



# **Kings and Clans: Ijwi Island and the Lake Kivu Rift, 1780-1840**

*David S. Newbury*

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This book questions the assumption that "clans", as traditionally defined by anthropologists and historians, are static structures that hamper political centralization. By reconstructing the history of kings and clans in the Kivu Rift Valley at a time of critical social change, this book enlarges our understanding of social process and the growth of state power in Africa. In the early 19th century many factors contributed to the creation of new social relations in the Lake Kivu region - ecological change, population movement, the expansion of the Rwandan state from the east, the rise of new political units to the west and the movement of many population groups and their rural forms through the area. This book looks at the role of clans in the establishment of a new kingdom on Ijwi Island in Lake Kivu. Drawing on detailed ethnographic observations of the social and ritual organizations of Ijwi society, oral data and evidence from written sources, this book shows that the clans of Ijwi were not static formations, nor did the establishment of a royal family on the island emerge from military conquest and internal social breakdown.

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