IDEOLOGY, CULTURE, AND TRADE UNION BEHAVIOR: THE NIGERIAN CASE

AUGUSTINE I. AHIAUZU

I. INTRODUCTION

ONE common feature of modern industrial workplaces is the existence of worker collectivities, particularly trade unions. When studying the behavior of trade unions at workplace, industry or national level, social scientists normally place their focus on the ideology of the unions. A union ideology is conceived here as a set of doctrinal statements which a union adopts for the purpose of legitimating its actions before its members and the wider society. Ideologies have the effect of shaping and structuring union policies and actions on specific issues. Ideological statements are also used by unions to evoke the absolute loyalty and commitment of union members and create a group feeling which can provide a strong basis for collective action when found necessary. Generally, a set of original ideologies evolve with a union organization, and these may vary with the situation and circumstances which prompted the formation of the union. Ideologies are the driving force behind union policies and activities. Therefore, it is the ideologies that a union adopts which determine the nature and general behavior of the union organization. Gallie's study [13, p. 313] of French and British unions supplies empirical evidence for this argument.

However, one noteworthy argument adduced by Fox is that union ideology, "by its nature varies considerably according to situation and circumstance" [12]. He went further to indicate a particular circumstance that could make for differences in union ideologies by arguing that "ideologies are virtually certain to incorporate some of the attitudes and values of the society in which they take their rise" [12, p. 132]. Here Fox was referring to "culture" as a circumstance which could account for differences in the ideologies of trade unions in different cultural contexts. Lipset [20] [21] in contrasting the trade union movement of the United States with that of Northwestern Europe and Australasia, has also pointed out the influence of the different societal values in shaping trade union movements in the different societies. Even Fox has argued that "the fact that each society has its own social configuration and historical development, which is in some respects unique, enables us to make a related proposition about collectivity ideologies" [12, p. 132]. But what has not hitherto been done is to identify the relevant cultural characteristics and the way they influence union ideologies and thereby shape the nature and general behavior of trade unions. This is what we intend to do in this paper.

We shall here distinguish the nature and the general behavior patterns of a union in terms of its degree of "unionateness." Blackburn has defined the degree of unionateness of a worker collectivity, as "the extent to which it is a whole-hearted trade union, identifying with the labour movement and willing to use all the powers of the movement" [8, p. 18]. The degree of unionateness indicates the extent to which a union organization is prepared to be militant, using all forms of industrial action to achieve its objectives. In the study reported in this paper we sought to identify certain cultural characteristics which influence the ideologies of the union organization in Hausa and Ibo workplaces in Nigeria, thereby accounting for differences in the nature and behavior of unions in the different cultural contexts. We shall present the study and a discussion of its findings, and then we shall examine the implications of such cultural influences for the management of industrial relations in Nigerian workplaces.

II. THE CASE STUDY: METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Writers who have so far given some indication regarding likely cultural influences on trade union behavior, have made the mistake of basing their conclusions on their comparative studies of unions in different countries, without giving thought to the fact that the differences which they might have observed in the behavior of unions, which they have attributed to culture, might have been due to the influence of other environmental factors, such as political, economic, and legal systems. For example in Gallie's conclusion [13, p. 295 and p. 312] on the roots of the differences in the nature and behavior of British and French unions, and Dore's explanation [9, pp. 12–13] on the likely origin of the differences between British and Japanese unions, the authors tended to ignore the fact that they were comparing workers who, being in different countries, were under the influence of different political, macroeconomic, and legal systems. This point seriously lowers the validity of the conclusions drawn by these writers from such cross-national comparative studies. In order to guard against such a mistake in our present study, we have based the study on the Hausa and Ibo cultural groups in Nigeria.

Two Hausa and two Ibo workplaces were selected for the study. In selecting the workplaces effort was made to ensure that the membership of each of the four workplaces was monocultural. This means that apart from the fact that the workplaces were located in the specific geographical area of the particular cultural groups, the greater proportion of members belonged to one cultural group. The four workplaces were matched in technology and size, and as they were all within one national boundary, they were under the influence of the same political, legal, and general macroeconomic system.[1] The only circumstance which differed in the four workplaces were the different cultural traditions, social values, and customary practices of the different cultural groups.

[1] The two Hausa workplaces were located in Kaduna while one of the Ibo workplaces was located at Aba and the other at Asaba. These organizations are to remain annonymous for obvious reasons.

Semi-structured interviews in the form of meetings with the branch union officials[2] were held in each of the four workplaces. A meeting lasted for about three hours in each workplace. The major questions put to the union officials present at each meeting were as follows:

1. What are the objectives of your union in the workplace which you as union officials are pursuing, in terms of your present activities and future plans?
2. What demands have you made to management in the past five years?
3. What methods have you adopted in enforcing these demands and how effective have those methods been?

The purpose of this sort of meeting was to create a forum whereby the union officials could be talked to in a group in order to obtain collective responses to questions, which would give a truer picture of what each of the unions considered its domestic objectives to be.

One thing which happened in all the four workplaces was that as soon as question No. 1 was put to the union officials, or came up in the course of discussion, one of them recited this statement: "To promote socialism and maintain the dignity of labor," and they all burst out laughing. It emerged from discussion that none of the union officials really understood the meanings of "socialism" and "dignity of labor"; it was during the one week orientation course they attended at the union headquarters as soon as they were elected, that they were taught to regard that statement as their main objective. They then explained what their real objectives were, and the methods they adopted in enforcing their demands. These are shown on Tables I and II. During discussions on the questions, the secretaries and branch presidents tendered documentary evidence in the form of correspondence with management, in support of their statements.

Table III shows the situation in the four workplaces regarding worker protests on remuneration issues for the past five years counting from the time the fieldwork in those workplaces was conducted (i.e., 1975 to 1980). During the period 1975 to 1979, Nigeria was still under a military government and there was a ban on strikes. The protests during 1975 to 1979, as explained by the union officials in those workplaces, took the form of large deputations of workers to management which disrupted work for periods lasting between two and four hours. They were not regarded officially as strikes for fear of contravening the statutory ban on strikes, but such deputations had the general effect of strikes although for a short period.

While commenting on the worker protests during this period, the managers in the Ibo workplaces explained that whenever the Federal Ministry of Establishment sent out circulars to all ministries and other public establishments stating new allowances and other financial benefits to be given to the civil servants, their own workers would within a short time send in representations requesting for such allowances to be paid to them also. They also explained that during selection interviews in their workplaces, new Ibo employees normally insisted on bargaining

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[2] The fieldwork for this study was carried out within the months of August, September, October, and November 1980.

TABLE I

UNION OBJECTIVES

	Hausa		Ibo	
	Work-place 1	Work-place 2	Work-place 3	Work-place 4
1. To protect workers against intimidation by managers	X	X	X	
2. To ensure job security for our members	X		X	X
3. To ensure that our members are fairly treated by managers	X	X		
4. To make sure that government salary and fringe benefit awards are reflected in our terms and conditions of employment without delay	X	X	X	X
5. To fight for better wages and salaries			X	X
6. To ensure that there is unity among our members because "united we stand, divided we fall"	X	X	X	
7. To ensure harmony between our members and their supervisors in their places of work	X	X		X
8. To watch the actions and policies of management so as to appose them when necessary for the benefits of members			X	X
9. To fight for the rights of our members			X	X
10. To strive for the improvement of our terms and conditions of employment	X	X	X	

Notes: 1. "X" shows the particular workplaces in which the objectives were mentioned.

2. The above statements were not the exact expressions used by the union officials present at the meetings, as most of the discussion was done in pidgin English and sometimes mixed with Hausa or Ibo language. I had to present the meanings of the original statements in good English as stated above in order to make them intelligible to the reader. However great care was taken to ensure that the exact meaning of the original statements are retained in the above.

for their rate of payment. If for any reason the new employee succeeded in getting a better rate than his counterparts already working in the workplaces, immediately the workers came to know of this, they would put up representation requesting for their own rates to be increased.

The managers in the Hausa workplaces on their own part, explained that worker protests for wage increases only took place in their workplaces when the federal government revised the salaries of workers in the public service. Their workers would then regard the rate of wages and salaries in the civil service as a minimum and put up representations for their own wages and salaries to be reviewed.

It was also found that workers in the Ibo workplaces resorted to the use of what Scott et al. [26] would call "unofficial forms of conflict," whenever there

TABLE II

UNION DEMANDS IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS AND METHODS ADOPTED IN ENFORCING THEM

	Demands	N	Methods
Workplace 1	D_3	1	M_1, M_4
(Hausa)	D_6	3	M_1
	D_7	1	M_1
Workplace 2	D_3	2	M_1, M_5
(Hausa)	D_7	1	M_1
Workplace 3	D_1	6	M_1, M_3, M_4
(Ibo)	D_2	3	M_2, M_5
	D_3	4	M_1, M_3, M_4
	D_5	2	M_1, M_5
Workplace 4	D_1	11	M_2, M_4
(Ibo)	D_2	2	M_1, M_2, M_5
	D_3	4	M_4, M_5
	D_4	1	M_1, M_4
	D_5	2	M_2, M_3

Sources: Semi-structured interview of groups of union officials at the four work-places; records from union files containing correspondences with management, Labour Office and union headquarters; interview of Federal Labour Inspectors at the Labour Offices in Kaduna and Owerri.

Notes: 1. Demands

  D_1: Reinstatement of suspended or dismissed members.
  D_2: Wages and salaries review.
  D_3: Implementation of government salaries and fringe benefits awards.
  D_4: Vehicle advances.
  D_5: Protective clothing for workers.
  D_6: Improvement of canteen services.
  D_7: Provision of games facilities.

  2. Methods

  M_1: Representations (oral and/or written).
  M_2: Complaints to Federal Ministry of Labour state offices and sub-sequent intervention by Labour Inspector.
  M_3: Sit down strike.
  M_4: Assistance of officials from union headquarters in Lagos.
  M_5: Slowing down of work-speed.

TABLE III

FREQUENCY OF WORKER PROTEST ON REMUNERATION ISSUES

Period	Hausa		Ibo	
	Work-place 1	Work-place 2	Work-place 3	Work-place 4
Approximate yearly average for 1975–79	0	1	3	3
Exact figures for the period between January and November 1980	0	0	4	3

Sources: Structured interviews of managers and union officials in the workplaces; minutes of union meetings and copies of correspondences between unions and management; records of the Federal Ministry of Labour Offices at Owerri and Kaduna.

was a feeling of discontent among workers as a result of management's new policies or rules to which the workers were opposed. The managers in the Ibo workplaces explained that any time there was disagreement between the unions and management, increases in rates of pilfering of finished textile products and raw materials, machine breakdowns, absentism covered by procured doctor's sick-leave certificates, sustaining of injuries in the factory, and all other forms of what one manager described as "workers tricks," were observed among workers. The trade union officials in these workplaces confirmed this, and explained that their workers did not generally like to undertake open industrial action as many of them feared to loose their jobs. In one union official's words; the workers "have the right to express their unhappiness with managements' actions in any form they feel will affect management. Otherwise management will not realize we are human beings."

III. THE CASE STUDY: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL INFLUENCES

As we stated earlier, our main purpose in investigating the objectives of the unions and the methods they adopt in pursuing the objectives at the workplaces, was to deduce the specific ideologies of the unions so as to establish the sort of unionism that existed in those workplaces. The real nature and the general behavior pattern of a union organization at any particular period can most effectively be ascertained only through the examination of its operational objectives, specific demands, and the methods and sanctions adopted in enforcing those demands.

In examining the ideologies of the unions in our four workplaces, the thing that first strikes one is the general doctrinal statement, "to promote socialism and maintain the dignity of labor," which the officials in the headquarters of this industrial union wished its branch organizations to operate on. This statement was confirmed by the officials in the union headquarters to have been handed over to them by the National Union Federation to which they were affiliated. As the unions in Nigeria did not develop originally on the basis of any fundamental ideologies of their own, as we pointed out elsewhere [1, p. 8] it is reasonable to argue that the statements of ideology of the unions were imported through their affiliations with international union organizations. The officials in the union headquarters therefore had a difficult task on their hands in making the imported ideologies operational in their branch unions. Since the branch union officials were found not to understand the meaning and full ramifications of the ideological statement, it meant that the statement would be almost unintelligible to the ordinary union members. In this matter of general ideology, no difference was observed between the Hausa and the Ibo workers.

The development of ideologies by group in a society has certain connections with the nature of social stratification in that society. Hyman and Brough argue that "ideology typically reflects particular constellations of class interests" [18, p. 187], while Ellis [10] suggests that there is some association between the attitudes of individual employees toward unionism and their perception of social

class. Nigeria does not have a well developed class structure. The word "class" has no equivalent in any Nigerian language. Hill has pointed out in relation to the Hausa society, that "so far as mobility between economic groups is concerned, the system is sticky but not set, there being no 'peasant aristocracy,' nor institutionally under-privileged group" [17, p. 189]. The question of class in Africa generally, has been succinctly answered by Peil when she argued that:

> Anyone trying to answer the question "Are there classes in Africa today?," is caught immediately in the problem of terminology....If the presence of classes means stable, unified and homogeneous groups of people conscious of their economic interests and working to promote them at the expense of other groups, the answer seems to be "not yet." [24, p. 96]

This absence of class consciousness among Nigerian workers is likely to be one of the factors militating against the development of a viable ideology by the unions.

The lately imported ideologies, such as the one the unions in our case study workplaces were expected to adopt, were formed on the basis of the labor history and social structure of foreign countries in both the Eastern and Western world, which are different from the Nigerian situation. It is therefore not surprising that the branch union officials simply greeted the ideological statement with loud laughter when one of them recited it. As argued by Fox [12, pp. 125–26], unions have both universal and domestic ideologies. The position of the four workplaces regarding universal ideology, as discussed above, was found to be nonexistent. We shall therefore now focus on the domestic ideologies of the unions in the four workplaces, which we intend to deduce from their objectives and the methods they adopt in enforcing their demands. From this, we can determine their relative degree of unionateness.

An examination of the nature of the professed statements of objectives of the unions in the four workplaces, which are stated on Table I and the methods they adopt in enforcing their demands as stated on Table II, provided an insight into the specific pattern of the underlying domestic ideological differences between these unions. The statements of objective shown on Table I could be classified into two groups—those that directly involve "confrontation" with management and those that focus on "cooperation" with management. Objective 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9 fall into the first group, while the remaining five fall into the second group. I have not applied any specific formal technique in classifying the statements, rather I have merely applied straightforward interpretation to the individual statements regarding the likely implications of pursuing the objectives. For example, objective 5, "to fight for better wages and salaries," is interpreted as being likely to involve direct confrontation with management. On the other hand objective 7, "to ensure harmony between our members and their supervisors in their places of work," is interpreted to denote cooperation. Few of the statements fall between the two groups and in such case the particular statements have been put in the groups they most tend to lean toward. There could be other ways of grouping these statements of objective, but it is considered that the method adopted here

TABLE IV

ANALYSIS OF UNION OBJECTIVES

	Hausa		Ibo	
	Workplace 1 N=7 (%)	Workplace 2 N=6 (%)	Workplace 3 N=8 (%)	Workplace 4 N=7 (%)
Confrontation	28.6 (2)	33.3 (2)	62.5 (5)	57.1 (4)
Cooperation	71.4 (5)	66.7 (4)	37.5 (3)	42.9 (3)

Notes: 1. "N" stands for the total number of objectives that were mentioned in individual workplace.
2. The figures in parentheses are the number of objectives under each of the two categories.
3. "%" is the percentage of the number of objectives in each group in the total objectives mentioned in the individual workplace.

appropriately serves the purpose. This classification has been applied in analyzing the objectives of the unions in the four workplaces and the results of the analysis are presented on Table IV.

The results of the analysis show that the greater percentage of the statements of objective mentioned by the Hausa unions, 71.4 per cent and 66.7 per cent respectively, were in the "cooperation" group, whereas the greater percentage of those by the Ibo unions, 62.5 per cent and 57.1 per cent respectively, were within the "confrontation" group. These results are consistent with the findings on the methods adopted by the unions to enforce their demands, presented on Table II. Where the Hausa unions favored the use of oral representation to management on industrial relations issues, the Ibo workplaces easily sought the assistance of third-parties such as the Labour Inspectors of the Federal Ministry of Labour, and union headquarters full-time officials; and also applied other direct confrontational methods like "go slow" and what the union officials in those workplaces called "sit down strike."[3] The results are consistent with the findings on the frequency of worker protests on remuneration issues shown on Table III. These results clearly suggest that the unions in the Ibo workplaces were more militant than the Hausa ones.

In considering what would be the likely origin of this difference between the Hausa and the Ibo workplaces, it would be useful to examine the available research evidence on the likely causes of militancy among unions in relation to demands for pay increases. One such study is the one carried out by Behrend [7] in Scottish firms, in which she examined the impact of inflation on conceptions of earning. She concluded that the workers she studied, through a process of experience-based learning, had developed expectations that pay increase would be received at regular intervals. This is the expectation that:

[3] "Sit down strike" was described as a situation where workers individually sat down in their places of work but refused to do any work. This is similar to what could be called "work to rule" in the Western countries of the world.

every present pay increase will be followed after a specified or customary interval
...by a future pay increase, and that this will happen as a matter of right, not
of work contribution, and a right which seems to have assumed the property of
a regular entitlement. It would appear that the effects of this learning process
cannot easily be changed or reversed [7, p. 5].

Behrend went on to argue that some evidence suggests that the expectations
regarding the amount of the next and future pay increases are also the result of
an experience-based learning process in which three interrelated factors wield
particularly important influence. These factors, as she explained them, are the
size of past pay increases, the expected protection against increases in the cost
of living, and the application of pay increase constraints. This means that the
worker's expectations are shaped by his own occupational experience of the
amounts of past pay rises arrived at in settlement, which have themselves been
influenced among other factors, by rising prices or pay constraints. But later in
the same paper Behrend emphasized that the cost of living is by far the most
frequently used references frame by workers, and that the size of the last increase
was not taken as a straightforward reference frame, but rather as an indicator of
how far it has helped the individual to deal with the rising cost of living [7, p. 6].

In examining the causes of his "wildcat strike," Gouldner [15] did not consider
the cost of living as the main cause of workers' demand for increase in wages
because, as he argued:

a wage demand also stems from other sources; here it was, among other things,
a convenient way of expressing aggression derived from changes made in the plant's
internal social organisation....Seen in the developing context of events, it seems
clear that the wage issue here did not initiate the cleavage between workers and
management, but on the contrary, the growing conflict precipitated the wage issue
and, of course, was further reinforced by it. [15, pp. 30 and 32]

Gouldner's argument suggests that some wage claims may have nothing to do
with rises in cost of living or anything of the sort mentioned by Behrend as stated
earlier. They could be mere expressions of aggression toward management, based
on other matters. We can now examine the likely cause of the greater militancy
of the unions in the Ibo workplaces than those in the Hausa workplaces, in the
light of the explanations offered by the two authors mentioned above.

The four workplaces, located within one national context, could be argued
to be similarly affected by the prevailing rate of inflation in the country.
Table V presents government statistics which indicate the spread of living costs
in three relevant cities in Nigeria. Lagos is the capital city. The two Hausa
textile factories involved in our study were all located at Kaduna, while the two
Ibo factories were located at Aba and Asaba, each of which is not significantly
distant from Owerri. As shown by the figures on the table, there are no great
differences between costs of living in Kaduna and Owerri. If anything, the figures
suggest slightly higher living costs in Kaduna than in Owerri. This suggests there-
fore, that rise in cost of living as Behrend [7] seemed to suggest, cannot be an
appropriate explanation for the higher frequency of worker protests for wage
increases in the Ibo rather than in the Hausa workplaces.

TABLE V

COST OF LIVING INDICES IN THREE NIGERIAN CITIES

	Lagos		Kaduna		Owerri	
	Food	All Item	Food	All Item	Food	All Item
January 1975	158	147	141	136	145	140
June 1975	166	154	164	150	165	160
January 1976	186	165	153	147	160	153
March 1976	191	168	165	155	154	152
April 1976	193	169	171	159	169	160
Difference	35	22	30	23	24	20

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos.
Notes: 1. 1960 equals 100.
2. Difference means the points difference from January 1975 to April 1976.

If one applies Gouldner's explanation to the situation, one will then have to consider each particular worker protest and its consequent wage rise, separately. This sort of consideration will require more detailed empirical research than the one done in our case studies, on each issue. Nevertheless, from the available data as shown on Table III a pattern can be observed, which suggests a similarity in whatever are the causes of the worker protests in the two Ibo workplaces. The question seems to be why those factors which make unions in the two Ibo workplaces demand increases in wages more frequently than the Hausa, do not seem to exist in the Hausa workplaces, considering that the four workplaces have similar technology, are approximately of the same size, are in the same product and labor markets, and are under the influence of the same political, legal, and general macroeconomic systems? One can look for the answer to this question in the only aspect in which the circumstances affectnig the attitudes and behavior of the workers at these workplaces differ. That is the expectations of the workers and the members of the management team in those workplaces, which are to a large extent influenced by the different cultural attitudes and customary practices of the Hausa and the Ibo societies.

The differences in the traditional orientation to financial rewards is of particular relevance here. It was observed, as explained earlier, that at the selection interview, the Ibo candidate would want to bargain individually on rates of pay. If the candidate succeeded in getting a higher rate than the existing workers, perhaps on the basis of the candidate's special skills, this would lead to the protest among the already employed workers and requests for increases in their own rates. The traditional orientation of the Ibo worker to financial reward corresponds broadly to that type of instrumental orientation to work, which Goldthorpe et al. [14] described as "deferred gratification." As pointed out by Peace in his study of "Industrial Protest in Nigeria": "The shopfloor worker, with little chance of promotion to highly skilled or supervisory work on high wages, sees such employment as a means to accumulating sufficient capital for the critical transition to the role of entrepreneur" [23, p. 144]. He went on to argue: "It is the successful independent man, not the industrial manager or civil

servant, alongside whom the wage-earner lives and establishes interpersonal re-
lationships, who is the key reference point in the cognitive map of the industrial
employee, and is the one with whom he can most clearly identify" [23, p. 145].
The Ibo worker therefore seems to be in a hurry to accumulate as much financial
reward as possible to enable him to leave the industrial workplace to set up his
own business early in his life. Moreover, he is conscious of the fact that the
sort of social recognition he is given by his Ibo community depends on how rich
he proves himself to be in the estimation of his community members, as the Ibo
enjoys being referred to as a "big man," which in Ibo society means a rich man.

Such orientation to work is not found among the average Hausa workers,
rather his orientation to financial reward is merely for immediate satisfaction of
his needs, as his religion teaches him to believe that he should not bother about
tomorrow, because tomorrow will provide for itself. We have shown elsewhere
[2, p. 16] that the traditional attitude of the Hausa toward the pursuit of wealth
and material benefits is one of little care, as his Islamic religion urges him to
believe that to be rich requires predestination by Allah (the Moslem god) and
not through his personal struggles. This explains to some extent the relatively
low "need achievement motivation" of the average Hausa worker as found by
Levine [19] in his extensive study of achievement motivation in Nigerian tribal
groups. Moreover the somewhat religiously-based diffuse relationship between
the Hausa worker and his managers and directors (who are predestined to be
rich) makes it possible for him to meet his financial needs any time he is in
difficulty simply by approaching the rich ones for help, which is normally readily
available. These circumstances help to reduce, if not remove from the mind of
the Hausa worker, any thought of undertaking protests for wage increases. This
traditional Hausa belief, that everyone's position is predestined, is related to their
traditional high regard for people in authority, as those in authority are perceived
as being divinely put in that position, and as such should be given absolute loyalty
(see [4]). These religiously-based beliefs of the Hausa make it difficult for Hausa
unions to embark on confrontational policies while handling industrial relations
matters.

The Ibo are different, as they traditionally do not give much special regard to
persons in authority as do the Hausa. The Ibo traditional saying "Igbo enwe eze,"
which literarily means that the Ibo do not recognize kings, shows that the Ibo
regards himself as being equal to everyone else. But two particular human quali-
ties which the Ibo, and in fact all Africans, have high regard for, as rightly pointed
out by Etukudo [11, p. 8], are "age" and "good character." If it happens that
anyone in authority has these two qualities, then he is likely to attract some degree
of special regard to himself, by virtue of his possessing these qualities. Unfortu-
nately not everyone in authority in the Ibo workplaces possesses these respectable
qualities. So the Ibo traditional attitude to authority as explained above, coupled
with his high instrumental orientation to wage employment, largely explains why
the unions in the Ibo workplaces were found to be more militant than the ones
in the Hausa workplaces.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN NIGERIAN WORKPLACES

The major question examined in this study was whether there was any difference between the sort of union that existed in the Hausa and the Ibo workplaces, in terms of their ideologies as deduced from their objectives and the methods they adopted in pursuing the objectives, and whether such differences were due to cultural differences. Our findings suggest that although the unions in the four workplaces belonged to one industrial union, they differed greatly in their domestic objectives and in the methods they adopted in pursuing those objectives at the workplaces. The Ibo unions were more militant than the Hausa unions. The greater militancy of the Ibo unions was considered to be based on the differences in the expectations of the Hausa and the Ibo workers which were rooted in the traditional Hausa attitude of less care for the acquisition of wealth and high regard for authority, and the Ibo traditional high desire for wealth which gives rise to their high degree of instrumental orientation to work, and their low regard for authority. The major culturally-based attitudinal characteristics of a society (a cultural group) which have been established, through the findings and the discussion in the study, as bearing a major influence in shaping the nature and behavior of trade unions in the workplaces of that society, in terms of their degree of militancy, are the following:
  (1)   attitude to authority;
  (2)   attitude to the acquisition of wealth and other material benefits;
  (3)   degree of instrumental orientation to wage employment; and
  (4)   respect for age and good character.
Although the empirical part of this study was specifically based on Hausa and Ibo monocultural workplaces, the above conclusions can, to a large extent, be generalized to any other cultural group in Nigeria and elsewhere. This is because the findings of this study generally confirm some findings in earlier studies. For example, in his comparative study of French and British workers, Gallie [13, p. 300] had found that French workers had an "exploitative" image of the firm and were generally more dissatisfied with their salaries and standard of living than their British counterparts, and consequently they were considerably more militant over issues at the workplace than their British counterparts.
One of the important implications of the findings of this study for effective management of industrial relations at workplace level, is that it is grossly unadvisable to transfer domestic managerial industrial relations policies and practices from one society to another. This is very pertinent for Nigerian organizations that have branches in different parts of Nigeria, and particularly for multinational corporations that have their subsidiaries in parts of Nigeria. As the findings of this study have shown that the nature and general behavioral inclinations of a trade union that do exist at any workplace must be largely dependent on the nature of the above listed attitudinal characteristics of the dominant cultural group among the workers, it is important that management in every workplace

identifies the nature of these cultural characteristics and takes account of them in formulating its industrial relations policies.

In drawing out policies and plans on the way to deal with unions in an Ibo workplace for example, management should recognize the nature of the cultural attitude of no special regard for authority held by the average Ibo worker. Gallie has argued that "in societies in which the value of equality is salient, low participative systems are likely to create normative conflict and hence the institutions of power are likely to be regarded as illegitimate by the work-force" [13, p. 305]. Adding this argument to the findings of our study one is inclined to think that management in Ibo workplaces should adopt more participative system in their industrial relations practices. One interesting point to note here is our finding which we reported elsewhere [3], which shows that in Hausa and Ibo monocultural workplaces in Nigeria, "paternalistic" and "collaborative" managerial industrial relations policies and practices respectively, are already being practiced. A particular discrepancy observed in these workplaces was that what Argyris and Schon [6] would refer to as "espoused policies," stated in the official documents of the organization, were far different from the actual "policies-in-use." What remains therefore is for management in these workplaces to officially recognize and acknowledge the influences of their societal values and customary practices on their industrial relations practices and expressly incorporate them in their official policies.

The situation in the subsidiaries of multinational corporations in Nigeria requires special attention. Although no study has hitherto been carried out on the industrial relations and general employment policies and practices of such organizations, it is reasonable, on the basis of the findings of this present study, to argue that multinationals that adopt ethnocentric policies will find it difficult to achieve effective and peaceful industrial relations at their workplaces. It is therefore advisable for multinationals in Nigeria to adopt what Perlmutter [25, p. 28] has called "polycentric" industrial relations policies, by which he meant policies that are centered on the circumstances of the host country. Multinational corporations in Nigeria should not simply draw up one set of policies for all their branches in different parts of Nigeria, rather they should ensure that cultural characteristics and the traditional attitudes of the dominant cultural (tribal) group in a particular workplace are reflected in the industrial relations policies and practices for that workplace.

Another implication of the results of this study is that management in Nigerian workplaces should seriously consider "age" and "good character" while appointing persons to managerial and supervisory posts at the workplace, especially those posts that involve dealing with union officials. Respect for age in employment matters is not peculiar to African societies. Okochi et al. [22, chap. 13], Hanami [16], and Dore [9] have shown that in Japanese workplaces "age" is one of the major factors which determine most issues for workers, such as salary grades, positions, and job ranks. It is likely that this situation contributes to the existence of peaceful industrial relations in Japanese workplaces. Since Nigerians and Africans generally, show a great deal of respect for age and

good character, if the majority of persons who occupy senior managerial and supervisory posts are manifestly seen to possess these qualities, the presence of such persons is likely to elicit cooperative responses from union officials and their members toward management actions, and this will make for peaceful industrial relations in Nigerian workplaces.

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