

Full Length Research Paper

Dunlopian Theory: Impact and Relevance to Nigeria Industrial Relations System

¹Francis C. Anyim, ²Cyril Oseloka Ikemefuna and ³Joy Onyinyechi Ekwoaba

^{1,2,3}Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, Faculty of Business Administration University of Lagos, Nigeria

Received February 3, 2012; Accepted February 28, 2012

Various attempts have been made to systematize relevant theoretical concepts of industrial relations by researchers but there is however, so much controversy that there is yet to emerge a general theory of industrial relations. The objective of this paper examined the work of John Dunlop which is acclaimed to be a famous text in the field of industrial relations. The paper made a critique of the Dunlopian model and anchored with the impact and relevance of the model to the practice of industrial relations in Nigeria in the 21st century.

Keywords: Industrial relations, Labour, Functionalism, Ideology, Budgetary constraints, Locus of power, Technological characteristics, Actors.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems with understanding the term "industrial relations" is that there is no one approach to the subject which satisfies everyone. Different people perceive the subject in different ways and from different theoretical and practical perspectives. Some view industrial relations in terms of class conflict between owners of capital and the working class. Some suggest that the subject has to do with the relationship between labour and management. Others look at the subject as the process of interest accommodation through which conditions of employment are fixed, relations regulated and power shared between the parties. Still others hold the view that the subject embraces the entire gamut of human interactions at workplace which arise out of the employment contract.

For the foregoing reasons, industrial relations have become both academic and political subject where the opposing ideas and values of individuals and of group compete against one another. The definitions of the scope and nature of industrial relations vary from one situation to the other. Among practitioners, definitions might arise from their experiences, beliefs and operational considerations with which they are faced.

Trade unionists, for example, tend to emphasize the relationship between Unions, Management and Employers' Associations and the processes and institutions that have developed to structure them. The main areas of focus from the trade union point of view are industrial conflict or strikes, Joint Consultations and various state labour and economic policies.

On the other hand, many managers do not even recognize the existence of industrial relations, particularly, if they are in very small establishments, while in some organizations, explicit recognition might be given to industrial relations leading to the appointment of managers to head such section, unit or department. However, the general tendency is for industrial relations to be looked upon by management as part and parcel of Personnel Management. In fact, some management equates industrial relations with Personnel Management which is grossly erroneous.

By and large, the academic study of industrial relations has not produced a common definition for the subject. However, industrial relations covers the following:

- relationship between employers and workers in individual enterprises;
- relations amongst managers and employers themselves including their organizations;
- relations between workers, their organizations and the State;

- relations between State officials and employers and their organizations; and
- relations among and between workers and their organization.

For the mere fact that the foregoing relationships are mixed or interwoven, industrial relations therefore covers relationship arising out of employment in which three principal parties are affected (workers and their organization – trade unions), (employers, management and their organization (Employers' association) and the State.

It is also noteworthy that industrial relations take place within a framework of: economic and social conditions; the nature of the labour force; Laws, public policy, international labour standards and established practice and Institutions (including trade unions, employers organization, the State, management, collective bargaining and joint consultations).

Out of all these factors which define the framework within which industrial relations takes place, perhaps the most important are the institutions. They have an existence beyond the particular persons involved in them and they establish the patterns of behaviour among their participants. Therefore, a knowledge of institutions is important because they pre-determine the broad limits within which industrial relations practitioners and participants such as managers, trade unionists and state officials or representatives act in practical situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Origin, Definition and Scope of Industrial Relations

The term "industrial relations" was coined out of the historical circumstances of the British Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. It came into common parlance long before its subject matter drew enough attention or acquired sufficient respectability to be treated as an academic or intellectual discipline (Yesufu, 1982). According to Fajana (2006) industrial relations is defined broadly as a discipline concerned with the systematic study of all aspects of the employment relationship. It deals with everything that affects the relationship between workers and employers; perhaps from the time the employee joins the work organization until he leaves his job. The American system approaches to the subject were strongly influenced by structural functionalist sociology (Ogunbameru, 2004). Dunlop (1958) based his model explicitly on Talcot Parson's social system; it assumed an inherent bias towards order and stability. According to Ogunbameru (2004) looking for a universal definition of industrial relations may be as stressful as looking for an Ocean in the desert. This is because over the years, the concept has been subjected to different conceptual treatment. Differences in definition

derived partly from the fact that despite a long history of academic investigation, no single disciplinary core has yet emerged in descriptions and explanations of industrial relations behaviour. For instance, sociologists, historians, economists, lawyers amongst others continue to make contributions often with scant regard for each other.

Cordova (1980) defines industrial relations as the process of interest accommodation by which conditions of work are fixed; relations are regulated and power is shared in the field of labour. Yesufu (1982) on his part sees industrial relations as the whole web of human interactions at work which is predicted upon and arises out of the employment contract. Both definitions recognize that industrial relations is concerned with the systems, rules and procedures used by unions and employers to determine the reward for effort and other conditions of employment, to protect the interests of the employed and their employers and to regulate the ways in which employers treat their employees.

In the opinion of Fajana (2006), the whole idea of industrial relations emerged because the conflict involving the inability of the employers and employees to have a proper dialogue concerning the terms and conditions of employment. The ensuring conflict is inevitable but there are generally mechanisms to ensure that it is channeled or accommodated. These mechanisms are individual resolution, unilateral determination by employers, state, trade unions or workers or joint modes of regulation by the actions of the parties.

In the course of everyday interaction, each of the parties, whether in the broader tripartite set up in industrial relations system itself, or bipartite nature of enterprise industrial relations has its own objectives which tend to guide its role. The objectives of the parties are sometimes congruent and at other times incongruent with one another. In spite of the strong desire or compelling necessity to work harmoniously, there is nevertheless latent antagonism or conflict among the parties. For instance, a worker may seek more favourable terms and conditions of work; a trade union may want to secure maximum benefits for its members; employers may seem always poised to achieve minimum costs and maximum profits while government and its regulatory agencies on the other hand may adopt socio-economic objectives and policies to which the other two parties may consider undesirable or find unpalatable (Anyim, 2009).

Industrial relations in terms of scope and content also embraces issues which are national in character (fuel scarcity, bad roads, power failure, inflationary trends, armed robbery, terrorism etc). Aside from the decisive influence which industrial relations has on supply of goods and services, it touches upon human values in the work environment. Bearing in mind that the industrial relations actors are transmitters of various events some of which lie outside the realm of industrial relations, it is therefore not surprising that the following variables which

are both national and international in character: war and peace, population explosion, technology, foreign trade, product market, social structure to mention just few affect industrial relations. However, it is generally believed that an industrial relations system is derived from a particular political, economic and legal context within which it exists. These contextual influences play prominent role in shaping the direction of industrial relations (Anyim, 2010). From the foregoing, industrial relations is therefore a complex of relationships in which many individuals, organizations and other variables or elements, have a role to play and the role of any one party or organization is affected by the role of the other.

Theories of Industrial Relations

In a broad sense theories are needed first as aid to understanding events and problems in the practical world. A second general reason for having theory is to aid prediction (Fajana, 2006). Dunlop (1958) stresses that theory is needed for the purpose of explaining observations. He decried the mounting up of facts on the plains of human ignorance and called for a speedy up of integrated theory to help interpret, explain and relate them. In the opinion of Walker (1976) the more industrial relations theory enables forecasting, the more useful it will be to practitioners, helping them to get ready for what may be in store. Flanders (1965) argues that theory is needed to pose the right questions and research to provide the right answers, granted that a constant interplay has to take place between the two.

Explaining the link between theory and action, Hyman (1975) admonishes trade union scholars that indifference towards all theories can be extremely harmful and he went further to state that actions should not be based on take for granted assumptions especially in a constantly changing world where traditional ideas are often rendered obsolete. According to Fajana (2006) the most serious problem hampering the development of stable general and valid theories of industrial relations is perhaps the confusions of different stages of theory formulation. He posits that much of the controversy about theories of industrial relations could be avoided if the theorists could be conscious of their levels of theorizing and the limitations of such levels.

There are five academic theories by which industrial relations institutions, structures and processes are analysed by different social theorists (Farnham and Primlott, 1998). These are unitary theory, conflict theory, social action theory, systems theory and marxist theory.

The unitary theory according to Fox (1974) is characterized by a belief that work organizations are unified bodies in whichever way share the same goals. A fundamental unity of interest is assumed among members of the organization, hence conflict does not necessary exist or should not logically occur. As Crouch (1982) puts it, conflict is seen in unitary perspective as

rather unnecessary since there is no misunderstanding or mischief. The approach has even moved further to view trade union as a historical anachronisms which is not relevant in the 21st century (Salamon 1992).

Conflict theory holds the basic assumption that the proponents see conflict as inherent in labour/management relationship based on the fact that these two classes have interests of conflictual nature and which are diametrically opposed to each other. The proponents of conflict theory also postulated that in a capitalist economy, the state is always on the side of the employer in an attempt to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie. In the opinion of Miliband (1969) the state stands for a number of institutions that are constantly used to harass and repress the trade unions. The state is therefore seen as a coercive instrument of the ruling capitalist class. According to Hyman (1975), the quest for control of work brings workers into direct confrontation with the management and considers government and its regulatory agencies as mere tools of influential individuals or groups who perpetrate their selfish interests. In the view of Margerison (1969) conflict is inherent in industrial society hence there is the need to resolve it through agreed rules between the contending parties in order to avoid the use of violence or other non-legitimate means.

Social action theory in industrial relations emphasizes the individual responses of the social actors such as managers, employees and union representatives to given situations. Social action theory is predominantly associated with the studies of Max Weber (1896). According to Weber, action is social by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual. The action takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course (Max Weber, 1896). Social action theory focuses on understanding particular actions in industrial relations situations rather than on just observing explicit industrial relations behaviour.

Dunlop (1958) presented the systems theory and provided tools of analysis to interpret and to gain understanding of the widest possible range of industrial relations facts and practice. In the words of Dunlop (1958) an industrial relations at any one time in its development is regarded as comprising of certain actors, contexts, an ideology which binds the industrial relations system together, and a body of rules created to govern the actors at the workplace and work community. The actors comprise a hierarchy of managers and their representatives; a hierarchy of non-representatives; and specialized third party agencies whether governmental or private ones. The contexts focus on three environmental contexts that play a decisive part in shaping the rules of an industrial relations system and with which the actors interact. They include technological characteristics, budgetary constraints and the locus and distribution of power in the larger society. The greatest criticism leveled against Dunlop's theoretical approach is the way the term

'systems' was applied. Blain and Gennard (1974) view as a grave shortcoming Dunlop's failure to define accurately the systems concept and his application of the term in a variety of ways. For instance he applied the term variously to individuals, individual firms, industrial branches and even to analyse and describe real case or circumstances.

The Marxist perspective has its origin from socialist ideologies. It assumes and emphasizes within a capitalist society where productive systems are owned and profit is the key influence on company's policy (Hyman, 1975). Hyman (1975) states further that conflict which arises out of those differences in economic power between social groups are rooted in the structure and institution of society itself and also that, the activities of industrial relations are means of achieving a resolution. According to Ogunbameru (2004) the conflict taking place in industrial relations between those who buy labour and those who sell it is seen as a permanent feature of capitalism merely reflecting the predominant power base of the bourgeois and the class relations of capitalist society generally. In this respect, class conflict, permeates the whole of society and is not just an industrial phenomenon. In the same way, trade unionism is a social as well as industrial phenomenon. Trade unions are by implication challenging the property relations wherever they challenge the distribution of the national produce. They are challenging all the prerogatives which go with the ownership of the means of production, not simply the exercise of control over labour power in industry (Allen, 1971). The Marxist perspective in its perception or notion sees the bourgeoisies giving rise to a revolutionary leadership of the working class which will gravitate to socialism and later communism.

In summary and in line with Roy Adam's (1988) contention, a good deal of theory are found in rudimentary forms which are enough to negate the statement that there are no valid theories of industrial relations.

Overview of Dunlopian Industrial Relations Systems

Dunlop's work titled "Industrial Relations Systems" published in 1958 is perhaps the most influential book in the field of industrial relations since the Second World War. According to Dunlop, the objective of the work is to build a general theory for the study of industrial relations. The work draws a lot from the systems concept and also on the earlier work of Talcott Parsons on the concept of "Functionalism". Dunlop views the industrial relations system as a subsystem of the wider society or entire social system. The industrial relations system is not a subsidiary of the economic system but logically an abstraction designed to highlight relationship and boundary lines between society and the industrial relations system. Also in some respect the industrial relations and economic system overlap and in other

respect, they have different scopes. For instance, recruitment of labour and wages/salaries administration have bearing with industrial relations and economics while the making of rules in the workplace is entirely within the realm of industrial relations. Any analysis of the industrial relations system makes assumption about the rest of the social system in three ways:

- i) the relations of industrial relations system to the entire society;
- ii) the relations of the industrial relations system to the economic system; and
- iii) the inner structure and characteristics of the industrial relations subsystem itself.

While it is true that industrial relations is a discipline of its own, however, it has been a cross-road or tributary where a number of disciplines have come together e.g. history, economics, government, sociology, psychology and law.

According to Dunlop, an industrial relations system at any given time in its development has certain actors, contexts and ideology which combine to establish rules to govern the actors at the workplace and in the work community. The dependent variables are the rules while the independent variables are the contexts of the system which can change. On the other hand, the ideology of the system which is the combination of the ideologies of each of the actors may be stable or unstable.

The actors are in three major groupings:

- i) Managers and their representatives;
- ii) Workers (non-managerial) and their spokespersons; and
- iii) Specialized governmental agencies (and specialized private agencies) dealing with managers' or workers' organizations or even individual workers.

These actors operate within contexts which is a constrained environment which may be determined by the larger society and it also influences and sets limit on their activities. The environment plays significant role in shaping the rules established by the actors. The environmental context is made up of three sets of variables:

i) **Technological Characteristics** of the workplace and work community, including the type of product(s) or service(s) created will greatly influence the size and skills of the workforce as well as the level or magnitude of managerial control. Dunlop went further to argue that identical technological environments in every different national societies can give rise to similar rules at workplace.

ii) **The Market or Budgetary Constraints** are the second feature of the environmental context. It is best illustrated in terms of differences noticeable between western and socialist world. For instance, in the western countries, the state budget has little influence on the

freedom of industrial organization which may adopt any means it so desires to achieve its objectives. But in the socialist countries, the State dictates through planning industrial output, remuneration/welfare package which the parties in industrial relations cannot influence or go against the dictates of the State. In other words, this context sets the limits within which the organization must operate. Furthermore, an industrial system created and administered by the parties will be adaptive to its market and budgetary constraints.

iii) **The Locus and Distribution of Power** is the third feature of the environmental context. This has to do with the location and distribution of power in the society which influences the extent to which the industrial relations system is centralized or decentralized as well as the kinds of interventions by whom and for what purpose. The distribution of power among the parties tends to be reflected in terms of prestige, position and access to power of the actors. For instance, a Managing Director/Chief Executive of an enterprise can reach the Labour Minister in few hours than a union official in the period of crisis. In another vein, the function of one of the parties is likely to be particularly influenced by the distribution of power in the society. For example, the power of the State supersedes that of other actors in the system.

Dunlop (1958) also wrote about rules which the actors establish for the workplace and work community, including those governing the relationship between the actors. He identified two types of rules: one is for resolving conflicts among the actors and this is termed 'procedural rules' while the other termed 'substantive rules' sets the specific terms and conditions of employment. These web of rules are diverse and consists of management prerogatives, state laws, agreements reached between parties, conventions or traditions and the procedures for interpreting such rules. From the foregoing, some of the rules are created within the organization, while some are external and imposed on the organization to regulate the conduct of the parties. Dunlop went further to enumerate that some of the rules will be more closely related to the technical aspects of operation while others will be more directly related to the distribution of power in the society. Also, the actual content of these rules varies enormously among systems as a consequence of the technological and market contexts of the systems. Furthermore, the setting of the detailed and technical aspects of the rules makes it imperative to create a special group of experts and professionals in the society e.g. Accountants, Lawyers, Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, etc. Another element in the system is the Ideology of each of the actors which is a set of beliefs concerning its own role and place and that of the other actors in the system. According to Dunlop, the ideology helps to bind or to integrate the system together as an indivisible entity. In general, while there tends to be a compatibility among the beliefs, there can

also be a situation where there is no common ideology, where at least one actor does not provide a legitimate role for the other. However, Dunlop insists that all the ideologies must be compatible or consistent to permit a common set of ideas which recognize an acceptable role for each actor.

Flanders (1965) is another author who provided further contribution to Dunlop's work on industrial relations systems. According to Flanders, industrial relations system is "a system of rules". He went further to state that the study of industrial relations can be described as the study of institutions of job regulations and emphasized that the authorship of such rules is very important. For instance, if rules are made by the workers they are likely to obey them whereas if they are made by management or government, they may and may not obey them.

Flanders in support of Dunlop's viewpoints observed that some of the rules for job regulations are substantive while others are procedural. Procedural rules define the status and relationship between the parties e.g. union recognition, dispute settlement procedure, etc. while the substantive rules are those that relate to the status and rewards of job e.g. wage rates, holiday entitlements, hours of work, etc.

Flanders viewed industrial relations system as having focus on job regulations, consequently, he categorized job regulations into two: internal and external job regulations. Internal job regulation has to do with rules developed by managers and workers whereas the external regulations are those involving the constraints brought about by Employers' Associations, National Trade Unions, Registrar of Trade Unions, National Industrial Court, Industrial Arbitration Panel, Law Enforcement Agents, etc. The short-comings/criticisms of Dunlop's work are examined in the sub-heading that follows.

Criticisms/Shortcomings of Dunlopian Industrial Relations Model

The industrial relations systems approach has many protagonists as well as antagonists in terms of criticisms leveled against the model by some writers. First, the industrial relations systems view the art of negotiation between management and union as dependent on rules whilst neglecting what transpires in the course of actual or practical negotiation between parties e.g. informal contacts to narrow differences or to solicit for understanding between parties during negotiation session(s), trade in and off of certain items on the bargaining table in the course of negotiation. Second, the model assumes that industrial relations process is static. Dunlop's work sees industrial relations exclusively as rule-making and job regulating processes and therefore too conservative a formulation. It also creates the impression that industrial relations processes maintains

stability and equilibrium thus ignoring the inevitability of conflict in the shopfloor or as unavoidable occurrence inherent in the system. Third, the model holds the impression that there must be a balance or compatibility between labour and management through a shared ideology. This viewpoint vividly supports the criticism of lack of dynamism portrayed by Dunlop's model. It is obvious that ideologies may not be compatible since the aims, objectives and expectations of both management and the employees are not identical but could overlap in certain spheres or areas.

Fourth, the model is seen to have ignored behavioural aspects of the actors in their day-to-day relationship. This behaviour or personality make-up of human beings focused on motivations, perceptions and attitudes which can influence their views or standpoint with respect to the interpretation of rules and regulations. However, we can add that personality characteristics are not the only factors that influence the decision of the actors but also other prevailing environmental factors at play.

The fifth criticism centres on the way the concept systems was used by Dunlop and its applications in a multifaceted or variety of ways. He applied it interchangeably to mean individuals, firms, distinct features of industrial relations practice in different countries, local unions, central unions, etc. However, the criticism may not be seen as worrisome or a serious defect of Dunlop's industrial relations model. This is due to the fact that industrial relations system could be conducted at both micro and macro levels i.e. by a single employer or by multi-employer at a central level. The crux or core issue is that a system should be seen as a structure or component parts working harmoniously together as espoused in Parson's concept of structural functionalism.

The sixth shortcoming focuses on the perception of Dunlop that the objective of industrial relations systems or framework is to provide statistical testing but unfortunately or disappointingly the model never generated any testable hypotheses for analytical purpose.

However and interestingly, the text indicates the factors that can affect, influence or alter industrial relations system: technological characteristics, market or budgetary constraint and location/distribution of power. Perhaps, the whole intent was to generate testable hypotheses from the foregoing factors which Dunlop surprisingly failed to develop. In similar vein, some proponents of Dunlop's model also follow suit when in the actual fact there are a lot of hypotheses that could have been generated and tested from some of the variables highlighted by Dunlop in his work. This trend may have stemmed from lack of awareness or interest in hypotheses testing by these scholars who seem not to have fully explored Dunlop's original intent of industrial relations systems. In summary, the model has been serving as a general framework in organizing a

description of the interaction between the actors in industrial relations, the environmental contexts and the ideologies of the parties but its practical application does not meet the stronger test set by Dunlop on statistical testing of hypotheses and the making of research more additive.

Dunlopian Model and its Impact and Relevance to the Nigeria Context

With respect to industrial relations scene in Nigeria, most of the Nigerian writers seem to have adopted Dunlop's systems approach as framework in the description of the actors in the system and in the context of various environmental factors. Besides, the industrial relations model has a profound impact on the pedagogy or teaching of industrial relations in the basic courses in the tertiary institutions.

The following features: the factors, environmental contexts, ideology, rules and the term systems amongst others are all crucial elements of the Nigeria system of industrial relations. Each feature as it relates to the Nigeria situation is the focus of the discussion that follows.

Like in other countries, the social system in Nigeria has other sub-systems such as economic, political and industrial relations which overlap with each other in the system or larger society.; In Nigeria, the industrial relations system comprise three groups of actors: the workers and their unions, the employers and their associations and the governmental agencies. These actors operate within certain environmental contexts namely technological characteristics of the workplace which has to do with the kinds of skills needed by the organization and the proportion of each e.g. the introduction of computers and other technical equipment will require the use of special skills and adherence to new mode of operation with its attendant consequences for labour relations.

The second context is market or budgetary constraints which set the limit within which the organization must operate. This impinges on the demand and supply of goods and services, competition, market and inflationary trends, recession in economy, level of employment, size of population, etc, which are common features of the Nigeria scene. The third context which focus on location and distribution of power among the actors shows how power is distributed in the larger society and the access of the parties to the corridor of power. In Nigeria, the government, apart from being the largest employer of labour, is also the chief regulator of the economy and its power supersedes that of other actors in the system. The industrial relations system in Nigeria is centralized with the operation of the interventionist policy termed "Guided Democracy" by government as distinct from the British model based on 'Laissez-faire' doctrine.

Each of the actors in the Nigeria system has ideologies which are sometimes compatible and at other times divergent since the expectations and interests of both workers, management team and government officials are different. However, the ideologies overlap along the line since each party perceives itself as working towards the economic prosperity of the organization and the nation at large. To this extent, a compatible or consistent ideology acceptable and recognized by all the parties is thus conceived and shared mutually.

Rules which are identified as the outcome or main output of the industrial relations system are applied in the resolution of conflicts among the actors and to govern their relationship in the workplace and the entire work community. In Nigeria, the following rules are used: procedural rules which focus on procedures for resolving conflicts and interpretation of the rules made in the event of disagreement between parties. The other is substantive rules which sets or defines terms and conditions of employment. Apart from the foregoing, there are also diverse web of rules employed in the workplace and the entire system: state laws or statutes, statutory regulations, labour policies/pronouncements, conventions, traditions, etc. which are rules externally imposed on the parties by the state authorities. Others are management prerogatives, Joint consultations, Negotiations, Conditions of Service which are rules made internally or within the organization to guide the conduct of the parties.

Rules with detailed and technical nature of operation has created a special group of professionals in the Nigerian society: Lawyers, Accountants, Engineers, Surveyors, Medical Doctors etc. As professionals in various fields, they are expected to have a mastery of the language or terms, concepts relevant to their profession or field of study. Turning to the notion that actual content of rules vary from one system to the other as expounded by Dunlop, the instance that the Nigeria system tolerates strikes as a form of conflict whereas in the socialist countries strike is hardly allowed readily comes to mind.

The stance of Dunlopian theory that an industrial relations system means different things at different levels of aggregation is also applicable to the Nigeria system. On one hand, industrial relations system is seen as a subsystem of the larger society and reciprocally, the larger society provides the external environment which influences the actors and industrial relations institutions. Some elaborations have been made on this in the preceding paragraphs on environmental contexts. Furthermore, industrial relations system and economic system overlap and in other respects they have different scopes to cover under the Nigeria model. In this context, Mobility of labour, population explosion, economic depression are subjects or issues that affect both the industrial relations system and the economic system in Nigeria but the drawing of terms and conditions of

employment is absolutely within the realm of industrial relations.

In the Nigeria industrial relations system, there is also the existence of a subsystem. The labour relations practice in the public sector with the government as an actor and regulator of industrial relations is distinct from what operates in the private sector of the economy e.g. free collective bargaining is prominently used in the private sector whereas the government (State) adopts periodic ad-hoc and imposed wage review for its employees in place of collective bargaining.

The environment as earlier adduced influences the actors in the Nigeria industrial relations scene in terms of goals, ideology and use of power. These variables in turn influence the behaviour of the actors in the process of making rules which has been noted under the shortcomings was ignored in Dunlop's model. In the Nigeria context, behavioural pattern of the actors are different. The employees see the employer as a superior and benefactors and not as their equals. Their social relations at workplace is rooted in paternalism which is analogous to respect for the leader, elder or superior in the work setting. In the Nigerian context, the actors' perception of leadership, seniority and authority differ remarkably from what obtains in the western industrial societies. Arising from this cultural imperatives, the expatriate manager in the Nigeria setting who fails to take cognizance of this vital variable may be faced with managerial difficulties or have his managerial competence questioned or indicted. The same trend could affect a Nigerian manager who indulges in western managerial practice or ideology without due regards for African cultural values in the workplace. In both instance, the manager may see the workers' action as personal hatred designed to undermine his/her leadership position rather than a phenomenon dictated by cultural imperatives.

Still on cultural undertone in the African setting, it is not unusual for the union leadership to make frequent requests for management to sponsor them on trade union courses in Nigeria irrespective of the check-off dues at their disposal or for the central labour organization to ask government to assist them with grants or funds for other contingencies. Yet and interestingly, their relationship still remain adversarial even when such requests are granted. This trend to a great extent is in consonance with societal customs and practices in the African setting. From the foregoing, the vital lesson that can be drawn from this scenario centres on the need for an industrial relations system to evolve institutions and behaviours which reflects the environment and cultural values of the actors in which it operates in terms of society or polity. Taking cognizance of the role behaviour and cultural influence play in industrial relations, Dunlop in his model seems to have ignored important element in his work.

The notion by Dunlop that industrial relations is a cross-road of many disciplines: history, economics, government, sociology, psychology and law is very relevant in the Nigeria context. During post-graduate admission exercise in Nigeria tertiary institutions, preference is usually given to students with social and management sciences background because they can easily comprehend the subject-matter and face the rigors of the discipline with ease than arts or physical sciences graduates. Furthermore, in the course of discharging their duties, the industrial relations managers or practitioners must be conversant with historical, economic, sociological, political and psychological trends in the country or within their environment of operation. Also industrial relations being a subset of the system grounded on web of rules puts the practitioner at alert on knowledge update all the time on laws or rule-making which is a dynamic process necessitated by the dictates of the environment or emerging trends in the system.

Following the stand of Dunlop that his model is meant to provide statistical testing for hypotheses, unfortunately most of the Nigerian authors in their text appear not to have treated the subject quantitatively and theoretically but rather historical and descriptive analyses tend to dominate their writings and research work or products. This to a great extent is not a healthy development since nearly all science disciplines make use of theories to aid, test and guide in the explanation of phenomenon.

Conclusively, it will be noted that the main areas covered by the Nigeria industrial relations model when compared with Dunlopian theory are institutional framework, collective bargaining process and disputes settlement procedures which conform with the actors' ideologies and rules-making as expounded by Dunlop in his famous work on industrial relations systems.

CONCLUSION

Dunlop's model amongst practitioners has sparked off enormous discussion within the industrial relations field. Though some scholars may not entirely agree with Dunlop but his text which cannot be easily ignored appears to be one of the most influential texts in the field of industrial relations. As Otobo (1988) acknowledges, the dominant received perspective in the social sciences in Africa remains the systems approach of Dunlop. Furthermore, Fashoyin (1992) and Ubeku (1983) describe in their texts the milieu in which parties relate in the Dunlopian tradition of systems context. Fajana (2006) sees most management in Africa as racially and ethnically stratified aside from other intervening variables, the compatibility of ideologies might prove difficult to achieve in his opinion.

The task set out by Dunlop model of industrial relations system was to provide an abstract which would supply the basis for a theoretical core to new inquiries and make research additive but bulk of the observers hold the view that Dunlop's industrial relations systems failed to achieve this objective. It is true that there are applications of industrial relations systems, but they tend to be more of a framework to describe the relationships between the actors in the system and in the context of the impact of various environmental factors.

In conclusion, there is no doubt, that Dunlop's industrial relations model is still alive and awaiting to be fully explored and applied by scholars. However, the task is for the lofty contributions of Dunlop to the field of industrial relations to be refined on a continuous basis and made dynamic in line with changing trends and dictates of modern society.

REFERENCES

- Adams, Roy (1988). "Desperately Seeking Industrial Relations Theory" In the *International Journal of Comparable Labour Law and Industrial Relations* Vol. 4, Issue 1, Pp 1 – 10.
- Allen, V.I. (1971) *The Sociology of Industrial Relations*, London, Longman Pg. 76.
- Anyim, F.C. (2010). Industrial Relations Practice in Nigeria" Paper Presented at Workshop Organized by NUSDE in Lagos, Nigeria Pg. 7.
- Anyim, F.C. (2009). "A Critique of Trade Disputes Settlement Mechanism in Nigeria: 1968 to 2004" Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Lagos, Nigeria.
- Crouch, C. (1993). "Industrial Relations and European State Traditions", Oxford University Press, Pg. 85
- Dunlop, J. T. (1958). *Industrial Relations System*, Illinois, University Press Carbondale and Edwardsville.
- Fajana, Sola (2006). *Industrial Relations in Nigeria: Theory and Features*, Lagos, Labofin and Coy Pg. 3.
- Farnham, D. and Primlott, J. (1998). *Understanding Industrial Relations, (5th edn) Cassell, London Pg. 44.*
- Fashoyin, T. (1992). *Industrial Relations in Nigeria, (2nd edn) Lagos, Longman Pg. 132.*
- Flanders, A. (1965). *Industrial Relations: What is Wrong with the System?*, London, Faber Press Pg. 6.
- Fox, A (1974) *Beyond Contract, Work, Power and Trust Relations*, London, Faber and Faber Pg. 29.
- Hyman, R. (1975). *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction*, London, McMillan Pg. 2.
- Margerison, C.J. (1969). "What Do We Mean by Industrial Relations? A Behavioural Approach" *British Journal of Industrial Relations* Vol.2 Pg. 45.
- Miliband, R. (1969) *The State in Capitalist Society*, Quartet Pg. 1
- Ogunbameru, O. A. (2004). *Organizational Dynamics*, Lagos, Spectrum Books Ltd Pg. 56.
- Otobo, Dafe (1988). *State and Industrial Relations in Nigeria*, Lagos, Malthouse Publishing Ltd. Pg. 166.
- Salamon, M. (2000). *Industrial Relations*, London, Pearson Education Ltd, Pg. 82.
- Ubeku, A.K. (1982). *Industrial Relations in Developing Countries: The Case of Nigeria*, London, McMillan Press Pg. 36.
- Yesufu, T. M. (1982). *The Dynamics or Industrial Relations: The Nigerian Experience*, Ibadan, University Press. Pg. 6

