

Politics of Non-Restoration of Ankole Kingdom in Uganda, 1962-2018

ABSTRACT

This study questions why the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government restored kingdoms in 1993 in Uganda and continue to recognise other traditional institutions, but has failed to restore Ankole Kingdom to date. Guided by four objectives: to examine the factors that forced the British colonialists to incorporate kingdoms during their rule; to explain the forces behind the abolition of kingdoms in Uganda; to examine the factors that led to restoration of kingdoms in Uganda except Ankole since 1993, and to analyze the relationship between Ankole kingship, politics and democracy, the study argues that the history of Ankole Kingdom is a story of contestations between pro and anti-restoration forces. The study used a qualitative approach, drawing on data from archives and oral sources. Anchoring on the Great Man's Theory, the study explains non-restoration of Ankole kingdom as a consequence of the illegitimate and insubstantial leadership. The study further draws on "Two Republics" to demonstrate the non-restoration of Ankole kingdom as a historical mix of colonialism and traditionalism. This mix led to redefining of politics and economy in Ankole that enlarged divisionism between the Bairu and the Bahima. Findings of this study indicate that the social and economic distinctions created cultural hegemony which makes restoration of Ankole kingdom almost impossible. The study concludes that non-restoration of Ankole Kingdom is largely embedded in the historical relationship between Bairu and Bahima. This study contributes knowledge to the understanding of the correlation between traditional institutions and modern political systems in Uganda and beyond.