

**The Tiv and
Their Southern Neighbours,
1890–1990**

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The Tiv and Their Southern Neighbours, 1890–1990
Emmanuel Chiahemba Ayangaôr

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Series Editor's Preface

The *Carolina Academic Press African World Series*, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola
University of Texas at Austin

Preface

This book examines the nature of the relations between the Tiv of Benue State and their southern neighbours in the northern Cross River State, Nigeria, from 1890 to 1990 to determine whether it was acrimonious or harmonious and investigate the changing patterns of those relations. This study was carried out to reconstruct the history of their intergroup relations and from it discern what lessons can be learnt with a view to strengthening the more positive aspects of their relationship in the future. Because no such study had been undertaken on this topic, it was imperative to conduct interviews in the field, access unpublished, published, internet and electronic sources and to analyze critically the data from a multidisciplinary perspective. The study discovered that the relationship between the Tiv and their southern neighbours predated the eighteenth century, but was characterized by violence because of the Tiv arrival and forceful displacement of those they met in the Benue Valley. Some of the ethnic groups displaced from their settlements, as far as Gboko, are the Tiv's southern neighbours. In spite of an occasional war, the Tiv remained on good terms with them, intermarrying and borrowing various crops, production techniques, ideas and cultural practices including the *Ogirinya* dance and its headhunting practices. British rule stopped Tiv migration beyond the Benue-Cross River border and the land-hungry Tiv had to lease or seek the permission of their southern neighbours to cultivate farmlands there. In spite of their closeness, British rule placed them in two mutually exclusive ethnic administrative areas. The study also found that the Tiv largely retained their traditional/informal economic and social ties, which, in spite of normal changes in taste, are still maintained. The Tiv largely depend on their southern neighbours for their supplies of palm oil, kola nuts and assorted spices and condiments and, in return, sell grains and root crops to them. However, secretly hidden behind all this lay their sinister *Ogirinya* mutual headhunting practices, which as a result of the growing Christian recognition of the sanctity of human life, became intolerable to an increasing number of their people. The open and official acceptance that such killings triggered interethnic killings came only after the 1985 Tsar-Obudu War. With the official banning of *Ogirinya*

practices and the formation of interethnic peace committees to monitor all activities along the border, far fewer interethnic clashes have taken place in the region. The major difference in Tiv relations with their southern neighbours, when compared with that of the Tiv and their neighbours in Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau States, is the fact that there are no Tiv contests for chieftaincy, political office or the ownership of land. The most important lesson learnt in this study is that there is no intergroup dispute that cannot be resolved if both parties are ready and willing to honestly discuss their problems and jointly work on maintaining the peace.

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Abbreviations

ADO	Assistant District/Divisional Officer
AG	Action Group
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BENCROSS	Benue Cross River Peace Committee
COR	Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers State movement
CSK	Concerned Sons of Kwande
DO	Divisional/District Officer
DRCM	Dutch Reformed Church Mission
FCT	Federal Capital Territory [Abuja]
HSN	Historical Society of Nigeria
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LGA	Local Government Area
NA	Native Authority
NCNC	National Convention of Nigerian Citizens
NEPU	National Elements Progressive Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NKST	Nongo Kristu u Sudan ken Tiv (Church of Christ in Sudan among the Tiv)
OBUTIV	Obudu and Tiv Peace Committee (over Obudu-Vandeikya Conflict of 1985)
OVCPM	Obudu-Vandeikya Christian Peace Movement
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
RCM	Roman Catholic Mission
RNC	Royal Niger Company
UMBC	United Middle Belt Congress
WAI	War Against Indiscipline