

Newspaper *Inquest* into Tiv-Jukun Conflict 2001: An Analysis of Ethnic Inequality and Domination in Contemporary Nigeria

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Abstract

On October 22 to 24, 2001, the Nigerian army killed more than two hundred unarmed Tiv and destroyed homes, shops, public buildings and other property in more than seven towns and villages in Benue State, Nigeria. *Vanguard* newspaper held an Inquest into the crisis to discuss causes, pattern, history, and solutions (*Vanguard* 2001, November 19) to the Tiv/Jukun conflict. This paper attempts a discourse analysis of the conflict, to determine how ethnic inequality and domination in contemporary Nigeria are constructed and presented in text, what discursive structures, strategies, and other properties of text were used in defining ethnic minority relations and identities and polarising group opinions on the conflict. The study found routine discrimination against minority Tiv in these states, justified by positive representation of the Jukun majority and negative opinions about of Tiv. This positive and negative opinion about Us versus Them is legitimized by indigene-settler ideology and justified by systematic association of Tiv ethnic group with problematic and negative social and cultural differences in order to sustain existing negative attitudes about them.

Keywords: newspaper discourse, ethnic conflict, inequality, domination, citizenship

1. Introduction

On October 22 to 24, 2001, the Nigerian army killed more than two hundred unarmed Tiv and destroyed homes, shops, public buildings and other property in more than seven towns and villages in Benue State, in central-eastern Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2002). The military operation began on Monday, October 22, when soldiers from 23rd armored brigade of 3rd armored division of the Nigerian army, based in Yola, capital of Adamawa state, tricked, deceived and rounded up residents in Gbeji village for a 'meeting,' made them sit on the ground, separated men from others, and then opened fire upon the men indiscriminately (Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2002).

The incident which provoked this grisly massacre of Tiv by military was an alleged abduction and killing of nineteen soldiers two weeks earlier. The 19 soldiers with conjectural identity (Kpera and Hagher 2001, November 21), were supposedly on a mission to restore peace in the area affected by the conflict between Tiv and Jukuns, and were abducted by a Tiv armed group in Vaase, on October 10. Their mutilated bodies were found two days later, on October 12, in the grounds of a primary school in the town of Zaki Biam, also in Benue State. Less than two weeks after the discovery of the bodies, a large number of soldiers arrived in what Amnesty International (2002, p.21) called a "studied act of revenge".

According to accounts by both Amnesty International (2002) and Human Rights Watch (2002), the Nigerian army, in a carefully coordinated operation designed to take residents by surprise, rounded up the residents of six towns, shot them, burnt the bodies beyond recognition and razed all the settlements. Soldiers stationed in the area immediately after the killings and destructions by federal government of Nigeria continued abuse of basic rights of the Tiv with the sole purpose of humiliating and intimidating them, including several cases of rape of women and young girls, persistent ill-treatment, harassment, extortion, and looting and, according to victims and witnesses, soldiers would often insult them on the basis of their ethnicity while carrying out these abuses (Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2002).

It was in the heat of this grievous Tiv persecution and tribulations that *Vanguard* newspaper held the 'Tiv/Jukun Inquest' into the crisis to discuss causes and pattern of the strife, history of the crisis, solutions and the way forward (*Vanguard* 2001, November 19). The newspaper felt that too narrow analyses were fixated on the Tiv-Jukun war, especially on supposed Tiv militants who allegedly murdered 19 soldiers on peace mission and the reprisal attacks by soldiers hence there was much more to the Tiv grief.

This paper attempts a discourse analysis of the newspaper 'Inquest', to determine historical, political or social background of the conflict, analyse groups' power-relations, isolate topics or themes expressed as most important information on the conflict, and establish what discursive structures and strategies were deployed in the overall definition of the situation, description of ethnic relations and polarisation of group opinions on the conflict. The broader aim of this paper is to analyse how social power abuse, dominance, and social and political inequality were reproduced in textual data in contemporary Nigeria.

2. Discourse Analysis

This study commences with the notion that critical discourse analysis, CDA, primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political (Van Dijk, 1993). CDA then is concerned, according to Van Dijk (1988), with studying and analysing words used in discourses to reveal the source of power abuse, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts. Accordingly, Fairclough defines critical discourse analysis as an approach which seeks to investigate systematically

[o]ften opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts and (b) broader social and cultural structures, relations and processes [...] how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power [...] how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (Fairclough 1993, p. 135; 1995a, p.132)

CDA can be distinguished as being fundamentally interested in analysing structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA investigates critically, social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse) (Wodak and Meyer, 2008). Some discourse theorists enlist the concept of ideology to theorise the subjugation of one social group to other social groups. Broadly, ideologies represent aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation. Given the general function of ideologies as “the coordination of the social practices of group members for the effective realization of the goals of a social group, and the protection of its interests”, van Dijk says, “it is of course true that many ideologies develop precisely in order to sustain, legitimate or manage group conflicts, as well as relationships of power and dominance” (1998b, p.24).

This study consists of opinions. Van Dijk (1998b) explains that opinions as evaluative beliefs, that is, as beliefs that feature an evaluative concept are necessarily embedded in ideologies. This paper therefore makes use of Van Dijk theory of “discursive expression and reproduction, a theory of the ways ideologies are expressed in, and acquired and reproduced by, the structures of socially situated text and talk” (1998b, p.29). In critical discourse analysis, it is claimed that such discursive practices contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups hence

Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258)

In *Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory*, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) typify such creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups as *discursive struggle* where “different discourses... are engaged in a constant struggle with one other to achieve hegemony, that is, to fix the meanings of language in their own way” (pp.6-7). This research therefore focuses on critical discourse analysis accordingly both as the discursive practices which construct representations of the world, social subjects and social relations, including power relations, as well as the role these discursive practices play in furthering the interests of particular social groups.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory has its starting point in the poststructuralist idea that discourse constructs meaning of the social world. Though it does not entirely agree with Marxism, it developed from Marxist theory of historical materialism by Karl Marx, which distinguishes between a base and a superstructure in its description of society. The base consists in material conditions such as the economy and ownership of the means of production. The state, the judicial system, the church, mass media and schools, and the entire production of meaning that goes on in society belongs to the superstructure. As Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) clarify, the economy is at the core of everything in society. It determines the superstructure, and what people say and think and keeps history going since change is understood as caused by changes in the economy.

But different Marxists, over the years, have argued that the economy does not completely determine the superstructure hence political struggle at the level of the superstructure can influence people’s consciousness in different directions. That is, the base no longer determines everything else but that political struggle in the superstructure can not only change the base but cause determination in more than one direction.

The discourse analytical approach here typically examines the various levels and dimensions of discourse

including discursive strategies, words, clauses, and sentences that are used to offer value judgement on the conflict and generally or contextually express values or norms of groups involved in the conflict. The discourse approach is considered appropriate here because it focuses primarily on social problems and political issues such as involving the Tiv and Jukun ethnic groups in Central Nigeria and can be theoretically helpful in understanding not only causes of the conflict but also ways abuse of power, dominance and inequalities of minorities in Nigeria are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text as offered from the *Vanguard* Inquest.

3. Methodology

The corpus for this paper consists of opinions collected from *Vanguard*, a Nigerian newspaper, which held an Inquest into the conflict for a period of three months between November 2001 and January 2002. All relevant articles and reports published by the newspaper during the period and tagged 'Tiv/Jukun Inquest' were purposefully collected and analysed in this study. Altogether, 38 articles were collected during the period from contending and interested parties to the Inquest into the conflict.

Analysis of the relevant texts follows the model given for ideological analysis in media studies by van Dijk (1998b, pp. 61-63). According to him, the following practical suggestions may be derived for doing ideological analysis:

- a) Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants
- b) Analyzing groups, power-relations and conflicts involved
- c) Identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them
- d) Making explicit the presupposed and the implied
- e) Examining all formal structure: lexical choices and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de)emphasize polarized group opinions

Here, we followed the above process firstly by giving background of the conflict. Then, we analysed the groups, power-relations and conflicts involved in terms of what objects, topics, or themes defined causation. Finally, we identified and examined what discursive properties of text were used in polarization of main actors in terms of positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them to sustain and reproduce the social conflict, domination, and inequality.

4. Background to the Tiv/Jukun Crisis

No serious ideological analysis is possible, according to van Dijk (1998b, p.62), "without at least some knowledge of the 'facts', about the historical, political or social background of a conflict, its main participants, the grounds of the conflict and preceding positions and arguments". The Tiv-Jukun conflict is one of the numerous recurring ethnic conflicts that have questioned the nature of Nigeria as a nation.

The Tiv and Jukun ethnic groups have had relationship for centuries that predates colonialism and was particularly cordial (Avav, 2002) until socio-economic and political changes in the Wukari area in particular and in the Benue Valley in general progressively turned that amiable coexistence sour (Shut, 2007). Conflicts have occurred in 1959, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1990 and 2001. First conflict in 1959 preceded the Federal Elections in Nigeria that year and illustrated Tiv grievances against the colonial authorities, their policies, the Northern Peoples Congress and Northern oligarchy which the Jukun mainly identified with and which the Tiv, Hagher (2002) says, saw as the signpost of their oppression and domination.

The 1981 to 1982 conflict occurred following political appointments made during the Second Republic from 1979 to 1983 in Wukari (Avav, 2002). Another Tiv-Jukun conflict occurred between 1990 and 1993. From the first week of September 2001 onwards, in particular, there were a series of attacks and counter-attacks by Tiv and Jukun armed groups on a weekly, and sometimes a daily basis in the border towns and villages. These continued into December 2001 and January 2002. Tiv complain of persecution in Taraba and claim that the Jukun occasion these attacks deliberately to ensure a political advantage in Taraba in the run-up to every election as in the scheduled 2003 elections (Action Aid, 2008).

5. Analysis and Discussion

An analysis of conflicts involved shows manifestation of themes and topics, or what Carvalho (2008) calls 'objects' associated to the broader conflict which made explicit reference to causes of the conflict. Among topical objects located in the economic base as well as the superstructure and spiced with political struggle to influence what people saw as the most important information on the conflict are questions of rights to citizenship and political participation, land ownership and use, abuse of power; states creation and boundary demarcations.

5a.1 Abuse of Power

Power, more specifically social power of groups or institutions, is a central notion in most critical works on discourse. Power presupposes privileged access to scarce social resources such as force and use of the coercive power of the military. And Van Djik (1993) says groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups.

Controversial role of the police and army in the conflict apparently affected acts and minds of Tiv inversely into believing that Jukuns took advantage of privileged access of their kinsman as Defence Minister to use coercive power of the military against them, such that “the army had become a willing tool of influential Jukun leaders” and were “working in concert with Jukun” (Kpera and Hagher 2001, November 21) against Tiv people. It was perhaps this conflicting involvement of the military on a supposed ‘peace keeping mission’ that led to death of 19 soldiers on October 12, 2001 and grisly massacre of defenceless civilians in Zakibiam and the vengeful murders in nine other towns in Tivland.

Thus at the Inquest, Tiv consistently complained and accused the police and the army of taking sides and assisting the Jukun (Avav, 2002 and Alubo, 2006) and talked of a deliberate campaign of ‘ethnic cleansing’. They wondered why the Federal Government “ignored persistent allegations that soldiers deployed to Taraba State had taken sides with the Jukun and were indeed helping the Jukun cause against Tiv” and questioned the manner of deployment of soldiers on “peacekeeping mission in border areas only with the knowledge of Jukun people” (Ate 2001, November 30) and government of Taraba State.

Tiv persistent allegations of coercive use of military against them may be ignored but the gruesome glee with which the army murdered innocent Tiv people and destroyed houses, farms, foodstuffs with armoured tanks (Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2002; Action Aid, 2008) typifies the culture of abuse of power with impunity (Ekanem, 2012; Ali, Oladesu and Ogunwale, 2013 September 8) among government agents and officials. It is common knowledge that the Nigerian armed forces, the Police Force and political leaders are responsible for numerous human rights violations even under the present civilian government.

5a.2 The Indigene-Settler Question

Textual data into the Inquest showed unbridled definition of citizenship as specific issue associated to the broader Tiv-Jukun conflict under consideration. Contestations over citizenship as cause of recurring conflicts in the area manifested in the indigene-settler ideological definition of citizenship which informed the Jukun’s attitude and disposition to the Tiv in Wukari division of the present-day Taraba State. In broad terms, the Jukuns claim to be the original inhabitants of Taraba State, the “indigenes” or “sons of the soil”, and consider the Tiv as “settlers” or “comers”.

The Tiv reject this view, on the basis that they too have been living there for generations and therefore have equal rights; they complain of being marginalized and excluded in Taraba, and consider it blasphemous if not absurd to be regarded as “foreigners”. Whereas the Tiv had arrived in the region as far back as the 1840s the Jukun essentially see them as settlers refusing or denying the Tiv access, relevance, entitlements, political participation and power on the ground that they were settlers (Best, 2005). Textual data into the Inquest typically showed a reproduction of Jukun dominance and legitimization of Tiv inequality in Taraba as “settlers...certainly not indigenes”; as “expansionist Tiv...immigrants...without consideration of their status as mere ‘guests’ or ‘immigrants’...Tiv immigrants”, “the Tiv are not indigenes of Wukari, they are in fact immigrant farmers”(Taraba Government 2001, November 20-21).

The Tiv more or less resist this talk of dominance and legitimization of their inequality, insisting that they arrived the conflict areas in the 17th century, were part of lower Benue Province under colonial rule, then Muri Province, Munshi Province, Benue Province, Tiv Division, Wukari Federation, and then later Benue-Plateau, Gongola, Benue, Taraba and Nassarawa States; that they had always lived in these areas centuries before these states were created, how can they now be “branded settlers, immigrants, and non-indigenes to be systematically killed and forced out of these states?” (Edzuwah 2001, December 3).

Tiv wondered what was wrong with their presence in Benue, Taraba, and Plateau States when the Ibos in Delta and Yoruba in Kwara are on less indigenes; when there is the presence of Kanuri in Bornu and Nassarawa; Jukun in Taraba, Benue and Nassarawa; Nupe in Niger, Kogi and Federal Capital Territory, and the Hausa/Fulani consider themselves indigenes in virtually all states in Northern Nigeria. Hence the Tiv want ‘justice’ to save their life “in the valley of the shadow of death”, where ‘systematic massacre’ and ‘acts of brutality’ against them amounts to “genocide” and ‘unwarranted and baseless Tiv cleansing agenda’, and where they are labeled as ‘settlers’ to be “wickedly suppressed” and “continue to be subjected to all forms of discrimination, deprivation and deliberate denial of fundamental rights to land use and ownership, employment, education, political participation, rights to vote and be voted for, and now rights to life and property” (Kpera and Hagher, 2001

November 30).

The prolonged crises between the Tiv and other ethnic groups particularly the Jukun in Taraba State and Azara in present-day Nassarawa State are therefore a consequence of contradictory definition of citizenship where “certain Nigerians...see themselves as indigenes of a given part of Nigeria...and other Nigerians whom they see as settlers in their so called part of Nigeria...country where a citizen is not a citizen except he is also an indigene” (Majebi, 2001 December 27). Whereas other groups in the region considered the Tiv as non-indigenes, the Tiv who constitute a strong numerical minority force in these areas consider themselves indigenes of the areas particularly on account of their long residence (Anifowose, 2003).

Nigeria is perhaps the only country in Africa, and indeed the world, where “you can be born in a place and spend your entire life in the place, pay your taxes and do other civil duties as a citizen and one day someone wakes up and tells you that you are just a settler” (Majebi, 2001 December 27). The issue of indigene has continued to be a recurring decimal and cause of most of the conflicts in Nigeria. It not only has entrenched a system of discriminatory practices but is supportive of and sustains a hierarchical, unequal, and ranked system of citizenship that has provoked violent conflicts among groups all over the country, aggravated the ‘National Question’ (Okocha, 2000; Nnoli, 2003; Imobighe, 2003; Eghosa and Rotimi, 2005; Best, 2005; Omotola, 2006; Adesoji and Alao, 2009).

The *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999* in Section 42 abhors discrimination of Nigerians’ citizenship rights on basis of ethnic affiliation, sex, religion etc. But it paradoxically fails to clarify the definition of who a citizen or an indigene is, and their rights according to which state of the federation they live in. Consequently, it encourages divided or dual citizenship where various nomenclatures such as “‘settler’, ‘native’,...‘immigrant’, ‘migrant’, ‘indigene’, ‘non-indigene’, *mbák*, *Gambari*, *Hausa-Fulani*, *nyamiri*, *nasara*, *ngwa*, *arna*, *kirdi*, and *baro*” are commonly used to discriminate some Nigerians from other Nigerians (Danfulani, n.d.). These centrifugal identities raise questions on the essence of being a Nigerian citizen, sharpen the dividing lines among Nigerians, create a sense of alienation among groups, fuel ethnic hatred and heighten tensions which often transform into violent conflicts such as Zangon-Kataf conflict, Ife-Modakeke intra-ethnic feud, Jos crisis, Tiv-Jukun conflict, aggravate the problem of national integration and make cohesive nationhood a more convoluted task (Aluaigba, 2008).

5a.3 Political Economy of Land Ownership

Directly related to the problem of indigene-settler identity is the land question. Data from the Inquest links the recurring Tiv/Jukun crises to struggle for possession of land and historic claims over rights of exploiting it. Ownership of land is therefore at the core of discursive struggle with Tiv to achieve hegemony. Consequently, Jukun fix the meanings of language in their own way as they construct Tiv right of residency as a ‘scourge’, “scourge of Tiv infiltration into Taraba State”, “encroachment of Tiv into Jukun land”, “swallowing it up”, “their expansion”, “Tiv expansion”, “expansion of the Munshis,” “Tiv land colonization,” “Tiv expansionist policy”, “Tiv again began to encroach” (Taraba Government, 2001 November 20-21); hence “the claim by Tiv people that Taraba State is their ancestral land is only a figment of their imagination”, “the Tiv have the impertinence to claim Taraba as their ancestral land”, “the Jukun only acted in self-defense to protect themselves and God-given land against the aggressors” (Gani, 2001 December 25).

Jukun justified the unequal rights of Tiv to engage in economic activity on land they live as “Tiv aggression” which “finds expression in acquisition and use of land for farming”, “Tiv encroached upon a grazing reserved for the Fulani”, “invaded farmlands belonging to Tarok farmers” “persistent Tiv harassment of the Chamba over some land which the Tiv wanted to appropriate by force” “Tiv forcefully acquired grazing land belonging to Fulani in Bali” “the Tiv fought the Goemai and Kwalla for their land” and “have been fighting the Ogoja over the years for the acquisition of their farmland by force” (Abdullahi, 2001 December 21)

The immediate cause of the 2001 crisis was understood as caused by changes in the political economy of land resources. Akume (2001 December 6) for instance, confirmed “the killing of one Mr Iortimin Umande by Fulani herdsmen” over land “after he had attempted to save his farmland from being destroyed by their cattle”. Also, all those interviewed by Aluaigba (2008) during a field research conducted on the conflict consented unanimously that the conflict started as a tussle over land involving a Tiv farmer called Iortimin Umande and Fulani cattle pastoralists who trespassed into the farm of Mr Umande and grazed there and when the latter confronted him, he was stabbed to death.

Conflict in Taraba between the Tiv and the Jukun has tended thus around competition for land as the economic base and primary means of production. The consensus among various scholars who have analyzed the Tiv-Jukun conflict, according to Best (2005), is that, in as much as other vital factors such as politics have often acted as a stimulant for the crises between them, land remains fundamental in understanding the standoff as both Tiv and

Jukun are farmers. This is especially true for the Tiv, with 80% engaging in farming as their principal occupation. Land thus remains a predisposing factor in the escalation of violence between these two ethnic groups the indigene-settler divide is used as a tool for claiming their right to it (Aluaigba, 2008). For the Jukun, the Tiv are settlers in the present day Taraba State and *ipso facto* have no ownership right to the land they occupy. The Tiv on the other hand, argue that they have been living here for centuries and therefore claim both land ownership and political rights in the State, particularly in the Wukari Local Government Area. These conflicting claims have triggered bloody clashes in the past, the most recent one being in 2001.

5a.4 Political Participation and the Fear of Domination

Data from the Inquest also shows that political struggle has also typically influenced people's consciousness in different directions resulting in recurring crisis. Disputes over ownership, allocation, and access to land and natural resources, as well as the right to rule and citizenship within the communities interacted with issues of power and the political question of domination, control, and survival of the contending groups to escalate the crisis. Tiv believe their preponderant populations in the defunct Wukari Federation (now Wukari, Ibi, Takum, Donga and Ussa L.G.As) and Nasarawa State (Lafia, Obi, Doma, Keana and Awe L.G.As) have been a constant source of worry to their neighbours who are at pains to share political positions with the Tiv (Kpera and Hagher, 2001 November 30; Edzuwah 2001, December 3) hence the incessant crises.

In Taraba State, Tiv say their political gains in the defunct Wukari Federation (Wukari, Ibi, Takum, Donga and Ussa) have been a constant source of worry to the Jukun. The victory of Mr Charles Tangur Gaza, a Tiv man of the United Middle Belt Congress, over Mallam Ibrahim Sangari, a Jukun man of the NPC, to represent the Wukari Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives during the 1956 Federal Elections (Best, 2005; Shut, 2007; Avav, 2002) welled fear of political domination among the Jukun that in an open contest, the Tiv they consider as immigrants and aliens, would dominate them politically in the future.

So with time, the Jukun assumed they would loose completely the control of political power in their own land to people they consider as settlers or non-indigenous to the area (Best, 2005; Alubo, 2006; Genyi, 2007 and Shut, 2007). In both the Second Republic and under the military, this fear was indeed reignited when a substantial number of Tiv people were appointed in the cabinet of defunct Gongola State government (Best, 2005; Okocha, 2001).

These political appointments angered the Jukun who once "physically assaulted a LG Chairman [Iyortyer Musa] in 1982" (Avav, 2002, p.50), turned them against the Tiv and triggered a kind of "cold war" between the two groups. Responses from field research from both sides in the conflict provided Aluaigba (2008) sufficient evidence to confirm this fear and conclude that one common major factor responsible for conflict between Tiv and Jukun is the fear of domination because the Jukun are entertaining fear because of the numerical strength of the Tiv in Taraba State. Consequently, other issues like the dispute over land have only acted as a catalyst releasing the pent-up anger of the Jukun over Tiv domination (Shut, 2007; Avav, 2002). Though land is frequently mentioned, it is political struggle in the superstructure that is in reality not only changing the base but causing other forms of conflict (Shut, 2007).

5a.6 Creation of States

Data from the Inquest show that creation of more states and local governments appeared to change material conditions at the base and provide the impetus for the sharpening of communal identities between 'indigenes' and 'non-indigenes', 'sons-of-the-soil' and 'migrants' and 'settlers' which manifest in the conflicts. Evidence into the Inquest indicates that boundary demarcations between Benue and Taraba states and political control of the border towns and villages are primary bases for disputes in the area. Conflicts become eminent in 1933 when Tiv Division was created and Katsina-Ala District was placed under Tiv Native Authority in Gboko and some segments of Tiv clans were left in Wukari division under the authority of Aku Uka of Wukari (Benue State Government, 2001, December 5; Edzuwah, 2001, December 3 and Kpera & Hagher, November 30).

This boundary separating Tiv Native Authority Division and Wukari Federation became contentious when it fragmented homogenous Tiv villages such as Gbeji, Vaase, Abako, Sai, Chanchanji and Kashimbila with some districts/clans in Tiv Division and others in Wukari Federation. Those left in the latter became instant minorities where their problems increased with creation of states in 1967, 1976 and 1996. When it became obvious that their numbers had the capacity to influence significantly the results of elections in these areas (Benue State Government 2001, December 5; Edzuwah, 2001, December 3 and Kpera & Hagher, November 30), they became discriminated against as settlers, immigrants and non-indigenes to be systematically killed and forced out of these states.

5b. Discursive Strategies

In examining propositions and implications and all formal structure as well as identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them, we rely on discursive strategies employed as forms of reality manipulation used by social actors (Carvalho, 2008) involved in the conflict. These illustrate how Jukun individuals discursively constructed the ethnic Tiv to reinforce the indigene-settler ideology, establish their dominance and marginalise as well as justify Tiv inequality.

5b.1 Legitimation and Positioning

Legitimizing consists in justifying and sanctioning a certain action or power, on the basis of normative or other reasons (Carvalho, 2008). Positioning on the other hand is a discursive that involves constructing social actors into a certain relationship with others that may, for instance, entitle them to do certain things. Thus, in the reproduction of Jukun dominance and marginalization of the dominated Tiv group, Jukun employed the discursive strategy of legitimating to legitimize Taraba State as Jukunland on the basis of indigene-settler ideology and prove how 'just', 'necessary' or 'natural' it is for them to have privileged access to the valuable social resource of land and political power.

By the strategy of positioning, the Jukun constructed a certain relationship with Tiv where the former is positioned as "indigenes" or "sons of the soil" and the latter as "*mbitse*" or "*mbichi*", "settlers", "immigrants", and "non-indigenes". This relationship is justified on grounds that the colonialists "found the Jukun where they are and the Tiv were also found in Tivland/Benue State," (Awudu, 2001 December 4) hence "the claim by the Tiv people that Taraba State is their ancestral land is only a figment of their imagination" (Gani, 2001 December 25), the Tiv people "always in search of territory to conquer," "they came from elsewhere trying to colonise a foreign place" (Adamu, 2001 December 10) "have the impertinence to claim Taraba as their ancestral land" (Adamu, 2001 December 25).

5b.2 Justification of Inequality

Justification of "inequality involves two complimentary strategies, namely the positive representation of own group and the negative representation of the others" (van Dijk, 1993, p.263). In this strategy, the Jukun employed models that contrasted the Tiv with them and structures and strategies that focused on various forms of positive self preservation and the negative other presentation.

First, they emphasized their tolerance, help or sympathy to the Tiv, how "the Jukun being the unsuspecting people that they have always been...accepted the Tiv as if they were brothers...gave them parcels of land to farm and settle...and carried the biblical injunction that one should love his neighbor as himself to a ridiculous extent...and loved our neighbors more than ourselves".. so whole-heartedly, they have been free enough to want to supplant us" (Awudu, 2001 December 4). Now, "instead of being grateful" for being "graciously accommodated by their host communities" and "living in good relationship with their hosts, they began to exhibit bad neighborly behavior" (Adamu, 2001 December 10) and "claim that our land is also theirs and that they must not only participate in our socio-cultural and political life, but also they must be integrated into our traditional system and way of life" (Awudu, 2001 December 4).

Second, the Jukun used the typical strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-presentation in discursive marginalization of dominated Tiv and justification of their inequality. In their positive self-presentation, the Jukun are a peaceful people who arrived their present place from Yemen with a rich tradition that is "quasi-feudal", a people "meek, introverted and generally shy even to the point of docility", a people who "have respect for constituted authority" and who are "more liberal and catholic than the Pope" (Awudu, 2001 December 4).

Jukun negative presentation of Tiv at the Inquest is expressed and persuasively conveyed in models that contrasted Tiv with them, involving systematic association of Tiv ethnic group with problematic cultural differences and illegal immigration and residence and focusing on negative social and cultural differences which attribute deviance and threats to them. Thus the "Tiv are republican...arriving Nigeria from the Congo through Cameroun...lacking in tradition...classless...aggressive, extroverted and bullish...always fighting everybody: all their neighbors...and themselves" (Awudu, 2001 December 4); "incompatible neighbors...classless and segmented people...decentralized or fragmented...they bear children indiscriminately...with expansionist attitude or even territorial ambition...would simply migrate into Joaquin land...a nuisance...stealing...in violent fracas...lawless and ungovernable...constitute a definite menace...a Munshi beleaguering force (Ahmadu Coomassie Commission 1965, 2001 November 19).

Negative evaluation of Tiv continued with persuasive historical accounts of how British colonialists got to know soon enough that the Tiv were a "society with upheaval instinct...xenophobic and excessively

abhorrent...ignorant savages...intractable people...continually fighting themselves...have a character of extreme lawlessness and disregard for life and reputed as treacherous and thieves”(Adamu, 2001 December 25). That “wherever the Tiv live, it has always been in their character to create conflicts” and to “show disrespect for constituted authority”(Gani, 2001 December 25).

Story telling moves including quotes from sources and experts were also used giving plausible details of negative events portraying Tiv as aggressive, lawless and uncontrollable people, that “as early as 1900 the Tiv were engaged in killing soldiers... the Tiv attacked (Lord Lugard) telegraph construction team in 1900 killing three soldiers...a most intractable people”(Abdulahi, 2001 December 21). Horrific scenes were painted of how “Tiv destroyed the Royal Niger Company depot at Abinsi in 1906...murdered them...hundreds of people including women and children...were drowned...while many more headless corpses were left on the scene of the fighting” (Abdulahi, 2001 December 21).

Other negative story telling events stereotyping Tiv lawlessness and aggression, including popular uprisings such as *Ijor* (1927), *Haakaa*(1929), *Nyambuan* (1939), *Kumendur* (1945), *Hoyo* (1948) and the 1960-64 riots were constructed as “violent response directed at constituted authority...to be unhindered by rules and regulations” (Abdulahi, 2001 December 21). In all these, interpretation of the “deviant actions” of Tiv is emphasized as typical, not incidental, that they are “always engaging themselves in violent upheavals, arson and murder”, that the “acts of lawlessness suited the Tiv natural inclination” (Abdulahi, 2001 December 21).

In order to discredit the Tiv, extensive attention is paid to their alleged threat to the interests and privileges of the Jukun, that “Tiv aggression finds expression in the acquisition and use of land for farming... the Tiv do not recognize the rights of others... Tiv encroached upon and forcefully acquired a grazing land reserved for the Fulani in 1983 and 1990... invaded farmlands belonging to some Tarok farmers in 1987...persistently harassed the Chamba...Tiv fought the Goemai, Kwalla and Ogoja for their land, that the 2001 conflict started as Tiv-Fulani fracas and not between Tiv and Jukun...until the Tiv started destroying Jukun villages and mounting road blocks to fish out Jukun commuters for slaughter that the Jukun joined the conflict” (Abdulahi, 2001 December 21).

5. Conclusion

This article has attempted explain how the Jukun ethnic group employed the indigene-settler ideology prevalent in Nigeria to discursively construct the Tiv, with whom they have had relationships for centuries that predate colonialism (Avav, 2002), as “settlers”, “immigrants”, and “non-indigenes” and as “aggressive, lawless and uncontrollable” people, and negative interpretations to justify Tiv inequality and marginalisation. From analysis of submissions to the newspaper’s Inquest into the conflict, the Jukun actively deployed legitimating and positioning, justification and negative story telling events to stereotype Tiv in order to validate relations of power, domination and exploitation.

The *Vanguard* Inquest appears to enact and reproduce contemporary ethnic inequality and domination in Nigeria where ethnic minorities are summarily at the receiving end of unsavory discriminations in denial of privileges and rights of citizenship in their country (Aluaigba, 2008; Majebi, 2001 December 27). Dominated by groups with seeming power base of privileged access to scarce social resources and use of force (Kpera and Hagher 2001, November 21) and sustained by unjust structures (Torwel, 2005), the Tiv in these states are pushed to the margin of life in political participation, land ownership and use, and rights as citizens. Their dominance is legitimized by indigene-settler ideology (Best, 2005; Hagher, 2002) and inequality justified by negative representation and abusive stereotype of Tiv to sustain existing negative attitudes about them.

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