

**The land question in socio- political conflict in Bukedi and Bugisu in eastern Uganda: 1900-2007**

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**PhD (History) Thesis**

**University of Dar es salaam, College of Social Sciences, 2017**

This study investigated the land question in socio-political conflicts in Bukedi and Bugisu in eastern Uganda. It specifically examines the origin of the land question in Bukedi and Bugisu and how it evolved over time; assesses the impact of colonial and post-colonial land policies on land relations, and how the latter related to socio-political conflicts in Bukedi and Bugisu. The study employed the evolutionary theory to explore the changing tenure regimes since pre-colonial times and how these led to pressing land issues in this area. It also employs the social conflict theory to link land-related issues to socio-political conflicts in Bukedi and Bugisu. A case study research design using a qualitative approach was employed. This approach mainly depended on three categories of sources to collect primary and secondary data: these were archives, oral interviews and published sources. The findings in this study show that the land question in Bukedi and Bugisu had its origins in the diverse local land tenure regimes of the pre-colonial societies that later made up these districts. It also shows that ill-conceived colonial land policies escalated the land question, which in turn led to socio-political conflicts between communities, families and individuals in Bukedi and Bugisu. The study further reveals that people's perceptions of the land policies put in place during the postcolonial period evoked emotional responses and political actions, which raised questions over issues of land ownership, distribution, use, as well as resource management and, ultimately, identity and citizenship rights. Contentions over such issues led to sociopolitical conflicts in many parts of Bukedi and Bugisu. The study concludes that most patterns of socio-political conflicts in Bukedi and Bugisu are linked to long-standing issues concerning land ownership and access rights from pre-colonial times through the colonial to the post-colonial period.