

FRAMEWORKS OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ANALYSIS: A RE-VISIT TO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS THEORY

Isaac Zeb-Obipi

Department of Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The search for a theory of Industrial Relations has led to the emergence of a plethora of frameworks, of analysis of Industrial Relations. Making sense of the diverse perspectives involved has become as problematic as the original search itself. This paper re-visits the search for a theory of Industrial Relations by imposing an order on some dominant schools of thought in the literature, starting with the subject-matter and approach debate. The paper concludes that the subject-matter of Industrial Relations has evolved from being unions, to institutions of job regulation (rules), and then to conflict; and these correspond with the Union, Rules, and Conflict frameworks of Industrial Relations analysis suggested here. Consequently, it is the view of this paper that these should be seen as the components of the subject-matter of Industrial Relations; and given its multi-disciplinary nature, a web-of-discipline approach is more appropriate in Industrial Relations theorizing.

KEYWORDS: *Unions, Rules, Conflict, Multi-Disciplinary, Web-of-Discipline*

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INTRODUCTION

Industrial Relations is a field of study and practice dealing with a set of interactions at the workplace predicated upon employment contract involving work parties and their representatives in job regulation. The meaning givers in this definition are: study field/practice, set of interactions, employment contract, work parties' representatives, and job regulation. It started with the factory employment system consequent upon the industrial revolution of the 18th century. It has since developed into an independent discipline with its own jargon and increased significance in society. However, there is still a debate over what really is its focus and approach with scholars having different perspectives. Girigiri (2002), gave a sample of these perspectives to include: System, Oxford, Industrial Sociology, Unitary, Industrial Conflict, Class Conflict, Integrated, and Political Economic perspectives or approaches. According to Green (1994), even attempts at defining its content by focusing on certain institutions, characteristics, procedures and topics have not solved its problem of definition and analysis.

Industrial Relations, indeed, has been in search of conceptual and analytical frameworks. Such frameworks are expected to provide it with distinctive and integrative concepts, methodologies and theories. They constitute the

approaches to the study and practice of Industrial Relations. Many scholars have acknowledged this search. For instance, Flanders (1965) appealed for "a distinctive industrial relations" and that "the study of Industrial Relations has had little theoretical content". Dunlop (1958) observed that:

Mountains of facts have been piled up on the plains of human ignorance. The result is a glut of raw materials. Facts have outrun ideas. Integrating theory has lagged far behind expanding experience.

Gill (1969) concluded that the main difficulty in the study of industrial relations is "the absence of a suitable conceptual framework to act as a heuristic device in structuring the data"; hence the search for such a framework; a search not made easy by the controversy over what the subject matter of Industrial Relations is and what approach should be used in studying it. This paper, through a survey of literature, seeks to examine the subject-matter and approach debate using three frameworks of analysis: Union, Rules and Conflict Frameworks of Industrial Relations analysis.

THE SUBJECT-MATTER AND APPROACH DEBATE

The search for a theory of Industrial Relations (IR) started with the debate as to what should be the core or focus of IR. Up to the end of the Second World War, trade unionism was the center of IR theory. IR analysis was dominated with trade union issues; first with economic bias, followed by a political bias, and then a combination of economic and political approaches. While Dunlop (1958) described a trade union as an economic institution attempting to maximize some wage or employment dimensions of its members, Ross (1948) described it as a political institution working in an economic context with "orbits of coercive comparison" determining common wage policy. Again, while Commons (1925) described labour union, as a liberating force, which helped establish constitutional government in industry and delineate the power of one of the parties over the other, Perlman (1949) described a union as a design, to protect workers' job interests and job sharing opportunities.

The approach to build IR theory around trade unionism gave way to others that progressed from unionism to collective bargaining, social sub-systems and interrelationships amongst parties at the workplace. In Chamberlain and Kuhn's (1965) view, the center of IR is collective bargaining for the sale of labour; form of industrial government, and a method of management. For Flanders and Clegg (1954), IR is part of the social system. It encompasses the influence of the process of industrialization on the behaviour of men and societies and deals with the inter-relationships of management, labour and government (Kerr et al, 1973). In Behrend's (1963) view, IR deals with motivation, power struggle between management and union and the importance of institutional and economic background. This view somehow suggests the element of conflict that has come within the focus of IR theory.

The second aspect of the search for a theory of IR involves the debate whether or not IR should adopt a multi-disciplinary approach. It has been observed that IR is at a crossroad where a number of disciplines have met. These disciplines include history, economics, government, sociology, psychology and law. As a result of this, some authors have argued that IR should be multi-disciplinary in approach. Such writers (Johnnie, 1988) have criticized Dunlop's (1958) and Wood et al's (1975) works as building a disciplinary fortress around sociology and economics, rather than hemming in other disciplines as an attempt in unifying Industrial Relations as a genuine discipline.

On the other hand, most functional specialists fear that a multi-disciplinary approach would tear the subject apart by concentrating attention on some of its aspects to the exclusion or comparative neglect of others. Pushing this view further is Gill's (1969) assertion that:

All these disciplines and others have their contributions to make but the lack of an integrating conceptual scheme has resulted in poor communications across boundaries and indeed has, perhaps, obscured full explanation by over simplification of the many sided complexity of the problems under consideration (in IR).

To allay the fear of the proponents of this view, it has been suggested that IR employs a “web of disciplines” approach; as more shall be gained if young disciplines such as IR “pinch chunks” from other established disciplines.

We have so far examined the debate on the subject matter and disciplinary approach of IR. Our purpose for this examination is to create the necessary background for the articulation of the theories of IR and the approaches they suggest for the study of IR. Since it is possible today to define Economics as the “theory of ends-means relationships” and Political Science as the “theory of power relationships”, one wishes to ask: “IR is a theory of what?” We have built up sufficient evidence to provide an answer to this question; and this evidence lies in the shifting of focus from trade unionism to job regulation and conflict. Consequently it is possible to conceive three analytical frameworks, theories or approaches of Industrial Relations. These are the Union, Rules and Conflict Frameworks.

UNION FRAMEWORK OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Trade Union approach to Industrial Relations conceives Industrial Relations as the relationships amongst unions, and the institutions and processes that have developed to structure them. Unions as used here refer to industrial unions, which include trade unions and employers' association. Within the trade unions could be found associations of senior employees (staff associations) on one hand and junior employees (labour unions) on the other. The interactions amongst the members of these unions either as individuals with collectivities or collectivities with collectivities are examined in this approach as constituting Industrial Relations.

In a second dimension, this approach provides for the analysis of the role of government as an intervention into the basic relationships between employer or employers' association and employees or their unions. Where even government is treated as an employer, its interventionist roles constitute a different unit of analysis. Thus, government legislations and policies, made to influence relations between employers and employees in a country, are expected to be complied with by government as an employer.

With unions as the fundamental unit of analysis, this approach proceeds to examine the processes, context and institutions involved in their (unions) interactions. It is from this standpoint that all the issues conceivable in today's Industrial Relations are often analyzed. For instance, the unions are shown as they participate in collective bargaining, organizational governance, dispute, grievance and disciplinary procedures etc. The unions are shown in terms of how they are influenced by factors within industry and the larger society. Unions, therefore, constitute the pivot of analysis in this framework of Industrial Relations. In fact, it will not be out of place to describe IR within this framework or approach as a theory of industrial unions in enterprise management.

An example of this framework of, or approach to, Industrial Relations could be found in the works Akpala (1982), Fashoyin (1980) and Ananaba (1969). For these scholars, Industrial Relations is the study of trade unions, collective bargaining and the roles of government. Every other aspect of Industrial Relations is accidental to these. For instance, Fashoyin described the aim of his work thus: to study the changing roles of government, character of trade unions and the effects of these changes, on labour-management relations at the workplace. This perhaps explains why the emphasis in his work was on a tripartite model of collective bargaining - one having employees' union,

management or employers' association and government.

The problem with this approach to Industrial Relations is that it is historical and descriptive. In other words, it is less analytical and explanatory. Often the history, development, and roles of industrial unions are given. The role of government is described. In narratives, the environmental, legal and institutional frameworks of IR are stated. Discussion of all of these and other relevant Industrial Relations issues is rarely along the part of a network of variables analytically isolated for the provision of explanation, prediction and control of such variable. While some understanding is offered, it is doubtful if the ultimate purpose of theory is served sufficiently via this approach. In fact, the approach could be described as being a-theoretical. Consequently, the search for a better framework of Industrial Relations analysis continued; and the Rules Framework emerged.

RULES FRAMEWORK OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Before now we had the impression that there were three approaches to Industrial Relations analysis. These have been described as the Oxford, Systems and Sociological approaches. We have, however, come to realize that there is no much difference between the Oxford and Systems approaches. Both of them have Rules at the center of their conception of Industrial Relations. They are indeed only models of the Rules theory of Industrial Relations or models of job regulation. They do, however, differ from the sociological or conflict approach. We shall, therefore, consider them as constituting the Rules Framework of or Rules Approach to, Industrial Relations analysis. It is otherwise called the Rules School (Ahiazu, 1999).

The Rules approach sees Industrial Relations as the study of the establishment and administration of Rules (Dunlop, 1958); the study of the institutions of job regulation (Flanders, 1965); and, is "a behavioural theory of labour negotiations based on the Rules-making mechanism" (Walton and Merkesie, 1965). In this approach, the Rules for the governance of the workplace through Industrial Relations are identified and the network of variables involved in their making and administration are analyzed. Rules making, therefore, is the core of Industrial Relations theorizing within this framework. Evidence of this could be found in the Oxford and Systems models.

The Oxford or Institutional approach pioneered by Flanders (1965) views IR as consisting of the institutions of job regulation which churn out Rules at the workplace. It identifies two institutions of job regulation as conflict resolution (c) and collective bargaining (b), two types of rules (substantive and procedural rules - r) and two forms of job regulation (internal and external). Taken together, the Oxford or Institutional view of IR could be expressed thus:

$$r = f(c,b) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 1}$$

Where:

- r = Rules
- c = conflict resolved/resolution
- b = bargaining (collective).

The Oxford model has been criticized. First, as could be seen from the model equation, it is not sufficiently analytical and is restricted in its treatment of the Rules making processes. Second, it is too narrow to provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing Industrial Relations problem. Third is its obsession with labour warfare and peace through conciliation and bargaining. Fourth it overemphasized the significance of political variables in Rules determination

at the expense of other equally significant variables. In fact, in this approach, the job regulation institution of collective bargaining is regarded as a political institution involving a power relationship between employers and employees. Other significant variables the Oxford model ignored include technology, market, status, ideology etc. The provision of some of these variables by the systems model explains the inferiority of the Oxford approach to the systems' approach.

The systems approach to IR was pioneered by Dunlop (1958) who borrowed the concept of "System" from Parsonian Sociology and applied it to IR. In this approach, IR is perceived as a sub-system of a total social system. The total social system is the industrial society, which consists of three sub-systems namely: the political, economic and industrial relations sub-systems. These sub-systems though have areas of autonomy overlap and inter-relate with each other and are influenced by the total social system. The sub-systems and their relationship with the total social system could be diagrammatically presented thus:

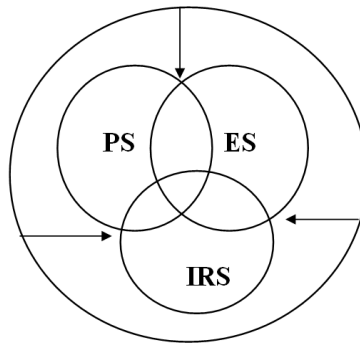


Figure 1: Dunlop’s Sub-Systems of Society

Where:

TSS = Total Social System

PS = Political System

ES = Economic System

IRS = Industrial Relations System

→ = Influence of TSS on the sub-systems

Dunlop (1958) applied the systems thinking to Industrial Relations in an attempt to present a general theory of IR that can explain why particular Rules are established and changed in response to certain forces. The result of this is the conception, perception and analysis of IR as a system. It is a system in which some actors acting within a given context and bound by an ideology make rules for the regulation of relationships at the work place. Consequently, in Dunlop's model - the IRS in the Fig. 1, every industrial relations system is structured with these variables: actors, context, ideology and Rules. Thus, the systems model of IR could be represented thus:

$$r = f(a,c,i) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 2}$$

Where:

r = Rules (substantive and procedural)

- a = Actors (employers, employees and government)
- c = Context (economic, technology and power)
- i = Ideology (shared beliefs and values)

What the functional equation suggests is that what constitutes IR is a system of rules that are a function of actors, context and ideology. The actions of the actors, factors in the context and beliefs and values constituting the actors' ideology are inputs into certain processes to produce outputs of rules which through a feedback mechanism affect the actors, context and ideology. In reference here include bargaining, consultation and arbitration; or in the context of methods of job regulation, managerial, joint and social regulation (Ahiazu, 1999) through which, IR rules emerge. Thus, IR is not just a system, but also a system of rules (Flanders, 1965); and not just a system of Rules, but also an open system of rules (Crag, 1975).

Dunlop's systems theory of IR is very significant. Its significance is evident in the following facts. It changed the central focus of IR from conflict and bargaining to Rules determination. It broadened the Industrial Relations perspective in a manner that enhanced its comprehensiveness, and elaborate and comparative nature. It portrayed IR as something more than just a collection of other disciplines by providing IR with a theoretical core and set of analytical variables and tools. By its abstraction of the critical variables in IR, it suggests propositions for testing in a four-element structure.

Dunlop's systems model of IR has been criticized severally. For instance, it has been criticized for its failure to make abundantly clear the precise analytical meaning of the system's concept; its obscure treatment of rules, ideology and power; and its neglect of the processes from which rules are derived. Some of these criticisms have led to several modifications of the systems approach. Such modifications include Blain and Gennard's (1970) incorporation of process and personality variables into the model. A rather extensive modification of the Dunlop's model has been provided by Ahiazu (1999). Ahiazu's number and extent of modifications are so much that, his model deserves an independent treatment. For the lack of a more appropriate nomenclature, we wish to describe his model as the A-Model of IR analysts or work-place model of Industrial Relations.

Ahiazu (1999) defined IR as a rules-making process in which, relevant behaviour manifestations of actors result into rules of job regulation. He considered IR as a product of the process of industrialization; for according to him:

Industrialization results in the creation of managers, industrial workers and labour organisations. The existence of these parties necessitates the development of what they called 'an industrial jurisprudence', the purpose of which is to define power and authority relationships among the parties as well as regulating all other aspects of employment in the work place and in the work community (Ahiazu, 1999; 111).

In his effort to provide a theoretical foundation for IR, Ahiazu (1999) attributed the first attempt at a theory of IR to Dunlop. He asserted that others gave partial treatments to IR by only focusing on trade union and class struggle, unions and their historical development and organisation, and unions and wage determination; and these were analyzed through the application of economic and political science theories. Thus, what emerged were only partial theories of IR. (We wish to observe that this assertion confirms our earlier stated position that there has been what could be described as a Union-Approach to Industrial Relations analysis.) To arrive at his model, however, Ahiazu reviewed the systems model of Dunlop and its criticisms.

According to him, Dunlop applied the general systems theory to develop an integrative model of IR. The model is useful in improving the teaching of IR, analyzing industrial conflict and comparatively studying IR across countries. However, he opined that the model has been criticized for focusing on conflict resolution to the neglect of conflict generation, confusing the place of power in IR, neglecting the processes by which Rules are made and ignoring personality factors. To Ahiauzu (1999), these criticisms of Dunlop's model have helped to develop the field of IR. This is because they have expanded IR to cover both structural and behavioural variables, structured and unstructured relationships, institutions and rules of job regulation and rules-making process, and conflict generation and resolution.

Ahiauzu (1999) further asserted that, some of the criticisms of Dunlop's systems theory have led to the emergence of several other models for the analysis of IR. One of such models is his own - the A-model of IR. This model is based on the conception of IR "as involving all formal and informal structures and processes that relate to the making and administering of Rules which regulate employment"(Ahiauzu, 1999: 119). It is based on IR at the workplace level in view of the possible existence of IR, at different levels such as national, industry, company or workplace levels. It also assumes that the study of IR entails the study of three sets of variables: those leading to or necessitating the making of Rules, those relating to the actual making of Rules, and those relating to the nature and effects of the Rules and their administration.

From these three sets of variables, he identified specific ones with which his model of workplace IR was constructed. The specific variables include External Environmental Systems, Culture, Society's Economic and Development History, Internal Environment of Workplace, Relevant Attitudes of Actors, Relevant Biographical Records of Actors, Power and Authority, Control, Conflict, Cooperation, Relevant Behaviour, Manifestations of Actors, Rules-Making, Rules of Job Regulation (Procedural Rules, Substantive Rules) and Quality of Industrial Relations. Ahiauzu (1999) used these variables to build schemata, which he appropriately named as "A model of Workplace Industrial Relations" (p. 124). According to him, his model "presents rules-making processes as the means through which the relevant behaviour manifestations of the actors result in the rules of job regulation". There is no doubt that his model, when critically analyzed and applied, would enhance theory development in IR.

To conclude this section, we wish to call attention to some points of departure from Dunlop (1958). Firstly, while he conceived the total social system as consisting of three sub-systems, we found four sub-systems; our fourth sub-system is the cultural system (CS). Secondly, while he treated the Industrial Relations System (IRS) as one of his three sub-systems on the same level of analysis with the Political (PS) and Economic (ES) Sub-systems, we consider it as a sub-system made up with elements from the three sub-systems of PS, ES and CS. Diagrammatically, what these mean is that, for the purposes of Industrial Relations analysis, the IRS is located at the center of the total social system thus:

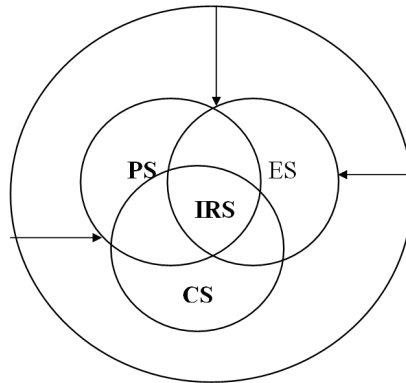


Figure 2: Industrial Relations Systems in the Total Social System

Source: An adaptation of Dunlop’s (1958) TSS.

Where:

TSS = Total Social System

PS = Political System

ES = Economic System

CS = Cultural System

IRS = Industrial Relations System

→ = Influence of TSS on the sub-systems

Thirdly, his algebraic notation of the systems model lacks parsimony - a requirement of a good theory (Baridam 2002). The input elements in the model are actors (a), context (c), and ideology (i). As independent variables, each of them has more than one category. For the actors variable we have employees or workers (w), employers or management (m) and government (g). For the context variable, we have technology (t), status and distribution of power (s), and economic factors (e). For the ideology variable, we have values (v) and beliefs (b). Now, in formulating the model, he "factorized" the context variable alone as in equation 3. A uniform factorization (expansion) of the variables would have resulted into equation 4 below. Since these equations violate the parsimony criterion, we prefer equation 2 as none is lost and as such it was used to denote his model rather than his original one.

$$r = f(a, t, e, s, i) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 3}$$

$$r = f(w, m, g, t, e, s, v, b) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 4}$$

Our fourth point of departure in this Rules Framework or School is in relation to Flanders (1965) model. He treated conflict resolution (c) and collective bargaining (b) as if they were the same thing and do not differ. This could even be seen in the algebraic notation of his model:

$$r = f(c) \text{ or } r = f(b) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 5}$$

What this means is that since

$$r = r \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 6}$$

Then:

$$f(c) = f(b) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 7}$$

Of course, this could not be true as there are a whole lot of differences between conflict resolution (c) and collective bargaining (b). But because we do recognize them as two Rules-making processes, both of them have been treated here as independent variables that determine the Rules of job regulation. This is the rational for equation 1 which we used to depict the industrial relations model of the Oxford school or institutional approach above.

CONFLICT FRAMEWORK OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

What we wish to describe as the Conflict framework in Industrial Relations theory is what is commonly referred to as the Sociological approach to Industrial Relations analysis. Our preference for the concept of "Conflict", instead of "Sociological", is informed by the observations that even the earlier discussed approaches have some sociological underpinnings and the core of what has been described as the sociological approach is conflict. So to tag one approach as sociological does not only suggest that the others are "non-sociological" but it also misses the distinguishing core of the approach or is rather vague in implying it. What perhaps explains the "sociological" nomenclature for the approach could have been the title of the work or model by Margerison (1969), that has dominated the approach.

Margerison (1969), a leading proponent of this approach, criticized the Rules approach. According to him, rule making is by no means the core of IR and that Flanders' (1965) concept of IR as a system of rules narrows the scope of IR inquiry to the regulation of conflict. The consequence of this is a concentration on the effects and resolution of conflicts rather than on its nature and development (causes). He argued that:

It would appear, therefore, that industrial relations as it is at presently construed is more concerned with studying the resolution of industrial conflict than its generation. The emphasis tends, therefore, to be put more on the consequences of industrial dispute than on its causes. It would seem from Flanders' views that industrial relations problems do not arise until they are within the formal orbit of the rules of the industrial relations systems. To counter this, I would suggest that conflict is the basic concept that should form the basis of the study of industrial relations.

To him, the rules school adopts a curative approach to conflict; and since this is faulty, he suggested a preventive approach to conflict. Against this background of a preventive, instead of a curative, philosophy to industrial conflict, Margerison opined that, all interpersonal behaviour must be part of industrial relations which he defined as the "study of people in a situation interacting in the doing of work in relation to some form of contract wither written or unwritten".

He conceived Industrial Relations as a social system consisting of two levels: the plant social system and national social system. These give rise to two major conceptual levels of Industrial Relations, two major sociological models of conflict, and the use of a multi-disciplinary approach. He further asserted that, Industrial Relations have functional areas and corresponding academic areas. While the former are Contractual, Organizational and Interpersonal relations, the latter include Economics and Law, Politics and Sociology, and Social psychology respectively – the basis of the multi-disciplinary approach.

Margerison (1969) argued that, the past tendency in industrial relations analysis has been to concentrate on specific areas like the contractual and orgainsational relations. Areas such as the interpersonal relations are relatively ignored. Consequently, Industrial Relations study has been of specific industrial institutions and not of behavioural

relationships. He concluded that, a behavioural science approach used alongside the institutional approach would give a more rounded view of the subject, Industrial Relations.

Another conflict approach to Industrial Relations analysis is provided by the pluralist perspective (Green, 1994; Barret et al, 1975). The pluralist framework of IR originated from Fox's (1966) distinction between unitary and pluralist frames of reference held by managers. Fox's work brought to the fore how pluralists see IR in general, enterprise, management, trade union, conflict and agreements in particular. Enterprise is seen as a coalition of individuals and groups, and a complex of tensions and competing claims. By coalition is meant a collection of individuals and groups with varying interests who have agreed to collaborate in a social structure that enables them to achieve some of their objectives. The terms of collaboration are negotiated.

For the collaborative structure to be maintained and be viable, management is pre-occupied with holding the variety of interests in balance. So management is seen as making decisions within a complex set of constraints which pressures it into forging compromises, new syntheses, and accommodating interests. Unionism on the other hand, is seen as manifestation of one of the basic values of competitive society – the right and freedom of association. It is a challenge to management and is seen as being able to adjust the balance of power to impose workers' preferences. It is accepted as a legitimate challenge.

To the pluralist, conflict is welcome as an indication of the fact that not all aspirations at the workplace are sapped by hopelessness or suppressed by power. It also indicates that ground rules need to be changed, adjustments in managerial styles and work rules need to be made otherwise management will fail to find or make appropriate compromises, syntheses and accommodation. Actor or the parties in a conflict see each other as mutually depended on one another while pursuing different priorities. They agree to respect the survival needs of each other. They seek to adjust their differences to ensure that every conflict is made to yield some compromises. To be able to do all these, each party limits its claims to a level sufficiently tolerable for the continuation of collaboration. They share confidence and operate negotiation and dispute settlement procedures through a consensual code of ethics and conduct.

In the pluralist perspective or model, there is a rough balance of power, goodwill and consensus. Agreements coercively imposed are not morally binding. Found cases of coercing by a superior power are exceptions. Where disagreements arise they are seen as healthy and desirable but not fundamental enough to destroy the enterprise. This is so because the parties submit themselves to compromise and observe agreements freely and honorably undertaken. The pluralist model, therefore, sees IR as a means of understanding, regulating and resolving conflicts at the workplace. It posits that conflict is endemic, positive, and exists both in the society and organisation. Union came into being to represent workers whose views, interests and values, differ from those of management; but through the various institutions and processes of IR (such as collective bargaining, consultation and arbitration). Their differences are compromised for the survival of the enterprise with conflict either prevented or resolved.

A third model of the conflicts approach to IR could be found in the Marxian literature. In fact, it will be out of place to say that both the Margerison's (1969) sociologist model and Fox's (1966) pluralist model have their roots in the Marxist approach (Green, 1994; Barret et al, 1975). Although Marx (1971) did not put forward a specific theory of IR, his general theory of dialectic materialism has relevant provisions that have helped the study, explanation and understanding of IR. For our purposes here, we shall list the relevant tenets of the theory. They include the following:

- Society is made up of two conflicting classes (the capitalist, bourgeois or employers and workers, proletariat, or employees). While the capitalists own the means of production, the workers own labour which creates wealth.
- These two classes are always at war because of an irreconcilable conflict of interests. The capitalist appropriates the wealth created by labour and leaves labour with nothing more than what is required for subsistence.
- The class war will lead to a socialist revolution that will bring about a classless communist society. In this revolution, the proletariat (employees) will overthrow the bourgeoisie (employers).
- Conflict in the industry is a reflection of the conflict in the society. As such the industry will equally experience a revolution that will place labour in the governance of industry.
- Trade unions are means for workers to gain a power base upon which they will secure improved terms and conditions from the capitalists (employers). Through unionism, workers can secure protection against management exploitation and unions will serve as a means of collectivism, contributing to the wider class in the society.

In criticising the conflict approach, more specifically, Margerison's (1969) model, Blain and Gennard (1970) observed that the emphasis on the significance of conflict in IR is not a new one, conflict models are not sufficiently rigorous in methodology; and are, sometimes, mere diagrammatic expositions rather than scientific attempts at establishing cause and effect relationships, claims they make or are made on their behalf are excessive, models appear too limited in their treatment of the factors that lead to conflict and its resolutions, concentrating only on the sociological aspects of IR, proposition they advance are in some cases "dreamiest" as in labour take-over of industry (our addition)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examined the theoretical frameworks or foundations of Industrial Relations. Three key frameworks were examined namely the Union, Rules and Conflict Frameworks of Industrial Relations analysis in addition to the subject-matter and approach debate. Findings from the literature are that:

Though Union, Institutions of job regulation, and Conflict had been dominant themes of Industrial Relations at different times in its evolution, the three are needed to have a comprehensive view of the subject-matter of Industrial Relations.

Given its multi-disciplinary nature and the tendency of scholars from different discipline to want to route for the dominance of their respective disciplines hemming in the contributions of the different disciplines for a distinctive and integrated field of study and practice, the web-of-discipline approach seems to be more satisfactory.

Within the Union's framework, Industrial Relations could be seen as a theory of union in enterprise management

It is a theory of the rules governing work parties and their relationships when viewed from the Rules' framework.

The Conflict framework asserts Industrial Relations as a theory of conflict inherent in the relationships amongst work parties within and outside industry.

Each of these provides us with different views of IR through their various models. All of them have their strong points as well as weak points. Despite their strengths and weaknesses, they have been presented here as separate approaches to the analysis of IR. It is, however, possible to find or apply elements that cut across the three in the study.

So the choice of what perspective or approach to take depends on a number of factors which include: analytical convenience, parsimony and contingency of thought.

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