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Sommario/riassunto	Focusing on the interplay of religion, society, and politics, August Nimtz examines the role of sufi tariqas (brotherhoods) in Tanzania, where he observed an African Muslim society at first hand. Nimtz opens this book with a historical account of Islam in East Africa, and in subsequent chapters analyzes the role of tariqas in Tanzania and, more specifically, in the coastal city of Bagamoyo. Using a conceptual framework derived from contemporary political theories on social cleavages and individual interests. Nimtz explains why the tariqa is important in the process of political change. The fundamental cleavage in Muslim East Africa, he notes, is that of "whites" versus blacks. Nimtz contends that the tariqas, in serving the interest of blacks (that is, Africans), became in turn vehicles for the mass mobilization of African

Muslims during the anti-colonial struggle. In Bagamoyo he finds a similar process and, in addition, reveals that the tariqas have served African interests in opposition to those of "whites" because of the individual benefits they provide. At the same time, Nimtz concludes, the social structure of East African Muslim society has ensured that Africans would be particularly attracted to those benefits. This work will interest both observers of African political development and specialists in the Islamic studies.
