but the question should be what the church had done to prevent or to avoid violence? However, while national church leaders were not directly involved in the

⁶⁴⁵ Paul R. Bartrop, *Encountering Genocide: Personal Accounts from Victims, Perpetrators, and Witnesses* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2014): 199-200.

⁶⁴⁶ See Israel Akanzi, review of Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwanda Crises 1990-1994* (Miltra Keynes: Authentic Media 2005), 101.

⁶⁴⁷ Timothy Longman, “Church Politics and the Genocide in Rwanda.” *JRA*, vol. 31, no.2 (2001): 163-186.

⁶⁴⁸ Des Forges Alison, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 140.

⁶⁴⁹ Maria van Haperen et al, *The Holocaust and Other Genocides: An Introduction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 98.

⁶⁵⁰ Letter written by the Cardinal Ratzinger, named Pope Benedict XVI (See Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2010), 320.

planning and execution of the genocide, most critics have condemned the churches not for their actions, but rather for their inaction, for not doing more to halt the bloodshed. Churches in Rwanda are accused of “sins of omission,” that is, for failing to act in the face of evil.⁶⁵¹

Conversely to Pope, Tharcisse Gatwa admits that the church played an important role in the development of the ethnic ideology that led to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, by exposing the complicity of the church in the promotion of racial ideology in the two phases. He also revealed the extreme relationship that existed between the church hierarchy and the colonial administration.⁶⁵² Longman likewise, contends that the churches in these communities did play an important part in determining the readiness of the community for genocide. Christian churches were intimately involved in Rwandan genocide; they played an important role in helping to make participation in the killing morally acceptable, whatever the individual reason for participation. Christian church made killing morally acceptable in that those Churches were a major site for massacres, and many Christians participated in the slaughter including church personal and lay leaders.⁶⁵³ Therefore, this strong church-state relationship visibly helps to explain why churches were involved in genocide.

In conclusion, what I found when I went through the story of Rwandan genocide is that the church was the major factor that made the genocide possible. First, at the beginning the missionaries were responsible in the promotion of racial ideology in the two phases, a racial ideology based on ethnic discrimination. The missionaries favoured the Tutsis with a view of producing a large class of Tutsi elites. This discrimination made the Tutsis dominant and the Hutus dominated, and later the counter version of this supremacy ideology. This, I consider as the root of the hostility between Tutsi and Hutu. One should note that the colonial strategy of divide and rule pursued by German and Belgian colonizers to amplify and articulate class differences marked ethnic differences between the Hutus and Tutsis.⁶⁵⁴ Secondly, the church because of its close working relationship with the power, encouraged obedience to political authorities, and legitimating of the state power and ethnic discrimination, rather than challenging the principles at the root of Rwanda’s ethnic conflict. Thirdly, during the genocide there were no a clear denunciations of the violence by the church leaders. Rather

⁶⁵¹ Timothy Longman, “Church Politics and Genocide in Rwanda.” *JRA*, vol.31, Fasc 2, Religion and War in the 1990s (May 2001): 163-184.

⁶⁵² Cfr. Israel Akanzi review of Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Church and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwanda Crises 1990-1994* (Miltra Keynes: Authentic Media, 2005): 101-102.

⁶⁵³ See Longman, “Church Politics and the Genocide in Rwanda,” 163.

⁶⁵⁴ Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 160.

than to oppose the ethnic division, the church leaders embraced ethnic ideology, and were themselves involved in the genocide. John Barton argues that when the violence erupted, priests, pastors, and lay leaders played active roles in the killings.⁶⁵⁵ I completely agree with Timothy Longman that a clear denunciation of ethnic violence by the church could diminish or better prevent ethnic conflict from becoming more violent.⁶⁵⁶

The case of the South African church represented by the “South African Council of churches” that identified itself with the struggle against apartheid could be truly illustrative. Therefore, put in deconstructive language, what was thought to be the ‘church’ in Rwandan Christians’ eyes has been absent of “presence.” The traditional understanding of the church as “body of Christ” has completely been overturned and superseded by an ideology of ethnic discrimination.

5.2.1.4 How to address the problem of ethnicity in the African church?

With wars, conflicts, instability and violence in DRC, Sudan, Central Africa Republic, Somalia to name just a few, Africa is portrayed as a continent of perpetual tension and conflicts. Peter Nyende had pointed out that ethnicity is a crucial dimension around which Africa’s religious, socio-economic and political problems turn and is currently a crisis in Africa which threatens its very survival.⁶⁵⁷ For this reason, a response to that crisis is almost urgent. In the following, I will be examining some of the proposals that have been made for addressing ethnicity in the African church.

Deusdedit Nkurunziza, in an article entitled “Ethnicity, the Gravitational Centre of Evangelization: An Essay in African Ecclesiology,” contends that ‘African ecclesiology of unity’ in diversity, is the only source of salvation and liberation of different African ethnic groups.⁶⁵⁸ The Ecclesiology of unity in diversity, according to him, encourages reciprocity, sharing the experiences of faith lived concretely in different cultural and ethnic life situations. The question that I may ask is this: how can this African ecclesiology of unity be experienced where people are in conflict and hate each other?

⁶⁵⁵ John Barton, “Confusion and Communion: Christian Mission and Ethnic Identity in Post genocide Rwanda” *Missiology: An International Review*, vol.XL, no.3 (July, 2012): 229-248.

⁶⁵⁶ Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 321.

⁶⁵⁷ See Nyende, “Ethnic Studies,” 140.

⁶⁵⁸ Deusdedit R.K. Nkurunziza, “Ethnicity and Evangelization: An African Perspective.” *African Ecclesial Review*, vol.43, no.1&2 (2007): 19-36.

Peter Nyende for his part suggests rather that we may address ethnicity by infusion of ethnic studies in the curriculum of Theological Education in Africa. This is very important issue because he observes that the curriculum of the Theological Institutions in Africa, are not fitted to the African context, and as result the students ends up ignorant of the issues they need to work with and to engage with theologically in their churches and society at large. According to Nyende, this can be made either through the Bible teaching, that is, a teaching of a Bible text relevant to an ethnic issue, or through Bible examples, that is, the way in which the writers of the Bible are seen to deal with ethnicity in their own time, still or through theology of ethnicity, that is, through the study of the Bible. That is, the Bible would assume a place of pre-eminence, a source of guidance.⁶⁵⁹

The question we may ask is how the changes in curriculum will prevent the introduction of ethnical motivated discriminatory practices? Nyende may be right in stating that the Bible is a source of guidance in the sense that it provides us with the moral virtues which we may follow. But, the Bible may also be an ethnocentric writing and its deconstruction or its exposure may assist us to understand how it works and to act proactively. The Bible is therefore a writing we can think with, that is, to see how the text can become a resource of invention without becoming a resource of faith.

The African Synod and Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) that made an assessment of the wars and conflicts in Africa, has noted that the ethnic group remains the source of African social and cultural identity, which the church is pledged to evangelize. After having condemned the violence in all its forms (ethnic and religious), the bishops proposed a calling for conversion as a way to overcome these conflicts.⁶⁶⁰

Here again the question is how a calling of conversion suggested by SECAM practically prevent ethnical motivated discriminatory practices? Orji Cyril, in his article “Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Sub-Sahara Africa,” offers a critical analysis of the Catholic Bishops’ response to the conflict in Africa. While agreeing with the bishops calling for conversion as a viable solution, he nevertheless observes that the bishops firstly, did not state the nature of this conversion, and secondly, they did not show how this conversion aids dialogue, and

⁶⁵⁹ Peter Nyende, “Addressing Ethnicity via Biblical Studies: A Task of African Scholarship.” *Neotestamentica* 44, no.1 (2010): 122-139.

⁶⁶⁰ For this quotation see Cyril Orji, “Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Sub-Sahara.” *African Ecclesiological Review*, vol.43, no.1&2 (2007): 37-62.

thirdly, the Catholic Bishops did not determinate how dialogue and conversion help to promote the common good.⁶⁶¹ Orji suggests that the bishops' call for conversion would be more meaningful if conversion is conceived in Lonergan's sense, that is, (developmental conversion).⁶⁶² He notes that Lonergan discusses the term "bias" in the context of his views on human knowledge, and defines "bias" as "the infantile beginning of psychic trouble" in which there are "dramatic bias", "individual bias", "group bias", and "general bias". Orji also notes that for Lonergan, "bias" can be overcome through conversion, and offers a better way on how conversion is to be understood: conversion has to be intellectual, religious, moral, and effective. He points out that conversion is not a simple event, but a process that involves a radical about-face in which one repudiates a lifestyle that does not promote the good of the human community. Such developmental conversion process helps one to eliminate all bias, and by so doing, advance the common good.⁶⁶³

In view of the above, it is a fair conclusion that the select proposals of addressing ethnicity in African church at which I looked are all workable. However, contrarily to Nkurunziza and Nyende, who went directly to the solutions to the problem of ethnicity in Africa, Orji went deeper by looking for the root of this sickness. He finds that the root is rather in the moral agency of individual (bias), and that the conversion is a way towards.⁶⁶⁴ Although the effort of Nyende and Nkurunziza in the search of solution for addressing ethnicity in African church cannot be denied, I consider the approach of Orji more suitable in that he is concerned with the state of heart in which all vices come from.

Nevertheless, ethnicity is indeed a problem in the African church, that ethnicity that is fuelled by antagonistic differentiation based on fixed identities that have been formed by different values where deconstruction will take place.

For that, the problem resides at the level of the church as institution, an institution of power and its institutional discursive practices, the church and its unaccountable leadership to the problem of ethnicity. So, how can ethnicity be curbed and destroyed in the contemporary African church today? From a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, the proposal of addressing the problem of ethnicity in the African church can be made through the following five levels:

⁶⁶¹ Orji, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Sub-Sahara Africa," 49.

⁶⁶² Orji, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Sub-Sahara Africa," 37.

⁶⁶³ Orji, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Sub-Sahara Africa," 50-59.

⁶⁶⁴ Orji, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Sub-Sahara Africa," 53.

- 1) African church is called to have knowledge concerning social injustice that comes from the margins and look for by all means the appropriate solutions in order to remedy;
- 2) African church has to speak out and raise the truth of no voice of the margins in order that those voices that are not heard today may be heard tomorrow;
- 3) African church has to deal specifically with the problem of women in the official hierarchy of the church by including women in the official capacities in the church;
- 4) African church will do the necessary to fight ethnical discrimination by favouring the communion of the all members without distinction of race, tribe and ethnic in order to prevent the conflict ethnics;
- 5) African church has to keep a critical distance with the state and avoid to be allied with it.

In conclusion, the ethnicity is the greatest challenge in which the church in Africa faces, which threatens the very survival of the continent. Indeed, if in politics all the wars and conflicts can be traced back to ethnicity, in the church ethnicity is still a problem which needs to be addressed. However, the discussion above has clearly shown that church is both victim and complier in the perpetuation and maintenance of ethnicity and church leadership is actually at a loss and unable to deal properly with the issue of ethnicity. For that reason, it is almost imperative to find a response to the problem of ethnicity in African church, and that the proposal that this study has suggested is part of the solutions that will be applied in order to address the problem of ethnicity in African church. For now, I will turn to another issue which African church is confronted, which is leadership.

5.2.2 The problem of leadership in the African church

5.2.2.1 The background of the problem of leadership in the African church

I have already mentioned somewhere that the term ‘leadership’ is a successful exercise of personal influence by one or more people that results in accomplishing shared objectives in a way that is personally satisfying to those involved.⁶⁶⁵ From this view, it is without doubt that the success of a group or organization depends primarily on the quality of its leadership.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁵ John Nirenberg, “Leadership Effectiveness” in *Encyclopaedia of Leadership* (eds. George R. Goethals, Georgia J. Sorenson, James J. Burns; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2004): 844-853.

⁶⁶⁶ See Van Dyk G.A.J. & Van Niekerk N.J. “Military leadership: A challenge beyond fall range leadership.” *JPA*, vol. 39, no.2 (2004): 322-340.

For this reason, the only way a Christian leader can be effective is by addressing the problems that are affecting the members of his/her community.

Indeed, with very few exceptions, the African church leaders' resistance to the corruption, injustice and oppression was theologically defective. It could be argued that one of the disappointments of the African church during the post-colonial era has been that the church failed to make a clear break with the dictatorial, corrupt, and oppressive governments. Laurenti Magesa observes that the church identity was compromised in post-colonial (independence) Africa due to its leaders' attitudes and behaviour towards the African states. He remarks that "from independence until very recently, the church and its leaders did not consistently speak out against the injustice, and oppression perpetrated by civil powers in so many African states."⁶⁶⁷ The African leaders of civilian and military regimes used all different methods to keep the church leaders allied. Agnes Abuom, who observed the emergence of this compromising in Kenya said that when Daniel arap Moi succeeded Jomo Kenyatta as President of the country in August 1978, efforts to subordinate the church were renewed. The church blessed the state, and called President Moi's leadership God ordained. Church leaders pledged their loyalty to the President.⁶⁶⁸ Nevertheless, some Christian leaders challenged that false conversion within the African church leadership. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, made remark that "The church is not true to itself if it keeps silent when people are exploited or abused. To violate the rights of the people is to violate God whose image dwells in them."⁶⁶⁹ In view of the above, African church needs the leaders who are willing to subject their faith to a more revolutionary view of African problems.

5.2.2.2 African leadership

In addressing the subject of African leadership, Maake Masango⁶⁷⁰ observed three different eras which influenced leadership in Africa namely: African religious era, Christian era, and Globalization.

⁶⁶⁷ Laurenti Magesa, "Religious Leaders, Peacemaking and Social Change: Some Theological Perspectives" in *Peacemaking and Democratization in Africa: Theological Perspectives and Church Initiatives* (eds. Hizkias Assefa and George Washira; Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1996): 72-94.

⁶⁶⁸ Agnes C. Abuom, "The Churches' Involvement in the Democratization Process in Kenya." *In Peacemaking and Democratization in Africa: Theological Perspectives and Church Initiatives* (eds. Hizkias Assefa and George Wachira; Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1996): 95-116.

⁶⁶⁹ Desmond M. Tutu, "The Church in Africa and Human Rights." *African New Bulletins* (1993): 231-239.

⁶⁷⁰ Maake Masango, "Leadership in the African Context." *The Ecumenical Review*, vol.55, no.4 (October 2003): 312-321.

1) African religious era: the leadership is characterized by a powerful leadership from kings, and rulers and diviners. Religious symbols and music played an important role within the community.

2) Christian era: during this era, the leadership changed from kings, priests, and diviners to teachers, nurses, and ministers of religions. Christianity introduced western cultures, the leaders of people adapted to Western concepts, and some abandoned their own African values, customs and cultures.

3) Globalization is directed by the leaders who have a vision that extends far beyond their borders. Western leaders, by virtue of their economic power are leading, while others are following. In this regard, the African countries are threatened. As result, the introduction of this new order has forced African leaders to re-evaluate their leadership and governance, to a method of deconstruction.

Briefly, Masango argues that a new ministry of servant leadership must be defined in view of challenges emerging. Yet, the identity that was forced upon African leaders by developed countries has become a blessing, for African leaders have been forced to start redefining their leadership according to their own African values (supersessionism).⁶⁷¹ The question here is that in what extent the identity forged upon African leaders became a benediction? Do we have here a state of hybridisation or supersessionism? It can be difficult to affirm that the model of leadership developed by the Western missionaries in Rwanda which led to the genocide is a benediction.

Vhumani Magezi⁶⁷², likewise in his discussion of African leadership argues that “African church leaders are challenged to develop a constructive African church leadership approach that appropriately integrates African traditional kingship and biblical servant leadership approaches.” He notes at least three aspects of African leadership:

1) The pre-colonial Africa: its treasure is hidden in traditional leadership practices that resulted in the construction of great structures. This leadership was disrupted by the continued scourge of slavery, colonialism, racism and exploitation.

⁶⁷¹ Masango, “Leadership in the African Context,” 320.

⁶⁷² Vhumani Magezi, “God-image of Servant King as powerful but vulnerable and serving: Towards transforming African church leadership at an intersection of African kingship and biblical kingship to servant leadership.” *HTS Teologiese Studies* 71(2), Art. #2907, 9pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v7i2.2907>

2) The period of colonialism: period characterized by disruption, the African leadership systems were interpreted according to the mindsets of foreign explorers.

3) Post-colonial Africa: is the Africa in which Africans find themselves in some of the key developments. For example, establishment of the African leadership council; African leadership Initiative; the Life after leadership.

He contends, however, that the present realities of Africa require African leadership for the future to be informed by at least four considerations: 1) the reality of culture dynamics deriving from historical African roots, 2) the reality of present African leaders who are influenced by both African and Western values, 3) leaders should be cognizant of the global space that African and South African institutions exist in, and 4) there should be a concise articulation of the meaning of African leadership in order for a constructive dialogue on the global “leadership menu table” to be present.⁶⁷³

Interesting to note is that though both state that for an effective African leadership, the leadership approach should integrate servant leadership and African traditional values. They however diverge in terms of elements composing a ‘servant leadership’. While Masango contends that a new ministry of servant leadership must be defined in view of challenges emerging, without showing how it can be defined, Magezi in contrast points out that the view of biblical servant leadership is different from the servant leadership as contained in management literature. According to him, it differs at least in five areas: 1) reference; 2) guiding principles; 3) motivation; 4) agent; and 5) goal. For Magezi the reference is Jesus, the guiding principles are drawn from the Bible, the motivation is the realization of God’s Kingdom on the earth, the agents are the human leaders, and the goal is faith development.⁶⁷⁴

In her discussion on the leadership in the African context, Carol Dalglish⁶⁷⁵ has pointed out that there is a range of issues that African leaders have to address if they are to be successful. These include among others: corruption, lack of democracy and economic freedom, and poverty. Nevertheless, in order to overcome the voices of the past, she suggests a number of strategies that leaders in politics and business community sector can adopt, namely: 1) listen to those around you, including the poor; 2) build efficacy in yourself and those around you;

⁶⁷³ Magezi, “God-image of Servant King,” 5.

⁶⁷⁴ Magezi, “God-image of Servant King,” 6.

⁶⁷⁵ Carol Dalglish, “The African Context,” in *Leadership in the African Context* (ed. Ebben van Zyl; Lansdowne/Cape Town: Juta and Company, 2015): 44-66.

3) build on existing culture and values; 4) learn from other countries (science) what has been done elsewhere; 5) promote sustainable development; 6) overcome the negative characteristics of many African leaders; 7) recognize the reality of globalization; and 8) make a personal commitment.

Bearing in mind the Chinese doctrine of “working on two legs,” Ike Udogu encourages constructive African traditional values as the first leg, and borrowing from other regions of the world those positive, effective, politico-economic techniques and strategies that have worked for them and could be carefully applied to Africa as the second leg.⁶⁷⁶ In his discussion, he highlights some lessons to be learned about leadership qualities that are helpful in guiding political, social, and entrepreneurial actors in African politics. These lessons are drawn from two seminal works on leadership: one from Colin Powell and another from Lincoln. I will limit my reflection only on Powell’s theory, because his theory relates to the question I am pursuing. According to Powell’s opinion, some fundamentals or rudiments of leadership that a good leader attempts to cultivate and imbibe in order to be an effective leader include: 1) success often breeds failure; 2) the need to challenge professional and experts; 3) people make victories possible; 4) recruiting and promoting subordinates; and 4) the trust factor.⁶⁷⁷

The two authors push the discussion further. For Udogu, an effective leader has to combine both African traditional values and opportunities that globalization can offer. But he does not provide with what these African constructive and traditional values are and how they could be implemented. Carol on the other hand, points out a range of issues that exacerbate the leadership crises on the continent and provides a number of strategies in order to overcome voices of the past. Nevertheless, from a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, the question is how these relate to the issue of ethnicness or ethnocentrism that is also a serious issue in the African continent?

In brief, from the discussion above, I may note that according to the first two scholars: the African leadership is influenced by at least three things: on the one hand, it has to import the ideas from the African own values, and on the other hand African leadership is influenced by Western values introduced by the missionaries and colonizers, and at the same time, the African leader has to refer to the challenges of the current context for an effective African

⁶⁷⁶ See Udogu, *Leadership*, 187.

⁶⁷⁷ Udogu, *Leadership*, 194.

leadership. They then propose each a guiding principle for an effective leadership. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, I may ask the question: what does it mean guiding principles from the Bible”? What would these be? And how can the Bible in any case be a resource on how to deal with African conflict, with ethnicity in Africa, with the problem of power between church and state? Concerning the last two scholars, they try to push the discussion further by pointing out some elements that exacerbate the leadership crises in the continent, and attempt to suggest the strategies for remediation. However, the question is how all these relate to the issue of ethnicity and its development into supersessionism? Therefore, we may argue that any effort for the discussion of leadership in Africa must integrate the notion of ethnicity, which is great problem for Africa. This leads me to the next point which is the African church and leadership.

5.2.2.3 *The African churches and leadership*

I have already noted that one of the disappointments of the church in Africa in post-colonial Africa has been the church leader’s alliance with the civil power. De Gruchy who observed this compromise said: “for the church’s prophetic role to be effective, its clergy is expected to maintain a critical distance from both political and civil society.”⁶⁷⁸ However, though obedience to authority (Gal 2:11-14) is a biblical recommendation, this cannot be turned into an ideology of submission by the church leaders.

As Mbengu Nyiawung argues, today the clergy have been disoriented and manipulated through the awarding of gifts.⁶⁷⁹ As a result, the church has tended to operate with little critics, and its leaders cannot speak out against the oppression, injustice, and violence made by the civil power on the population.⁶⁸⁰ In addition, when a clergy from an ethnic group is placed to the church leadership, the members of other ethnic groups are overwhelmed. In Rwanda for example, the church encouraged obedience to political authorities, and legitimation of the state power and ethnic discrimination. In this case, the church’s biblical mandate to stand up against the oppression has been superseded by loyalty to the civil authorities. In deconstructive point of view, the African church leadership presents an

⁶⁷⁸ De Gruchy J.W., “Christian witnessing in a secular state: Rethinking Church-State relations in a new democratic South Africa,” in *An African challenge to the church in the 21st century* (eds. Guman M. & L. Milton; Cape Town: Salty Print, 1997): 86-96.

⁶⁷⁹ Mbengu D. Nyiawung, “An African Hermeneutic reading of Luke 9:18-22 in relation to conflict and leadership in pastoral ministry in the Cameroonian context.” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, vol.69, no.1 (2013), 1-7.

⁶⁸⁰ Magesa, “Religious Leaders, Peacemaking and Social Change,”78.

apparent contrast. In this sense, the church's prophetic role is thus contrasted, superseded by the need to fulfil the personal interests.

Equally important to note is the question of women in the African churches leadership. Philomena Mwaura observes that "today women still dominate the pews in mainline churches, African Institute churches, charismatic movements, and Pentecostal churches. They are, however, absent from the power structures of the churches, which are male dominated."⁶⁸¹ Similarly, in a study made by NCA of the 2007-2008 churches' audits conducted respectively in Malawi, Zambia and South Africa, and subsequent similar audits carried out in Zimbabwe and Lesotho in 2011-2012, on the number of women appointed to position of power and decision making in churches and councils, the study showed some positive changes, but the change is happening at a painstakingly slow pace. It is still men who are in the positions of power and decision making at most levels.⁶⁸²

Still Philomena Mwaura feels that a dominant ideology has ensured that women continue being clients in the churches just as they were in shires of traditional societies, whether matrilineal or patrilineal has influenced the perception of gender roles in society. Patriarchy has defined women as inferior, thus perpetuating marginalization of women.⁶⁸³

Patriarchy, according to Musa Dube, an African feminist scholar, is a social, economic, and political institution that is structurally arranged from a male point of view, giving power primarily to males and relating the majority of women, certain groups of people such as homosexuals, blacks, youth and lower classes to social margins. Nevertheless, she contends that not every patriarchal society is imperialist.⁶⁸⁴

In view of this, Sundkler and Steed attribute this fact to the missionary enterprise. They argue that "the missions whether Catholic or Protestant originating in the nineteenth century, were

⁶⁸¹ Philomena N. Mwaura, "Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted churches and Pentecostal churches" in *African Christianity: An African Story* (ed. Odbu U. Kalu, Perspectives on Christianity Series, vol.3, no.5 (2005): 410-445.

⁶⁸² *Women in the church leadership: Co-option or Transformation?* (NCA-Created In God Image-Tools 9-June 2005), 135.

⁶⁸³ Mwaura, "Gender and Power in African Christianity," 412.

⁶⁸⁴ Musa W. Dube, "Jumping the Fire with Judith: Postcolonial Hermeneutics of Liberation," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible and the Hermeneutic of Liberation* (eds. Silvia Schroer and Sophia Bietenherd; JSOT Sup. 374 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003): 60-76.

largely expressions of a patriarchal society and these attitudes seemed to fit with an African society in its patriarchal and matriarchal form.⁶⁸⁵

However, in his doctoral thesis entitled “The role of Makhadzi, in traditional leadership among the Venda, Pfarelo argues that even though in many communities women are subordinate to men, there are special classes of women who played critical roles in the public sphere and whom the society regards highly.⁶⁸⁶

As an example, we may note Kimpa Vita, also baptized Dona Beatrice, an African founder and prophetess in Democratic Republic of Congo. She claimed to have died and resurrected and that she was the reincarnation of St. Anthony. Kimpa Vita claimed to have been commissioned to preach, to teach, and to proclaim the coming judgment, and held that a black messiah would come to restore the Kongo Kingdom to its former glory. Her message was perceived by the Belgian colonizers as an anti-colonial contextualized Gospel. Her attempt to organize the African church with black saints was a challenge to the hegemony of the Portuguese Catholic Church, that accused her of propagating heresy, and she was burnt live in 1706.⁶⁸⁷ Kimpa Vita can be regarded as a model of woman leadership in the African churches today.

Also in West Africa, one can note two founders of churches: Grace Tani and Marie Lalou. They were prophetesses, healers and leaders in the Harrist movement. Daneel Inus reports that Grace Tani founded the church of the Twelve Apostles in 1918, together with Kwesi John Nackabah, who became the administrative and public healer.⁶⁸⁸ Tani was a traditional priestess; her church emphasized healing through faith in God and through the use of sanctified water. James Amanze too states that this dual arrangement, was a convenient method used by several AICs to overcome traditional male resistance to women’s leadership.⁶⁸⁹

In view of the above, these examples are simply exceptions that function as tokens when Africa is confronted with downgrading female leadership. I may conclude that the question of

⁶⁸⁵ Bengt Sundkler & Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 680.

⁶⁸⁶ Pfarelo E. “The role of Makhadzi in traditional leadership among the Venda,” Ph. D Thesis, University of Zululand, 2013.

⁶⁸⁷ See A. Anderson, *African Reformation* (Trenton: African World Press, 2002), 48.

⁶⁸⁸ Inus Daneel, *The Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 46.

⁶⁸⁹ James Amanze, *African Christianity in Botswana* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1998): 63-65.

women's leadership in the African church today still requires more attention although, the consciousness is taking roots within certain churches and that the change is happening slowly. The androcentric system is still apparent in certain church denominations. A more effort must be done in order that the positions of leadership are occupied by both male and female and that the church could open the opportunities for women at all levels. The patriarchal ideology, this power of men must be deconstructed in order to reach the target which is to achieve 50/50 women and men in all decision making.

5.2.2.4 How to address the problem of leadership in the African church?

In addressing the subject of African leadership, Mvumani Magezi has pointed out that it may be futile exercise for African leaders to be backward looking to pre-colonial times, as opposed to rather focusing on retrieving some African leadership elements that are still relevant to contemporary Africa. These elements could also contribute to global leadership discussion. However, these elements need to be moderated and integrated with biblical leadership principles to develop a constructive and responsible African Christian leadership.⁶⁹⁰ Carol Dalglish and Ike Udogu have suggested each the strategies for remediation. However, from a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, the notion of African church leadership can be developed first, by shattering of hierarchy (male leaders, male elites at the top), destroy the hierarchy system, a system that is in any case a model taken from colonialism. Second, by situating the notions of leadership at the bottom where there is no voice in order to make these voices heard that are not heard currently. Third, if we succeed to make those voices heard, we need to prevent that self-interest again besiege those that have made the voices heard.

Now if I relate this with Acts 6:1-7 it is possible to see that the no voice in Acts 6 (Hellenist widows) has been represented by an equally no voice (Hellenist group) who decided to speak out. The knowledge concerning social injustice comes from the margins and the absence of women in the official hierarchy. My question is therefore, how can we today remedy a situation where the same absences occur?

⁶⁹⁰ Magezi, "God-image of Servant King", 8.

5.3 How we can think with Acts 6:1-7?

In this last point of the chapter I am attempting to respond to the question: what us as Africans can appropriate or better can think with Acts 6: 1-7? The following summary is provided to respond to the above question:

Firstly, the author of Acts develops a speech of discriminatory discourse directed against the Hellenists by privileging one group (Hebrew widows) and neglecting another (Hellenist widows) in the daily distribution of food. Secondly, I have noted how the privileged practice, the practice of preaching (oratory) is performed in the text. From a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, the Twelve did not solve the problem; they only change the responsibility by calling to a group that does not exist in reality for I cannot see how they have done that new function of serving tables. The Twelve contrast their praying and preaching with waiting on tables, the latter is less valorised than the oratorical work they are doing. The daily distribution of food is not again mentioned and becomes almost a forgotten issue. But what I see, what is mentioned is the work of the Twelve, the oratorical work. Thirdly, and finally I noted the target of oppression in the text. And I am tempted to reach the conclusion that Acts instead being the solution for the problem of widows, is itself the problem. It is the problem because there is a border between men and women in this text, and I need to cross the border. As Turid Seim has convincingly argued “this is why an explicit criterion of gender is introduced in Acts to exclude women from the responsibility of being elected to the service of leadership, whether of the word or of the tables. Both as new apostles and the seven –who according to the list names given are all men- had to be elected from among the men.”⁶⁹¹ Therefore, while women are idealized by men in this way, this then justifies a masculinization in Acts’ presentation of early Christian community. In this view, the category of masculinity, as a social and oppressive construction is real and still present in Acts’ agenda. After thinking with the text Acts 6: 1-7, I may now show the implications of the study for the African context.

With the arrival of colonialism in Africa, the colonial-missionary enterprise maintained and perpetuated ethnicity, a kind of attitude that we may call “ethnicness,” or “ethnicalization.” This attitude has become so embodied that the church itself does not recognize it, and that the hierarchy and the appointments in the hierarchic structure of the church are determined by the

⁶⁹¹ Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1994), 252.

violence that ethnicness produces. The close relation of church and state as problematic made the church forsaken to function as a critical mechanism. In Rwandan genocide for example, the church was the main factor that made the genocide possible, by promoting a racial supremacy ideology. The church encouraged obedience to political authorities, and legitimated the state power, and ethnic discrimination. The church leaders embraced ethnic ideology, priests, pastors, and lay leaders all played active roles in the killings. From this first, African church is called to keep a critical distance with the state in order to speak out and raise the truth of no voices from the margins. African church is sensed to have knowledge concerning social injustices that comes from the margins in order to prevent ethnical discrimination. African church will endeavour to make voices heard that are still not heard currently. Second, the notion of African church leadership can be developed by shattering of hierarchy, by situating the notion of leadership at the bottom, and by integrating women in the official hierarchy of the church.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the aim was to contextualize the study, that is, to look at the problem of ethnicity, and leadership in the African church. I have noted that the arrival of missionaries and colonialism in the African continent changed some of positive values of the natives. The colonial missionaries have superseded the African positive values by Western culture. They equally maintained and perpetuated ethnicity which became embodied even in the hierarchy of the church. In Rwanda, the colonial missionaries succeeded ethnical discrimination between the Tutsis and Hutus by privileging the Tutsis minority over the Hutus majority, a situation that later led to Rwandan genocide of 1994.

To think with Acts 6:1-7, African church is called to prevent ethnical discrimination by having knowledge of social injustices that come from the poor margins. African church will make the voices heard that are not heard currently. African church leadership will be developed by shattering and situating of hierarchy at the bottom in order to prevent self-interest. African leadership will also endeavour to include women in the official hierarchy of the church. These are some pointers that will prevent African church from submissiveness and its unaccountable leadership to the problem of ethnicity.

It has been shown that ethnicity is one of the great sicknesses in the African church in which an urgent response is needed. I have suggested that to address this issue, the church must

neither embrace ethnic ideology nor promote and legitimate ethnic discrimination, and must maintain a critical distance from the power. African church must always pay a particular attention to the issue of women not by excluding the women from the responsibility, but by deconstructing the long historical tradition of the patriarchalist ideology and by promoting the role of the women in the church.

Leadership, in the other hand, presents a great challenge in the African church resulting of the church leaders' attitudes vis-à-vis the power. Therefore, for an effective and constructive African church leadership, the leader or the church leader should consider the challenges of the African actual context in order to develop a constructive and effective leadership; the church leader should not fail his or her prophetic mission by constructing the strong relationships with the power; which prevent him or her to speak the truth; the leader should be a democratic and servant leader who always request the opinions of the others; and must not embrace or legitimate ethnic discrimination. The African church must refrain from the spirit of regionalism in order to avoid the ethnic rivalry among the priests or clergy. Finally, to think with Acts 6:1-7 I may conclude that the church in Africa instead being a solution for the problem of ethnicity in the African church is itself the problem.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

I have noted in chapter one that Acts 6:1-7 revealed an ethnical discrimination problem in the early Christian Jerusalem community, between the Hebrews and Hellenists and its development into supersessionism. I claimed that the previous studies have not adequately investigated the tension between Jewish leadership and the newly formed Hellenist leadership (chapter 2). My hypothesis was that the seven were not chosen to serve tables (*διακονεῖν τραπεζαῖς*), but to serve word (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*) and supersede the Twelve in the community leadership (chapter 4). Moreover, I assumed that the text of Acts 6:1-7 contains in it, the discursive practices, binary oppositions, and undecideabilities which required me to use a critical approach that will enable a more adequate explanation of the ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7. I discovered that rhetoric and deconstruction could better help me in the analysis of the text and answering the questions that are posed. This chapter, however, except the introduction comprises three sections: the first section: A summary of findings recaps the previous readings in Acts 6:1-7 and provides a review of rhetorical criticism and deconstruction critical approaches. In the second section: conclusions, I will be giving the conclusions that can be drawn from the approach that I have used in this study. And in the last section: limitations of the study and recommendations for further study, I will show how my study is limited in scope, and I will make suggestions for further research, which will make a useful contribution to existing knowledge if only these suggestions are undertaken.

6.2 Summary of findings

6.2.1 Previous readings in Acts 6:1-7

A review of Acts' scholarship reveals that several studies have been done on Acts 6:1-7 from Historical-critical, Narrative criticism, Socio-rhetorical criticism or feminist criticism perspective,⁶⁹² but none has studied the problem of ethnical discrimination and its

⁶⁹² See, for example, Henry Joel Cadbury, "The Hellenists," in *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 5 of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, (eds. F.J. Foakes and Kirsopp Luke; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002); Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971); Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2010); Joseph B. Tyson, "Acts 6:1-7 and Dietary Regulations in Early Christianity," *PRSt* 10 (1983), 145-161; Robert C. Tannehill, *The*

development into supersessionism in details. Here below, I have selected a few modern scholars as representative of Acts' scholarship: Luke Timothy, Todd Penner, David Pao, Hansung Kim, Philip Sell, and Joseph Fitzmyer because of their contributions not only for their research on Acts but also for their contribution for the conflict between Hebrews and Hellenists in Acts 6:1-7.

Luke Timothy Johnson has really contributed on the question of identity of Jews and Christians. He is important here because he has identified the tension between the role assigned to the seven and their function within the narrative. He has limited his study to an investigation of the identity of the terms "Hellenists" and "Hebrews." He argues that the problem of this passage is that there is no obvious connection between the purported role of the seven and their actual function in the narrative.⁶⁹³ However, the scope of his study and methodology are inadequate for a more adequate explanation of the ethnical discrimination depicted in Acts 6:1-7.

Todd Penner's has greatly contributed on the question of ancient and modern criticism on Acts. His writing "In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Historiography" deals with the problem of Hebrews and Hellenists in detail. His study is a criticism of modern historical-critical interpretation of Acts. After having asserted that a clear problem that the passage posits is that the Hellenists widows are being neglected in the daily distribution, and after having given some scholars' speculative answers to the question "why were the Hellenist widows neglected," Penner concludes that many modern scholars seem more interested in historical facts behind the text in Luke's narrative itself.⁶⁹⁴ However, although he correctly pointed out that Acts 6:1-7 require more examination than simply a problem of identity, his methodology is inadequate to answer the questions raised by this study.

David W. Pao focuses his discussion around three historical problems: the identity of the Hellenists and Hebrews, ideological difference between the two groups, and the historical

Narrative Unity in Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation, vol.2: The Acts of the Apostles (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

⁶⁹³ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 104.

⁶⁹⁴ Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 60.

framework which one should understand the caring for the widows in the early church.⁶⁹⁵ He argues that the historical reconstructions may help in our understanding of the reality behind the text.⁶⁹⁶ Pao contributes to the discussion in Acts 6:1-7 by exploring the question behind the text. However, Pao's study shows a limited understanding of the ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7 which cannot be understood from a historical reconstruction of the text with the assumption that the meaning is to be found within the text.

Hansung Kim is important not only because she examines the problem of Hellenists and Hebrews, but also she looks for the causes of the conflict between Hellenists and Hebrews. After having reckoned that there are different views on the nature of the conflict, she argues that a comparison of the Hebrews and Hellenists was appropriated in order to articulate the nature of the conflict.⁶⁹⁷ According to her, the conflict in Acts 6:1-7 has two causes: cultural and doctrinal. Doctrinal because the Hellenists widows were neglected because the Hellenists did not observe the ceremonial laws, and also cultural because they did not speak Aramaic the language of worship and they were marginalized. Thus, Kim has approached the issue in Acts 6:1-7 from a cultural-religious point of view. Nevertheless, although she has pointed out that the language and the law were the causes of this conflict; his methodology is limited for an understanding of how ethnicity is really present in Acts 6:1-7. Hence, her study is limited for a more adequate explanation of the problem of ethnical discrimination and its development into supersessionism depicted in Acts 6:1-7.

Philip W. Sell discerns that the tension recorded in Acts 6:1-7 may have been over more than an adequate system of food distribution. His contribution resides in that he has identified that the "daily distribution of food" is not truly foregrounded as the problem in Acts 6:1-7. Sell contends that Acts 6:1-7 should not be viewed as addressing the formation of the first diaconate because, he says, *διάκονοί* is not used in this passage, and that *διακονεῖ* is used to refer the "waiting on tables", and *διακονία* refers to the twelve ministry of the word.⁶⁹⁸ Sell is correct as he supports the view that the seven men appointed were not called

⁶⁹⁵ David W. Pao, "Waiters or Preachers: Acts 6:1-7 and Lukan Tabke Fellowship Motifs," *JBL* 130, no.1 (2011): 127-144.

⁶⁹⁶ Pao, "Waiters or Preachers," 129.

⁶⁹⁷ Hansung Kim, "Rereading Acts 6:1-7 for a Multicultural Organization." (Cited from the online version: <http://www.emisdirect.com/emq/issue-306/2213> Access on 22/01/2019).

⁶⁹⁸ Phillip W. Sell, "The Seven in (Acts 6:1-7) as a Ministry Team." *BibSac* 167 (2010): 58-67.

διάκονοί .⁶⁹⁹ But he does not go further with his exegesis of Acts 6:1-7 to demonstrate that the tension recorded in this passage is an ethnical discrimination that was developed into supersessionism. Thus, his methodology is inadequate and has shown a limited understanding of ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer considers the term *διακονία* in Acts 1:17, 25; 6:1-2 and 6:4 and comes to the conclusion that the seven are appointed to “wait on” or “serve” tables and asserts that the institution of the seven may reflect a later development in the community, because when the Twelve disappear the title along with apostles is no longer continued, but what eventually developed in the Christian church from the seven is a new class of ministers commissioned by the Twelve with prayer and laying on of hands and subordinated to them, the deacons, as known since Irenaeus of Antioch.⁷⁰⁰ However, although Fitzmyer has pointed out the inconsistencies in the role assigned to the seven that does not fit with the subsequent episodes in Acts, his methodology is limited for an adequate comprehensive understanding of the real function assigned to the seven.

Therefore, from the above I may argue that all these studies contribute to the problem in Acts 6:1-7 in studying one aspect of the issue, but are limited in scope and methodology and have shown a limited understanding and adequate explanation of the ethnical discrimination problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7. Consequently, these methodologies applied in the analysis of Acts 6:1-7 were inadequate for the purpose of this study. So, a suitable approach for reading is required for a more adequate explanation of the issue in this passage. A conjunction of rhetorical and deconstructive critical approaches is well suited for an investigation of the ethnical discrimination depicted in Acts 6:1-7 and its development into supersessionism. The particularity of this method is that it has never been applied before to the study of Acts 6:1-7.

6.2.2 Rhetorical critical approach: review

I have already indicated in the introduction (chapter one) that classic rhetoric was restricted to persuasion as its main objective and its scope was limited to discourse. But with modern rhetoric, the objective was no longer restricted to persuasion, and its scope could now include

⁶⁹⁹ This argument is also contended by F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 182; Norman E. Nagel, “The Twelve and the Seven in Acts and Needy.” *ConcJourn* 31 (2005): 113-125.

⁷⁰⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 348.

all process of human symbolization.⁷⁰¹ I have also mentioned that modern rhetoric has not fully divorced from the categories of traditional rhetoric, because rhetoric criticism of the New Testament has used these categories in order to respond to the questions deriving from historical criticism of the New Testament.⁷⁰² However, that dependency of the New Testament rhetoric criticism upon traditional rhetoric has led some scholars to conclude that rhetorical criticism using Greco-Roman convention, that is, rhetorical criticism, which regards rhetoric as an aspect of historical criticism (diachronic rhetorical criticism), was too limited for a suitable model for analysis, and consequently inadequate for a modern hermeneutics.⁷⁰³ This situation has created a room for scholars to pursue other rhetorical models for analysis. A suitable model was seen in Vorster's rhetorical critical model, specifically his construction of the rhetorical situation: the problematization. More specifically, the way in which Vorster constructs his rhetorical situation is more suitable and more significant for my purpose. It is suitable because the notion of problematization can help me us to question and articulate the binary oppositions inscribed within Acts 6:1-7, and it is significant inasmuch as the mechanism of problematization foregrounds the discursive practices, that is, a problematization of practices, principles, and power relations operating within my selected text Acts 6:1-7.

6.2.3 Deconstructive critical approach: review

As for rhetorical critical approach, Deconstruction as a strategy of reading aims the dismantling of the hierarchical oppositions within a text. The strategy of deconstruction consists of a two-steps process "reversal" and "displacement."⁷⁰⁴ While the process of a deconstructive reading can be summarized as follows: a reading that shows how a text is dependent upon the presuppositions of metaphysical of presence (binary oppositions) that the text attempts to overthrow by a double reading, while at the same time showing how the text questions the metaphysics (logocentrism) which it presupposes entering in contradiction with itself with a view of discovering the meaning. Derrida provides reading strategies which facilitate a fresh perception of the text.⁷⁰⁵ As I have already indicated, deconstruction will be

⁷⁰¹ Johannes Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *Focusing on Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Methods*. (ed. Andrie du Toit; Pretoria: Protea, 2009): 505- 578.

⁷⁰² Vorster, "Rhetorical Criticism," 537.

⁷⁰³ Duane F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 165-176.

⁷⁰⁴ John P. Leavey, "Four Protocols: Derrida, His Deconstruction," *Semeia* 23 (1982): 42-57.

⁷⁰⁵ David Jobling, Tim Pippin and Ronald Schleifer (eds.), *The Postmodern Bible Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 55.

used in conjunction with rhetorical critical to enable a more adequate explanation of the problem I am dealing with here in Acts 6:1-7.

6.3 Conclusions

6.3.1 Conclusions based on rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach

6.3.1.1 A brief general concluding survey of the results the rhetorical and deconstructive approach yield.

Chapter 3 examined the three key terms: ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership which form the structure of the chapter, and which also formed the spectacles with which I can read my selected text. Indeed, I have indicated that the examination of these categories enables me to explore how identity formation was constructed and asserted in the Roman antiquity in the first century, how to understand the relationship between “Jews” and “Christians,” and also how I can deal with all that these three categories could entail in the contemporary Africa.

I have noted that from a rhetorical and deconstructive perspective, ethnicity is a construction, it is something invented, it is that because it entails fluidity, it is unstable, is not defined in the same way in all contexts. I have identified three theories of ethnicity namely: primordialist, constructionist, and instrumentalist. I have pursued the constructivist approach because my approach deconstruction and rhetoric move me away from the notion of fixity. However, I have indicated that ethnicity does not mark the dividing line between “Jews” and “Christians,” because “Jews” and “Christians” identity was fluid in the early Christianity and that Christianity was a construction. Finally, the categories such as “otherness,” “whiteness” or “hybridity” were related to ethnicity and are all described as identity formation.

Supersessionism referred to the Christian view that the New Testament church superseded Israel as the true people of God. From a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, supersessionism represents an antithetical relation between Israel and the church, a relation characterized by the duality of oppositions. I examined five theories of supersessionism namely: punitive supersessionism, economy supersessionism, structural supersessionism, dispensation (non-supersessionism), and post-supersessionism. However, I have pointed out that this study does not support the view that church superseded Israel in the salvific plan of God, because the Bible does not endorse supersessionism. However, the tendency of the New Testament scholars today is both: those who replicate supersessionism by favouring Paul

interpretation and neglecting to study those who resisted Paul and wanted to maintain their Jewishness.

The last key category was the leadership. I have noted that “leadership” is conceived as a process of interaction between the leader on one hand, and the members of the group on the other hand, for the achievement of a common objective. I have mentioned six types of leadership namely: autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership and servant leadership. However, I have indicated that from a rhetorical and deconstructive point of view, leader in Acts is not made from a model fixed in advance. It is rather constructed by the means of endurance or eloquence: Paul and Stephen are the typical examples. Moreover, leader in the New Testament did not lead by serving: Stephen, Philip started preaching rather than serving (Acts 7-8). Luke’s writing specifically Acts 15-16 very vividly illustrate to what extent there was leadership rife in the early Christianity, and how confrontations, group formations, strife and conflicts were the order of the day in early Christianity.

In chapter four, I was dealing with an *eisegesis* (reading into) of Acts 6:1-7 in which a rhetorical critical approach is used in conjunction with deconstruction. My hypothesis was that the previous approaches were limited and did not provide me with a comprehensive understanding of the problem I am dealing with in this passage, and I assumed that a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach is well suited to lead me toward a more comprehensive understanding of the ethnical discrimination and its development into supersessionism.

Indeed, in order to see how the problem has been constructed by the author, it was important to review the purpose of Luke-Acts, the speeches in Acts, and the structure of Acts. It was retained that Luke was writing to Theophilus and his audience in order to correct a historical misunderstanding and also about the conflict that existed between Jews and Christians. Further, I have noted that the speeches in Acts are crucial factor in the coherence of Acts account, and that the question of authorship of these speeches does not matter because from a deconstructive point of view, there is no possibility to link the author with the writing. And those scholars used the term structure to provide with a framework that will give the meaning of the text. So, they rather imposed from an outsider a structure that could provide with a meaning.

6.3.1.2 *Rhetorical critical approach of Acts 6:1-7*

6.3.1.2.1 Problematization:

I have identified three discursive practices: the practice of daily distribution of food, the practice of laying on of hands, and the practice of oratory. Concerning the practice of food distribution, I said that the ancient world was characterized by extreme poverty and social inequalities and the major factor concerned the burden caused by Roman occupation. The material wealth was distributed unevenly, and in these conditions the widows were particularly exposed and could be carried off. The second practice the laying on of hands, we noted that the meaning of that practice was not always the same. In Acts 6:1-7, the laying on of hands signified ordination or commission and cannot be confused with the bestowing of the spirit and initiation. The last discursive practice which is not explicitly mentioned but it is into the ground is the practice of oratory. I have indicated that the practice of oratory as power, a power to speak well was exclusively reserved for males. When Stephen is foregrounded as character nothing is said concerning the distribution of food, the practice for which he has been appointed to. But what is foregrounded is his practice of oratory, as a great orator.

6.3.1.2.2 The construction of person

Crucial in the making of rhetorical situation, is constituted of gender, education, and acts of persons. I have noted that Luke constructs his own person with the term gendered male and we have seen how ethnicity and masculinity function in the choice of seven and in the person to deal with the issue. The Hebrews by virtue of their status as Aramaic speaking Jews had a sense of superiority while the Hellenists were inferiors, a situation that put them in a difficult situation to have a view. This is an issue concerning hierarchy.

6.3.1.2.3 The construction of the audience

I have noted that Acts' audience is gendered male and from a deconstructive point of view there is still in that audience a problem of masculinity, a problem of perpetuation of hierarchy where a group (men) is represented and another (women) is not.

In the rhetorical situation of Acts 6:1-7, the audience is composed of Hebrews, Hellenists, and widows as part of the implied audience. The Apostle's strategy to remove the constraint posed by the distribution of food did not resolve the problem; they only dropped the problem

into the laps of the Hellenists. Two rhetorical problems were identified in the strategy of the Apostles: all the seven came from the Greek community (ethnicity), and all the persons chosen are men (gender). When Stephen is foregrounded as character the function for which he has been appointed to disappears, but what is foregrounded is his art of oratory.

In the analysis of the argument, I have identified the τόποι (loci) pertaining to person: the author of Acts depicted the Hellenists as another group in the Jerusalem community different from the Hebrews. The loci of ethnicity functions here where the Hellenists were having their widows being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The author of Accts distinguishes between two different groups of which the one has been constantly related to a particular construction if Jews, whereas the other group has been given more porous boundaries, that couls include Greek-speaking Jews, but that couls also include non-Jews, whether they are proselytes, god-fearers or newly acquired non-Jewish adherents of the Christian faith.

I have indicated that exordium *προοίμιον* is not found in Acts 6:17 but the narration *διήγησις* is found vv.2-4.

6.3.1.3 Deconstructive critical approach of Acts 6:1-7

A general survey of the recent studies indicated that the majority of the studies that have been done on Acts 6:1-7, were from historical-critical method. I have noted that in spite of historical-critical hegemony, that method is questionable for not questioning the fixity of the identities of the Hebrews and Hellenists; for not taking into consideration that hierarchies may have been reversed; for not also taking into consideration how this passage contributed to fostering supersessionism and at the same time not questioning how leadership can and must be differently constructed in contemporary ecclesial environments. In addition, these methods were inadequate in generating strategies that can be preventive ethnical discrimination and promote a more egalitarian ethnical relationship in the church. For this reason, a more suitable approach was needed.

Deconstruction as a strategy of resisting historical-critical hegemony, as a mode of reading, and a strategy of dismantling the binary oppositions enabled a more adequate explanation of the ethnical problem depicted in Acts 6: 1-7.

Yet, I was required to go further by examining Acts 6:1-7 in its broader framework and this helped me to see how the narrative in Acts 6:1-7 contrasts with the preceding accounts in the preceding chapters.

I have noted that deconstruction is a dismantling of the binary oppositions in a metaphysical system. For that I divided my deconstructive critical approach into: dismantling the binary oppositions; the seizing and capsizing the oppositions; drowning the oppositions; the examining of the text's undecideabilities; and the reading of the old name.

6.3.1.3.1 Dismantling the binary oppositions (serving tables-serving word)

The focus was a critical reading that appearing to grasp the figurative meaning of the text from a dismantling of the violent hierarchies within the text. Two structures of hierarchical oppositions were erected from the text: 1) at ground level is the apparent meaning in which the Hellenists (seven) are chosen to serve tables (*διάκονειν τραπεζαίς*) v.2 at the high level the figurative meaning in which they will be serving the word (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*) vv.2-8. I discovered that Stephen chosen to serve tables at the ground level becomes preacher and missionary at high level. Likewise Philip also chosen to serve tables at ground level becomes preacher and evangelist at the high level.

6.3.1.3.2 Capsizing the hierarchical oppositions

In capsizing the hierarchical oppositions between the Hebrew widows and Hellenist widows, I found that while the Hebrew widows were well served, the Hellenist widows were neglected. I have also capsized the hierarchical oppositions between Hebrew leadership and Hellenist leadership. I saw that the literal represented by the Hebrews is now superseded by the figurative represented by the Hellenists.

6.3.1.3.3 Drowning the oppositions

As the second phase which entailed the emergence of a new concept, I have seen that the ministry of food distribution v.2 is following by the emergence of ministry of word v.4. In the conflict between the Hellenists and the Hebrews the literal meaning of "serving tables" is declared superseded by the figurative meaning "serving word," which came through the

teaching and preaching of the word, and which was symbolized by the Spirit which was Jesus.

6.3.1.3.4 Examining the text's undecideabilities

In examining the text's undecideabilities, I have seen that the focus entails going beyond simply oppositions. In the text I identified two undecideable situations. The first was the inconsistencies in the role assigned to the seven and their present activities in the subsequent narrative (role-function). After dismantling, capsizing and drowning the hierarchical oppositions, my study discovered that the seven men were chosen not to serve tables as it has been usually defended, but rather to serve word. I have deduced that the figurative meaning of "waiting tables" v.2 is therefore the means through which the word of God could be proclaimed. I also identified a second undecideability in the function and the criteria of the choice (role-criteria). I found that the criteria in v.3 deferred significantly with those in Judas's replacement. This is an undecideable since these criteria corresponded neither with the criteria demanded for a deacon, nor with the replacing of Judas, and nor with Paul's definition of apostleship.

6.3.1.3.5 Reading the old names (Paleonymy)

Reading the old name or Paleonymy is the last point of my deconstructive reading. It consisted of the reading under erasure of the violent hierarchies. It is an operation in which the old name or the old assumptions is read under erasure, and which entails a reversal. I found the violent hierarchical oppositions (neglect-devote) which I read under erasure. I noted that the Twelve expressed a prioritization of prayer and preaching (ministry of word) over the ministry of tables. The deconstruction of the previous assumption "it will be not for us to neglect the word of God," implies a deconstruction of relationship. At the reversal, where it was said "it will not be right for us to neglect the word of God," it shall be said "we will continue to devote ourselves to prayer and preaching of word." I have argued that this is an act of paleonymy inasmuch as the old name (old assumptions) is overturned in the erasure, that is, it is read under erasure and the implied term the word if God is neither erasure nor dominate.

After this reading into *eisegesis* of Acts 6:1-7, I may now argue that the strategies provided by rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach enable a more adequate explanation of ethnical discrimination problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7. The practice of food distribution; the

practice of laying on of hands; and the practice of oratory, have been problematized. I saw how the Twelve changed the responsibilities in prioritizing the ministry of word over the ministry of daily distribution. They contently dropped the problem into the hands of seven, and the plight of the widows completely disappears from the scene, and the ministry of food distribution carries less value in that community. When Stephen is foregrounded, and the portal of his death, I found what would become later the first trace of supersessionism. I have seen the problem of masculinity, as a power of domination, which is a problem of hierarchy where only one group (men) dominates and another (women) is not.

Chapter five, which contextualized the study considered the question how can ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership be curbed and destroyed in contemporary African church, and how I can think with a text as Acts 6: 1-7 in African context?

I have noted that ethnic identity is what gives African a sense of life, an African identity. Africans actually installed positive values, non-discriminatory. But with the arrival of missionaries and colonisers, they abandoned some of African positive values and introduced Western culture. Indeed, ethnicity is a problem only when it is fuelled by antagonist differentiations based on a fixed identity which has been formed by different value systems. I saw that in Rwanda for example, the missionary enterprise initiated and maintained ethnic discrimination by favouring the Tutsis minority over the Hutus majority in school and in the catholic seminaries. I have also noted that the church played a significant role in promoting an ethnic ideology that led to the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and also in helping to make participation in the killing morally acceptable. I have pointed out that ethnicity has been fixed in current ecclesial hierarchy. To address the problem of ethnicity, I noted that I need to deconstruct the antagonist differentiations that are based on a fixed identify that has been formed by different value systems.

I have also indicated that the problem of African leadership as a product of close relationship of the church and state where the church because of its submissiveness has forsaken its accountability to function as a critical mechanism in its interaction with the state. I also indicated that it is a problem of hierarchy, institutional hierarchy.

To think with Acts 6:1-7 I mentioned that the notion of African leadership can be developed firstly, by constructing an alternative notion of hierarchy, secondly, by situating the notion of leadership at the bottom, thirdly, by including women as an example of “voice that should be

heard specially those of women as they propose alternative constructions of identity and leadership,” fourthly, by including women who are still consistently excluded from the hierarchical system in the church. These are some possibilities that can help to deal or to perform a curbing of ethnicity that develops into supersessionism in the African contemporary church.

6.4 Methodological implications

I have argued in chapter one that a conjunction of rhetorical criticism and deconstruction was needed for a more suitable comprehensive understanding of the problem of ethnical discrimination in Acts 6:1-7 that escalated into supersessionism. My approach enabled to work towards the exposure of the hidden, concealed, and contradictory in the text. A deconstructive analysis allowed me to expose how a fixed identity functioned in the construction of the group and person identity. Another advantage was that when ethnicity, supersessionism, and leadership are approached from the perspective of rhetorical and deconstructive critical approaches it provided me with a more comprehensive understanding of these terms. Rhetorical construction of the situation enabled me to see how the problem in Acts 6:1-7 has been constructed, and also it compelled me to pay attention to an attempt of explanation why the problem has been constructed in the way it has been constructed. Furthermore, it is worth to point out that my approach (rhetorical and deconstruction) is not ahistorical. The objective was not discarding or rejecting what has been done by historical-critical method, or to enter into a debate concerned with opposing a rhetorical critical approach or deconstructive critical approach with historical-critical method as if a rhetorical or deconstruction is not a historical. The objective was rather to investigate how what has been done with the realm of a historical-critical approach can also be deployed in a modified version with a rhetorical and deconstructive reading.

6.5 Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

6.5.1 Limitations of the study

Although I have argued that a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach was well suited for a more comprehensive understanding of the ethnical discrimination problem depicted in Acts 6:1-7, it has not been comprehensive in terms of research in every aspect of exegesis. For example, I have not done an analysis of ethnicity and supersessionism in the whole writing of Acts, and I have not provided with an entire history of how supersessionism had

developed, the reason being that my focus was not on a historical survey but rather to experiment with how the terms ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership can be deconstructed and used in an alternative manner.

6.5.2 Recommendations for further research

I have moved away from a purely textual approach, that is, where the text is dominant and the concern is the meaning of the text. It can be depicted as TEXT-----→CONTEXT with the objective to establish what the meaning of the text is, or how the development of the text took place. However, what I have done here is CONTEXT----→TEXT---→CONTEXT. That means I identified a problem in our contemporary society and I read the text to determine how other suggestions dealt with the similar problems, but not following the resolutions offered by the text, but on contrary to read the text against the grain, that is, to bring the text into discussion. So, the results of my study need to be recommended and also provide the avenues for other researches.

First, a study can be made on Ethnicity, Supersessionism and church hierarchy in South African Catholic Church;

Second, another study can be made on Ethnicity, Supersessionism and male dominance in South African Protestant Church;

Third, another can be also made on Ethnicity, Supersessionism and the notion of Leadership in DRC awakening churches.

6.6 Conclusion

I have investigated ethnicity and supersessionism and leadership in Acts 6:1-7 using a rhetorical and deconstructive critical approach. I have found that ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership are issues concerning with hierarchy. For that, this thesis has deeply changed my thinking on the way I now understand the notions of ethnicity, supersessionism and leadership and the effects these categories are constructed in the contemporary society

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