



Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)

Olufemi Vaughan

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This book analyzes how indigenous political power structures in Nigeria survived both the constricting forces of colonialism and the modernization programs of postcolonial regimes. With twenty detailed case studies on colonial and postcolonial Nigerian history, the complex interactions between chieftaincy structures and the rapidly shifting sociopolitical and economic conditions of the twentieth century become evident. Drawing on the interactions between the state and chieftaincy, this study goes beyond earlier Africanist scholarship that attributes the resilience of these indigenous structures to their enduring normative and utilitarian qualities. Linked to externally-derived forces, and legitimated by neotraditional themes, chieftaincy structures were distorted by the indirect rule system, transformed by competing communal claims, and legitimated a dominant ethno-regional power configuration. Olufemi Vaughan is Professor in the Department of Africana Studies and the Department of History, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

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