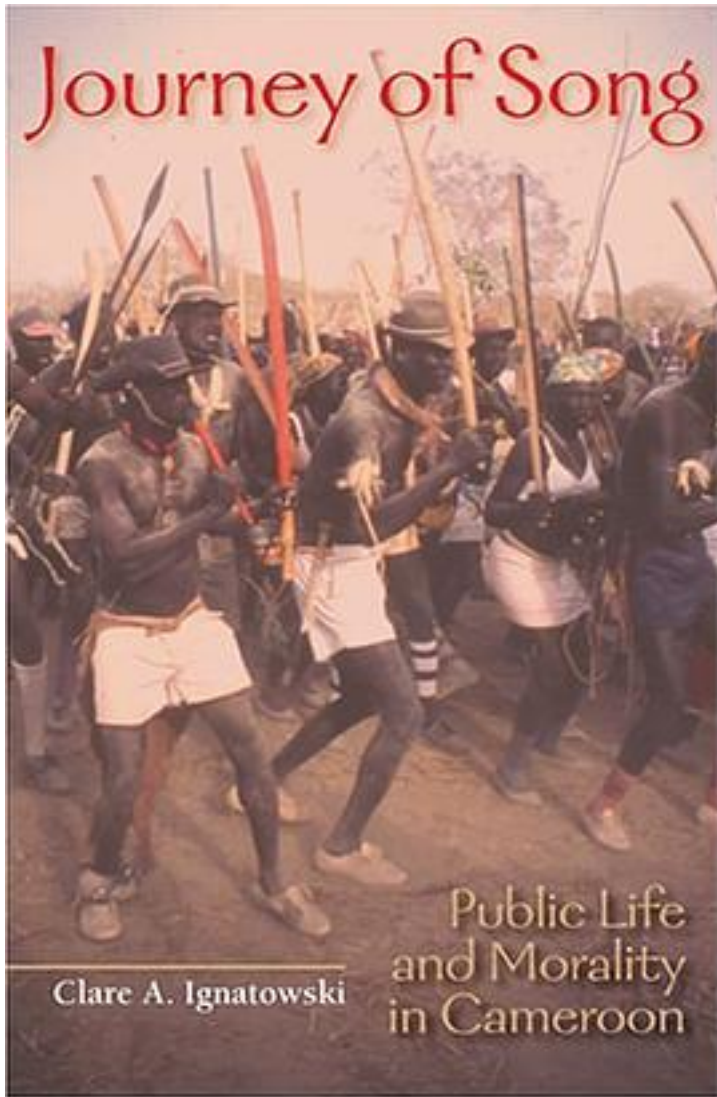


Journey of Song



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During the long dry season, Tupuri men and women in northern Cameroon gather in gurna camps outside their villages to learn the songs that will be performed at widely attended celebrations to honour the year's dead. The gurna provides a space for them to join together in solidarity to care for their cattle, fatten their bodies, and share local stories. But why does the gurna remain meaningful in the modern nation-state of Cameroon? In "Journey of Song", Clare A. Ignatowski explores the vitality of gurna ritual in the context of village life and urban neighbourhoods. She shows how Tupuri songs borrow from political discourse on democracy in Cameroon and make light of human foibles, publicize scandals, promote the prestige of dancers, and provide an arena for powerful social commentary on the challenges of modern life. In the context of broad social change in Africa, Ignatowski explores the creative and communal process by which local livelihoods and identities are validated in dance and song. Clare A. Ignatowski is a Diplomacy Fellow at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, U.S. Agency for International Development.

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目录:

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