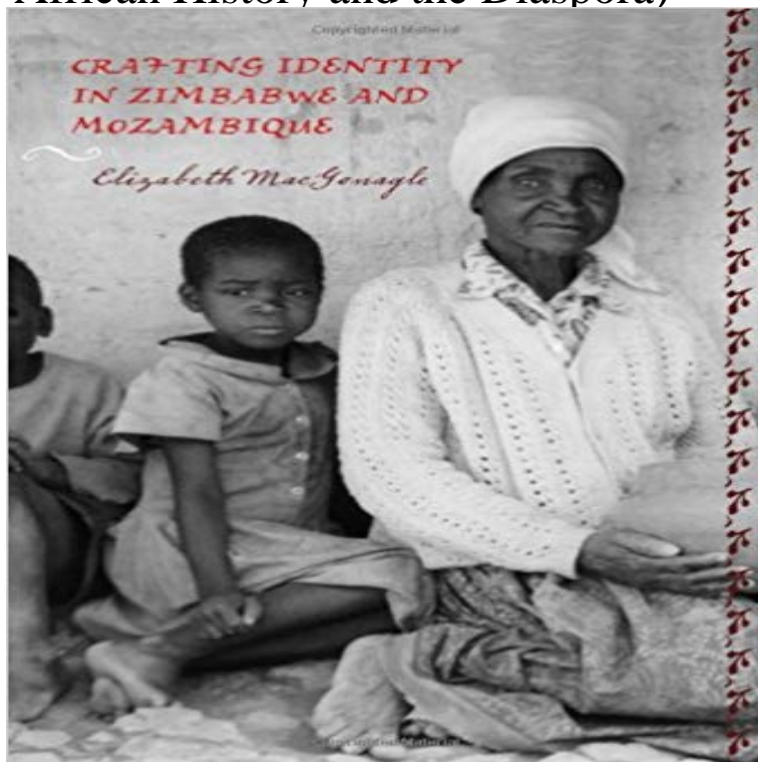


## Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)



In an examination of historical patterns over four centuries, Elizabeth MacGonagle reveals both continuities and changes in the crafting of identity in southeast Africa. This work challenges conventional approaches to the study of ethnicity and tribalism in Africa by showing that contemporary ethnicity is not merely a creation of the colonial and postcolonial eras, but has much deeper roots in the precolonial past. By focusing on collective historical experiences that affected ethnic identity before the influence of European colonialism, MacGonagle contends that the long history behind ethnicity reveals African agency as central to the formation of tribalism. With this first comprehensive history of the Ndaus of eastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique, Elizabeth MacGonagle moves beyond national borders to show how cultural identities are woven from historical memories that predate the arrival of missionaries and colonial officials on the African continent. Drawing on archival records and oral histories from throughout the Ndaus region, her study analyzes the complex relationships between social identity and political power from 1500 to 1900. Ndauness has been created and recreated within communities through marriages and social structures, cultural practices that mark the body, and rituals that help to sustain shared beliefs. A sense of being Ndaus continues to exist into the present, despite different colonial histories, postcolonial trajectories, and official languages in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. MacGonagle's study of ethnic identities among the marginalized Ndaus sheds light on the conflicts and divisions that haunt southeast Africa today. This compelling interpretation of the crafting of identity in one corner of Africa has relevance for readers interested in identity formation and ethnic conflict around the world. Elizabeth MacGonagle is Assistant Professor of

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