Tiv Group Alliance and Individualistic Society: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

This study critically examines the interplay between the alliance system of the Tiv group and the values of an individualistic society, highlighting the tensions and challenges arising from their coexistence. The Tiv, an ethnic group in Nigeria, are traditionally known for their strong communal bonds and group-orientated social structure, which contrasts sharply with the individualistic ethos prevalent in modern, Western-influenced societies. The problem lies in the potential erosion of Tiv cultural identity and social cohesion as individualism gains prominence, creating a clash between collective and individual values. The aim of this study is to explore the dynamics between Tiv group alliance and individualistic society, analyse the resulting conflicts, and propose solutions to mitigate these challenges. Using a qualitative methodology, the research draws on interviews, ethnographic observations, and secondary literature to gather data. Findings reveal that while Tiv group alliances foster unity and collective responsibility, the rise of individualism threatens these traditional structures, leading to social fragmentation and identity crises among the Tiv. The critical analysis underscores the

need for a balanced approach that respects Tiv cultural heritage while accommodating individualistic aspirations. Recommendations include promoting cultural education, fostering dialogue between traditional and modern values, encouraging community-based development programs, integrating Tiv traditions into modern governance, and creating platforms for youth engagement. In conclusion, the study advocates for a harmonious coexistence of Tiv group alliances and individualistic values, ensuring cultural preservation and societal progress.

Keywords*: Tiv, Group Alliance, Individualistic Society, Critical Analysis*

Introduction

The interplay between communal societies and individualistic cultures has long been a subject of academic inquiry, particularly in understanding how these contrasting social frameworks influence human behaviour, societal cohesion and development. The Tiv people of Nigeria, known for their strong emphasis on group alliances and communal living, provide a compelling case study for examining the tensions and synergies between collectivist and individualistic societal structures. This paper critically analyses the Tiv group alliance system in the context of an increasingly individualistic global society, exploring the cultural, social and economic implications of this dynamic.

The Tiv, an ethnic group primarily located in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, have historically relied on group alliances—known as *kwav*— (Age mates) to foster unity, resolve conflicts and maintain social order. These alliances are deeply rooted in kinship, shared cultural values and mutual interdependence, forming the bedrock of Tiv society. In contrast, individualistic societies, often associated with Western cultures, prioritise

personal autonomy, self-reliance and individual achievement over collective interests. As globalisation continues to blur cultural boundaries, the Tiv and similar communal societies are increasingly confronted with the influences of individualism, leading to both challenges and opportunities.

This analysis begins by exploring the foundational principles of Tiv group alliances, highlighting their significance in maintaining social cohesion and resolving disputes. It then examines the characteristics of individualistic societies, emphasising their focus on personal freedom and economic independence. The intersection of these two systems is

critically analysed, with particular attention to the tensions that arise when communal values clash with individualistic ideals. Finally, the paper proposes potential solutions to address the challenges posed by this cultural intersection, aiming to foster a harmonious balance between communal traditions and the demands of a modern, individualistic world. Through this exploration, the paper seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how traditional societies like the Tiv can navigate the complexities of globalization while preserving their cultural identity.

Conceptual Clarifications

Tiv Group Alliance

The Tiv people, an ethnic group primarily located in Nigeria, are known for their complex social organization, which is deeply rooted in kinship and communal alliances. The Tiv group alliance system is a traditional structure that emphasises collective identity and mutual support. According to AkpenpuunDzurgba (2009), in the Tiv nation, the people often talk about awambe, a Tiv, which means "Tiv blood" or the "Tiv type of blood"(p. 84). This means that the first type of blood the first ancestral father, Tiv, had is the same type of blood that has been passed on from Tiv himself through many generations up to the present generation of old men and women, adult men and women, young men and women, as well as male and female children. In the same manner, when the Tiv man and woman talk about mar u Tiv (Tiv extraction), they are referring to the people who have the Tiv blood in their bodies. It also means that they are born by Tiv parents. This means that the Tiv people do look at themselves as a people bound together by blood or a genealogical descent that transcends a mere group alliance. According to Paul Bohannan (1997), a prominent anthropologist, corroborates this line of thought: the Tiv organise themselves into segments based on patrilineal descent, which fosters a strong sense of unity and cooperation within

the group (p. 45). These alliances are not merely social but also economic and political, as they facilitate resource sharing, conflict resolution and collective decision-making. The Tiv system contrasts sharply with individualistic societies, as it prioritises the group over the individual, ensuring that the welfare of the community takes precedence.

The Tiv group alliance also plays a crucial role in maintaining social order. As Laura Bohannan (1958) (writing under the pseudonym Elenore Smith Bowen) notes in her ethnographic work, the Tiv rely on their kinship networks to mediate disputes and enforce norms, which reduces the need for formal legal institutions (p. 78). This communal approach underscores the interdependence of individuals within the group, a hallmark of collectivist societies.

Individualistic Society

In contrast to the Tiv group alliance, an individualistic society prioritises personal autonomy, self-reliance and individual achievement. Individualism is a defining characteristic of many Western societies, particularly in the United States and Europe. According to Geert Hofstede (2001), a pioneer in cross-cultural studies, individualistic cultures emphasise personal goals and rights over group obligations (p. 76). In such societies, success is often measured by individual accomplishments and social structures are designed to promote personal freedom and competition.

Individualistic societies also tend to have weaker communal ties and a greater emphasis on privacy. As Robert Bellah *etal*. (1998) argue in their seminal work "Habits of the Heart," individualism in the United States has led to a fragmentation of social bonds, with people increasingly prioritising their personal interests over collective well-being(p. 123). This stands in stark contrast to the Tiv group alliance, where the community's needs are

paramount.

Comparative Analysis

The Tiv group alliance and individualistic society represent two ends of the collectivism-individualism spectrum. While the Tiv system fosters strong communal bonds and collective responsibility, individualistic societies emphasise personal freedom and self-expression. These differences have profound implications for social organisation, economic practices, and cultural values. For instance, the Tiv rely on kinship networks for economic support, whereas individualistic societies often depend on market-based systems and formal institutions.

However, both systems have their strengths and challenges. The Tiv group alliance promotes social cohesion but may limit individual autonomy, while individualistic societies encourage innovation and personal growth but may struggle with social fragmentation. Understanding these dynamics is essential for appreciating the diversity of human social organization.

Tiv In History: An Overview

The Tiv people are one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, predominantly found in Benue State, with smaller populations in Taraba, Nasarawa and Cross River States, as well as parts of Cameroon. Their history is marked by migration, socio-political organisation, economic activities and cultural heritage. The Tiv people have played significant roles in Nigerian history, contributing to the country's socio-political and economic landscape. This paper provides an overview discussion of the history of the Tiv people, incorporating scholarly perspectives.

Origins and Migration of the Tiv

The origin of the Tiv people has been a subject of scholarly debate. Oral traditions suggest that the Tiv trace their ancestry to the Bantu-speaking groups that migrated from the Congo Basin (TesemchiMakar, 1994, p.4). According to Eugene Rubingh (1969), the Tiv are believed to have migrated from the Swem region, a hilly area located on the Nigeria-Cameroon border (p. 62). This migration was primarily driven by the search for arable land and security from external threats. By the 16th century, the Tiv had settled in their present geographical location in central Nigeria.

The Tiv migration followed a unique pattern known as the "*ya*" system, a method of expansion where groups moved and established settlements while maintaining familial and kinship ties **Paul J.Bohanna** 1953, p.45). This system allowed them to adapt effectively to new environments and maintain a sense of unity and identity despite widespread settlement.

Political and Social Organisation

Unlike many ethnic groups in Nigeria that had centralised political structures, the Tiv operated a decentralised system of governance. Their society was organised based on kinship and lineage, with leadership vested in elders known as "Ortar" (Shagbaor F. Wegh, 2003, p.41). The primary unit of Tiv society was the family, which formed part of a larger "tar" (clan). The clans were linked through common ancestry, and their affairs were managed through consensus and collective decision-making.

The Tiv had no kings or paramount rulers before colonialism, relying instead on the council of elders and age-grade systems for governance (Laura Bohannan, 1968, p. 79). The

emergence of the Tor Tiv as a central authority was a colonial creation meant to introduce an administrative head for easier governance (EugeneRubingh, 1969, p. 63). Today, the Tor Tiv remains the paramount traditional ruler of the Tiv people, overseeing cultural and political affairs.

Economic Activities

The Tiv are predominantly agrarian, with farming being their main occupation. They are known for cultivating crops such as yams, maize, millet, sorghum, cassava, and rice. According J.T.W Gbor (1993), the Tiv people developed sophisticated agricultural techniques, including crop rotation and mixed farming, which contributed to their self-sufficiency (p. 65). Trade was also an important economic activity. The Tiv exchanged farm produce with neighboring ethnic groups such as the Idoma, Igala, and Jukun. Additionally, they engaged in craft-making, blacksmithing, and hunting, which provided supplementary economic support (TesemchiMakar, 1994, p. 5).

Colonial Experience and Resistance

The Tiv people's encounter with British colonial rule in the early 20th century was marked by resistance. The Tiv opposed direct rule and colonial taxation policies, leading to multiple conflicts with British administrators. The most notable was the Tiv Riot of 1929, which was sparked by colonial efforts to impose a warrant chief system, contrary to the Tiv decentralized political structure (Shagbaior F. Wegh, 2003, p.42).

During the colonial period, Western education and Christianity were introduced to the Tiv through missionary activities. The Dutch Reformed Church and the Catholic Church played significant roles in establishing schools and churches, contributing to literacy and

socio-economic development in Tiv land (Eugine Rubingh, 1969, p. 64). However, traditional religious beliefs, centered around Aondo-God (the supreme deity) and ancestral veneration, remained strong among the people.

Tiv in Post-Colonial Nigeria

With Nigeria's independence in 1960, the Tiv people became actively involved in national politics. Several Tiv leaders emerged as influential figures in Nigerian governance. The Tiv played a crucial role in the formation of the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), a political movement that advocated the rights of minority ethnic groups in Nigeria (Gbor, 1993, p.66). One of the most prominent Tiv political leaders was Joseph Tarka, who championed the cause of the Middle Belt and fought against the marginalisation of minority groups in Nigeria's political landscape (Wegh, 2003, p.43). Today, Tiv leaders continue to play active roles in both state and national politics.

Cultural Heritage and Identity

The Tiv people are known for their rich cultural heritage, including their unique dance forms, traditional attire, and oral literature. The *Kwagh-hir* puppet theatre is a significant cultural performance that combines storytelling, music, and dramatization to educate and entertain audiences (Rubingh, 1969, p.65). Traditional Tiv attire, characterised by the Anger cloth (black and white striped fabric), symbolises unity and identity. The *Swange* dance is another important cultural expression, often performed during festivals and ceremonies (Gbor, 1993, p. 67).

Challenges and Contemporary Issues

Despite their rich history and contributions to Nigerian society, the Tiv people face several challenges in the contemporary era. Land disputes, ethnic conflicts, and herder-farmer clashes have posed significant threats to their socio-economic stability. The invasion of Tiv farmlands by armed herders has led to displacement and loss of livelihoods (Makar, 1994, p.6). Additionally, issues such as youth unemployment, political instability, and inadequate infrastructure continue to affect the development of Tiv land. However, the resilience of the Tiv people has enabled them to navigate these challenges and seek sustainable solutions through education, political engagement, and community development initiatives (Wegh, 2003, p. 44).

The Tiv people have a rich and dynamic history that reflects their resilience, cultural heritage, and contributions to Nigerian society. From their migration and settlement to their socio-political organization and economic activities, the Tiv have maintained a distinct identity. Despite historical and contemporary challenges, they continue to thrive and play a significant role in Nigeria's cultural and political landscape. Understanding Tiv history provides insight into the broader historical narratives of Nigeria and the importance of preserving indigenous cultures.

Group Alliance as a Social Norm in the Society

Group alliance, a fundamental aspect of human social behaviour, refers to the formation of cooperative relationships between individuals or groups to achieve common goals, enhance survival, or gain social advantages. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in evolutionary psychology, sociology, and anthropology, as humans are inherently social

beings who thrive in collective settings. Group alliances are not only a survival mechanism but also a social norm that shapes societal structures, cultural practices, and interpersonal relationships. This section explores the concept of group alliance as a social norm, its theoretical foundations, manifestations in various societal contexts, and its implications for social cohesion and conflict.

Theoretical Foundations of Group Alliance

The concept of group alliance can be traced back to evolutionary theories, which posit that humans have evolved to form alliances as a survival strategy. According to Darwin's theory of natural selection, individuals who cooperated with others were more likely to survive and reproduce, passing on their cooperative traits to future generations (Darwin, Charles, 1859, p.163). This idea is further elaborated in the theory of reciprocal altruism, which suggests that individuals form alliances with the expectation of mutual benefit in the future (Robert L. Trivers, 1971, p.35–57.). For instance, in hunter-gatherer societies, individuals formed alliances to hunt, gather food, and protect each other from predators, thereby increasing their chances of survival.

Social identity theory (Tajfel, Henri, & Turner, John C, 1979) provides another lens through which group alliances can be understood. This theory posits that individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem from their membership in social groups. By forming alliances with others who share similar characteristics, beliefs, or goals, individuals reinforce their social identity and enhance their sense of belonging (p.33-47). This is evident in various social contexts, such as political parties, religious groups and sports teams, where individuals align themselves with others who share their values and objectives.

Group Alliance as a Social Norm

Social norms are unwritten rules that govern behaviour within a society, and group alliance is one such norm that influences how individuals interact with one another. As a social norm, group alliance is reinforced through socialisation processes, cultural practices and institutional structures. From a young age, individuals are taught the importance of cooperation, teamwork and loyalty to their group. These values are embedded in educational systems, family structures and community organisations, making group alliance a normative behaviour in society.

One of the key functions of group alliance as a social norm is to promote social cohesion. By fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose, group alliances help to reduce social fragmentation and promote collective action. For example, during times of crisis, such as natural disasters or pandemics, communities often come together to support one another, demonstrating the power of group alliance in fostering resilience and solidarity (Robert D. Putnam, 2000, np). Similarly, in the workplace, employees who form alliances with their colleagues are more likely to experience job satisfaction, productivity, and organisational commitment (**Daniel M. Kramer**, 1999, p.34).

However, group alliance as a social norm can also have negative consequences, particularly when it leads to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. Social identity theory suggests that individuals tend to favour members of their own group (in-group) over those who belong to other groups (out-group), leading to prejudice, stereotyping, and conflict (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 33-47). This is evident in various forms of social stratification, such as racism, sexism, and classism, where group alliances are used to justify the exclusion

and marginalization of certain groups.

Manifestations of Group Alliance in Society

Group alliances manifest in various forms across different societal contexts, including politics, religion, economics and culture. In the political realm, group alliances are often formed to gain power, influence and resources. Political parties, for example, are alliances of individuals who share similar ideologies and work together to achieve political goals. These alliances are essential for the functioning of democratic systems, as they provide a platform for collective decision-making and policy formulation (John H. Aldrich, 1995, p. 55). However, political alliances can also lead to polarisation and conflict, particularly when they are based on divisive ideologies or ethnic identities.

In the religious domain, group alliances are formed around shared beliefs, rituals, and values. Religious groups provide a sense of community and belonging, as well as a framework for moral and ethical behaviour. These alliances often transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, creating global networks of believers who support one another in times of need (Rodney William Stark; William Sims Bainbridge, 1985, p.10). However, religious alliances can also be a source of conflict, particularly when they are used to justify violence or exclusion against those who hold different beliefs.

In the economic sphere, group alliances are formed to enhance productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. Business alliances, such as partnerships, joint ventures, and trade unions, enable organizations to pool resources, share risks, and achieve economies of scale (Gulati, R. 1998, p. 293-317). These alliances are particularly important in a globalised economy, where companies must navigate complex markets and regulatory environments.

However, economic alliances can also lead to inequality and exploitation, particularly when they are dominated by powerful corporations or nations.

In the cultural realm, group alliances are formed around shared traditions, languages, and artistic expressions. Cultural alliances play a crucial role in preserving heritage, promoting diversity, and fostering creativity. For example, indigenous communities often form alliances to protect their land, culture, and rights from external threats (Smith, L. T. 1999, p.24). Similarly, artists and cultural practitioners form alliances to collaborate on projects, share resources, and advocate for their interests. However, cultural alliances can also lead to cultural appropriation and the erasure of minority voices, particularly when they are dominated by dominant cultural groups.

Implications of Group Alliance for Social Cohesion and Conflict

The formation of group alliances has significant implications for social cohesion and conflict. On the one hand, group alliances can promote social cohesion by fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and mutual support among individuals. This is particularly important in diverse societies, where individuals from different backgrounds must coexist and collaborate. By forming alliances across social, cultural and economic divides, individuals can bridge differences, build empathy, and create a more inclusive society (Robert D. Putnam, 2000 p. 23).

On the other hand, group alliances can also lead to social conflict, particularly when they are based on exclusionary or divisive criteria. In-group favoritism and out-group discrimination can create social hierarchies, perpetuate inequality and fuel intergroup tensions. This is evident in various forms of social conflict, such as ethnic violence,

religious extremism and political polarisation. To mitigate these negative consequences, it is essential to promote inclusive and equitable forms of group alliance that prioritise cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect.

Group alliance is a fundamental social norm that shapes human behaviour, societal structures and cultural practices. Rooted in evolutionary psychology and social identity theory, group alliances serve as a mechanism for survival, identity formation and collective action. As a social norm, group alliance promotes social cohesion by fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support, but it can also lead to conflict when it results in in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. The manifestations of group alliance in politics, religion, economics and culture highlight its pervasive influence on society. To harness the positive potential of group alliance while mitigating its negative consequences, it is essential to promote inclusive and equitable forms of cooperation that prioritise the common good. By doing so, societies can build stronger, more resilient communities that are capable of addressing the complex challenges of the modern world.

Tiv   and   Group   Alliances

The Tiv people, an ethnic group primarily located in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, have a rich history of social organisation and political alliances. Their societal structure is deeply rooted in kinship and lineage systems, which have historically influenced their group alliances and conflict resolution mechanisms. This discussion explores the Tiv's traditional social organisation, their approach to group alliances, and the role of these alliances in maintaining social cohesion and resolving conflicts.

Traditional Social Organisation

The Tiv are organised into a segmentary lineage system, which forms the basis of their social and political structure. This system is characterised by the division of the society into smaller kinship groups, each with its own leadership and autonomy. According to Laura Bohannan(1957), the Tiv lineage system is "a complex web of relationships that governs social interactions and alliances" (75-90). According to Afred AkawuTorkula (2004, p.19) "The Tiv people, till today, live in a union of compound people by members of a kin group closely related by blood, a very closely knit individual with his children and brothers. TyavkaseShii (2011, p.12) corroborated Tokula that the first characteristic of the Tiv worldview to be noted is communality. No Tiv was an island unto himself. The fundamental desire toward cosmic tribal life reflected the essential harmony and unity of the macrocosm. The futures of the individuals were reflected in the lives of all members of the community, and each community has a stake in the destiny of others." The lineage system allows for flexibility in forming alliances, as smaller groups can come together to address common issues or threats.

Group Alliances and Conflict Resolution

Group alliances among the Tiv are often formed to address external threats or internal disputes. These alliances are typically temporary and are dissolved once the issue at hand is resolved. Laura Bohannan (1958), in her study of Tiv society, notes that "alliances are not permanent but are formed based on mutual interest and necessity" (p. 75-90). This fluidity in alliance formation is a key feature of Tiv social organisation and contributes to their ability to maintain social harmony.

The Tiv also employs a system of conflict resolution known as "*kwav*" (age group), which involves the use of intermediaries to negotiate disputes between conflicting parties. This

system relies heavily on the existing network of alliances and the authority of lineage leaders. As Abraham Akiga (1954) explains, "The success of "*kwav*" depends on the willingness of the parties involved to honor the alliances and agreements brokered by the intermediaries" (p. 112).

Modern Influences on Tiv Alliances

In contemporary times, the traditional Tiv system of alliances has been influenced by modern political structures and external factors such as colonialism and globalisation. The introduction of centralised governance and political parties has altered the dynamics of group alliances among the Tiv. However, as John Middleton (1971) observes, "the underlying principles of kinship and mutual interest continue to play a significant role in shaping Tiv alliances" (p. 203). Furthermore, the introduction of communication technologies has escalated this fragmentation of the Tiv group alliance through the use of phones and internet interactions, which introduces people to groups formed in social media, leading to negligence of the Tiv original group alliance.

The Tiv people's approach to group alliances is a testament to the adaptability and resilience of their social organisation. Their lineage system, combined with flexible alliance formation and effective conflict resolution mechanisms, has enabled them to navigate both internal and external challenges. While modern influences have brought changes to their traditional practices, the core principles of kinship and mutual interest remain central to Tiv society.

An Individualistic Society

An individualistic society is one that prioritises the needs, goals, and rights of the individual

over those of the group or collective. This cultural framework emphasises personal autonomy, self-reliance and the pursuit of individual success. Rooted in Western philosophical traditions, individualism is often contrasted with collectivism, which values group harmony and interdependence (Middleton 1971, p. 204). The rise of individualism has been closely linked to modernisation, urbanisation, and the influence of Enlightenment ideals that championed personal freedom and rational self-interest (Triandis, Harry C.1995, p.45).

One of the defining characteristics of an individualistic society is the emphasis on personal achievement. Individuals are encouraged to pursue their own goals and are often rewarded for their unique contributions. This is evident in educational systems and workplaces, where competition and personal merit are highly valued (Markus and Kitayama 1991, p. 224). For example, in the United States, a quintessentially individualistic society, success is frequently measured by personal accomplishments such as career advancement or financial independence (Bellah *etal*. 1985, p.78).

However, individualism is not without its critiques. Scholars argue that excessive individualism can lead to social fragmentation and a decline in communal bonds. As people prioritise their own interests, there is a risk of neglecting collective responsibilities, such as caring for the vulnerable or addressing societal inequalities (Putnam 2000, p.167). Furthermore, individualism has been associated with higher rates of loneliness and mental health issues, as the pressure to succeed independently can create feelings of isolation (Twenge, Jean M.2006, p. 201).

Despite these challenges, individualism remains a dominant cultural force in many societies. It has shaped political systems, such as liberal democracies, which are founded on the principles of individual rights and freedoms (Fukuyama, Francis.1992, p. 56). Additionally, individualism has influenced global economic practices, particularly through the promotion of free-market capitalism, which thrives on competition and innovation(Weber, Max 2001, p.89). Individualistic society places a high value on personal autonomy and self-reliance. While it fosters innovation and personal growth, it also poses challenges to social cohesion and collective well-being. Understanding the balance between individual and collective interests is crucial for addressing the complexities of modern societies.

Implications of Tiv Group Alliance and Individualistic Society

The Tiv people, an ethnic group primarily located in Nigeria, are known for their strong communal ties and group alliances, which stand in stark contrast to the values of individualistic societies. This dichotomy between collectivism and individualism has significant implications for social organization, economic practices, and cultural identity. By examining the Tiv group alliance system and comparing it to individualistic societies, we can better understand the broader implications of these contrasting social structures.

Tiv Group Alliance: A Collectivist Framework

The Tiv social structure is deeply rooted in collectivism, where the group takes precedence over the individual. According to Bohannan (1958), a prominent anthropologist, the Tiv operate through a system of *tar* (lineage groups), which form the basis of their political, economic and social organisation. These alliances are not merely familial but extend to broader communal networks, ensuring mutual support and collective decision-making (p.

45) For instance, during conflicts or resource allocation, the Tiv rely on their group alliances to maintain harmony and equity (Bohannan. 67). This collectivist approach fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, which is central to Tiv identity.

In contrast, individualistic societies, such as those in Western Europe and North America, prioritize personal autonomy and self-reliance. As Hofstede (2001) notes, individualistic cultures emphasise personal goals over group goals, and social structures are often designed to protect individual rights and freedoms (p. 123). This fundamental difference in values leads to distinct social dynamics, where competition and personal achievement are often valued over communal welfare.

In Tiv land of Benue State, Nigeria, Benjamin Tyavkase Shii (2011) lamented that the Christian missionaries contributed greatly to destroying group alliance in Tiv land: The church taught that salvation was a personal matter and that one stood finally before a personal God to give a personal account. Many Christians could not participate in some of the practices of the community, and the Christians are the catalyst for the breakup of the ancient Tiv ties. The church now offers a new and important community to the Tiv. The church is also a place to identify with a group, a new focus of loyalty; the church serves as a substitute for the lost oligarchy of the compound (p. 411).

Dzurgba (2009, p.50) corroborated Shii that the European-African relationship was principally motivated by the economic interests of nations. In this context, natural resources, production and distribution of goods and services, trade, commerce, commercial routes, political power, literary education, technological knowledge and skills, as well as

strong armed forces, were all together utilised to achieve economic development. At this time, the Carthaginian Empire was the only strong empire that could challenge European empires in the Mediterranean region. The existing kingdoms in North Africa were militarily and economically weak, and there was no cooperation among them. This means that the main aim of the Europeans in Africa was to disintegrate them and plunder their resources.

Economic Implications

The Tiv group alliance system has significant economic implications. In Tiv society, resources such as land and labour are often shared within the *tar* system, ensuring that no member of the community is left without support. This communal approach to resource distribution (yanaangbian) contrasts sharply with individualistic societies, where private ownership and market competition dominate. As Bohannan (1957) observes, the Tiv system of land tenure is based on collective ownership, which reduces economic disparities and promotes social cohesion (p. 45).

On the other hand, individualistic societies tend to have higher levels of economic inequality, as individuals are encouraged to accumulate wealth for personal gain. This can lead to social stratification and a lack of safety nets for those who are less successful in competitive environments (Hofstede 2001, p. 76). The Tiv model, while not without its challenges, offers an alternative framework that prioritizes collective well-being over individual accumulation.

Cultural Identity and Social Cohesion

The Tiv group alliance system also plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity. Through their communal practices, the Tiv reinforce a shared sense of history, values, and traditions. This collective identity is maintained through oral traditions, rituals, and communal celebrations, which strengthen the bonds between members of the *tar* (Bohannan 1954,p.67). In individualistic societies, cultural identity is often more fragmented, as individuals are encouraged to define themselves independently of group affiliations.

However, the emphasis on individualism can also lead to greater personal freedom and innovation. In societies where individual expression is valued, there is often more room for creativity and diverse perspectives (Hofstede 2001, p.78). This can be seen in the arts, technology, and other fields where individual contributions drive progress. The challenge lies in balancing individual freedom with the need for social cohesion, a balance that the Tiv achieve through their group alliances.

The implications of Tiv group alliances and individualistic societies highlight the trade-offs between collectivism and individualism. While the Tiv system promotes social cohesion, economic equity, and cultural continuity, individualistic societies offer greater personal freedom and innovation (Loko & Adedina, 2022). Both systems have their strengths and weaknesses, and understanding these differences can provide valuable insights into how societies can address contemporary challenges such as inequality, social fragmentation, and cultural preservation.

Possible Solutions to the Problem of Tiv Group Alliance and Individualistic Society

The Tiv community in Nigeria has a well-established reputation for its robust communal relationships and collective partnerships, which are integral to their social, economic, and

political frameworks. Nonetheless, in modern times, the emergence of individualism, spurred by globalization and modernization, has generated conflicts within Tiv society. This section examines potential strategies to harmonize the traditional Tiv collective alliances with the increasing impact of individualistic ideals.

1. Promoting Cultural Education and Awareness

One solution is to promote cultural education that emphasises the value of both communal and individualistic approaches. By educating younger generations about the importance of Tiv communal values, such as *ityo* (kinship) and *kwav* (age group), while also acknowledging the benefits of individualism, a balance can be achieved. AsAkigaSai (2018) notes, "Cultural education serves as a bridge between tradition and modernity, ensuring that neither is entirely lost" (p. 45)). Schools and community programmes can play a pivotal role in this effort.

2. Strengthening Community-Based Institutions

Another solution is to strengthen community-based institutions that foster collaboration while respecting individual autonomy. The Tiv *kwagh-hir* (communal meeting) can be revitalised to address contemporary issues, allowing for collective decision-making while accommodating individual perspectives. According to Bohannan (1957), "the strength of Tiv society lies in its ability to adapt its traditional institutions to new challenges" (p. 112). This approach ensures that communal values remain relevant in a changing world.

3. Encouraging Inclusive Economic Policies

Economic policies that promote inclusivity can also help bridge the gap between group alliances and individualism. For instance, cooperative societies and microfinance

initiatives can empower individuals while fostering a sense of community. As Udoka Aondofa(2020) argues, "Economic empowerment that aligns with cultural values can mitigate the tensions between individualism and communal living" (p. 78). Such policies can provide opportunities for personal growth without undermining communal bonds.

4. Leveraging Technology for Social Cohesion

Technology can be harnessed to strengthen social cohesion in Tiv society. Social media platforms and communication tools can be used to promote communal activities and share cultural knowledge, even among those who have migrated to urban areas. As noted by IorapuuTor (2019), "Technology can serve as a tool for preserving cultural identity while embracing modernity" (p.20-30). This approach allows for the coexistence of individualistic and communal values.

5. Fostering Dialogue and Mediation

Finally, fostering dialogue and mediation between proponents of individualism and communal values is essential. Conflict resolution mechanisms, such as the Tiv i*jir*(traditional court), can be adapted to address disputes arising from these tensions. According toAkaakar, Terna(2017), "Dialogue and mediation are key to finding common ground in societies undergoing cultural transformation" (p. 56). This ensures that both perspectives are respected and integrated.

The tension between Tiv group alliances and individualistic society is a complex issue, but it can be addressed through a combination of cultural education, institutional strengthening, inclusive economic policies, technological innovation, and dialogue. By embracing solutions that honor both communal traditions and individual aspirations, Tiv society can

navigate the challenges of modernity while preserving its cultural heritage.

Recommendations

Having investigated Tiv Group Alliance and Individualistic Society: A Critical Analysis.
The study suggests the following recommendations:

1. Promote Cultural Education and Awareness: Encourage educational programs that highlight the values of the Tiv group alliance system (e.g., communal living, mutual support, and collective decision-making) alongside the principles of individualistic societies (e.g., personal freedom, self-reliance, and innovation). This will foster mutual understanding and respect between the Tiv communal system and individualistic societies, reducing conflicts and promoting coexistence. Integrate cultural studies into school curricula and organize community workshops to discuss the strengths and challenges of both systems.

2. Strengthen Social Safety Nets in Individualistic Societies: Individualistic societies can learn from the Tiv group alliance system by incorporating stronger communal support structures, such as community-based welfare programs or cooperative initiatives. This would address the isolation and lack of support often experienced in individualistic societies, creating a balance between individualism and communal responsibility. Governments and NGOs can establish community centers, mentorship programs, and cooperative networks to encourage collective responsibility.

3. Encourage Hybrid Social Systems: Develop hybrid social systems that combine the strengths of the Tiv group alliance (e.g., collective welfare, shared resources) with the benefits of individualistic societies (e.g., personal autonomy, innovation). A hybrid system

can mitigate the weaknesses of both systems, such as the potential for groupthink in communal systems or social fragmentation in individualistic societies. Pilot programs in communities or organizations can test hybrid models, such as cooperative businesses or shared resource networks.

4. Address Power Dynamics in Group Alliances: Examine and address power imbalances within the Tiv group alliance system, ensuring that marginalized voices (e.g., women, youth) are included in decision-making processes. This will make the group alliance system more equitable and adaptable to modern societal challenges, reducing internal conflicts and enhancing its sustainability. Introduce inclusive governance structures and leadership training programs within Tiv communities to promote fairness and transparency.

5. Foster Dialogue Between Communal and Individualistic Societies: Create platforms for dialogue and exchange between the Tiv group alliance system and individualistic societies to explore shared values and collaborative solutions. Open dialogue can bridge cultural gaps, reduce stereotypes, and foster mutual learning, leading to innovative solutions for societal challenges. Organize international conferences, cultural exchange programs, and collaborative projects that bring together representatives from both systems. These recommendations aim to create a balanced approach that respects the strengths of the Tiv group alliance system while addressing the challenges posed by individualistic societies. By promoting cultural understanding, hybrid systems, and inclusive dialogue, it is possible to build a more harmonious and sustainable social framework.

Conclusion

The Tiv group alliance is rooted in communal values such as mutual support, shared responsibilities, and collective identity, which foster strong social cohesion and cultural continuity. Individualistic societies emphasise personal autonomy, self-reliance, and achievement, which contrasts with the Tiv's communal focus. Tiv group alliances promote unity and cultural preservation but may limit personal expression and innovation. Individualistic systems support personal freedom and progress but often face social fragmentation and weakened communal ties. The contrast between group-oriented and individualistic values reveals a need for reconciling both models to benefit from their respective strengths. A hybrid approach is recommended—one that balances communal support with personal aspirations, encourages intercultural dialogue, and promotes policies that integrate collective welfare with individual growth.

The critical analysis underscores the dynamic relationship between group alliance and individualism within and beyond the Tiv society. Each system holds intrinsic value—while communalism ensures social unity and cultural identity, individualism drives personal development and innovation. A balanced integration of these paradigms is essential for building inclusive, adaptive, and harmonious societies. Recognising and synthesising these approaches can help address modern social challenges and foster mutual understanding in an increasingly diverse world.

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