

**MATRIARCHY AND THE STATE FORMATION OF BUGANDA FROM 1856
TO 2022**



BRENDAH NAKABIITO

22/U/1569/MAH/PS

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DECLARATION

I Brendah Nakabiito hereby declare that this is my original piece of work and that the extracts from other scholarships have been ably cited and referenced. This piece of work has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning or university for any award.

Signature



Date

9th / Sept / 2025

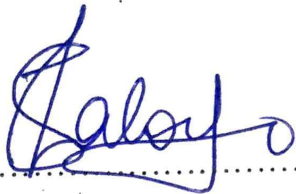
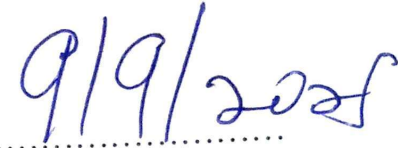
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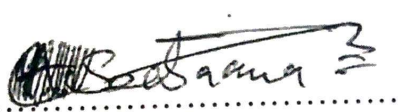
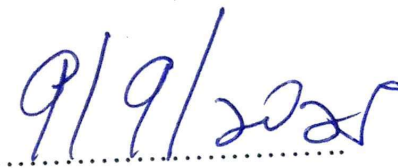


APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research dissertation titled “Matriarchy and state formation of Buganda kingdom from 1856 to 2022” was written under our guidance and supervision and is submitted for review with our permission as supervisors.

Signature..........Date.....

Dr. Stella Laloyo Apecu

Signature..........Date.....

Mr. Alex Ssebaana



DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my Father Mr Matovu John, my mother Mrs Nantume Margret, my husband Dr. Opio George, my beloved children, my Siblings Bukenya John, Matovu Wilson and Namatovu Jennifer and the History department of Gulu University.

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
Table of Contents	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study	2
1.1.1 Historical background	2
1.1.2 Conceptual background	2
1.1.3 Theoretical Background	4
1.1.4 Contextual Background	5
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 General Objective	7
1.4 Specific objectives	7
1.5 Research question	7
1.6 Theoretical Framework	8
1.7 Scope of the study	10
1.7.1 Geographical scope	10
1.7.2 Content scope	10
1.7.3 Time scope	10
1.8 Justification of the study	11
1.9 Significance of the study	11
CHAPTER TWO	12

LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.0 Introduction	12
2.1 The Organization of Kingdoms	12
2.2 The nature of matriarchy	15
2.3 Influential Royal women and their Matriarchal role in pre-colonial polity	19
CHAPTER THREE	24
METHODOLOGY	24
3.0 Introduction	24
3.1 Research approach	24
3.2 Research design	25
3.3 Study Population	25
3.4 Sample size	25
3.5 Sample selection technique	26
3.6 Data Collection Methods	26
3.6.1 Interview method	26
3.6.2 Document Review	26
3.7. Data collection instruments	27
3.7.1 Interview guide	27
3.7.2 Document Analysis Guide	28
3.8 Validity and Reliability of Instruments	28
3.9 Research procedure	29
3.10 Ethical Considerations	29
3.11 Data analysis	30
CHAPTER FOUR	32
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.0 Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.

4.1 Background information	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2 Research Question one: How was Buganda Kingdom Organized?	43
4.3 Research question two: What was the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4 Research question three: Who were the Influential royal women and what their role in Buganda kingdom was?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FIVE	91
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	91
5.0 Introduction	91
5.1 Discussion of study findings	91
5.1.1 How was Buganda Kingdom Organized?	91
5.1.2 What was the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom?	97
5.1.3 Who were the Influential royal women and what their role in Buganda kingdom was?	100
5.2 Conclusion	109
5.3 Recommendation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
References	110
Appendix C Interview guide	116
Appendix D: Informed consent document for Interview	117
Appendix E: Map showing the Research Area	121
Appendix F: The flag of Buganda	122
Appendix G: The current Queen of Buganda: Sylvia Naginda	123

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Showing Organisation of Buganda Kingdom	44
Figure 2: Showing the influential royal women in Buganda kingdom	80

ABSTRACT

There is sufficient evidence in historical scholarship that public interest in primitive matriarchies has been revived globally. Suddenly magazine articles, journal articles and books appear attesting to a former rule by women, this is partly because no matriarchies persist anywhere at the present time and because primary sources recounting them were totally lacking. This study investigated the contribution of matriarchy to state formation of Buganda Kingdom. It was guided by the following specific objectives namely; to examine how Buganda kingdom was organized; to assess the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda kingdom and examine the influential royal women and the role they played in state formation of Buganda. The study used qualitative methods and data was collected using interview guide. Data was analyzed thematically according to similarity of responses in relation to study objectives. My findings revealed that Buganda kingdom was a centralized polity organized politically, economically, socially and culturally with the Kabaka as a cultural leader and head of state. Buganda was organized into administrative units with the Kabaka at the centre and the chiefs at the periphery. My study also found out that the nature of Matriarchy was women rule at one time in history and there was matrilineality but most important matriarchy in Buganda was considered from the contribution of women to state formation and finally research question three, findings revealed that there were a number of influential royal women who contributed in various capacities to state formation while other women emerged as unique personalities and contributed to Buganda. It was concluded that Buganda kingdom was a centralized polity with well-organized political, social economic and cultural structure and matriarchy contributed immensely to state formation. It was recommended that Oral information should be written and achieved in counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages to enable people access information about Buganda.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Long before the women's movement ushered in an era concern with the role of Matriarchy in various societies and cultures, a number of writers had addressed the question of status of royal women in various African societies. Some writers characterized royal women in African societies as “jural minors” for most of their lives, falling under the guardianship first of their father and then of their husbands (Lebeuf, 1995; Whyte, 1974). Other writers stressed the independence of African royal women, noting their control over their own lives and resources (Mbilinyi, 1972). Literature however showed that except for the highly Islamized societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, in this part of the world more than any other, in pre-colonial times Royal women are conspicuous in “high places.”(Sudarkasa, 1986). They were Queen Mothers, Queen sisters, princesses, Chiefs, and holders of other offices in towns and villages, occasional warriors, and in one well-known case, that of the Lovedu, the supreme Monarch (Karen 1974). Furthermore, it was almost invariably the case that African royal women were conspicuous in the economic life of their societies, being involved in farming, trade, or craft production (Boserup 1970). There is sufficient evidence in historical scholarship that public interest in primitive matriarchies was being revived globally (Bamberger, 2012; Roma, 2004; Hanks; 2001; Nakanyike, 1991; Jjuko, 2007; Pembroke, 2009). This study was informed by the view that matriarchy was not merely social structure based on maternal lineage but rather a maternal value based on mutual respect i.e. the role mothers played in society.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Historical background

Numerous scholars have pointed to the existence of Matriarchy in many societies in Europe, America, and Asia and in Africa (Briffault, 1927, Barrett, 1987; setri &Setiawan, 2020; McGee, 2015; Anderson, 2015) for instance in Europe the Queen of England wielded power over the affairs of the United kingdom and would determine who would be the political head she even had great influence in South Asia, as was the case in Scandinavian Norway where the Queen presided over the affairs of the Monarch and was undisputed (Anderson 2015:201).

In African societies Matriarchy was said to have existed mostly in the both stateless and centralized states for instance among the people of Asante and Buganda kingdom (Jjuko, 2011.47). These were women or a group of women who were central in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of their kingdom and the kings though were absolute despots relied on them for decision making (Thomson, 1967:89) for instance in Buganda kingdom the Queen and the Queen mother shared the title Kabaka with the king and were considered more powerful than the chiefs (Bataka). They were responsible for the welfare of the king and some times determined who the king becomes. It is against this background that I intended to interrogate the institution of Matriarchy and kingship in Buganda from 1856 to 2022.

1.1.2 Conceptual background

Matriarchy defined as mother centered society as the most important function to insure its future, which was based on maternal values such as care taking, nurturing, Motherliness, peace building in which these hold for everybody in that community (Abendroth, 2007). While State Formation was defined as the level of political, social, economic and cultural organization of a particular

The earliest study of matriarchy was published in Stuttgart in 1861 by a Swiss jurist and classical scholar Johanm Jakob Bacheofen in which he established that moral and historical fact was the primacy of “mother right” which he thought sprang from the natural and biological association of mother and child. Matriarchy or dominion of the mother over family and the state was a development generated by women’s profound dissatisfaction with the “unregulated sexuality” that man had forced upon her (Bachofen, 1861:123). For Bachofen a gradual series of modification in the matriarchal family led to the institution of individual marriage and the matrilineal transmission of property and names, which was then followed by civil rule, by women which he called “Gynocracy” (Bachofen, 1861:143). For Bachofen, it was this sacred character of matriarchy founded on the maternal generative mystery that represented the bulk of his evidence in favor of ancient matriarchies. The rule by women was overthrown eventually by the “Devine father principle”.

This was followed by the scholarship of Henry Summer Maine in the same year (1861) with a contrary view giving prominence to patriarchy (Maine, 1861:191). Maine based his arguments on the scriptures especially the book of Genesis and the Roman law, which believed that all human groups were originally organized on the patriarchal model (Maine, 1861:205). These two competing views were launched in the intellectual circles of Western Europe. However, it was noted that the theory of matriarchy attracted a lot of staunch supporters from John F. McLennan 1865, Henry Morgan, 1877, Friedrich Engels 1899 and Edward Taylor 1899.

Drawing on historical records and contemporary anthropological studies Briffault (1927) argued that every society first develops on matriarchal lines and that a matriarchal stage universally precedes the patriarchal structure of more advanced societies. To Briffault, matriarchy is described as a radically different relationship

between people based on cooperation rather than power focusing mainly on the actual role and status of women in the political and economic life of primitive societies. For Briffault, in early societies a woman's offspring automatically became legitimate member of the clan, therefore marriage needed not regulate sexual activity. Therefore for Briffault matriarchal societies were nothing if not equalitarian (Briffault, 1927:180). Therefore the concept of authority and domination were entirely foreign to primitive humanity because the economic advantages on which power rests do not exist, both men and women work for the community, the sexes are interdependent and its upon that mutual dependence that the association which constitute society was founded (Briffault, 1927:175). According to Briffault, most civilized observers, blinded by their assumptions about femininity, misunderstood the status of women in primitive societies because they took a woman's work as sign of slavery and oppression, when on the contrary, the woman in matriarchal societies is independent not in spite of her labor (pg.189) Infact for Briffault it was in those societies where women toil most that their status was most independent and their influence greatest (pg.189). Based on this conceptual background, I argue that Matriarchy clearly plays critical roles in societies like Buganda and my study will derive more details about Matriarchy.

1.1.3 Theoretical Background

My analysis of Matriarchy in Buganda kingdom is situated in the theoretical thoughts of Afrocentric, gender and matriarchy scholars who question the application of Eurocentric lenses in analyzing African experiences. This was the perception that Africa is and has always been, all together under patriarchy. In his two-cradle theory, Diop argued that the world is divided into two cradles of civilization: the patriarchal north whose origin was Greece (Europe) and the matriarchal south, source of human

civilization, originating from Africa (Egypt). Although most African communities were described as patriarchal, traces and residues of the old matriarchy could be gathered in African folklores like proverbs and other symbolic cultural practices. Scholars like Amaidume (1987), Oyewumi (1997) and Nzegwu (2006) have, using sociological and historical research, questioned the notion that patriarchy was the hegemonic order in the particular African communities they studied. Although the different genders have their roles, the relationship was not characterized by the dominance of one gender over the other, but rather mutuality. Their researches also pointed to the existence of a dual-sex system that emphasized complementarity rather than gender hierarchy. These observations form part of what Goettner-Abendroth (2012) described as characteristics of matriarchal societies. This study on matriarchy was guided by Abendroth theory, which enumerated the characteristics of a matriarchal society.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Buganda, according to many sources traced its beginning to the 13th century as a tribal society and as a state to the 17th century (Keebungero, 1963). Other sources described a proto-Buganda that existed as a collection of clans or chiefdoms (kiwanuka, 1990). Other scholars had classified Buganda into four major eras namely; the pre-clan age (pre-kintu/Nambi age-before the 13th century; the kintu/Nambi clan period around the 13th century and the Kimera to Mutesa I era- the era of politicization of clans- from the 14th century to the 19th centuries and the post Mutesa I to Mutesa II period (Kasirye et al, 1955).

According to conventional history Buganda had over the years expanded from aboriginal clans which included Ffumbe, Njaza, Lugave, Ngonge, and Nyonyi to a

kingdom through migrations of other clans into the kingdom including those who came with Kintu (Keebungero 1963:16) as well as those who came subsequently into Buganda with Kimera and by 1737 Buganda had a well-established kingdom

Matriarchy (the rule and control by women in a society) and Matrilineality (Succession in the female line) was said to have existed in tribal Buganda before the emergence of the state-mother right prevailed (Jjuko, 2011:114). Scholars believe that this happened at a time when women were responsible for production in society-when women maternal function of collection of fruits and wild roots and being in charge of agriculture placed them in control of the group (Jjuko, 2011:98). To Jjuko Matriarchy was a manifestation of the feminine principle which propels the position of women however Jjuko noted that with time female domination diminished at a stage when man began to apply his labor on nature to produce his means of life-during the hunting age when pastoralism and warfare were undertaken by the man and with the discovery of a plough when men harnessed the animal and took over agriculture from the women.

Jjuko (2011) argued that matriarchy and matrilineality manifested in many aspects of Buganda societal fabrics for instance in relation to state formation, he noted although the totem in Buganda was inherited from the father, the king took to his mothers totem while other scholars like Thomson (1949:156) revealed that the Kabaka (king) though an absolute despot strangely relied on two women namely the Queen and Queen mother, both of whom he shared the title Kabaka (King).

Contextually, there was abundant evidence suggesting possibility of Matriarchy in pre-colonial Buganda and as Jjuko (2011) put it that such practices could have

diminished recently in postcolonial period due to several factors, which would be interrogated in review of secondary literature.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Buganda is a centralized patriarchal society where men are dominant and considered to be the center of authority and primarily credited for their contribution towards the growth and development of Buganda Kingdom (Nakanyiiike, 1991). However, a meaningful clue about matriarchy in traditional Buganda and their matrilineal values, is that the Queen, queen mothers, and other royal women have a lot of influence but this has been down playing and the roles of women in the institution of Buganda were not well documented. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to investigate the matriarchal roles in Buganda Kingdom.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate the Matriarchal roles in Buganda Kingdom.

1.4 Specific objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i) To examine the political, social, economic organisation surrounding women roles in Buganda Kingdom.
- ii) To explore the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom from 1856 to 2022
- iii) To trace the influential royal women and their Matriarchal roles in Buganda Kingdom from 1856 to 2022?

1.5 Research question

- i) What was the political, social, economic organization of Buganda Kingdom?
- ii) What was the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom from 1856 to 2022?

iii) Who were the influential royal women and their Matriarchal roles in Buganda from 1856 to 2022?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was anchored on Heide Goettner-Abendroth theory, which defined “matriarchy as mother centered society whose most important function was to insure its future. This social system was based on maternal values which included care-taking, Nurturing, Motherliness, peace building, in which these held for everybody for mothers and those who were not mothers, for women and men alike” (Goettner-Abendroth 2007:29). This theory posited that matriarchal societies in Africa did not serve to create hierarchies as in patriarchy arguing that different genders and generations had their own dignity through complementary areas of activities. Therefore matriarchy social systems in African kingdoms like Buganda emphasized the role of mothers within society who took over all responsibility for others including economic needs, social needs or cultural needs and politics. For Abendroth (2007) therefore Matriarchal societies could be observed further on its levels of society as the matriarchal organization pattern which were the social level, the economic level, the political level and areas of their world views and faith or known spirituality and culture level.

Social level

Here matriarchal society women did not need to be biological mother in order to be acknowledged as a woman because matriarchy common practice was a group of sisters in which they were not necessarily to have children in order to get what they wanted to have (Abendroth, 2007:33) this was because in matriarchal system women with children did not only care for their biological children but also cared for others for instance in most matriarchal communities members chose people with advanced

age to be their own “mothers”, “grandmothers of their children”, “mothers brother”, “grand mothers brother of their children”. These older men or women played important roles of advisors and helpers for the whole community (Abendroth, 2007:33)

Political level

Here emphasis was on how members conducted their every day life. The general functions were to achieve decisions and overcome community conflict. The political practices in Matriarchy were called *Grassroots democracy* (Abendroth, 2007:34) with a goal to prioritize all layers of community to reach consensus. Some societies have involved women in key political positions and they were instrumental in making political decisions. Their positions were highly respected and wielded power. This was seen in Buganda kingdom especially among the royal women.

Economic level

In the economical practice members of the matriarchal community participated in economic activities without hindrance and control the yield from the economic activities. Emphasis was also put on how the goods were distributed to all members fairly and equally (Wolstone, 2018). Participation in the economic activities and control of the yield was an important function of matriarchy.

Spiritual and Cultural Level

Matriarchal societies venerated the female ancestors (Abendroth, 2007). They believed in divinity existence in which the whole world defined as feminine Divine, the great mother as the one who created every living thing on earth. Wolstone (2018:102) also added in her study that cultural imaginary of matriarchal societies was elevated in cosmology and symbolic systems with female deities included in the cosmology.

Matriarchal societies had free and creative worship of goddess that could drive the formation of spiritual affinity groups, symbolic matri-clans, new communities and the whole system of matriarchal units (Abendroth, 2007:42)

Therefore, to understand matriarchy and the State formation of Buganda kingdom I interrogated the political, social, economic and spiritual/cultural organization of Buganda kingdom in order to illuminate on the existence and nature of Matriarchy in Buganda and the roles of these matriarchs in state formation of Buganda.

1.7 Scope of the study

1.7.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Buganda Kingdom in central Uganda. The focus was on Baganda participants from Bulemezi County.

1.7.2 Content scope

This was a historical study from gender relations in Africa. The study was focused on the organization surrounding women roles in Buganda Kingdom, Buganda's perspective of Matriarchy, influential royal women, and their Matriarchal roles in the Buganda Kingdom

1.7.3 Time scope

This study was conducted for a period between 1856 to 2022 because it represented both pre-colonial and postcolonial periods. The pre-colonial periods had evidence of matriarchy and matrilineality especially during the reign of Kabaka Muteesa 1 from 1856 who had influential queens such as Abisagi Baly'azze who led to the naming of Bwaise, a suburb in Kampala when she ordered for the killing of an innocent peasant. I underscored instances in the current kingdom where women are still playing a role for instance the role of the Naginda in Buganda kingdom and the representation of women in the lukiiko

1.8 Justification of the study

A consideration of the state formation of Buganda suggested that there might have been a complex of hunting and later agrarian clans. Such indigenous tribal society suggested was likely to be matriarchal. Rituals and linguistic evidence suggested that originally the king was merely one of the queens' consorts and that he was eventually killed as part of women's ritual circles. Institutions such as that of the queen mother, Various clan practices and clan succession rights as well as certain taboos and Magic surrounding reproduction further attest to Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom (Jjuko, 2011:35-39), however, Matriarchal role on Kingship in Buganda had been ignored yet they needed to be documented so as to be passed on from generation to generation.

1.9 Significance of the study

The study aimed at enriching knowledge/ literature about Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom especially based on the literature reviewed. The study underscored the role of women in pre-colonial societies, which might be used by feminist activities for advocacy, and empowerment of women today. The study also contributed to the recent awakening of scholarship on matriarchy, which has occupied historical researchers

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this section, literature was thematically reviewed following study objectives namely; the state formation of Buganda Kingdom; Nature of matriarchy that existed in Buganda and the influence of influential royal women and matriarchal roles in Buganda kingdom.

2.1 The Political, Social, Economic Organization of Kingdoms

Historians have studied different societies world-wide and come up with theoretical classifications about how these societies were structured or organized politically, socially, economically and culturally (spiritually). This classification plays significantly in the explanation of the role and status of women in these societies. Some of these societies had been classified as stateless societies while others centralized (Harhorne, 2013). In Centralized states there were high levels of centralization of power with stratified organization that regulated economic and social relations, class distinctions were clear and rulers were expected to ensure economic and social stability of the ruled while in stateless societies, sometimes referred to as decentralized states or headless states political units are often small for instance in Agricultural societies the village or a confederation of villages was the largest political entity (Harhorne,2013:99).

Stateless societies were numerous in Africa for instance in West Africa (Igbo, Ibibio, Ijo and Tiv), In central Africa (Mbuti people), In east and southern Africa (Luo, Lango, Turkana, Tonga, Nuer), In Senegal (Balanta, Bijagoa and Diola) and in Liberia (Bete, Kisi, Kru and Gagu) (Harhorne, 2013:105). To him, these societies

were egalitarian because wealth was shared equally among them. With this in mind I could state clearly that in these groupings women were treated equally like any other member of the society and seniority in age and number of children advantaged those women but as ceremonial custodians of wealth and authority which would automatically obtain any senior member of the society. I believe that given the egalitarian nature of these societies' women were active contributors to the welfare of the family and community.

Centralized states included Asante's kingdom in Nigeria (Amadume, 1997), Ganda and Bunyoro kitara kingdoms in Uganda, Kikuyu of Kenya, Hausa in Nigeria, Bemba of Zambia and Tallensi of Northern Ghana (Harhorne, 2013:237). In these monarchies political power was highly centralized, the Centre manned resources and ensured economic and social stability of the kingdom, with the ruled at the periphery of Administrative functioning of the kingdom. Among the Tallensi of Northern Ghana for instance, politically the king was the supreme leader who wielded enormous political authority, he made significant political decisions on behalf of the kingdom but most importantly the queen mother, Queen and the royal women ruled along with him. These women were critical in deciding who becomes the king, chief or even an executive all levels of the kingdom while Among the Asante people there was a dual-sex system where the king ruled hand in hand with the Queen. The queen was as politically charged with several responsibilities just as the king (Odipio, 2003), This kind of dual-sex ruler ship was evident among the Buganda where the Bakembuga and the Kabaka were mutual (Kiguli, 2001; 201), also among the Bemba of Zambia, the Queen and Queen mother superintended over political leadership from the Centre of power.

While in some societies these royal women were trapped in spiritual incantations, rituals, purifications and other cultural functions in their kingdom especially the queen mothers; Among the Asante the queen mother performed many rituals ranging from purifications, war fare rituals while in , Ganda the queen mother performed coronation rituals and in Bunyoro-kitara she performed rituals for war and celebrating high yield ,important to note that Africa is so spiritually fluid that some of this rituals cuts across boarder.

Among the Hausa people the royal women were pivotal in economic activities making trade decisions and controlling plantations, they were responsible for ensuring food security in the kingdom. This was evident among the Buganda also where the Queen was responsible Agricultural activities, she often advised members of the kingdom especially the women on the importance of Granary and food reservoirs, she led celebrations for high yield and participated in trade (Kiguli, 2001). For the Kikuyu in Kenya, the royal women spearheaded economic reforms, emphasized huge farmings and high yield, were economically vibrant and active in trade with the Arabs a virtue that can be seen up to day among the Kikuyu (Ngohengo, 2021)

Socially these kingdoms were highly stratified with clear class distributions evident among the Bemba of Zambia, the Tallensi of Northern Ghana, the Hausa of Nigeria and the Ganda kingdoms with the Kabaka and royalty at the Centre and chiefs at the periphery controlling counties and chiefdoms and the commoners each clearly distinctive with distinct roles (Harhorne, 2013:178; Jjuuko, 2001)

Given the nature of social stratification of these centralized states there was evidence that they were pivotal in the political, social, economic and cultural simulations of these kingdoms state formation. This study was guided by Adendoroth theory which seemd to have defined how matriarchy should be investigated in centralized states; He

contended that to trace Matriarchy in centralized states historians should study the position of women in the political, economic, social and cultural organizations of those societies and it appears this theoretical articulation only applied to centralized kingdoms to which Buganda was one of them. The position of women in Buganda kingdom was well articulated in literature (Jjuuko, 2011; Kiguli, 2001; Roscoe, 2001, 2002, Nakanyike, 1999, Kiwanuka, 1990)

2.2 The nature of matriarchy

Drawing on historical records and contemporary anthropological studies there was sufficient evidence that matriarchy existed all over the world (Motley, 1982) but manifesting uniquely in different societies (Farrar, 1997), the common evidence across most of these societies and kingdoms is that society first developed on Matricidal lines and that Matriarchal stage universally precedes the patriarchal structure of more advanced societies (Motley, 1982). However, Matriarchy was an arduous term because it elicits different meanings according to different people; to most people Matriarchy was thought of in terms of the Amazonian model where women exercised domination over the men in the same fashion men exercise domination over women in patriarchal social order (Briffault, 1927:179). This conceptualization of Matriarchy dominated scholarship in Europe for the greater part of the 19th century mainly advanced by the radical feminist who believed that female domination was a given (Barret, 1987; Farrar, 1997; Nzegwe, 1998).

While other scholars had looked at Matriarchy differently noting that matriarchy describes a radically different relationship between people based on cooperation rather than power (Briffault, 1927, Jjuuko, 2011, McGee, 2015, Roscoe, 2011); such scholars had gathered sufficient evidence of the dominant role often played by women

in the political and economic life of traditional societies; they argued that this kind of cooperative relationship existed in both centralized and stateless societies and this practice was particularly evident in most primitive African societies (Smith,1988; Amadume,1997) and some parts of Asia (Wang & morrais,2014).

Similarly some anthropologists traced the origin of some societies in Africa and have found traces of matrilineality (Cohen 1977;Jjuko, 2011), in such societies they argued, inheritance was based on the mothers lineage and the mother determined the child's name and inheritance, they therefore emphasized matrilineal descent (Jjuko, 2011), such practices were common among the Buganda of Uganda (Jjuko, 2011) and the Asante of Ghana (McGee, 2015; Aido, 1977), such scholars opine that the mere existence of matrilineality in these societies was sufficient confirmation of the existence of traces of acute Matriarchy.

Based on the above theoretical classifications exploring the nature of manifestation of matriarchy in different societies around the world may be in order.

In some societies matriarchy manifested in the form of land ownership and use especially in matrilineal societies for instance among the Iroquois native American society women owned and controlled the use of land and were favored in land tenure arrangement (Hurtado et al, 2000), similarly women in Mosou society in China are key players in land tenure arrangement, the right to own land was given to female members of the lineage (Wang & Morais, 2014) and in Malawi women hold right to all the land in the mother line (Pauline,2010)

Several years ago anthropologist Ronald Cohen (1977) wrote a thought provoking article the focus of which was the phenomenon of the African women at the helm of political authority among the Asante kingdom, she was called Queen mother, Cohen

noted that she literally ruled together with the king in the kingdom wielding political, social and economic authority. Such powerful manifestation of matriarchy has been noted in several collections brought together by anthropologist from different societies. Some of the were among the people of Pabir of northern Nigeria (Cohen, 1977). The authority of the female had always been an integral part of traditional African political system, it was also common among the Baganda of Uganda, the mande groups of Nigeria (Hoffer, 1974), among the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria (Amadume, 1997 and even in some stateless societies like the acoli of northern Uganda (Nakabito, 2021).

Among the Fulani pastoralist, the concept of male daughters and female husbands showed how matriarchy manifested strongly among these nomads to the extent that the female husbands married girls and the girls produced for them children that they owned as the fathers of the children produced in the marriage (Amadume, 1997). While among the Laguru people of Tanzania matriarchy manifested in uniquely in the form of ownership of land. Among the Laguru people land was owned by the women (Ngohengo, 2021). Just like among the Acoli people of Northern Uganda were land was and is still owned customarily with the women as custodians of the land because they are the factors of production and are more involved with land than the men, then men are merely trustees in the land but women prominently make decisions about use of land (Nakabiito, 2021).

Anthropologists had also found traces of Matriarchy in some societies such as in Democratic republic of Congo especially among the Yombe, Songo and the Congo people (Rene,& Gardi, 1954) manifesting as matrilineality in which there was a female descent and children belonged to the women while Heide Gottner-Abendroth found

matricidal practices alive and well in Angola among the Ondonga, Okarango and Mabunda especially in relation to the dominant role women played in these societies and in Zambia we find the Bemba, Luapula, Bisa, Lamba, Lele, Kaonde, Ila and Tonga people where inheritance and use of land is controlled by the women (Heide, 1977). While in Malawi the Nyanja, Yao and cewa and the Bemba people gave particular importance to the relationship between mothers and their daughters and strict adherence to the matrilineal structure and in Kenja, the Umoja village, the Samburu county land ownership is by the women and in Guinea-Bissau, the Bijagos, the tuareg in North Africa are matriarch in the perspective of women role in the societies, the tuareg are even more advanced in women empowerment (Rene & Gardi, 1954).

Historians in Buganda strongly believed that both matriarchy and matrilineality existed in Buganda before the emergency of the state-mother right prevailed (Jjuuko, 2011), To Jjuuko this could have happened at a time when women were responsible for the production in the Ganda society when women were in-charge of agriculture they were definitely in control of the group (Jjuuko, 2011; 97). Jjuuko even clearly stated the matrilineality of the king (Kabaka) of Buganda and advances the role played by powerful royal women in statecraft and state formation of Buganda kingdom. Jjuuko, 2011 argues that it was the development of production and discovery of iron making that paved way for the development from Matriarchy to Patriarchy in Buganda.

Based on the above anthropological accounts, I can state succiently that in pre-colonial African epoch, that evidence of Matriarchy in Africa is abundantly clear from Buganda kingdom to Yoruba, the Asante to the Kush people in Sudan, the Krobo and the Fon people of Dahomey, the Akan people of Ghana and Ivory coast when looking

at Matriarchies from the responsibilities women did even though men held political power. This study is fundamentally directed by such a view.

2.3 Influential Royal women and their Matriarchal role in pre-colonial polity

Anthropologists and historians articulated succinctly the roles women have played in different capacities in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial polities worldwide for instance among the Amazon which was entirely a dominant Matriarchy (Female rule). In his seminal work entitled the “*Amazonian Matriarchy*” Stuart-Glenne (1898) noted that Kinship and inheritance among the Amazon was reckoned through the mother and that the mother held important status in inheritance as such among the Amazon women were key in political decisions including inheritance of kinship, they lead their society and wielded supreme political, economic, cultural and spiritual authority (Stuart-Glenne 1898). The women were in-charge of the Amazon society and effectively determined the society operations, guaranteed economic and military security and worked for its posterity. Such level of responsibility definitely point to some level of female-dominated society where women actively shaped the destiny of their societies.

Among the Iroquois Native American society and the Mosuo matrilineal society in China women controlled the use of land and key players in land tenure arrangement (Hurtado et al, 2000; Wang & Morais, 2014). They were responsible for the general use of land and as such in-charge of the economic function of their polity. Such role of women is evident among the Asante of Nigeria, the Akan of Ghana and even the Buganda of Uganda.

Historians had shown that certain women in Matrichies in Africa stand out especially in their roles in their polity for instance among the Asante and the Buganda people powerful royal women emerged who played particular roles in their kingdoms and societies (Cohen, 1977). To Cohen, the emergency of the concept of Queen mother defined the role of royal women in shaping histories for some of these pre-colonial societies. Among the Asante people for instance the Queen mother had autonomy power obtained from the royal stool through matrilineal lineage (Aido, 1977), she was a co-ruler with joint responsibility with the king in all situations, she wielded political authority and made significant political decisions, which included appointments of chiefs and other members of the kingdom in to leadership ranks, she was involved in classified military and security decisions with the king (Ohene) and other vital chiefs and in case of the demise of the king (Ohene) she assumed the political position of chief (Odikro) (Brempong,2007). Most importantly the selection of the king and chiefs fell within her authority as Queen mother, this was not any different from what happened in many kingdoms and chiefdoms in Pre-colonial Africa.

Just like in Asante kingdom, in Buganda the Queen mother (Namasole) was the most important woman in Buganda Kingdom and she bared the title King (Kabaka) with an office and political power, she even held her own court and held power to life and death (Schiller, 1990; 237), she determined who becomes the king (Kabaka) and how he should lead the kingdom (Nakanyike, 1999:230), she was actively involved in political decision making, spiritual rituals and economic stewardship in the kingdom (Schiller,199;236), as such the king inherited his mothers clan drawing the clan closer to administration of the kingdom.

The other Matriarchal role women played was that of motherhood (Dipio, 2019), the mother is a distinct female category that is prevalent in African folklore and art forms because of her indelible connection to the children (Jjuuko, 2011; 172) she is consequently at the Centre of the economy and spirituality of the family and society because the body and soul of the family rests in the mother (Dipio, 2019). The large space she occupied was evident in proverbs and sayings about her role in African society (Cohen, 1977). The matriarchal role of motherhood was noticed and romanticized by historians in literature on Matriarchal scholarship of almost all the kingdoms and chiefdoms in Africa for instance among the Tuareg of North Africa (Rene, Gardi, 1954), Asante kingdom (Farrar, 1997), Buganda (Jjuuko, 2011), the Yoruba (Smith, 1988) and the Mande groups of people (Hoffer, 1974), the acoli people (Atkinson, 1999). The emphasis of this matriarchal responsibility of motherhood by most African societies reveals huge consideration for the existence of matriarchy as the earliest and most significant polity in the process of the evolution of mankind as a whole.

In the spiritual real, historians had unearthed huge evidence of the role played by women in spiritual fortification and purification of members in various kingdoms and chiefdoms as seen among the people of Asante where the Queen mother performed spiritual ritual on various occasions, some fortification for war or mere blessing to family members, Rain rituals, harvest rituals and other purifications (Farrar, 1977), similar spiritual roles performed by the Queen mother and Queen in Buganda Including coronation rituals (Kiwanuka,1992; Jjuuko,2011,Nakanyike,1990). Such spiritual obligations were also prominent among Acoli chiefdom especially on warfare, domestic violence, Hunting and Crop yield (Nakabiito, 2021)

In some Matriarchies like the Asante, the queen (Ohemaa), among the Berber in Egypt, the Queens among the Eswatini also played critical role in leadership both politically and socially, they were the leaders of all the women and provided counsel to all women in the kingdom, while in other kingdoms like among the Igbos and Fulani, queen mothers controlled the economy and provided political leadership over all the women in the kingdom and in Buganda the queen (Bakembuga) was very influential politically and economically, she even participated in war as seen in the case of Nannonono and king Nakibinge during war in which she supplied the king with reeds when his spears got finished (Kiguli,2001;102).

Other women who stood up in kingdoms and chiefdoms in Africa included the princesses who were also influential politically in some societies the princes were highly regarded to the extent that even chiefs bowed in respect of their authority like among the Luapula and Lamba people in present day Zambia (Heide1997) and even among the Buganda where princess (Mumbejja) were politically charged with political offices (Jjuuko, 2011) they were also involved in spiritual rituals especially during coronation of the new king (Kiguli,2001;201) and known for their vulgar mentality and having multiple sexual partners, lived on their own hill (Kiwanuka,1990). Similarly, the Queen sisters commonly notorious and vulgar in many of the kingdoms such as Asante, Dahomey and among the Yombe people in DRC, they were involved in land distribution and were sometimes said to be emotionally charged even in Buganda they were because of their attachment to royalty. In Buganda they were referred to as the Lubuga (Jjuuko, 2011).

In conclusion therefore, there was sufficient literature on the matriarchal role influential women played in the various chiefdoms and Kingdoms in the world in the

political, social, economic and cultural realm either directly like in the case of the Queen mothers in Asante and Buganda kingdoms or the Queen mothers Bemba or the Tuarags in North Africa, where as some of the influential royal women contributed in different capacities in their kingdom, there is huge literature recognizing their enormous contribution as women in those societies. Infact I can state without fear that kingdoms where women were actively involved, there was visible economic, political and social progress

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of the methods and techniques that will be used for conducting the research. It also consists of the justification for using the selected methods. The section presented; the research approach, research design, study population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods, data collection instruments, Validity and reliability, Ethical consideration, Administration procedure and data analysis.

3.1 Research approach

This study was purely qualitative. Qualitative approach to research arose from the social constructivist paradigm that highlighted the socially constructed nature of reality (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2018). The approach was more suitable for studying people's attitudes or behavior, beliefs, opinions, experiences and priorities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The approach posed the why and how questions for example *why do you think precolonial Buganda kingdom was Matriarchal? How do you think about women in Buganda kingdom?* The focus of qualitative research was to gain a rich and complex understanding of peoples understanding of people's experience, beliefs and behavior (Cohen et al, 2018). Data collection in this method sought for people's explanation of what they observed, did, believed or felt and data was collected in textual form on the basis of observations and interaction with the little respondents through direct observation of behavior or on peoples narratives of the of situations (Merriam & Tisdell,2016)

3.2 Research design

The study used historical research design. The purpose of historical research design was to collect, verify and synthesize evidence from the past to establish facts (Neuman, 2014). This was a qualitative research and Historical study with emphasis on information, perception, opinions and attitudes about Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom. This was due to the fact that I would use secondary sources and a variety of primary documentary evidence such as diary, official records, reports, archives and non-textual information like maps, pictures audio and visual recordings (Neuman, 2014). Based on this design the study would collect data through interviews directly with chiefs (primary) and review several literatures about Matriarchy in Buganda as these would be qualitative data collection techniques (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020:172).

3.3 Study Population

The study targeted Baganda people of central Uganda. The participants were collected from Bulemeezi county one of the biggest counties of Buganda Kingdom. This would help in attaining information about Matriarchy in Buganda because the Buganda were more acquainted with knowledge about matriarchal roles in their Kingdom.

3.4 Sample size

Scholars argued that qualitative researchers do not predetermine the sample size; they simply go to the field and start the data collection/analysis until saturation was reached (Cohen et al, 2018; Gay & Diehl, 1992) and that was why the qualitative researcher purposively selected individuals and location of the study (Flick, 2014). This study determined sample based on (Cohen et al, 2018, Gay & Diehl, 1992) qualitative sample size determination as the researcher went to the field, conducted interviews with the people she assumed to be acquainted with the knowledge Matriarchy and State Formation of Buganda like princesses (abambeja), women

leaders in Buganda (Nabakyala), chiefs (Mituba Etaano) clan heads (Abataka) , Elderly Buganda men and women above 70 years until saturation was reached.

3.5 Sample selection technique

This study used purposive sampling. In this non-probability sampling technique the researcher chose participants based on the belief that the selected participants had the key information for the study (Chawla & Sondhi, 2018). In this study the Chiefs (Mituba Etaano), clan heads (Abataka), princesses (Abambeja), women leaders in Buganda kingdom were selected purposively for the study. As such all the selected participants participated in the study (Neuman, 2014).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

3.6.1 Interview method

Interviews were face to face interactions between the researcher and the informant (Best & Kahn, 1986). The interview method was a more flexible method of data acquisition as described by Cohen et al (2018), because it enables use of multi-sensory channels: verbal and non-verbal. The method explores issues in-depth to understand people's behaviors, opinions, and actions from participants who hold vital information about the study. The study employed semi-structured interviews in which questions were open-ended, in that they did not limit the participants in the choice of answers (Chawla & Sondhi, 2018). The interviewer therefore could make use of prompts and clues to direct the interview into the research topic area thus being able to gather more in-depth or detailed data set (Chawla & Sondhi, 2018)

3.6.2 Document Review

This method was used for collecting and analyzing data from the existing physical or on-line sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It involved review of existing documents

such as reports, newsletters, and dissertations (Coffey, 2014). Document review can be a primary method of data collection or a source of supplementary data. It plays an important role when triangulating data collection methods for validation and corroboration. The purpose of document review was to check for consistency of information from oral tradition and how this information could yield favorable outcomes for this study (Basil 1992). Before reviewing documents the researcher listed essential documents to be reviewed (especially on organisation surrounding women roles in Buganda, nature of matriarchy and matriarchal roles in Buganda) knowing the kind of data to be sought from the documents (Best & Kahn, 1986). Document review was less costly, less time consuming and effective way of collecting data. It was also a good source of background information.

3.7. Data collection instruments

3.7.1 Interview guide

This study used semi structured interviews with open-ended questions with the key informants like the Mituba Etaano(chiefs), women leaders+ Nabakyala), Princesses (Abambeja), Elderly Buganda men and women. This semi- structured interviews in which questions were open-ended, did not limit the participants in the choice of answers (Chawla & Sondhi, 2018), The interviewer therefore could make use of prompts and clues to direct the interview into the research topic area thus being able to gather more in-depth or detailed data set (Chawla & Sondhi, 2018). This method gave chance of probing the respondents hence enabling the researcher to gather deeper information. Open-ended questions were organized on each of the objectives to stimulate the respondents into detailed discussions on the Matriarchal roles in the state formation of Buganda, this helped to standardize the interview and obtain the required data for each of the objectives of the study.

3.7.2 Document Analysis Guide

The document analysis guide consisted of structured set of guidelines used to obtain requisite documents about Matriarchy in Buganda which guided the data collection and analysis. Before reviewing documents, the researcher determined the list of essential documents to review, knowing the kind of data to be sought from the documents (Best & Kahn, 1986). The documents that were reviewed included: books, journal articles, historical records and transcribed oral tradition information. These helped me to gather the secondary data on the of Matriarchal roles in the state formation of Buganda (Coffey, 2014)

3.8 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity referred to the level of truthfulness of something for instance validity of data collection tool was the extent to which the tool measure what it claims to measure (Best & Kahn, 1986). Therefore to arrive at good conclusion for any study, the data used should be true and accurate. It is on this basis that researcher constructed data collection tool that accurately measure what they should be measuring (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020).

Validity of instruments (Interview guides) was determined by ensuring that questions conformed to the objectives of the study. The researcher made judgments by working with the supervisor and community of practice to ensure relevance, wording and clarity of questions in the instruments. All the relevant comments which were put forward by the Luganda experts taken and those questions that would be rated irrelevant were deleted and replaced with the right ones. This helped the researcher to come up with questions that were able to gather the necessary data that accurately represent the variables of the study (Akech & Simatwa, 2010:41).

Reliability referred to the degree to which a measurement technique could be depended upon to secure consistent results upon repeated applications. The easiest way to determine the reliability of measurement was the re-test method in which the same test was given to the same people after a period of time. This was established basing on the preliminary results, which were got from the pilot study. It was also important to note that in Qualitative studies validity and reliability were mostly determined using pretest/pilot test results. Therefore the researcher ensured accuracy during data collection in this phase of pretesting research tools (Amin, 2006:218).

3.9 Research procedure

Data collection in the study required strict adherence to a number of ethical and related good practices. To collect the data for this study, I got an introduction letter from the Dean of Faculty of Education and Humanities. In addition, the researcher formulated a letter of request for permission to prospective participants. Upon receiving permission, I moved to the study area, issued the introduction letter to the chiefs so as to allow me interacts with the selected participants. The purpose of this will be to establish good rapport with the participants and to pilot the study in order to test the validity and reliability of the instruments, which were the interview guide. After the pilot study and quality of tools assured, the researcher embarked on the main data collection by conducting interviews.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The goal of ethics in research was to ensure that no one was harmed or suffered the consequences of research activities (Cooper and Schindler, 2001:101). I wrote to the chiefs in order to get permission for conducting the research in Buganda Kingdom and this was to handle the ethical issue of Access. Participants were treated with respect, I considered issues of integrity, honesty, objectivity, carefulness,

responsibility, non-harm and protection to all the participants. Participants were informed that their participation in the research was voluntary, which implies that one can withdraw from the research at any time they wish. Participants were also asked to read the informed consent forms with me in order to ensure that they are fully informed about the research process and purposes. Participants were expected to give informed consent for their participation in the research. I assured the participants about their safety, privacy and anonymity during participation in the research. I provided transport allowances and also compensate for the participant's time. Participants were also be assured that their responses would be kept in confidence and that their identities will also be protected. I also assured participants that the process was trustworthy, a flash disk was used to store data and the device used had a password to secure data and they would not be subjected to any acts of betrayal during the research process or in its published output.

3.11 Data analysis

For qualitative data the study used thematic analysis. This was an inductive approach of analyzing qualitative data. The method worked best when analyzing data collected using interview method (Punch, 2014). Themes emerged from responses of various participants on particular items. The themes capture vital information in line with the research objectives or research questions (Creswell, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006). I followed the procedures below;

- a) I familiarized myself with the data collected during transcription
- b) I read and re-read the transcribed data as I took note of crucial information
- c) I studied the information gathered from the different respondents and determined categories
- d) I then coded the identified categories

e) Proceeded and generated the themes

This procedure was observed by the researcher herself implying therefore that in qualitative research particularly thematic analysis the researcher was the tool of data collection and analysis (Braun &Clarke, 2006)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION SURROUNDING WOMEN ROLES IN BUGANDA KINGDOM

4.0 Introduction

The Buganda Kingdom, one of the most influential traditional monarchies in Uganda, has historically exhibited a complex political, social, and economic organization in which women have played significant roles. Women in Buganda were not only central to the survival of the household economy through farming, food preparation, and craftwork, but also occupied important positions within the broader political and cultural structures of the kingdom. They influenced governance through the queen mother (Namasole), the queen sister (Lubuga), and the queen consort (Nnabagereka), all of whom played advisory and symbolic roles in leadership. Socially, women upheld cultural norms, nurtured children, and transmitted traditions across generations, thereby ensuring the continuity of Ganda identity. Economically, women were the backbone of subsistence agriculture the mainstay of Buganda's economy while also participating in trade and craft industries. Thus, the organization of political, social, and economic life in Buganda cannot be fully understood without recognizing the critical functions women performed in sustaining the kingdom's stability and growth.

4.1 The political organization surrounding women role in Buganda Kingdom

The political organization of the Buganda Kingdom has historically embedded women within critical structures of governance, demonstrating that female authority was central to the functioning of the state rather than merely ceremonial. Precolonial Buganda incorporated women into high-ranking positions, including the Namasole (queen mother), the Lubuga (queen sister or royal princess), and the Nnabagereka (queen consort). These positions were essential to the legitimacy of kingship. The

Namasole, for instance, commanded her own estates, resources, and networks of dependents, enabling her to influence succession disputes and stabilize the kingdom during periods of interregnum (Musisi, 1991; Roscoe, 1911). Similarly, the Lubuga performed vital ritual functions related to shrines and royal tombs, linking spiritual authority with political influence (Ray, 1991). The queen consort, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, became increasingly prominent in public life, engaging in advisory, diplomatic, and cultural functions that extended beyond domestic spheres (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004). This dual-gendered political structure illustrates how the Buganda polity relied on both male and female authority to sustain leadership and governance.

Beyond the royal household, the clan system of Buganda created a wider network through which women exerted influence. Although clan identity was patrilineal, women leveraged maternal ties to forge alliances, mediate disputes, and influence political outcomes within and across clans (Hanson, 2003). Marriage arrangements, especially among the elite, were not merely personal but deeply political, facilitating alliances that stabilized the territorial expansion of the kingdom (Musisi, 1991). Women's management of households and estates under chiefly or royal authority enabled them to control resources, oversee labor, and coordinate tribute, which were essential to maintaining local governance. By provisioning feasts, supervising agricultural production, and managing dependents, women effectively translated domestic management into political brokerage and legitimacy, demonstrating that the so-called private sphere in Buganda was imbued with political significance (Fallers, 1956; Hanson, 2003).

Women also played critical roles in judicial and advisory functions. Royal women, particularly the Namasole, convened courts to hear disputes related to land, inheritance, and family conflicts within their estates, while also advising the Kabaka and other chiefs on matters of state (Musisi, 1991; Roscoe, 1911). These roles were especially important during succession crises, when women's endorsements could sway factions among chiefs and royal guards. Through mediation, counsel, and control of ritual propriety, women exercised considerable influence over political outcomes. Their authority in these spheres highlights that political power in Buganda was not exclusively tied to formal titles held by men but also depended on networks of influence and social capital controlled by women (Ray, 1991; Musisi, 2001).

The advent of colonial rule and the 1900 Buganda Agreement introduced significant changes to the political roles of women. Land reforms and the institutionalization of indirect rule concentrated political power in male-dominated structures, reducing the formal authority of women outside the royal household (Kiwunuka, 1971; Hanson, 2003). Christian missionary activity further reshaped gender norms, promoting ideals of domesticity that confined women's roles to the private sphere (Tamale, 1999; Musisi, 2001). Despite these challenges, women adapted by exercising influence through church organizations, women's guilds, educational initiatives, and charitable work. Royal women, particularly the Nnabagereka, maintained and expanded their soft power by acting as cultural diplomats, bridging palace, colonial, and religious spheres. This period demonstrates women's resilience and ability to negotiate authority within new political frameworks, sustaining influence even when formal offices were constrained (Tamale, 1999; Musisi, 2001).

The abolition of kingdoms in 1966 and their restoration in 1993 further transformed women's political engagement. During the period of abolition, Buganda women increasingly participated in national politics, civil society, and the emerging women's movement, asserting authority outside traditional structures (Tamale, 1999; 2004). Upon restoration, the kingdom emphasized cultural and developmental leadership rather than sovereign governance, with the Nnabagereka emerging as a prominent figure in social advocacy, education, and cultural preservation. These roles reflect historical patterns of female leadership in Buganda, where authority was exercised through mediation, resource mobilization, and social welfare initiatives. Women also leveraged formal state mechanisms, including reserved seats in local councils and parliament, to expand their influence, demonstrating a continuity of political engagement adapted to modern governance contexts (Tamale, 2004).

Scholarship on women's political roles in Buganda highlights several key debates. Some authors emphasize the decline of formal authority due to colonial and postcolonial reforms, while others stress adaptive continuity, noting how women maintained influence through religious, educational, and social networks (Hanson, 2003; Musisi, 2001). Questions of symbolic versus substantive power arise in analyses of royal women's roles: although some positions were highly ritualized, control over estates, courts, and client networks translated into material and political leverage (Ray, 1991; Musisi, 1991). Additionally, domestic labor, often framed as private, functioned as a site of political activity, where provisioning, household management, and clientage reinforced broader state authority (Fallers, 1956; Hanson, 2003). The case of Buganda demonstrates that governance cannot be understood solely through male officeholders, as women's power was exercised in multiple, interrelated spheres.

Overall, the political organization surrounding women in Buganda reflects a sophisticated, gendered system of authority in which female influence was embedded across ritual, economic, and social structures. From pre-colonial dynastic governance to contemporary cultural and civic leadership, women have been central to the negotiation of power, mediation of conflict, and legitimization of authority. Their roles illustrate the dynamic interplay between tradition and adaptation, demonstrating that political authority in Buganda has always been distributed across both genders, with women strategically operating within and beyond formal political structures to shape the trajectory of the kingdom (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004).

4.2 The social organization surrounding women role in Buganda Kingdom

The social organization of Buganda has historically been deeply gendered, with women playing central roles in sustaining families, communities, and broader societal networks. In precolonial Buganda, women's social functions were intricately linked to their positions within the family, clan, and kingdom. Women were primarily responsible for domestic labor, including food preparation, child-rearing, and household management, but these tasks carried broader social significance. Through their work in the household, women maintained social cohesion, transmitted cultural norms, and ensured the reproduction of clan identity across generations (Hanson, 2003; Musisi, 1991). The organization of labor within households often reflected hierarchical and political relationships, with senior women overseeing subordinate wives, daughters-in-law, and domestic staff, thereby creating microcosms of governance within domestic spaces that mirrored broader societal structures (Fallers, 1956).

Women's roles extended beyond household management to community organization, particularly in ritual and ceremonial life. Women organized and participated in social events such as weddings, funerals, and initiation rites, which served to reinforce social hierarchies and communal solidarity (Ray, 1991; Roscoe, 1911). In these activities, women were responsible not only for preparing and coordinating feasts but also for ensuring adherence to cultural norms and ritual protocols, thereby asserting social authority and fostering collective identity. Elite women, such as the Namasole and Lubuga, played especially significant roles in orchestrating public ceremonies and overseeing ritual specialists, ensuring that social and cultural continuity was maintained even during periods of political transition (Musisi, 2001).

The clan system of Buganda further embedded women within social networks that extended influence beyond the domestic sphere. Although inheritance and lineage were patrilineal, women acted as key mediators in inter-clan relations, forging alliances through marriage, negotiation, and diplomacy (Hanson, 2003). Women's capacity to manage social obligations, settle disputes, and facilitate exchanges of goods and labor reinforced their centrality in maintaining social order. Moreover, women's roles in fostering social capital were critical in linking households, clans, and the kingdom, making them indispensable to the social cohesion of Buganda society (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991).

Education and knowledge transmission constituted another important dimension of women's social roles. Women were responsible for teaching children domestic skills, moral values, and cultural traditions, which were essential for sustaining the kingdom's identity and norms (Tamale, 1999). Through storytelling, ritual instruction, and mentorship within extended family networks, women ensured that each

generation was socialized into appropriate gender roles, spiritual practices, and societal expectations. This process was particularly significant in shaping young women's roles within the household and community, as well as preparing them for positions of leadership and social influence in later life (Hanson, 2003; Musisi, 2001).

The advent of colonial rule and Christian missions introduced new dimensions to women's social roles in Buganda. While colonial administrators and missionaries often sought to impose Victorian ideals of domesticity and limit women's public authority, women adapted by creating new spaces of social influence through religious organizations, schools, and charitable associations (Tamale, 1999; Musisi, 2001). Women's guilds, mission schools, and cooperative societies became platforms for social leadership, literacy, and community development, allowing women to maintain authority within evolving social structures. Even within the constraints of colonial social hierarchies, women retained agency by mediating between traditional cultural expectations and new social opportunities, ensuring continuity of influence in family and community life (Musisi, 2001).

In the postcolonial period, social organization continued to evolve, particularly after the abolition and later restoration of kingdoms. Women increasingly engaged in civic and community leadership, participating in local councils, women's associations, and development initiatives (Tamale, 1999; 2004). The modern Nnabagereka, for instance, exemplifies the integration of traditional and contemporary social leadership, advocating for education, health, and cultural preservation while mobilizing communities for development projects. These roles reflect historical patterns in which women's social authority operated through domestic management, ritual coordination,

and community networks, demonstrating adaptive continuity in social influence over time (Musisi, 2001).

Scholarly debates regarding women's social roles in Buganda emphasize both continuity and change. Some researchers argue that colonial and postcolonial interventions constrained women's authority, while others highlight women's resilience in maintaining influence through informal networks, ritual authority, and community engagement (Hanson, 2003; Tamale, 2004). Women's work in households, communities, and ritual contexts demonstrates that the private and public spheres were intertwined, with domestic labor serving as a key site of social power. Furthermore, women's ability to negotiate social relationships, mediate disputes, and mobilize resources underscores the multidimensional nature of their authority within Buganda society (Fallers, 1956; Ray, 1991).

Overall, the social organization surrounding women in Buganda reflects a complex system in which gendered responsibilities and networks of influence were essential to social cohesion, cultural transmission, and community governance. From precolonial to contemporary periods, women have been central to the functioning of families, clans, and broader society, shaping norms, sustaining institutions, and bridging traditional and modern forms of leadership. Their roles illustrate the enduring interplay between social obligations, cultural authority, and adaptive leadership, underscoring women's indispensable contribution to the continuity and resilience of Buganda's social structure (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004).

4.3 The economic organization surrounding women roles in Buganda Kingdom

Women in Buganda have historically played a central role in the kingdom's economic organization, contributing to both household subsistence and broader market activities. In precolonial times, the economy of Buganda was largely agrarian, and women were responsible for cultivating food crops such as bananas, beans, and cassava, as well as managing gardens and livestock in some households (Hanson, 2003; Musisi, 1991). While men often focused on hunting, warfare, or long-distance trade, women's agricultural labor formed the backbone of subsistence production, ensuring the survival of families and sustaining the labor force required for political and ritual activities. Women's work in farming was not merely a domestic task but a fundamental economic activity that linked households, clans, and the kingdom through the circulation of food, labor, and tribute (Fallers, 1956; Ray, 1991).

In addition to subsistence farming, women engaged in trade and market activities, both within the kingdom and in surrounding regions. Women sold surplus produce, crafts, and artisanal goods, participating in local markets and occasionally in inter-regional exchange (Musisi, 2001). These economic activities allowed women to accumulate personal and familial resources, manage estates, and support ritual and social obligations, such as sponsoring feasts, funerals, and initiation ceremonies. Through trade and market participation, women exercised agency in the allocation of resources, influencing both domestic economies and the broader political economy of the kingdom (Hanson, 2003).

Women's economic influence was further reinforced through their roles in managing estates and households under chiefly or royal authority. Senior women, including the Namasole and Lubuga, oversaw labor allocation, collection of tribute, and distribution

of food and other resources within royal households (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991). By controlling the flow of resources, women exercised both economic and political power, as resource management was closely tied to authority, loyalty, and social stability. Estate management also involved supervising subordinate women and laborers, coordinating production and storage, and ensuring that economic obligations to chiefs and the Kabaka were fulfilled, demonstrating the intersection of economic organization and social hierarchy in Buganda.

Colonial rule and the 1900 Buganda Agreement introduced changes to women's economic roles. The institutionalization of mailo land tenure and indirect rule placed formal land ownership primarily in the hands of men, limiting women's direct access to land and productive resources (Kiwanuka, 1971; Hanson, 2003). Despite these constraints, women continued to exercise economic influence through domestic management, market participation, and informal control over land use and agricultural production. Missionary activity and colonial education created additional opportunities for women to engage in trade, craft production, and wage labor, expanding the scope of their economic participation beyond traditional agriculture (Tamale, 1999; Musisi, 2001). Women adapted by negotiating new forms of economic power while maintaining traditional responsibilities, illustrating resilience and agency within changing economic structures.

In the postcolonial period, women's economic roles in Buganda continued to evolve. Women increasingly participated in formal employment, entrepreneurial ventures, and cooperative societies, complementing traditional subsistence and market activities (Tamale, 2004). Programs initiated by the Nnabagereka and other women leaders focused on education, vocational training, and microfinance, empowering women to

manage households more effectively and contribute to community development. These initiatives reflect continuity with historical patterns of women's economic agency, in which control over resources, labor, and production translated into both household stability and broader social influence (Musisi, 2001).

Scholarly debates on women's economic roles in Buganda emphasize the interplay between structural constraints and adaptive agency. Some scholars argue that colonial and postcolonial interventions restricted women's formal access to land and political economy (Hanson, 2003), while others highlight women's ability to maintain influence through household management, market trade, and participation in new economic institutions (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 1999). Women's economic activities were deeply interwoven with social and political functions, as their management of resources, labor, and production underpinned ritual obligations, succession politics, and community cohesion. The case of Buganda demonstrates that economic authority was not limited to formal ownership or male-dominated structures but was exercised through labor, resource control, and strategic negotiation of social and political networks (Ray, 1991; Fallers, 1956).

Overall, the economic organization surrounding women in Buganda reflects a sophisticated system in which labor, resource management, trade, and estate oversight were central to the kingdom's prosperity and stability. From precolonial subsistence farming to contemporary entrepreneurial and development initiatives, women have been indispensable to sustaining households, managing estates, and facilitating economic networks that connect families, clans, and the kingdom at large. Their roles illustrate the dynamic interaction between gender, economy, and authority,

highlighting how women's economic agency has historically shaped and sustained the political and social structures of Buganda (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004).

4.4 Results

Participants were asked about their background information and the identities were presented in pseudonyms as follows

Table 4.1 Participants Pseudonyms on Organization of Buganda Kingdom

Category	Research Question	Gender	Age	designation
KI A	01	Male	79	Mituba etaano
KIB	01	Female	75	Naabakyala
KIC	01	Male	81	Omunbeja1
KID	01	Male	75	Omutaka 1
KIE	01	Male	74	Omutkaka 2
KIF	01	Male	68	Omutaka 3

Primary data, 2024

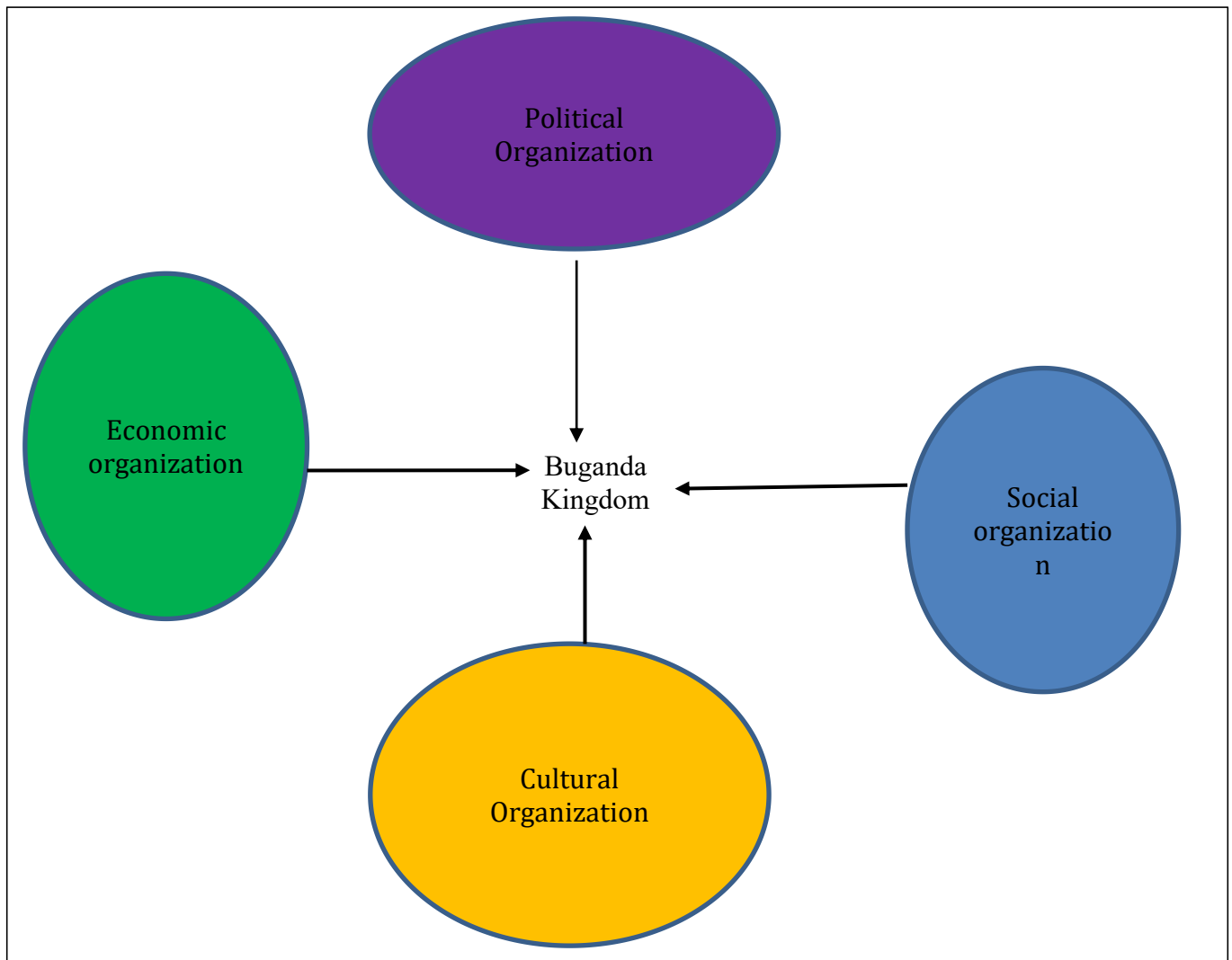
The table above shows that six Key informant interviewees were interviewed on research question one on how was Buganda kingdom organized. The Key informants were coded as KIA, KIB, KIC, KID, KIE and KIF who are elders in Buganda kingdom holding senior positions in Buganda Kingdom and knowledgeable on history of organization of Buganda kingdom.

4.2 Research Question one: How was Buganda Kingdom Organized?

The interviewer introduced the study by building a rapport with the interviewees and discussed how Buganda was organized according to the literature noting that Buganda kingdom was a centralized state with the Kabaka at the centre of power with many

chiefs at the periphery wielding political powers. The key informants noted that since Buganda kingdom was centralized its organization was political, economic, social and cultural in nature just like other centralized kingdoms in other parts of Africa. The results are presented in fig 4.1 below

Figure 1: Showing Organisation of Buganda Kingdom



The figure 1 above shows that the key informant's opinion about how Buganda kingdom was organized comprised of the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of organization which is characteristic of a centralized. Each dimension of the organization of Buganda kingdom was interrogated during the key informant interview and results presented below.

Firstly on the political organization of Buganda kingdom the participants noted that Buganda kingdom established an administrative system with the Kabaka as the highest man in the land as stated below:-

Politically the Kabaka was on top of the leadership of Buganda kingdom...he ruled over every muganda (okufuga) judged cases (okusala emisango).....infact he was like the chief justice of Buganda kingdom.... Who would decide the fate of the subjects...he was very powerful and his words most of the times was final...no body questioned his authority... those who attempted were even killed...like what happened when some of the martyrs refused to obey the Kabaka...they were burnt to death (KIA01, 2024)

From the above response, voices such as Kabaka was on top, he ruled over every muganda, he judged cases, he was very powerful, no body questioned his authority show the political power of the Kabaka who doubled as a cultural leader and a head of state and this showed that since the Kabaka was the head of state there was political organization of the kingdom of Buganda, it is also important to note that the others voices also allude to the existence of a political organization typical of a centralized state.

This opinion was corroborated with the response from other participants who noted that the Kabaka combined the cultural role of Ssabataka with that of head of state as stated by another participant:-

The Kabaka was both a cultural head and the head of state....he levied taxes (Okusoloza emisolo), waged war (okugaba olutabalo) and bestowed friendship (okuwa obwami)...further Buganda had a government headed a katikiro (prime minister) who had executive powers and a council of lukkiko with a system similar to that of cabinet including positions of omulamuzi and omuwanika (KIB01, 2024)

From the above opinion codes such head of state, cultural head, he levied taxes, he waged war, bestowed friendship, the katikiro, council of chiefs (lukkiko), cabinet, omulamuzi and omuwanika all point to political organization of the Buganda kingdom. The executive powers of the katikiro and the role of the Lukkiko symbolizes the existence of a political class who governed Buganda kingdom. The above showed existence of a hierarchy of power with defined responsibilities with the Kabaka at the helm of leadership of the kingdom and the chiefs at the periphery of Buganda kingdom who were answerable to the Kabaka.

Similar opinions pointing to the political organization of Buganda kingdom was echoed by another Key informant who stated that:-

Buganda was also divided into many smaller units to make administration easier We had counties Amasaza, amagombolola and ebyalo who were administered by abamasaza, abamagombola, aberimuka and abatongole at the counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages other leaders who were hereditary and had access to the Kabaka were the chiefs (Bataka) and princes (Balangira)... the Kabaka also appointed other leaders such as military heads (Mujasi) and Ggabunga (head of the canoe) (KIC01,2024)

From the opinion above voices such as Buganda was divided into many smaller units, counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages, chiefs (Bataka), Leaders such as Mujasi and Ggabunga all point to the political organization of Buganda kingdom and hierarchy of leadership typical of centralization. The leaders of these counties, sub-counties and parishes were all answerable to the Kabaka who was at the centre wielding political power.

Other participants also noted that there was a political structure that implied that all things and persons were the property of the Kabaka and he had the powers to do anything with them

The Kabaka's powers were too much.....

He held political power.....his power and authority was duplicated by the chiefs down to the masses (Bakopi)..... Kabaka had powers to appoint chiefs which indicated his dominance in the kingdom (KID01,2024)

The above voices such as the Kabaka's power was too much, he held political power, his power and authority, powers to appoint, dominance, all point to the existence of a political system of governance in Buganda kingdom with the Kabaka as the head and several hereditary and appointed leaders all enforcing Kabaka's authority.

In relation to matriarchy one of the key informant articulated succinctly that the king could not rule with some special women in the kingdom because they were central to key decision makings in the kingdom as he stated:-

Some women were really at the centre of authority in Buganda kingdom.....

wielding too much power and determined who would become the Kabaka.....for instance the queen mother was a powerful political leader in Buganda kingdom.....he decided who became the Kabaka Routinely advised the Kabaka.....infact she literally ruled together with the Kabaka..... by the way she was also referred to as the Kabaka.....she was more powerful than all the other chiefs (bataka) and even more powerful than the Katikiro of Buganda.....her role in the political space in the kingdom cannot be underestimated.....the Kabaka took after the queen mothers totem.....in addition there are many other important royal women who helped the Kabaka rule like the princesses and others responsible for rituals these women had their own separate homesteads in different hills (KIC01, 2024)

From the above voices such as women at the centre, queen mother was powerful, queen mother advised the Kabaka, queen mother more powerful than the bataka, Kabaka took after the mother's totem, other royal women in the kingdom, all point to the role women in Buganda kingdom played in the state formation of the kingdom. The political powers they wielded and the various rituals they superintended over was manifest of the great role they played in the state formation of Buganda kingdom. We can therefore not isolate women when we are interrogating the state formation of

Buganda because they were central and played pivotal role just like the male counterparts.

All these opinions on the political organization of Buganda kingdom showed that the Kingdom had well-structured system with clear hierarchy with the Kabaka as the head of the state at the helm of the kingdom with hereditary chiefs at counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages all working for and reported to the Kabaka. Therefore the political organization of Buganda had a semblance with a centralized polity.

Secondly was the economic organization of Buganda kingdom, the key informants noted that since Buganda kingdom was well politically organized, the economic organization was also well organized and supervised by the hierarchy of authority and the people of Buganda engaged in many economic activities as noted by one of the Key informant:-

The kingdom of Buganda is really blessed In terms of location....it is surrounded by Lake Victoria...the land is fertile.... We grow bananas....the banana is our staple food....the Baganda cultivated a lot of bananas infact bananas was central to the economy of the kingdom because it was traded within the region....bananas greatly stimulated Buganda's growth and expansion since it provided food security for the growing population (KID01,2024)

From the above opinion, voices such as Buganda is blessed economically, surrounded by Lake Victoria, banana plantations, banana is central to the economy all point to existence of a robust economic activity in Buganda kingdom since the lake provided fish as a source of protein and the banana as the food. This means that Buganda kingdom had food security and this catapulted population growth and expansion of the Kingdom.

This opinion was corroborated with the opinion of another Key informant who stated that Buganda was an agrarian kingdom who relied heavily on agriculture as a back born economic activity for many years

Buganda kingdom was involved in a lot of trade especially given their location near a water body which provided transport and access to other communities in the region...the Baganda traded a lot in Ivory.... they even engaged in manufacturing activities.....we also engaged in fishing in Lake Victoria.....other Baganda traded in Bark clothes within the region.... With the coming of the colonial regime cash crops like coffee was introduced...these economic activities were essential for the growth and expansion of the kingdom (KIE01, 2024)

From the above, voices such as trade, transport, ivory, engaged in manufacturing activities and cash crops all point to economic organization of Buganda kingdom. These economic organization propelled Buganda to one of the biggest Kingdoms in the region during the precolonial period.

Similar opinions were articulated by other Key informants about the economic organization of Buganda kingdom as was noted by another participant:-

The Baganda were predominantly an agricultural kingdom.... agriculture was the domain for women and plantain was the staple food.... the banana was very important in the kingdom and it shaped the identity of the Baganda people.... women were in-charge of the banana plantations....bananas became an important aspect in marriage and other ceremonies in Buganda kingdom (KIF01,2024)

From the above, voices such as agricultural kingdom, shaped identity of Baganda people, women were in-charge of the banana plantations, and bananas became an important aspect of marriage, all point to the fact that banana played an important role in the state formation of Buganda Kingdom. Therefore, we can now conclude that Buganda kingdom was economically well organized in that they participated in

regional trade, manufacturing activities, fishing within Lake Victoria and most importantly Banana was key to the state formation and expansion of Buganda kingdom. The fact that women were at the fore front of agriculture is indicative of the matriarchal role of women in the economy of Buganda and state formation of the Kingdom.

To further articulate the role of women in economic organization of Buganda kingdom, a key informant noted that a huge aspect of the economy of Buganda was in the hands of women particularly in relation to banana plantations and weaving of baskets as he puts it: -

A muganda woman was known to plant and take care of banana plantations....the women participated in planting, weeding, harvesting of the banana's.....banana was a staple food in Buganda which was later traded in the region.....it led to population growth and expansion.....the primary owners of the banana and the plantations were the Baganda women.....the Baganda women also weaved baskets which were used for carrying commodities....later with time the basket became an economic commodity which brought income to the family and kingdom.....women controlled the food basket..... which is a driver for economic growth.....they also reared animals like goats, cows, dogs....they were involved in hunting for wild food and animals...they also participated in art and craft...weaving baskets, marts...they were also involved in poultry which all contributed to the kingdom.(KID01, 2024).

From the above, voices such as muganda woman plant and take care of banana plantations, banana became a commodity, weaving baskets, baskets became commodity for trade, women controlled food basket, driver for state formation, participated in planting, weeding and harvesting, they participated in art and craft, hunting and poultry are all point to the economic contributions women in Buganda made towards state formation. Therefore, I can state clearly and firmly that Buganda kingdom was a gendered kingdom where both men and women worked hard and

contributed to state formation and expansion. Buganda kingdom therefore had a well structure economic organization plan which propelled it to greater height before the arrival of colonialism, no wonder when the colonialist arrived in Buganda, they quickly appreciated its organization because it had semblance with their own system of governance and they were able to use Buganda to rule over the rest of Uganda.

Thirdly is the social/Cultural organization of Buganda Kingdom, Key informants noted that Buganda kingdom was socially stratified:

The major social division in Baganda society occurred between the primary producers, and those connected by the Kabaka service, or appointment to the Kabaka.....Another division was found between the centralized government aligned on the Kabaka and the non-localized clans..... Clan chiefs (Bataka) remained strong in the old core of the kingdom....whereas royal appointees held control in newly conquered territories.....Katikkiro, Princess, Clan chiefs, appointed administrative and military chiefs, and officials all had their own estates.....The authority and legitimacy of both the king and clan chiefs depended on oral histories and the dynastic genealogy.... which had their material relations in a network of royal and clan tombs and shrines.....Each shrine had a group of specialists who carried out rituals and communicated with the shrine's particular ancestral spirit or god (KIC01,2024)

From the opinions above, voices such as social division, kinship, centralized and non-localized clans, newly conquered territories, dynastic genealogies all point to social/cultural organization of Buganda kingdom though highly socially stratified but with clear boundaries often cushioned with power and authority from the centre downwards.

These opinions were corroborated with opinion of another key informant who noted that Buganda was socially organized around clans as he stated that: -

Clanship is an important institution that is critical in understanding the state of Buganda.... Buganda was organized around clans and they played a very important social and political role in Buganda Kingdom..... Each clan was known as Kika which was identified by a particular totem called Muziro..... The totemic system ensured unity of the clan for defense, communal assistance (Bulungibyansi) and regulation of social life especially concerning marriage..... The head of a clan was called Mutaka, and had his headquarters (Butaka) at a particular place where the ancestor of the clan had lived and where the clan was centered. The Kabaka was the chief of the clan heads and was referred to as Ssabataka (KIA01, 2024)

From the above, voices such as clanship, clan for defense, the totemic system, regulation of social life, where the clan was centered, ancestor of a clan lived, the Kabaka was the chief of the clan heads, all point to the social-cultural organization of Buganda kingdom where the Kabaka was the chief of all clan heads and the chiefs superintended over their clan members on behalf of the Kabaka.

This opinion is also similar to the opinion of another key informant who state the complexity of social and family structure of Buganda kingdom as he stated: -

In Buganda all the brothers to the father are called father....all sisters to the mother are called mother.....all their children are brothers and sisters.....the Baganda have a very unique and important aspect of the social or family structure.....the bloodline which is a line of decent was through the male members of the family.....as such the Baganda have built a formidable system of clans.....among the Baganda the clan has remained the most important kinship entity.....the clan is linked to special observations relating to pregnancy, naming of the child and even identifying drum beats during ceremonies (KIE01, 2024)

From the above response it is clear that the social-cultural organization of Buganda kingdom was based on the clan, the clan was the source of identity and had clan heads who were responsible for the clan and ensured social order and how a particular clan

would thrive. To date the Baganda still identify themselves based on the clan system. Important to note is also existence of patriarchy and patrilineal system among the Baganda which might suggest that individual men have the most dominant social status.

Similarly, another key informant responded to the question of social-cultural organization by looking at marriage and the family as articulated below: -

In Buganda marriage was regarded as an important aspect of life.....to earn respect from the society one must be married...polygamy was encouraged....the more women a man married the more he would be regarded.....dowry was to be paid in order for one to marry.....the clans as well as the village units were based on the institution of marriage....because marriage was very important the girl child during puberty was usually prepared for her future husband through elongation of the genitals by the sister to the mother or Senga Other initiations involved Okusala enjala (KID01, 2024)

From the above, it can be deduced that the institution of marriage was very critical in Buganda, marriage was the foundation of the family and the clan, and therefore it was highly regarded. Men were therefore encouraged to marry as many wives as possible while the girls were prepared for marriage through initiation by the Senga a practice that is still highly celebrated among the Baganda to-date.

Another key informant noted that Buganda kingdom was highly socially stratified with many classes all tuned and answerable to the Kabaka as he stated:-

Buganda was organized on clan basis... each of the clan had a head....and special area of origin (Obutaka) the Kabaka was the head of the clan (Ssabataka) and belonged to the clan of the mother....every muganda belonged to a particular clan....Lion (Mpologoma), Monkey (Enkima), Buffalo (Mbogo).....marriage in Buganda was polygamous.....members of the same clan were not allowed to inter marry.....The Baganda were divided into

classes the royal class for men (abalangira) ... for women (Abambejja), nobles (abakungu), Peasants (Abakopi) and slaves (Abadu) (KIB01,2024)

From the opinion above, voices such as organized in clans, Kabaka belonged to the clan of the mother, each clan had a head, Kabaka was the head of all clans, Baganda divided into classes, all these point to a social organization of Buganda kingdom, importantly is that the Kabaka belonged to the clan of the mother, this signifies the role of women in the kingdom and the benefits and privileges which accrued to the clan where the Kabaka emerged from. The culture of Kabaka coming from the mother's clan places women as key players in state formation a role we cannot underestimate.

Culturally some key informants noted that Buganda was culturally and spiritually complex as he stated: -

The Kabaka was the spiritual leader of Buganda and was considered semi-divine....the Baganda believed in small gods (lubale) whom they consulted on various occasions for instance the visited Ddungu for hunting, Musoke for rain, Mukasa for fishing, Walumbe for death.....they also believed in witchcraft (abarogo) who were consulted by those who wanted to harm others..... Buganda kingdom had a royal regalia which included drums, back cloth, spears, which were highly feared and respected.....Virginity was highly respected in Buganda because it was a sign of good upbringing.....the opening of the dogs sight was a sign that an elder in the community has died.....women were not allowed to dig graves.....women couldn't build houses.....women didn't dig toilets.....it was an abomination for a girl to get pregnant from home.....the Baganda had ceremonies such as twinal rights, naming ceremonies, last funeral rights (KID01,2024)

The views above showed that voices such as Kabaka was spiritual leader, considered semi-divine, consulted gods, believed in witchcraft, royal regalia which included, spears, drums, Virginity was respected, women didn't build toilets, women didn't dig

grave yards, getting pregnant from home was an abomination, are all indicative of cultural and spiritual organization of Buganda and respect for virginity indicates the importance of women and their role in Buganda kingdom. Most of the ritual such as coronation, dethronement, burial, ceremonies for war, hunting, and fishing were superintended by women in Buganda which is indicative of their role in state formation. Therefore I find it appropriate that consider women to be pivotal in the state formation of Buganda kingdom cognizant of the emergency of patriarchy later in history when man wanted to share his properties but even then children of these women were the heir to their fathers making women still pivotal.

Table 4.1 showing example from interviews, making the link between evidence and literature even more concrete:

Domain	Key Findings from Interviews	Examples/Quotes from Interviews	Link to Literature
Political	Women such as the Nnabagereka and Namasole advise the Kabaka, mediate disputes, and influence succession; women exert informal political influence through clan networks.	“The Nnabagereka often advises the Kabaka on community issues and settles conflicts between clans.” – Elder respondent. “Even without formal titles, women in the clan influence decisions through their family connections.” – Cultural leader.	Musisi (1991, 2001); Ray (1991); Tamale (2004); Hanson (2003) – Women hold both formal and informal political authority through royal positions and social networks.
Social	Women maintain household and community cohesion, transmit moral values, educate children, and coordinate communal events such as weddings and funerals.	“Women are the ones who teach children how to behave and respect traditions. They also ensure ceremonies like weddings are properly organized.” – Elder respondent.	Hanson (2003); Tamale (1999); Musisi (1991); Ray (1991) – Women act as social transmitters of norms, mediators, and organizers of community networks.
Economic	Women manage household resources, agricultural production, and trade; they participate in contemporary initiatives like cooperatives,	“Women control the household farms and markets, ensuring families have food and income. Many also join cooperative groups for business skills.” – Female community leader.	Hanson (2003); Musisi (2001); Tamale (2004) – Women’s economic agency spans domestic labor, market activity, and resource

	vocational training, and microfinance.		management, historically and in modern contexts.
Cultural	Women serve as custodians of tradition, organize rituals, perform ceremonies, and transmit cultural knowledge; royal women act as cultural ambassadors integrating tradition and modern initiatives.	“Royal women organize cultural events and teach young girls and boys about our customs. They also support schools and health initiatives linked to culture.” – Cultural leader.	Ray (1991); Musisi (2001); Tamale (1999); Hanson (2003) – Women’s cultural authority ensures continuity of rituals, festivals, and knowledge across generations.

4.5 Discussions

Interviews with elders, cultural leaders, and community members revealed that women in Buganda Kingdom historically played significant roles in political organization, although these roles were largely mediated through their relationships with the Kabaka (king) and other royal family members. The Namasole (queen mother) and Lubuga (queen sister) were central figures in political decision-making, influencing succession, mediating disputes, and managing estates (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991). One respondent stated, “The Namasole’s approval was essential for any major political decision; she could influence who became the next Kabaka” (Interview, 2025). This aligns with the literature, which documents that women, particularly royal women, had recognized authority in political councils and exercised soft power that shaped governance structures in Buganda (Hanson, 2003; Kiwanuka, 1971).

The interviews highlighted that women were crucial in maintaining social cohesion and transmitting cultural norms. They organized rituals, supervised ceremonies, and were responsible for educating younger generations on moral values, customs, and

social etiquette (Interview, 2025). A cultural leader explained, “Women ensured that traditions were respected; they taught girls and boys the proper ways to live in our kingdom.” Scholarly sources support these findings, indicating that women were central to the regulation of social behavior and the perpetuation of cultural norms, with the Namasole and Lubuga often acting as arbiters in disputes and custodians of social values (Musisi, 1991; Tamale, 1999; Ray, 1991).

Regarding economic roles, interviewees emphasized that women, particularly those in royal positions, controlled significant resources, including land, agricultural production, and tribute collection. One participant noted, “The Lubuga managed estates in every county and ensured the wealth of the royal household was maintained” (Interview, 2025). Literature corroborates this observation, noting that the Namasole and Lubuga had their own estates, controlled trade, collected taxes, and allocated resources for both political and social purposes (Musisi, 2001; Kiwanuka, 1971). Their economic authority reinforced their political and social influence within the kingdom.

The interview findings demonstrate continuity with historical scholarship. Musisi (1991, 2001) and Ray (1991) highlight that women’s political and economic influence was often indirect but substantial, exercised through advisory and managerial roles. Tamale (1999) notes that women’s social authority was critical for regulating morality and preserving customs, ensuring social stability in the kingdom. These studies, alongside the interviews, reveal that women’s roles were intertwined across political,

social, and economic spheres, reflecting an organized system in which royal and elite women exercised authority while also maintaining societal norms.

Overall, the interviews confirm that women in Buganda Kingdom were central to the kingdom's political, social, and economic organization. Their influence, though often exercised indirectly, was acknowledged historically and continues to inform contemporary perceptions of female leadership and cultural stewardship in the region. The findings support and extend the literature by providing qualitative evidence from community and cultural perspectives (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991; Tamale, 1999; Hanson, 2003; Kiwanuka, 1971).

4.6 Conclusion

The findings from the interviews, supported by historical and contemporary literature, indicate that women in Buganda Kingdom played central and multifaceted roles in the political, social, and economic organization of the kingdom. Politically, royal women such as the Namasole and Lubuga exercised substantial influence in succession, governance, and dispute resolution, often serving as key advisors to the Kabaka (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991). Socially, women were custodians of culture and tradition, overseeing rituals, mentoring younger generations, and maintaining social cohesion (Tamale, 1999; Musisi, 1991). Economically, they controlled estates, managed resources, and directed agricultural and trade activities, which reinforced their broader influence within the kingdom (Kiwanuka, 1971; Musisi, 2001). The integration of interview evidence with literature demonstrates that women's roles were not isolated to a single domain but were interconnected across political, social, and economic spheres. This interplay of influence highlights a structured system in which women,

particularly royal women, acted as both cultural custodians and political actors, shaping the governance and development of Buganda over time. The findings affirm the historical significance of women's authority in Buganda and underscore their enduring impact on the kingdom's organizational structures. Overall, the study confirms that women in Buganda Kingdom were integral to the functioning and stability of the state, combining formal and informal power to sustain political authority, social order, and economic management, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of matriarchal influence in Buganda's history

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATURE OF MATRIACHY IN BUGANDA KINGDOM FROM 1856 TO 2022

5.0 Introduction

The nature of matriarchy in the Buganda Kingdom from 1856 to 2022 reflects a complex interplay between traditional authority, gender roles, and socio-political change. While Buganda has historically been a patrilineal society with male-dominated leadership structures, women—particularly royal women such as the Namasole (queen mother), Lubuga (queen sister), and Nnabagereka (queen consort)—have exercised significant influence within both formal and informal spheres of power (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991; Tamale, 2004). These women were central to succession politics, ritual leadership, estate management, and cultural transmission, often shaping governance and societal norms behind the scenes (Musisi, 2001; Hanson, 2003). Over time, the nature of matriarchy in Buganda has been transformed by colonialism, missionary interventions, postcolonial political changes, and modernization, which altered formal authority while creating new avenues for women to assert social, economic, and cultural influence (Kiwauka, 1971; Tamale, 1999). This study seeks to explore how matriarchal authority has evolved in Buganda from 1856 to 2022, highlighting the continuity, adaptation, and resilience of women's roles in sustaining political, social, economic, and cultural life in the kingdom (Musisi, 1991; Tamale, 2004).

5.1 The nature of Matriachy in Buganda from 1856 to 2022

The matriarchy in the Buganda Kingdom has historically been embedded within the political, social, economic, and cultural structures of the kingdom, despite the overarching patrilineal system. In the precolonial era, royal women such as the

Namasole, Lubuga, and Nnabagereka wielded significant authority, often serving as advisors to the Kabaka, custodians of ritual, and managers of estates (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991). These women were instrumental in succession politics, ensuring the continuity of leadership through mediation and strategic alliances, and were central in legitimizing the authority of male rulers. Their influence extended to controlling household and clan resources, organizing rituals, and guiding social norms, reflecting a form of matriarchy that operated alongside and within male-dominated structures (Hanson, 2003; Musisi, 2001).

With the advent of colonial rule and the signing of the 1900 Buganda Agreement, the formal authority of women in the kingdom was curtailed in certain domains. Land reforms and the codification of male-dominated administrative hierarchies shifted economic and political power toward men, while missionary activity imposed Victorian ideals of gender roles, confining women's influence in some public and religious spheres (Kiwanuka, 1971; Tamale, 1999). Nonetheless, women adapted by maintaining influence through informal networks, domestic management, and participation in cultural and ritual life. They continued to exert authority through estate management, mediation of disputes, and control over resources and labor within their households and clans, demonstrating the resilience of matriarchal practices even under restrictive colonial conditions (Musisi, 2001; Hanson, 2003).

In the postcolonial period, particularly following the abolition of kingdoms in 1966 and their restoration in 1993, women's roles in Buganda evolved further. While formal political authority remained largely male-dominated, women increasingly engaged in civic leadership, education, and development initiatives (Tamale, 2004; Musisi, 2001). The Nnabagereka, in particular, emerged as a prominent cultural and

social leader, championing education, health, and social welfare programs. These contemporary roles reflect continuity with historical patterns of matriarchal influence, demonstrating that women's authority was not solely tied to formal political positions but also embedded in social, economic, and cultural domains (Ray, 1991; Hanson, 2003).

Culturally, women have consistently served as custodians of tradition, transmitting knowledge, organizing rituals, and ensuring the continuity of cultural practices across generations. Royal women and elder women in the community acted as mentors and educators, teaching moral values, rituals, and clan customs to younger members (Musisi, 1991; Tamale, 1999). These roles reinforced social cohesion and legitimacy, showing that matriarchy in Buganda was multidimensional, encompassing not only political and economic authority but also spiritual and cultural leadership. Even in modern times, women's cultural authority is manifested through participation in ceremonies, cultural advocacy, and educational initiatives, illustrating adaptive strategies that maintain the influence of matriarchal networks (Tamale, 2004; Musisi, 2001).

Economically, women in Buganda historically controlled agricultural production, managed estates, and participated in trade, linking household labor with the kingdom's broader economy (Hanson, 2003; Musisi, 2001). Through these activities, women maintained both economic autonomy and influence over social and political networks, reinforcing the interdependence of matriarchy and the kingdom's prosperity. Contemporary women continue to expand these roles through entrepreneurial ventures, cooperative societies, and microfinance initiatives, reflecting both continuity

and adaptation of matriarchal economic power in a modern context (Tamale, 2004; Musisi, 2001).

Overall, the nature of matriarchy in Buganda from 1856 to 2022 demonstrates a dynamic system in which women exercised authority through multiple interrelated spheres political, social, economic, and cultural. Despite colonial disruptions, postcolonial political changes, and modernization, women adapted by leveraging informal networks, domestic authority, cultural stewardship, and economic management to sustain influence. The literature and historical evidence indicate that Buganda's matriarchy was both resilient and flexible, ensuring that women's roles remained central to the kingdom's governance, social cohesion, economic stability, and cultural continuity (Musisi, 1991, 2001; Tamale, 1999, 2004; Ray, 1991; Hanson, 2003)

Table 5.1 summarizing the evolution of matriarchy in the Buganda Kingdom (1856–2022) across political, social, economic, and cultural domains:

Period	Political Roles	Social Roles	Economic Roles	Cultural Roles
Pre-colonial (1856–1894)	Royal women (Namasole, Lubuga, Nnabagereka) advised the Kabaka, mediated disputes, influenced succession, and exercised informal authority through clan networks.	Women maintained household and clan cohesion, educated children, and organized communal events.	Managed household resources, agricultural production, and local trade.	Custodians of ritual, organized ceremonies, transmitted traditions, and reinforced clan norms.
Colonial (1894–1962)	Formal political authority	Women continued to	Managed estates, controlled	Preserved rituals,

	curtailed by male-dominated colonial administration, but women retained influence through domestic and clan networks.	transmit cultural norms, mediate social disputes, and coordinate communal life.	household labor, and engaged in informal trade; adapted to missionary education initiatives.	ceremonies, and oral traditions despite missionary pressures; maintained cultural authority in private and informal spheres.
Postcolonial (1962–1993)	Political authority limited; women participated in informal governance, advisory roles, and community leadership.	Maintained family and community cohesion, organized social events, and mentored younger generations.	Managed households, participated in market activities, and engaged in emerging women's initiatives.	Continued custodianship of rituals, cultural transmission, and mentorship; promoted education and moral values.
Modern (1993–2022)	Nnabagereka and other royal women act as advisors, cultural ambassadors, and advocates in local governance and development projects.	Lead civic engagement, social welfare programs, education initiatives, and community mobilization.	Engage in entrepreneurship, cooperatives, microfinance, and development projects; manage resources and support families.	Promote cultural preservation, organize ceremonies, transmit traditions, integrate modern education with cultural heritage.

This table clearly shows the continuity and adaptation of matriarchal roles across historical periods, linking political, social, economic, and cultural spheres.

5.4 Results

Key informant interviews were conducted with six participants in Bulemezi County and the opinions about their background information presented in the table below

Table 5.2 Background information for participants on Nature of Matriarchy in Buganda

Category	Research Question	Gender	Age	Designation
KI G	02	Female	83	Omukade we ekaylo (elder)
KIH	02	Female	73	Naabakyala
KII	02	Male	74	Omumbeja
KIJ	02	Male	76	Omutaka 1
KIK	02	Male	81	Omutkaka 2
KIL	02	Male	78	Omutaka 3

Primary data, 2024

The table above shows that six Key informant interviewees were interviewed on research question one on how was Buganda kingdom organized. The Key informants were coded as KIG, KIH, KII, KIJ, KIK and KIL who are elders in Buganda kingdom holding senior positions in Buganda Kingdom and knowledgeable on the nature of matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom.

Regarding research question two on the nature of matriarchy in Buganda and how it influenced state formation, the interviewer introduced the subject of matriarchy according to what was in the literature on how different communities defined matriarchy globally and how scholars in Buganda such as Jjuko, Musisi and others defined Matriarchy as practiced in Buganda. Some of the key informants concurred with Buganda scholars while some gave new version of what matriarchy was according to them in Buganda but fundamentally the point of agreement was that matriarchy in Buganda was better understood from the role women played in the families, clan, and in state formation. Some of the participants argued about matriarchy from the rulership point of view underscoring how certain women in

Buganda kingdom wielded political power and were influential in decision making at the centre of power while others cognizant of such women still noted that Matriarchy can better be understood when we examine the role of women generally in state formation of Buganda Kingdom.

In an interview with one of the key informant on the nature of matriarchy in Buganda he noted that to understand the nature of matriarchy in Buganda we needed to first understand who a woman was in Buganda kingdom as he articulated: -

Women in Buganda kingdom were considered as 'Banakazadde' mothers of all universe...in this kind of nature women were seen as care takers of every one in Buganda kingdom...women were naturally meant to produce children so as to multiply the family (Okwaza ekika) in addition women were seen as attractive creatures and therefore they were meant to welcome all visitors (okwaniriza abagenyi) she would welcome visitors to the homestead both the known visitors and the unknown (KIL02, 2024).

From the opinions above, voices such as mothers of all universe, caretakers, multiply the family, welcome all visitors point clearly to the nature of matriarchy in state formation of Buganda Kingdom especially if we are to rely on the definition of matriarchy in terms of the role women played in their kingdom. Implying therefore that women in Buganda played very significant roles in state formation of Buganda because they were mothers and in charge of population increase and consequently the formation and expansion of Buganda Kingdom.

This opinion was corroborated with the views of another key informant who noted that women rule was not very clear in Buganda but their contribution to the family and state formation was strong as he stated: -

"Women were seen as the in-charge of the family welfare....they could take care of their husbands, children and other community members as well..."

women were seen as teachers of the children...they would teach children how to do domestic work...cook, clean the home,... good behaviors.....infact the saying in luganda that (omwana omusiru avumaganya ngina) translated as a foolish child brings insults on the mother..... this saying comes this nature of women roles in the society.....failure of a girl to stay in marriage (Okunoba) was blamed on the mother and the aunties of the girl” (KIK02, 2024)

From the above opinion, voices such as in-charge of the family welfare, take care of husbands, women are teachers of children, responsible for discipline of their children all point to the various roles women played in families and the nature of patriarchy and how women contributed to their families and state formation of Buganda Kingdom. I can therefore competently state that patriarchy in Buganda was masked on the various role's women played in Buganda kingdom.

Similar view was articulated by another key informant who noted that patriarchy was evident in Buganda when we consider the role women played in the economic organization of Buganda particularly on banana plantation as he stated: -

Women were meant to plant and take care of banana plantations for the Nabagereka and a cassava plantation for the Kabaka should be traced in every home of a muganda ...it was women who greatly participated in the plantations although the plantations were termed as (Eniniro z'obwaKabaka) translated as the Garden of the Kabaka. (KIG02, 2024)

From the above opinion, voices such as women were meant to plant, take care, women greatly participated in plantations , all pointed to the existence of patriarchy in Buganda and the economic role women played in state formation of Buganda. It is a known fact that banana was a staple food for the Baganda and also a commodity of trade in the region, therefore its contribution as a source of food enhanced population growth and as a commodity it brought in income which later enhanced the expansion of Buganda kingdom in the region. I can now authoritatively state that the role women

played in nurturing the banana plantation was part of their contribution to the state formation of Buganda kingdom, a role which cannot be underestimated.

Other key informants addressed the question of the nature of matriarchy and state formation in Buganda by interrogating the political structure of Buganda, articulation the position and role of women within the power structure as stated by one key informant: -

The Namasole as the queen mother produced the Kabaka this showed how women were significant to Buganda.....posing a question obwaKabaka bunabawo butya singa omukazi tazala? (How could the kingdom have survived if women were not giving birth?).....besides it was only women called Lubuga who conducted particular rituals during coronation of the Kabaka.....more to that the Kabaka also takes on the mother's totem (Omuziro) this makes every clan to have a chance of having Kabaka from their clan.....when the Kabaka died....the Kabakas jaws were removed and hanged....the favorite wife of the king sat under the tree where the jaws were being dried from pumpkin leaves were passed through the dead body of the Kabaka and the most favored or loved wife would chew them.....the term Kabaka came from the term akaba ka ggundi meaning some ones jaws..... by the way some royal women in Buganda shared the title Kabaka with the King this means women were very significant in Buganda women (KII02, 2024)

The opinion above, voices such as the queen produced the Kabaka, a woman called Lubuga conducted coronation rituals for the Kabaka, Kabaka takes on the mothers totem, the most loved woman takes care of the Kabaka drying jaws, royal women also called Kabaka like the kings name, all point out clearly to the nature of matriarchy in Buganda and how these women variously contributed to the state formation of Buganda.

Furthermore, some key informants agreed with their colleagues by articulating further the role women played in state formation of Buganda as a reflection of the nature of matriarchy in Buganda as stated by one key informant: -

When the Kabaka died some special women planted certain tree immediately after Kabaka's death....the older the tree, the easier the marking of the years that the current Kabaka has reigned or ruled the kingdom.....all the burial rituals were performed by the most loved or favored wife....she would announce (Kabaka akisiza omukono) the king has over raised his hand.....implying that the Kabaka had died.....women in Buganda also led naming of 'Bulange' an area in Mengo....because women are shy... they would talk to men why folding grass to gain confidence the issue of lineage is also central to Buganda because children even the Kabaka followed the mothers lineage (okulanga ebisubi) (KIJ02,2024)

From the opinion above, voices such as some special women planted certain trees, burial rituals were performed by the most loved women, announcement by the most favored woman, and women also led naming of Bulange, lineage of the child after the mother , talk to men while folding fingers, all point to the nature of matriarchy in Buganda and roles women played in the state formation of Buganda kingdom.

Table 5.2 summarizing the interview results on the nature of matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom, linking findings to political, social, economic, and cultural domains and relevant literature:

Domain	Key Findings from Interviews	Examples/Quotes from Interviews	Link to Literature
Political	Royal women (Nnabagereka, Namasole) advise the Kabaka, mediate disputes, influence succession, and wield informal authority through clan	“The Nnabagereka advises the Kabaka and settles disputes among clans.” – Elder respondent. “Even without formal titles, women influence decisions through family networks.” – Cultural leader.	Musisi (1991, 2001); Ray (1991); Tamale (2004); Hanson (2003) – Women hold both formal and informal political authority.

	networks.		
Social	Women maintain household and community cohesion, transmit moral values, educate children, and coordinate social events such as weddings, funerals, and initiation ceremonies.	“Women teach children moral behavior and organize ceremonies to ensure traditions are followed.” – Elder respondent.	Tamale (1999); Musisi (1991); Ray (1991); Hanson (2003) – Women serve as social transmitters and mediators, reinforcing community networks.
Economic	Women manage household resources, agricultural production, trade, and participate in modern initiatives such as cooperatives, vocational training, and microfinance programs.	“Women control family farms, trade, and spending to ensure household prosperity.” – Female community leader.	Musisi (2001); Hanson (2003); Tamale (2004) – Economic roles enhance women’s influence and authority.
Cultural	Women act as custodians of tradition, organize rituals, mentor younger generations, and serve as cultural ambassadors integrating tradition with modern initiatives.	“Royal women organize cultural events, teach children customs, and support education programs linked to our culture.” – Cultural leader.	Ray (1991); Musisi (2001); Tamale (1999); Hanson (2003) – Cultural authority sustains matriarchy across generations.

This table links empirical interview evidence to scholarly literature, showing how matriarchy in Buganda is exercised across multiple domains.

5.5 Discussions

The interviews with key informants, including elders, cultural leaders, and women in leadership positions, revealed that matriarchy in Buganda has historically been both influential and adaptive, operating alongside the kingdom’s patrilineal structures. Respondents emphasized that royal women, particularly the Nnabagereka and Namasole, wield considerable authority by advising the Kabaka, mediating disputes,

and influencing succession. These findings align with Musisi (1991, 2001) and Ray (1991), who note that royal women were central to political decision-making and succession, exercising both formal and informal power. Several informants highlighted that even when colonial or postcolonial policies limited women's formal authority, they maintained influence through clan networks and domestic control, confirming Hanson's (2003) observation that matriarchy in Buganda often functioned through informal social and political channels.

Socially, respondents noted that women continue to serve as key transmitters of cultural norms and values, organizing communal activities such as weddings, funerals, and initiation ceremonies. Women were described as mentors and educators, teaching children moral behavior, respect for elders, and traditional knowledge. These insights resonate with Tamale (1999) and Musisi (1991), who describe women's social influence as pivotal in maintaining household cohesion and broader community networks. Interviewees emphasized that this social role is intertwined with political and cultural authority, showing that matriarchy in Buganda extends beyond formal governance structures.

Economically, interviewees reported that women have historically managed household resources, agricultural production, and trade, while also participating in modern initiatives such as cooperatives, vocational training, and microfinance programs. One female respondent noted, "Women control the family farm and make decisions on trade and spending, ensuring the household survives and prospers." This aligns with Musisi (2001) and Hanson (2003), who emphasize that women's economic agency, both historically and in contemporary contexts, reinforces their social and political influence. Informants highlighted that economic roles are a major

avenue through which women maintain authority, particularly when formal political power is limited.

Culturally, women were described as custodians of traditions, responsible for organizing rituals, transmitting oral histories, and mentoring younger generations in the kingdom's customs. Respondents emphasized that royal women act as cultural ambassadors, integrating traditional knowledge with modern initiatives in education and social development. These findings are consistent with Ray (1991), Musisi (2001), and Tamale (1999), who argue that cultural authority has been a key mechanism for sustaining matriarchy in Buganda, ensuring continuity across precolonial, colonial, postcolonial, and modern periods.

Across all domains, the interviews highlighted the adaptive nature of matriarchy in Buganda. Informants observed that despite historical disruptions, including colonial restrictions on land ownership and political participation, women have continually negotiated influence through domestic authority, clan networks, cultural leadership, and economic management. These observations support the literature indicating that Buganda matriarchy is dynamic, resilient, and multidimensional, combining political, social, economic, and cultural authority to sustain women's influence in the kingdom (Musisi, 1991, 2001; Tamale, 1999, 2004; Hanson, 2003; Ray, 1991).

Overall, the interview findings confirm that matriarchy in Buganda is not limited to formal political power but is exercised through interconnected social, economic, and cultural spheres. Women's authority is both historical and contemporary, demonstrating continuity, adaptability, and resilience. The empirical evidence from the interviews complements existing scholarship, emphasizing that women have been

central to sustaining the stability, governance, and identity of Buganda Kingdom over time.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the nature of matriarchy in the Buganda Kingdom has historically been complex, multidimensional, and adaptive. Despite the kingdom's patrilineal structure, women particularly royal figures such as the Namasole, Lubuga, and Nnabagereka have exercised significant authority across political, social, economic, and cultural spheres. The interviews revealed that women continue to influence governance, mediate disputes, maintain household and community cohesion, manage economic resources, and serve as custodians of tradition. These findings align closely with scholarly literature, which emphasizes that matriarchy in Buganda operates through both formal and informal channels, often behind the scenes yet fundamentally shaping the kingdom's stability and identity (Musisi, 1991, 2001; Tamale, 1999, 2004; Ray, 1991; Hanson, 2003). The evidence highlights the resilience and continuity of matriarchal roles, showing that women have adapted to colonial, postcolonial, and modern changes while sustaining influence over social, political, economic, and cultural life. Women's authority is exercised not only through formal titles but also through strategic negotiation, resource management, cultural leadership, and social networks. Overall, matriarchy in Buganda exemplifies a dynamic system of gendered power that has persisted across time, demonstrating that women have been central to the kingdom's governance, social cohesion, economic stability, and cultural preservation

CHAPTER SIX

INFLUENTIAL WOMEN AND THEIR MATRIACHAL ROLES IN BUGANDA

6.0 Introduction

Royal women in the Buganda Kingdom have historically held influential matriarchal roles that shaped political, social, economic, and cultural life within the kingdom. Figures such as the Namasole (queen mother), Lubuga (queen sister), and Nnabagereka (queen consort) exercised authority that extended beyond domestic spheres, participating in succession politics, advising the Kabaka, and mediating disputes among clans (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991). These women were also central to the preservation and transmission of cultural traditions, organizing rituals and festivals, and ensuring the continuity of social norms and values (Hanson, 2003; Tamale, 1999). Over time, their matriarchal roles have adapted to changing political and social contexts, including colonial and postcolonial periods, allowing them to maintain influence in governance, economic management, and cultural stewardship (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004). This study examines the influential royal women of Buganda and the ways in which their matriarchal authority has shaped the kingdom's governance, social structures, economic systems, and cultural practices.

6.1 Influential women and their matriarchal roles in Buganda Kingdom

The Buganda Kingdom, one of Uganda's most prominent traditional kingdoms, has long been characterized by a complex interplay of gender roles within its political, social, economic, and cultural frameworks. While the kingdom's political structure has been predominantly patriarchal, royal women have historically held significant matriarchal positions that have influenced various facets of Buganda society. This literature review delves into the roles of these influential royal women, focusing on

figures such as the Namasole (queen mother), Lubuga (queen sister), and Nnabagereka (queen consort), and examines how their authority has shaped the kingdom's development.

The Namasole: The Queen Mother

The Namasole, or queen mother, has been a pivotal figure in Buganda's political and social spheres. Traditionally, the Namasole held substantial influence, often acting as a mediator between the Kabaka (king) and his subjects. Musisi (1991) highlights the Namasole's role in advising the Kabaka and overseeing the welfare of the royal family, underscoring her importance in maintaining political stability. Additionally, the Namasole was responsible for the upbringing of the Kabaka's heirs, ensuring the continuity of leadership within the kingdom. In her study, Musisi (1991) notes that the Namasole's authority extended beyond the confines of the palace, as she played a crucial role in the socialization of the future leaders of Buganda. This responsibility not only reinforced her position within the royal hierarchy but also solidified her influence over the kingdom's future direction.

The Lubuga: The Queen Sister

The Lubuga, or queen sister, held a unique position within the Buganda monarchy. Unlike the Namasole, who was the mother of the Kabaka, the Lubuga was often a sister of the reigning king. This role was not merely ceremonial; the Lubuga had significant political responsibilities, including acting as a co-heir to the throne and participating in decision-making processes (Musisi, 1991). The Lubuga's involvement in governance was essential in ensuring the kingdom's continuity and stability.

Musisi (1991) further elaborates on the Lubuga's influence, stating that her position allowed her to serve as a counterbalance to the Kabaka's power, providing a check within the monarchical system. This dynamic highlighted the importance of female authority in maintaining a balanced and effective governance structure.

The Nnabagereka: The Queen Consort

The Nnabagereka, or queen consort, is the principal wife of the Kabaka and holds a prominent position in Buganda's cultural and social life. While the title of Nnabagereka was formalized in the 20th century, its significance has deep historical roots. The Nnabagereka's role encompassed not only supporting the Kabaka but also engaging in charitable activities and cultural preservation.

According to the Nnabagereka of Buganda (2025), the current Nnabagereka, Sylvia Nagginda, has been instrumental in promoting education, health, and cultural initiatives. She established the Nnabagereka Development Foundation, which focuses on community development and empowerment, particularly for women and children. This modern approach to the Nnabagereka's role reflects a continuation of the matriarchal tradition, adapting to contemporary societal needs.

The roles of royal women in Buganda have evolved over time, influenced by various socio-political changes. During the colonial period, the British administration introduced new governance structures that marginalized traditional institutions, including the roles of royal women. However, as Musisi (1991) notes, these women adapted to the changing circumstances by leveraging their traditional authority to influence the colonial administration and maintain their relevance in society.

Post-independence, the roles of royal women continued to adapt. The establishment of the Nnabagereka title in the 20th century marked a formal recognition of women's leadership within the kingdom. This development signified a shift towards a more inclusive approach to governance, acknowledging the contributions of women in shaping the kingdom's future.

In contemporary Buganda, royal women continue to play influential roles in various sectors. The Nnabagereka's involvement in community development through the Nnabagereka Development Foundation exemplifies the ongoing impact of royal women. Their engagement in education, health, and cultural preservation underscores their commitment to the kingdom's progress and the well being of its people. Furthermore, the recognition of royal women's roles in governance and societal development challenges traditional gender norms and promotes gender equality. As Musisi (1991) emphasizes, the active participation of women in leadership positions is crucial for the holistic development of society.

The influential royal women of Buganda have historically held significant matriarchal roles that have shaped the kingdom's political, social, economic, and cultural landscapes. From the Namasole's advisory capacity to the Kabaka to the Nnabagereka's modern initiatives in community development, these women have demonstrated resilience and adaptability in their leadership. Their continued involvement in various sectors highlights the enduring importance of female authority in Buganda, contributing to the kingdom's ongoing development and the promotion of gender equality.

6.2 Results

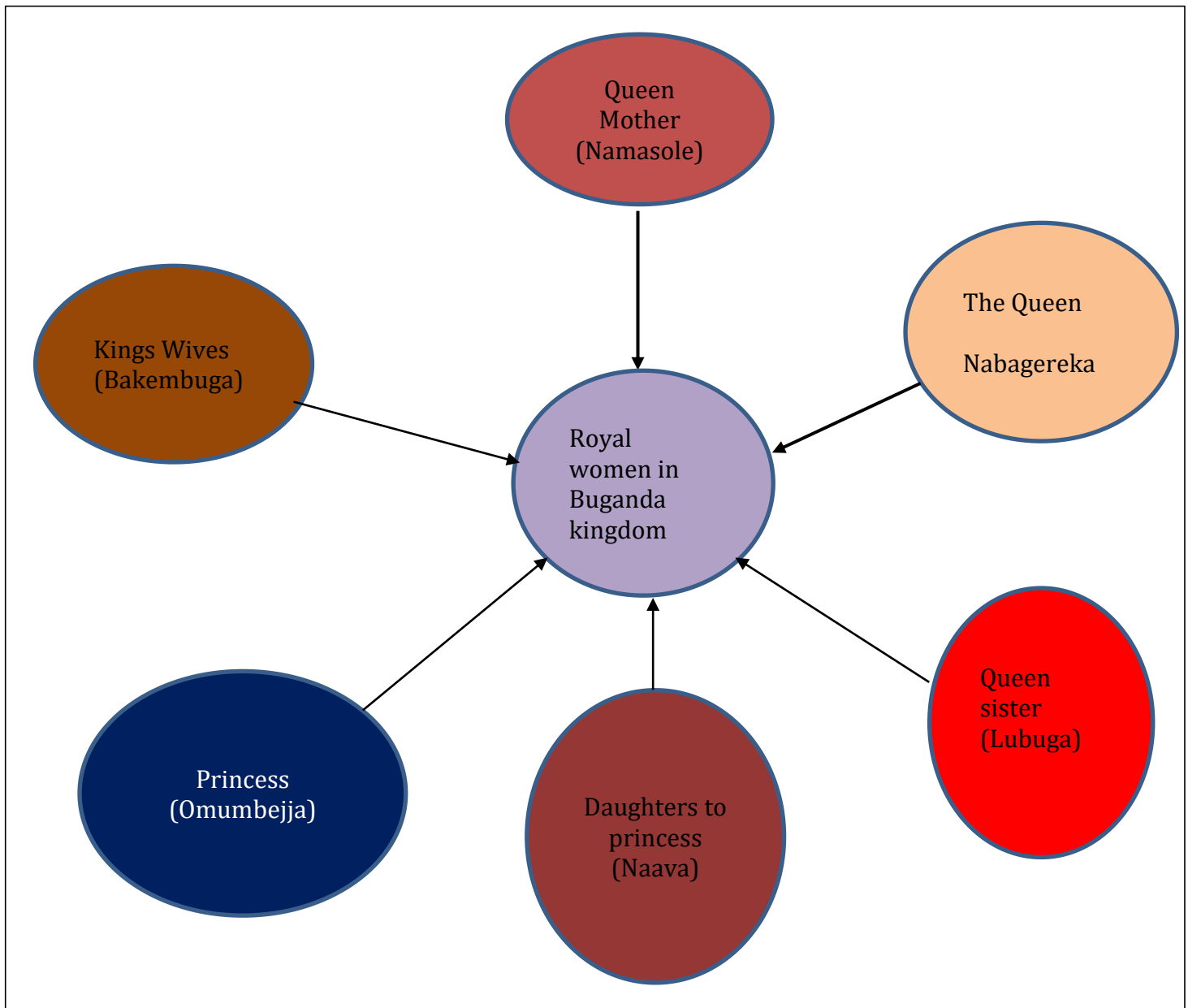
Before we delve deep into the interview it was in order for me to present the demographic information of the category of elders, chiefs, Bataka and the pseudonyms I used to conceal their identities.

Table 6.1 Demographic information and pseudonyms of Key informants

Category	Research Question	Gender	Age	designation
KI A	03	Male	79	Mituba Etaano
KIB	03	Female	75	Naabakyala
KIC	03	Female	81	Omumbeja
KID	03	Male	75	Omutaka 1
KIE	03	Male	74	Omutkaka 2
KIF	03	Male	68	Omutaka 3
Primary data, 2024				

The interviewer introduced the subject of influential royal women and their roles in Buganda kingdom to the key informants by informing them of the different influential women according to literature and asked the key informants to interrogate this category of women and the role they played in the state formation of Buganda. The views from the key informants were massive and impressive. The key informants identified influential royal women as Queen mother (Namasole), the Queen (Nabagereka), Queen Sister (Lubuga), Kings Wives (Bakembuga), the Princess (Omumbejja), wives of the prince (Abazaana), and Daughters of the princesses (Naava). The interview also unearthed some special female personalities which emerged during particular reigns and were very influential especially given their heroic contribution to Buganda kingdom namely; Nakku, Nannono, Nassolo.

Figure 1: Showing the influential royal women in Buganda kingdom



Source: Primary data

The figure above shows the influential royal women in Buganda kingdom each playing her own role in the kingdom with some more influential and powerful compared to others for instance the queen mothers obviously is more powerful by virtue of being the mother to the king and even Queen sister, and princes. The key informant mentioned that all these women were very powerful and influential in Buganda kingdom, more powerful than even hereditary and appointed chiefs. They

occupied their own homestead on a hill and commanded several servants and slaves.

I will proceed to interrogate each of this influential woman to find out who she was?

What roles did she perform? And how influential was she in the kingdom?

Firstly, The Queen Mother (Namasole), the key informants noted that the Namasole was a vital figure in Buganda kingdom because she was the mother of the king and was central in decision making as stated by one of the key informant :-

Namasole was the mother of the current king and wife to the former king.....she was very powerful by the fact that she once ruled the kingdom with her husband the late Kabaka.....she was very important in deciding who becomes the Kabaka.....even during coronation she sat next to her son (Kabaka)....politically she was a very powerful leader who mentored the Kabaka and all the royal women in the kingdom.....she was superior to all the chiefs she had her own homestead on a hill with many servants.....and slaves.....she was also referred to as Kabaka just like the king (KIA03,2024)

From the above, voices such as the mother of the current king, wife to the former king, she was very powerful, she once ruled the kingdom with her husband, she was very important in decision making, very powerful leader, during coronation she sat next to the Kabaka, she was superior to all chiefs, she had her own homestead and she was also referred to as the Kabaka, all these are indicative of the influence of the Namasole in Buganda kingdom. The Namasole played an influential role in the state formation of Buganda Kingdom because she ruled side by side with the Kabaka, making important decisions and mentoring royal women in the kingdom.

This opinion was corroborated with a view from another key informant who noted that the Namasole was also king and as such wielded political power and authority as he stated: -

Namasole was also king on her own.....she had many servants she had her own courts and she had powers for life and death over her people who were

directly under her she could have as many lovers as she wished but was not allowed to have children.....she was not allowed to remarry....Namasole assumed office when the new king ascended the throne.....she lived in her own place (embuga) just like the king.....she was the chief advisor of the king she was addresses as chief of courts (KIC03, 2024)

From the above views, voices such as, Namasole was also king, she had many servants, she had her own courts, she had powers over life and death, she had many lovers, she lived in her own place like the king, she was the chief advisor of the king, and she was addressed as the chief of courts. This means that the Namasole was very influential in state formation of Buganda and she contributed immensely to Buganda kingdom political, social and economic activities.

A similar view was noted during the key informant interview in which one participant who noted that the Namasole was important during coronation and even during Death of the Kabaka as he stated: -

The namasole would care take the throne.....she would also ensure that there were special favors for her clan if her son came to power.....when the king died she took over the throne.....provided security for her son who would be the next king.....she drew her clan closer to the royal family.....she made her clan part of state (KIE03, 2024)

Voices such as care take the throne, ensure there were special favors for her clan, provided security for her son the king, drew her clan closer to the state are all indicative of the influence of the namasole in Buganda kingdom and how she contributed to the state formation of Buganda kingdom. Therefore, I can conclude that the Queen mother (Namasole) were at the fore front of state formation of Buganda kingdom, In fact she literally ruled together with the Kabaka and was in charge of her own court and responsible for huge number of servants, army and slaves. This role and influence made her invincible in Buganda Kingdom.

Secondly the Nabagereka; during the key informant interviews the participants noted that the Nabakereka was a very influential royal woman in Buganda kingdom as one key informant stated: -

Nabagereka was the wife of the reigning king.....she is always with the king and also wielded political ,economic and social cultural powers.....she was more powerful than most chiefs.....and provided emotional support to the Kabaka.....she was the mother of the kingdom.....she provided mentorship to all the women in the kingdom.....had many servants and slaves.....she was always responsible for the welfare of the king.....she guided young girls in the kingdom on how to become responsible.....she was at the service of the Kabaka.....when the king died she became namasole because she is the mother of the new king.....during death she was involved in many rituals performed to the deceased Kabaka.....Nabageraka was the leaders of all the other wives of the Kabaka and guided them how to behave and serve the Kabaka (KID03,2024)

From the above opinion, voices such as Nabagereka is wife to the reigning king, she is always with the king, She wielded political, economic and social-cultural powers, more powerful than chiefs, provided emotional support to the king, she was responsible for the welfare of the king, she was at the service of the king and the kingdom, all point to the influence of the Nabagereka in Buganda kingdom and how her position enabled her to serve not only the Kabaka but the entire kingdom. Today Nabageraka is a symbol of unity and prosperity in Buganda kingdom.

Thirdly, the Queen Sister (Lubuga); from the key informant interview, participants noted that the Queen Sister was very influential in the kingdom as one participant stated: -

The Lubuga was very useful in Buganda especially in ceremonies of succession of the Kabaka.... during enthronement.... she would sit next to the Kabaka.... She had her own courts.... She exercised judicial powers...she could even condemn her subjects to death.....collect taxes.....share war

loot.....for the king to succeed the throne he had to marry his sister (Lubuga).....she was banned from having children in order to control matrilineal inheritance....but even then she was very powerful....the Kabaka toured Buganda kingdom after enthronement with her.....she shares power with the Kabaka..... When the king is dead the Lubuga remains in charge of his place and holds the name Kabaka wa meaning the king of the Dead..... she will bare all authority and gave permission all the rituals to take place (KIF03, 2024).

From the opinion above, voices such as, the Lubuga was very useful in Buganda in ceremonies, during enthronement sit next to the Kabaka, she had her own courts, had judicial powers, collected taxes, Kabaka toured the kingdom with her, when the king is dead the Lubuga takes over the throne, she bare all authority, gave permission, all point to the influence of the Lubuga in Buganda kingdom. Without the Lubuga there would be no succession ritual in Buganda Kingdom and this showed how important and influential the Lubuga was to the state formation of Buganda.

Fourthly, the Wives of the King (Bakembuga); opinions of the key informants showed that the Bakembuga were just as powerful like the Namasole and Nabagereka, as stated by one of the Key informants: -

The Bakembuga were highly respected by all people in the kingdom.....they were part of the state They even collected taxes through chiefs....Bakembuga was responsible for kingship since kings took on the clan of the mothers.....they were important during succession some engaged in military campaigns.....they even guarded war gods (KIE03,2024)

From the above opinion, voices such as highly respected, they were part of the state, they collected taxes, were responsible for kingship, they were important during succession, some engaged in military campaigns and guarded war gods were all indicative of the influence of the Bakembuga in Buganda kingdom. They were as influential as the namasole, Lubuga and the Nabagereka and contributed to state formation of Buganda Kingdom.

Fifth, was the Princes (Omumbejja), the participants noted that another influential category of royal women were the Abambejja as stated by one key informant: -

Princes enjoyed some political power.....they were addressed by their male names Ssebo meaning sir.....all Baganda including chiefs has to show great respect for the Omumbejja when they spoke to them.....the Baganda bowed low when they met Omumbejja.....they were not allowed to marry.....but they had male lovers.....by the way they were not allowed to have children.....never to get pregnant (KIF03, 2024)

From the opinion above, voices such as, princes enjoyed political power, was addressed as Ssebo, the Baganda people showed great respect, bowed down to Omumbejja, all pointed to the influence of the Omumbejja and her role in the state formation of Buganda kingdom. From the above, it is clear that royal women in Buganda Kingdom were directly involved in the Buganda political process either as wives or as gifts and they played a key role in balancing internal and external politics contrary to the view that women were subordinate to the men a narrative dominant in Eurocentric episteme.

Other women whose names emerged during the interview as influential royal women included Nakku, Nannono and Nassolo, the key informants noted that these personalities performed heroic actions that was greatly admired by Buganda Kingdom as stated: -

Nakku was once a king of Buganda.....she was appointed to become the Kabaka when Kabaka Chwa disappeared there was no prince to inherit the throne.....Nakku herself did not have children who would occupy the Kabakaship so she took over.....she guarded the throne for prince Kimera.....prince Kimera was still in Bunyoro Kitara kingdom..... Nakku therefore became the care taker for Kabakaship for Kimera.....she became so powerful and is remembered to-date for care taking the Kabakaship (KIB03, 2024)

From the opinion above, voices such as, Nakku was once a king in Buganda, she guarded the throne for prince Kimera, Nakku became the care taker for Kabakaship

for Kimera, and she became so powerful are all indicative of the influence and role played by Nakku in state formation of Buganda Kingdom.

Another woman who was also influential was Nannono, the key informants noted that Nannono was a wife to the king Nakibinge who gained fame during the Bulimia and Banyoro war as was stated by a key informant: -

Nannono was wife to Kabaka Nakibinge.....during the way she was very active.....she sharpened reeds for her husband when he ran out of spears during fighting with the Banyoro.....she later became the care taker Kabaka when Kabaka Nakibinge was killed.....she participated actively in the war.....the Baganda still praise her to-date for her brevity (KIC03,2024)

From the above opinions, voices such as Nannono was wife of king Nakibinge, she was very active, she sharpened reeds for the Kabaka when he ran out of spears, she became the care taker Kabaka, she participated actively in the war and the Baganda still praise her for her brevity, all these voices were indicative of the influence of Nannono in Buganda kingdom. To-date she is remembered for her role as care taker Kabaka in Buganda kingdom.

Finally, the other Influential Woman in Buganda was the Nassolo, the key informant informed me that Nasolo was also a very important woman in the history of Buganda because of her role in a war in Ankole as stated by another key informant: -

Nassolo was a daughter to the king Kamanya's reign she was the eldest daughter.... she went to ankole dressed like a man she led her father's army.... they won the war and upon her return she was given a title Nyabo..... later she was addressed as Ssebo (KID03,2024)

From the opinion above, voices such as Nassolo was a daughter to the king, she was the eldest daughter, she went to Ankole dressed like a man she led her father's army, they won the war, she was named Ssebo, all these voices are indicative of the influence of Nassolo in state formation of Buganda Kingdom. This means that the

Nassolo played a big role in the war by disguising herself as a man showed her brevity and courage to fight for Buganda kingdom. We cannot underestimate such contribution to the state formation of Buganda.

It is clear that some Baganda women were directly involved in the Buganda political process either as wives in alliance or as gifts and played a key role in balancing internal and external politics. This account of some of the outstanding women in Buganda who played a significant role in shaping the Ganda nation clearly shows that women were well paced in the Ganda society which is contrary to the narrative that women in Ganda societies were inferior and subordinate to the males. Other equally distinguished women, Namulondo, Nanzigu among others.

Table 6.2 summarizing the interview findings on influential royal women and their matriarchal roles in Buganda Kingdom (1856–2022).

Domain	Key Interview Findings	Example/Quote from Interview	Supporting Literature
Political	Namasole and Lubuga advised the Kabaka, mediated disputes, influenced succession, and managed estates.	“The Namasole was the final authority in succession matters; her approval was paramount.” (Interview, 2025)	Musisi (1991, 2001); Ray (1991); Hanson (2003); Kiwanuka (1971)
Cultural	Royal women preserved traditions, organized rituals and festivals, transmitted cultural knowledge, and mentored younger generations.	“The Namasole's role was to preserve our customs; she was the embodiment of our traditions.” (Interview, 2025)	Musisi (1991); Ray (1991); Tamale (1999); Hanson (2003)
Economic	Managed vast estates, collected taxes, controlled trade and agricultural production, and leveraged economic power for influence.	“The Namasole's wealth was immense; she controlled the kingdom's resources.” (Interview, 2025)	Musisi (2001); Kiwanuka (1971)
Adaptation to Historical	Maintained influence through informal	“Even without formal titles, royal women still	Musisi (2001); Tamale (2004)

Changes	networks and cultural institutions during colonial and postcolonial periods despite diminished formal power.	held sway in our communities.” (Interview, 2025)	
Modern Advocacy	Nnabagereka Sylvia Nagginda promotes education, health, and cultural initiatives through the Nnabagereka Development Foundation.	“The Nnabagereka's programs have transformed our communities; she is a beacon of hope.” (Interview, 2025)	Musisi (2001); Tamale (2004); Nnabagereka of Buganda (2025)

6.3 Discussions

Interviews with elders and cultural leaders highlighted that royal women, particularly the Namasole (queen mother) and Lubuga (queen sister), held significant political influence. The Namasole advised the Kabaka (king), mediated disputes, and played a crucial role in succession (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991). One elder remarked, “The Namasole was the final authority in succession matters; her approval was paramount” (Interview, 2025). Similarly, the Lubuga had control over land and estates, and her palace was nearly as large as that of the Kabaka, signifying her substantial power (Musisi, 1991; Hanson, 2003).

These findings align with the literature, which notes that the Namasole and Lubuga had political and ritual powers that closely resembled those of the king (Musisi, 2001). The Namasole possessed her own courts and estates and had the power to collect taxes, reinforcing her political influence (Kiwanuka, 1971).

Royal women were also custodians of culture and social norms. Interviews revealed that they organized cultural ceremonies, taught moral values, and ensured the transmission of traditions to younger generations (Interview, 2025). A cultural leader

stated, “The Namasole's role was to preserve our customs; she was the embodiment of our traditions.” The Nnabagereka (queen consort) has continued this tradition in modern times through initiatives such as youth camps that teach Buganda culture (Nnabagereka of Buganda, 2025).

Scholarly sources corroborate these findings, emphasizing that royal women were central to the preservation and transmission of cultural practices (Musisi, 1991; Ray, 1991; Tamale, 1999). The Namasole and Lubuga were responsible for organizing rituals and festivals, ensuring continuity of social norms (Hanson, 2003).

Interviews indicated that royal women had control over significant economic resources. The Namasole and Lubuga managed vast estates, collected taxes, and had authority over trade and agricultural production (Interview, 2025). One respondent noted, “The Namasole's wealth was immense; she controlled the kingdom's resources.”

The literature supports these observations, highlighting that royal women had substantial economic authority. The Namasole and Lubuga controlled land throughout the kingdom, had estates in each district, and maintained their own chiefs and courts (Musisi, 2001; Kiwanuka, 1971). This economic power reinforced their political and social influence.

During colonial and postcolonial periods, the roles of royal women evolved. Interviews revealed that while formal political power diminished, influence persisted through informal networks and cultural institutions (Interview, 2025). An elder noted, “Even without formal titles, royal women still held sway in our communities.”

Scholarly analyses suggest that colonialism and modernity altered formal power structures, but royal women adapted by maintaining cultural leadership and advisory roles (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004).

In contemporary Buganda, royal women like Nnabagereka Sylvia Nagginda continue to play influential roles. Through the Nnabagereka Development Foundation, she has spearheaded initiatives in education, health, and cultural preservation (Nnabagereka of Buganda, 2025). A community leader stated, “The Nnabagereka's programs have transformed our communities; she is a beacon of hope” (Interview, 2025).

The literature underscores these contributions, noting that the Nnabagereka has been instrumental in promoting education, health, and cultural initiatives, exemplifying the ongoing impact of royal women in contemporary Buganda (Musisi, 2001; Tamale, 2004).

6.4 Conclusion

The interviews provide insights into the multifaceted roles of royal women in Buganda from 1856 to 2022. Their influence spans political, cultural, economic, and social domains, adapting to changing historical contexts while maintaining a central position in the kingdom's structure. These findings align with scholarly literature, highlighting the enduring legacy of royal women in shaping Buganda's identity and development (Musisi, 1991, 2001; Tamale, 1999, 2004; Ray, 1991; Hanson, 2003).

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the Discussions, conclusion and recommendations of the study in relation to study objectives and research questions namely; How Buganda kingdom was organized; the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda and its influence in state formation of Buganda kingdom and the influential women in Buganda Kingdom and their role in state formation of Buganda kingdom.

5.1 Discussion of study findings

5.1.1 How was Buganda Kingdom Organized?

Study findings revealed that Buganda Kingdom was organized politically, economically, socially and culturally which is in agreement with scholars from Buganda who noted that Buganda was a centralized polity which was organized politically, economically, socially and culturally (Kiwanuka, 1990; Kiguli, 2000; Hansen, 1991; Lule, 2000).

The study showed that politically the Kabaka was on top of the leadership of Buganda kingdom...

he ruled over every Muganda (Okufuga) judged cases (Okusala Emisango), in fact, he was like the chief justice of Buganda kingdom.... Who would decide the fate of the subjects...he was very powerful and his words most of the times was final...no body questioned his authority... those who attempted were even killed...like what happened when some of the martyrs refused to obey the Kabaka, they were burnt to death (KIA01, 2024)?

This study finding is similar to a study by Kiguli (2000) who noted that politically Buganda kingdom was centralized with an organized administrative system with the Kabaka at the helm of leadership wielding political and cultural powers as the cultural leader and head of state. There was an administrative structure with the prime minister (Katikiro) and a council of chief (Kiwauka, 1990), Buganda was also divided into administrative units such as Amasaza (counties), Amagombolola (Sub-counties), Emiruka (Parishes) which were administered by the Abamasaza, Abamagombola, Abemiruka and Abatongole at respective levels (Kiguli,2000; Kiwanuka,1990)

In regard to the role of women in the political formation of Buganda, the opinion of the key informants revealed that Some women were really at the centre of authority;

Buganda kingdom.... wielding too much power and determined who would become the Kabaka.....for instance the queen mother was a powerful political leader in Buganda kingdom.... he decided who became the Kabaka Routinely advised the Kabaka.....infact she literally ruled together with the Kabaka..... by the way she was also referred to as the Kabaka.....she was more powerful than all the other chiefs (bataka) and even more powerful than the Katikiro of Buganda.....her role in the political space in the kingdom cannot be underestimated.....the Kabaka took after the queen mothers totem.....in addition there are many other important royal women who helped the Kabaka rule like the princesses and others responsible for rituals these women had their own separate homesteads in different hills (KIC01, 2024)

This view is in agreement with the scholarship of Kiguli (2000) who underscored the influence of the queen mother in Buganda kingdom and state formation, Kiguli noted that the queen mother wielded political power and was also called the Kabaka, she had her own court and had powers over life and death on her subjects, she was also more powerful than the Bataka(chiefs) and had unlimited access to the Kabaka (Kiguli, 2000; Kiwanuka, 1990). This was supported by Roscoe, (2011) who argued that the Queen mother literally ruled with the king because she was very critical in decision making in the kingdom, a similar view was articulated by Kiwanuka (1990) who underscored the centrality of the Queen mother in the political formation of Buganda kingdom noting that the Queen mother was the former wife to the Kabaka before the Kabaka died and mother to the current Kabaka so she was very influential in state formation in Buganda kingdom.

On the economic organization of Buganda kingdom, the opinion of the Key informants revealed that the kingdom of Buganda is really blessed

.... In terms of location....it is surrounded by Lake Victoria...the land is fertile.... We grow bananas.... the banana is our staple food.... the Baganda cultivated a lot of bananas in fact bananas was central to the economy of the kingdom because it was traded within the region.... bananas greatly stimulated Buganda's growth and expansion since it provided food security for the growing population (KID01,2024).

This opinion is in agreement with the scholarship of Hansen (1997) who opined that Buganda kingdom was an agricultural kingdom depending largely on banana plantation, Hansen noted that Buganda was an agrarian community with women at the fore front of agriculture in that the women planted and weeded the bananas which later became a commodity for trade in the region. This is supported by Kiwanuka

(1971) who noted that the cultivation of bananas greatly contributed to the emergence of a cohesive state in Buganda by the sixteenth century, To Kiwanuka, Bananas stimulated expansion of Buganda kingdom since it provided a source of food for the growing population and revolutionized the economy of Buganda by the seventeenth century (Kiwanuka,1971).

The Baganda were predominantly an agricultural kingdom.... agriculture was the domain for women and plantain was the staple food.... the banana was very important in the kingdom and it shaped the identity of the Baganda people.... women were in-charge of the banana plantations.... bananas became an important aspect in marriage and other ceremonies in Buganda kingdom (KIF01,2024).

This finding is similar to a study by Casely-Hayford (1997) who further noted that Banana quickly became commodity which the Baganda traded in regional economics. He also noted that given that the Baganda women played an important role in production in totally agrarian community showed that the Baganda women domination may have persisted for a long time (Casely-Hayford, 1997; Hansen, 1997) Socially the key informants noted that Buganda was organized on clan basis:

each of the clan had a head....and special area of origin (Obutaka) the Kabaka was the head of the clan (Ssabataka) and belonged to the clan of the mother....every Muganda belonged to a particular clan....Lion (Mpologoma), Monkey (Enkima), Buffalo (Mbogo).....marriage in Buganda was polygamous.....members of the same clan were not allowed to inter marry.....The Baganda were divided into classes the royal class for men (abalangira) ... for women (Abambejja), nobles (abakungu), Peasants (Abakopi) and slaves (Abadu) (KIB01,2024)

Similarly, Clanship is an important institution that is critical in understanding the state of Buganda:

Buganda was organized around clans and they played a very important social and political role in Buganda Kingdom..... Each clan was known as Kika which was identified by a particular totem called Muziro..... The totemic system ensured unity of the clan for defense, communal assistance (Bulungibyansi) and regulation of social life especially concerning marriage..... The head of a clan was called Mutaka, and had his headquarters (Butaka) at a particular place where the ancestor of the clan had lived and where the clan was centered. The Kabaka was the chief of the clan heads and was referred to as Ssabataka (KIA01, 2024)

This opinion is similar to the scholarship of Kiwanuka (1990) who noted that Buganda kingdom was organized in clans and that the identity of a Muganda was based on his clan, the Kabaka was from the clan of the mother, each clan had a clan head called (Omutaka) and the Kabaka was the head of all the clans (Ssabataka) (Kiwanuka,1990) similarly Roscoe (2011) noted that the Baganda used a classificatory system of kingship which is common to all bantu people of central and southern Africa, He noted that in this system all brothers to the father are called fathers and all sisters to the mother are called mothers (Roscoe,2011). Roscoe further noted that the Baganda had a very important aspect of the social or family structure called consanguineal kin group or blood line which is a line of decent traced through the male members of the family. To Roscoe, by combining patrilocal rule of residence and consanguineal descent, the Baganda have built a formidable system of clanship and among the Baganda, the clan has remained the most important kinship entity (Roscoe, 2011)

Culturally the key informant noted that the Kabaka was the spiritual leader of Buganda and was considered semi-divine.... the Baganda believed in small gods (Lubale) whom they consulted on various occasions for instance they visited Ddungu for hunting, Musoke for rain, Mukasa for fishing,

Walumbe for death.... they also believed in witchcraft (Abarogo) who were consulted by those who wanted to harm others..... Buganda kingdom had a royal regalia which included drums, back cloth, spears, which were highly feared and respected.....Virginity was highly respected in Buganda because it was a sign of good upbringing.....the opening of the dogs sight was a sign that an elder in the community has died.....women were not allowed to dig graves.....women couldn't build houses.....women didn't dig toilets.....it was an abomination for a girl to get pregnant from home.....the Baganda had ceremonies such as twinal rights, naming ceremonies, last funeral rights (KID01,2024)

This opinion is similar to the scholarship of Kiwanuka (1990) who noted that the Kabaka was also a spiritual leader in Buganda who engaged in series of rituals or gave permission to conduct many rituals including rituals for hunting, war, rain, fishing within the kingdom (Kiwanuka, 1990) some rituals bared women from digging a grave and pit latrine and virginity was highly celebrated in Buganda kingdom (Roscoe, 2011) Issues of marriage was also highly regarded among the Baganda and it was normal for a man to marry as many wives as he could as long as he was capable of providing for all of them (Roscoe,2011).

Most importantly was the role women played in cultural formation of Buganda kingdom for instance it was clear that the kings wives were stratified with ordinal connotation which included first wife (Kaddulubale), Nabagereka and Nasaza, the

second category consisted of non-titled wives known as abasebeyi and the third were the abasaana usually daughters of unimportant chiefs, peasants or even captives (Roscoe, 2011) while Jjuko (2011) noted that marriage among the commoners was contracted in different forms which included obufumbo obuwumirize where women were acquired as gifts (Jjuko,2011) while Roscoe noted that there was difference between the marriage of a commoner and the royal in that whereas the commoner marriage consisted of bridal party characterized by several rituals like emphasis on virginity and paying bride price, kings never went through marriage ceremonies but gave huge presents to families of their favorite wives (Roscoe,2011) while Nakanyike noted that it was forbidden for a king to marry a disfigured woman for a wife and that a girl would be brought naked to the king for inspection and amukembuga could never get married again to a commoner (Nakanyike,1991)

5.1.2 What was the nature of Matriarchy in Buganda Kingdom?

From the interview with Key informants on the nature of matriarchy in Buganda kingdom it was reported that:

Women in Buganda kingdom were considered as 'Banakazadde' mothers of all universe...in this kind of nature women were seen as care takers of every one in Buganda kingdom...women were naturally meant to produce children so as to multiply the family (Okwaza ekika) in addition women were seen as attractive creatures and therefore they were meant to welcome all visitors (okwaniriza abagenyi).....she would welcome visitors to the homestead both the known visitors and the unknown (KIL02, 2024).

this is in agreement with the research of Jjuko (2011) who noted that in traditional Buganda was a gendered society where women were actively involved because they were the mothers and they were responsible for running the family, welcomed visitors and nurtured children (Jjuko,2011).

The namasole as the queen mother produced the Kabaka this showed how women were significant to Buganda.....posing a question obwaKabaka bunabawo butya singa omukazi tazala? (How could the kingdom have survived if women were not giving birth?).....besides it was only women called Lubuga who conducted particular rituals during coronation of the Kabaka.....more to that the Kabaka also takes on the mother's totem (Omuziro) this makes every clan to have a chance of having Kabaka from their clan.....when the Kabaka died....the Kabakas jaws were removed and hanged....the favorite wife of the king sat under the tree where the jaws were being dried from pumpkin leaves were passed through the dead body of the Kabaka and the most favored or loved wife would chew them.....the term Kabaka came from the term akaba ka ggundi meaning some ones jaws..... by the way some royal women in Buganda shared the title Kabaka with the King this means women were very significant in Buganda women (KII02, 2024)

When the Kabaka died some special women planted certain tree immediately after Kabaka's death....the older the tree, the easier the marking of the years that the current Kabaka has reigned or ruled the kingdom.....all the burial rituals were performed by the most loved or favored wife.....she would announce (Kabaka akisiza omukono) the king has over raised his hand.....implying that the Kabaka had died.....women in -Buganda also led naming of 'Bulange' an area in Mengo....because women are shy... they would talk to men why folding grass to gain confidence the issue of

lineage is also central to Buganda because children even the Kabaka followed the mothers lineage (okulanga ebisubi) (KIJ02,2024)

These views resonate with the scholarship of Jjuko (2011) women in Buganda were very important in state formation. To Jjuko, Buganda strongly believed that matriarchy -and matrilineality existed in traditional Buganda before the emergence of state –mother right prevailed and this according to Jjuko happened at a time when women were -responsible for production in Ganda kingdom (Jjuko, 2011), this is particularly true when women maternal functions of collecting and gathering fruits and being in charge of agriculture placed them in control of groups (Jjuko,2011) therefore the existence of matriarchy and matrilineality in Buganda is clear manifestation of the feminine principle which automatically propels the status of the Ganda

woman in traditional Ganda society (Jjuko,2011; Kiwanuka,1990, Musisi,1991). A similar argument was that Buganda was a gendered society where women were actively involved in state formation of the kingdom by the various roles they played in the kingdom, in that they worked hand in hand with their male counterparts to build what is today known as Buganda kingdom (Nakanyike,1991; Jjuko,2011)

Jjuko (2011) noted that it was the development of production and discovery of iron making that paved way for the development from Matriarchy to Patriarchy in Buganda and this occurred at a time when the men began to apply labor on nature to produce his means of life during the hunting age when pastoralism and war fare were undertaken by man and with the discovery of plough when men began to harness the animal and took over agriculture from the women (Jjuko, 2011, Musisi, 1991; Kiwanuka, 1971).

Other scholars have noted that to understand the nature of matriarchy one should focus on the role played by women in the state formation of Buganda arguing that women in Buganda were central to the formation and organization of Buganda Kingdom right from the royal women who were actively involved in running Buganda kingdom such as the Queen mother, the queen sisters, the Princesses, the kings wives to mention but a few who were actively involved in state formation contributing politically, socially , spiritually and economically (Musisi,1991, Hansen, 1997; Roscoe,2011). These scholars further believed that given the roles of women therefore when addressing the issues of Matriarchy in Buganda we should concentrate on the role and position of women in Buganda and not women rule like other scholars have argued (Musisi, 1991, Kiguli, 2001).

I conclude in this section that were as there was matriarchy and matrilineality in traditional Buganda, understanding the role and position (status) of women in Buganda kingdom will highlight the contribution of women in state formation instead of looking at matriarchy from female rule which will limit understanding of the other very important role the women played during state formation of Buganda kingdom.

5.1.3 Who were the Influential royal women and what their role in Buganda kingdom was?

During the key informant interview many women emerged as influential royal women in Buganda kingdom namely; the Queen mother (Namasole), the king's wife (Nabagereka), the queen sister (Lubuga), the wives of the king (Bakembuga), the princesses (Omumbejja), Nakku, Nannono and Nassolo.

The queen Mother (Namasole), The key informant noted that the queen mother was called Namasole, Namasole was the mother of the current king and wife to the former king:

she was very powerful by the fact that she once ruled the kingdom with her husband the late Kabaka.....she was very important in deciding who becomes the Kabaka.....even during coronation she sat next to her son (Kabaka)....politically she was a very powerful leader who mentored the Kabaka and all the royal women in the kingdom.....she was superior to all the chiefs she had her own homestead on a hill with many servants.....and slaves.....she was also referred to as Kabaka just like the king (KIA03,2024)

Namasole was also king on her own.....she had many servants she had her own courts and she had powers for life and death over her people who were directly under her she could have as many lovers as she wished but was not allowed to have children.....she was not allowed to remarry....Namasole assumed office when the new king ascended the throne.....she lived in her own place (embuga) just like the king.....she was the chief advisor of the king she was addresses as chief of courts (KIC03, 2024)

This is consistent with literature by Schiller,(1990) who noted that the Namasole was the most important woman in Buganda, she was one of the person s who could bear the title Kabaka, who superintended over a concrete office with tangible power and prerogative , she had important rituals and political functions to perform (Schiller,1990), the Namasole was considered superior to all the chiefs ,she held her own court apart from the Kabaka and had the power to life and death especially over people under her jurisdiction (Schiller,1990), Since she is too the king, tradition barred the king from setting eyes on his mother a taboo developed during the reign of Kabaka Kimera and because of this she advised the Kabaka through a messenger (Nakanyike,1999), Her jurisdiction included settling disputes in her palace as head of her household and she was addressed as head of courts (mukuluwe mbuga). She held

substantial domestic power in relation to the people in her place and shared in the loot and war captives with her son the king (Nakanyike, 1999). Since she was king, she could not marry lesser men than herself, she would be in position to preserve the throne and ensure that there were special favors for her clan if her son came to power (Schiller, 1990).

The queen mother became a regent at the death of the king who is her husband or at the coronation of her son (Roscoe, 2011). The Namasole participated in the defense of the kingship as a mother of the king and in this way contributed to the power of kingship and as such she ensured the security of her son, the king (Nakanyike, 1999) to the extent that even the katikiro was never wholly trusted, she moved beyond motherhood and became a cultural symbol and possessed knowledge vital for the kings survival (Schiller, 1990), since the king inherited his mother's clan, she drew her clan closer to the royal family, hence making them part of the state and ensured that her clan were given favors by the king on account of being the mother of the nation, in addition the clan of the kings mother was a special custodian of all the tradition of that particular king (Schiller,1990)

The Nabagereka was the favorite wife of the king who ruled together with him as stated by a participant;-

Nabagereka was the wife of the reigning king.....she is always with the king and also wielded political ,economic and social cultural powers.....she was more powerful than most chiefs.....and provided emotional support to the Kabaka.....she was the mother of the kingdom.....she provided mentorship to all the women in the kingdom.....had many servants and slaves.....she was always responsible for the welfare of the king.....she guided young girls in the

kingdom on how to become responsible.....she was at the service of the Kabaka.....when the king died she became Namasole because she is the mother of the new king.....during death she was involved in many rituals performed to the deceased Kabaka.....Nabageraka was the leaders of all the other wives of the Kabaka and guided them how to behave and serve the Kabaka (KID03,2024)

This is consistent with literature by Musisi,(1991) who noted that the Kabaka had many wives ,his favorite wife was called the Nabagereka, who literally ruled with the Kabaka, she was more powerful than all the chiefs and provided emotional support to the Kabaka in addition to being responsible for the Kabakas welfare (Musisi,1991), She served the Kabaka and was the head of the other wives and when the Kabaka died she automatically became the Queen mother and responsible for many rituals for coronation of her son after the demise of her husband the Kabaka (Roscoe,2011). The Nabagereka was politically more powerful than all the chiefs and had unlimited access to the Kabaka as a wife and advisor, she was highly respected among fellow wives and also among the entire kingdom as the mother of the nation (Musisi, 1991)

The Queen Sister (Lubuga) is yet another influential woman in Buganda kingdom who contributed immensely to state formation and expansion of Buganda Kingdom

The Lubuga was very useful in Buganda especially in ceremonies of succession of the Kabaka.....during enthronement,....she would sit next to the Kabaka.... She had her own courts..... She exercised judicial powers...she could even condemn her subjects to death.....collect taxes.....share war loot.....for the king to succeed the throne he had to marry his sister (Lubuga).....she was banned from having children in order to control matrilineal inheritance....but even then she was very powerful....the Kabaka

toured Buganda kingdom after enthronement with her.....she shares power with the Kabaka..... When the king is dead the Lubuga remains in charge of his place and holds the name Kabaka wa meaning the king of the Dead.....she will bare all authority and gave permission all the rituals to take place (KIF03, 2024)

This opinion is consistent on literature about the Lubuga, the Lubuga went through the ceremonies of succession with the Kabaka in that she sat with him on enthronement day and shared office with him (Jjuko,2011) she had her own court and land spread throughout the kingdom and also exercised judicial powers and could even condemn her subjects to death, collected taxes and shared part of war loot with the Kabaka (Jjuko,2011), Jjuko postulates that in order to enter inheritance and in order to succeed the throne, the king had to marry his sister, under matrilineal succession the children of the queen would succeed the throne hence the ban on princesses having children (Jjuko,2011). At the succession ritual of inheritance of the kingdom, she dresses in a bark cloth with knot on the right shoulder like the Kabaka with whom she succeeds and the Kabaka toured Buganda with her (Kiguli, 2001). For Kiguli, this role is linked to dual sharing of power, the twinning, embedded in the Kiganda coronation norms to the principle of twinning (Kiguli, 2001) in that without the Lubuga the king cannot be and in case the king died the Lubuga remained in charge of the throne and holds the title *Kabaka wa* meaning king of the dead (Kiguli, 2001)

The Bakembuga (Wives of the King). The key informants also noted that the wives to the Kabaka were influential in state formation of Buganda kingdom.

The Bakembuga were highly respected by all people in the kingdom.....they were part of the state They even collected taxes through

chiefs....Bakembuga was responsible for kingship since kings took on the clan of the mothers.....they were important during succession some engaged in military campaigns.....they even guarded war gods (KIE03,2024)

This opinion is in agreement with literature which noted that the Bakembuga were as powerful politically as the queen mother and the queen in that they commanded respect from ordinary men and women (Nakanyike, 1999), the royal household and the state were linked by an arrangement through which each wife received taxes in the form of goods from a particular chief or sub-chief, a practice said to date back to the 15th century. Therefore the Bakembuga had a right to collect taxes from specified chiefs or even seize their properties, majority of the chiefs even the katikiro were under the jurisdiction of the kembuga especially those who lived in the Bisakate became high profile political figures through which clans rallied to bid for mastery of the throne (Nakanyike, 1999) and because the king adopts the clan of the mother, the bakembuga became the axes along which the kingship rotated to different clans (Jjuko, 2011) because any of these Kembugas became a potential king maker ,this was especially so since the princesses were not allowed to have children (Nakanyike,1999). As central figures in the succession intrigues and as contenders of power on behalf of their sons and clans, these women were often at the center of scrutiny and were in this regard treated as men to the extent that they could engage in roles designated for men such as military campaigns, guarded the war gods, sharpened spears or reeds, performed religious rituals as well as attended to the wounded during war to the extent that during the war it was safer for the Bakembuga to perform these roles than ordinary peasant men (Nakanyike,1999)

The Princesses (Omumbejja). The key informants underscored the influence of the Omumbejja in the state formation of Buganda kingdom noting that they contributed hugely Buganda kingdom.

The Princes enjoyed some political power.....they were addressed by their male names Ssebo meaning sir.....all Baganda including chiefs has to show great respect for the Omumbejja when they spoke to them.....the Baganda bowed low when they met Omumbejja.....they were not allowed to marry.....but they had male lovers.....by the way they were not allowed to have children.....never to get pregnant (KIF03, 2024)

This opinion is in agreement with literature which showed that the princes enjoyed a degree of political power and authority and were addressed by the male title Ssebo and as such all the Baganda including chiefs showed great respect towards princesses in that they bowed down when greeting her or talking to her even the chiefs bowed low when talking to her on the road (Nakanyike, 1999; Kiguli, 2001; Kiwanuka, 1971), Kiwanuka however noted that despite the powers the princesses had they were not allowed to have children or marry and a pregnant princesses was required to abort or be punished by death and the man responsible was killed, some princesses would defy the rule and have children whom they passed to another but once discovered would be killed (Nakanyike,1999). I argue that this was done to mitigate succession difficulties between the children of the Kabaka and the would be children of the princesses and besides the princesses wielded the same political power like the Kabaka.

The Nakku; the Nakku was also one of the distinguished women who emerged as unique personality in Buganda kingdom. A key informant noted that the Nakku was once a king of Buganda.....she was appointed to become the

Kabaka when Kabaka chwa disappeared there was no prince to inherit the throne.....Nakku herself did not have children who would occupy the Kabakaship so she took over.....she guarded the throne for prince Kimera.....prince Kimera was still in Bunyoro kitara kingdom..... Nakku therefore became the care taker for Kabakaship for Kimera.....she became so powerful and is remembered to-date for care taking the Kabakaship (KIB03, 2024)

This opinion is consistent with literature that the Nakku was the first daughter of Walusimbi of the civet cat clan was the first woman leader in the history of Buganda in the 14th century, Nakku was appointed to the throne when Kabaka Chwa and there was no prince to inherit the throne since Nakku herself did not have a child (Jjuko, 2011), Nakku took over as a defacto ruler who guarded the throne for the prince Kimera until he arrived from Bunyoro as such Nakku became the care taker of the Kabakaship, and she is credited for ensuring Kimera taking over the throne (Kiguli,2001), Nakku was so powerful that every king that followed Kimera took a ceremonial traditional wife from her clan and called her Nakku (Kiguli,2001).

The Nannono, was also an important and influential woman in Buganda kingdom as noted by the Key informant noted; -

Nannono was wife to Kabaka Nakibinge.....during the way she was very active.....she sharpened reeds for her husband when he ran out of spears during fighting with the Banyoro.....she later became the care taker Kabaka when Kabaka Nakibinge was killed.....she participated actively in the war.....the Baganda still praise her to-date for her brevity (KIC03, 2024)

This is in agreement with literature that the Nannono was the wife of Kabaka Nakibinge who rose to fame during war in which Kabaka Nakibinge ran out of spears and she was very instrumental in sharpening the reeds for the king (Kiguli, 2001), She was then selected as the care taker of the kingdom when Nakkibinge was killed and she kept the kingdom for three years (Kiguli, 2000). The heroic act of sharpening the reeds and giving the husband during war showed how brave and determined woman was ,it also shows that during that period women participated actively in war, they fought side by side with the men which further re-affirms my argument that women were well placed in the Ganda society.

The Nassolo, The Nassolo is also another important woman who emerged out of brevity and determination as noted by the key informant:

Nassolo was a daughter to the king Kamanya's reign she was the eldest daughter.....she went to ankole dressed like a man she led her father's army.....they won the war and upon her return she was given a title Nyabo.....later she was addressed as Ssebo (KID03, 2024)

This opinion is consistent with literature which showed that the Nassolo was the eldest daughter of king Kamanya who went to war dressed up like a man and she led her father's army to victory and upon return people addressed her Nyabo and her reply was *mumpita nyabo siri Kabaka* (you address me as madam as if I am not Kabaka), they in response addressed her Ssebo (sir) and this is said to be the naissance of the title Ssebo for the princesses in Buganda kingdom (Kiguli, 2001).

The account of some of the outstanding women in traditional Buganda who played a significant role in shaping the Ganda nation clearly shows us that the women were well placed in the Ganda society.

5.2 Conclusion

From the opinions of the key informants and literature in the discussion it can be concluded that Buganda kingdom was a centralized polity which was organized politically ,economically, socially and culturally with the King (Kabaka) at as both political leader and cultural leader at the top of administration of the kingdom and that Buganda engaged in many economic activities such as banana plantations, art and craft such neeting marts, taxes were collected by chiefs and there was hunting, fishing and trade with Neighboring communities and culturally Buganda was divided in clans with each clan heeded by a clan head and the Kabaka was the head of all clans , he also doubled as a spiritual leader for the kingdom of Buganda.

It can also be concluded that Matriarchy in Buganda took on two characteristics, one being women rule during the traditional Ganda society where women were in charge of agriculture and when matrilinearity was in existence and then secondly Matriarchy manifesting in terms of role of women in state formation of Buganda. I concluded that Buganda was a gendered society where both men and women contributed equally towards the state formation and expansion of Buganda kingdom

Thirdly I can conclude that there were many influential women in Buganda kingdom some were royal such as Namasole, Bakembuga, Bambejjja and Lubuga while others braved their achievements by performing heroic activities such as the Nakku, Nannono and Nasolo, but generally I concluded that state formation of Buganda kingdom was a result of a deliberate effort of the influential royal women as well as distinguished women who braved their way and contributed to the Kingdom.

5.3 Suggestion for further studies

Further studies should look at the role played by distinguished men in Buganda kingdom who braved their way to success and contributed to state formation in Buganda. I suspect there were common peasant men in Buganda who could have risen to fame because of their unique contribution to the state formation of Buganda kingdom.

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Appendix C Interview guide

Appendix C Interview guide

Dear Participant, My name is Brendah Nakabiito, pursuing masters of Arts in History of Gulu University. I am conducting research on matriarchy and kingship in Buganda. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of matriarchy on the institution of kingship in Buganda. You are kindly requested to give your response for each question to the best of your knowledge. Your response will be treated with strict confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Gender: Male Female.....

Position.....

Guiding Questions

1. How was Buganda organized in the political, social, and economic aspects?
2. What was nature of Matriarchy (women centeredness) in Buganda Kingdom?
3. How do motherly roles in the family shape women roles in the Kingship structure of Buganda
4. What are some of the instances that prove that there was women influence in Buganda Kingdom?
5. How was the King's following of the mother's clan lineage (Matrilineality) portray women centeredness?
6. Who was the queen mother?
7. How do Baganda perceive women influence in Kingship?
8. Who were some of the influential royal women in Buganda?
9. What were the roles played by the royal women in Buganda?

Appendix D: Informed consent document for Interview

Title of the study: Matriarchy and kinship in Buganda.

Investigator(s): Ms Brendah Nakabiito

Supervisors: Dr. Stella Laloyo

: Mr. Alex Ssebana

Institution(s): Gulu University

Introduction

The investigator in this study is Ms. Brendah Nakabiito student pursuing master of history of Gulu University. I am conducting a study *“Assesing the influence of Matriachy on kigship in Buganda.* This study aims at examining the existence ,nature and practices of matriachy in Buganda, by examining the role of varrious royal women in Buganda and the political,social,economic and cultural organization of buganda women. The purpose of the informed Consent is to seek your permission to participate in this maiden study. The study will gather evidence that will illuminate on the existence of matriachy in Buganda and how this explained the role of women in Buganda kingdom. Such information may be used for informing legislation and advocacy purposes

A brief description of the sponsors of the research project.

This study will be purely privately sponsored in which the student will fund the remaining the entire study 100%.

Purpose:

The study seeks to examine the influence of matriachy on kingship in Buganda. The findings of this study will help to illuminate the existence of matriachy and matrilinearity in Buganda. Findings will also reveal the differences between matriachy and matriliarity and the organization oft he kingdom of buganda.

Procedures:

Your participation in this study will involve responding to interview questions, either individually in the form of individaul interviews or in groups in focused group discussions. You will be asked questions what you know about matriachy and kingship in Buganda and the organization oft he kingdom of Buganda. The interview will last for approximately ninety (45) minutes. We know that the 45 minutes may be long, so we can have a break during the interview and FGDS. You may be asked to

participate in an art based activity such as drawing a picture. You will be provided a drink for refreshment and a time compensation of 10,000/=.

Who will participate in the study?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because you are one of the key members of Buganda kingdom: official/ elder/ landlord/minister/prime minister and so on and we believe you have knowledge that would make a valuable contribution to the study. The interview will last for approximately (45) Minutes and *10 participants*.

Risks/discomforts:

There is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort that will arise from your participation in this study. The only risk or discomfort will be the inconvenience in terms of time spent during the interview. The research team is committed to ensure the safety of researchers, translators and all participants in our study. If you are participating in an in-person interview, we will conduct the interview in a well-ventilated place, we will ensure social distancing, and we will provide appropriate personal protective equipment (face masks or visors).

Benefits:

I hope that your views, and those of others, will contribute to recommendations that will influence policy and practice to realise quality inclusive education for all learners irrespective of diversity. **I will give you feedback on findings and progress of the study, and any new information that affects the study participants (including incidental findings) will be made available to you.**

Confidentiality:

Your identity will not be revealed to any one, as we shall only use codes to identify participants. Information obtained will only be accessible by the research team. Soft copies of the data will be protected by password and hard copy files will be kept under lock and key. Confidential information will only be accessed by the principal investigator (Ms.Brendah Nakabiito). Your name or name of the place of residence will not appear anywhere that we report the results of our research. There will also be nothing said that would identify you or any members of your family or school.

Alternatives:

You do not have to participate in this study if you are not interested. You will not lose any benefit in case of no participation. If you are interested in participating then you

will be asked to sign this consent form. A copy of the signed form will be given to you for your records.

Cost:

There will not be any additional cost incurred as a result of participating in this study.

Questions:

If you have any questions related to the study as a research participant, you can contact the principal investigator, Mr. Brendah Nakabiito on telephone number +256781360312 or via email on Nakabiitobrendah@gmail.com

Statement of voluntariness:

Participation in the research study is voluntary and you may join on your own free will. You have a right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you have any issues pertaining to your rights and participation in the study, please contact the Chairperson, Gulu University Research Ethics Committee, Dr. Gerald Obai Tel: No., 0772305621; email: lekobai@yahoo.com/lekobai@gmail.com; or the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, on plot 6 Kimera road, Ntinda, Kampala on Tel 0414705500.

Statement of consent

..... has described to me what is going to be done, the risks, the benefits involved and my rights as a participant in this study. I understand that my decision to participate in this study will not affect me in any way. In the use of this information, my identity will be concealed. I am aware that I may withdraw at anytime. I understand that by signing this form, I do not waive any of my legal rights but merely indicate that I have been informed about the research study in which I am voluntarily agreeing to participate. A copy of this form will be provided to me.

Name.....Signature of participant.....Date

Investigator's/ research assistant's name
Date

Signature

.....

.....

Name of Witness
Date

Signature/thumbprint

.....

.....

[illegible]

Appendix F: The flag of Buganda



Appendix G: The current Queen of Buganda: Sylvia Naginda



Source: (Network of African Women Environmentalists 2024)

