

## ABSTRACT

### **Traditional Institutions and State Power: Culturalist Contestations in Buganda and Ankole By Atwijuka Anitah**

Most scholarship on Uganda's post-colonial politics has revealed the persistent legacy of a colonial logic in power. Its focus has been the central state, with little articulation of politics from below. Yet, Uganda's recent post-colonial history has featured agitations for different forms of traditional institutions through which the society advances a critique of the state. Whereas some are demands for kingdoms, others are demands for what the proponents call 'cultural institutions' and 'cultural foundations' which this thesis regards as *skeletal kingdoms*. Both have produced nationalistic sentiments- some transitioning into violence and others stopping at the threshold of it. What is their agency and what is its nature? To understand the agency of traditional institutions, it is imperative to reflect on their various demands. While some publics have viewed the demands for kingdoms as reactionary and so regressive, others have considered it progressive. The demand for skeletal kingdoms has often been privileged as able to overcome colonial logics of indirect rule. Investigating the manifestations of both forms of nationalism in Buganda and Ankole, this thesis inquiries into the nature of the agency of these perceivably different forms of nationalism. It argues that all these culturalist agitations are mired in a cycle of conscription in reproducing the logic of the modern colonial state.