

Uganda Cultural Institutions: Psychological Adaptations and Implications towards Restoration of Ankole Kingdom

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ugandan kingdoms are ancient institutions which trace their establishment from the Bunyoro-Kitara- the first kingdom. Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom was a cattle-based economy, ruled by the cattle-keeping Babito aristocracy (ca. 1200-1600). It is reported to have covered vast areas in East Africa- including much of Western Kenya, Northern Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, parts of Eastern Zaire, and most of Uganda (Twesigye 1995). However, many more kingdoms were formed during the 17th century onwards. By 1960s there were approximately 12 kingdoms in Uganda (Doornbos 1978).

However, five years into the post-colonial era in Uganda, monarchs and cultural institutions were banned in 1967. This great evolutionary change in cultural institutions was catalytically groomed for Uganda to become a Republic. It took 26 years for the institution of traditional or cultural leaders to be restored following the 1993 statute enacted by the National

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Resistance Council (NRC). This was later enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995. Chapter 16 (246) (1) provides that traditional or cultural leaders may exist in any area in accordance with the culture, customs and traditions or wishes and aspirations of the people to whom it applies. Consequently, in some communities, restoration has allowed kingdoms to re-organize and regain a measure of authority, while in other communities; such has been resisted, as in former Kigezi, Bakonzo/Bamba and Ankole.

Important question to be asked is, why has the issue of traditional or cultural leaders not been resolved by the communities concerned or used a method prescribed by Uganda Parliament? Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the psychological adaptations and implications towards restoration of one of such communities that has resisted reinstating a cultural or traditional leader. Psychological in this case implies human behaviour as it relates to individual and group relationships in a stratified community. Twining (2001: 51) points out that behaviour in its various forms is a major influence in many areas. Notably Ankole kingdom is used as a case study because for the past 21 years the top leadership of Uganda hails from this area. Therefore, it is possible that the leadership could have influenced the community or a method used by parliament to restore the kingdom.

2. ANKOLE KINGDOM

Historically, Ankole Kingdom (see map below for the original 'Nkore' kingdom) covered the current districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi, Ntungamo, Isingiro, Kiruhura and Ibanda with a total population 2,339,400(8.6%) of the 27,207,900 population of Uganda and 16,367.1(6.8%) of the 241,550.6 square kilometers- the area of Uganda (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2004).