Diversity and Challenges of Industrial peace in Work Place in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The work place is very diverse and this leads to conflict or absence of industrial peace. The Nigerian conditions in its peculiarities exacerbate conflict in industry and government policies developed to deal with these conflicts have not been effective. This paper centers on the search for industrial peace in industry in Nigeria especially in the increasing unitarist policies seen in industry today. Many businesses disregard welfare, diversity and humanistic principles in dealing with the employees. They deny the employees basic rights that come with working in industry. This fact makes conflict the order of the day in industry in Nigeria. This paper submits, using critical analysis, that organizations within industries should create enabling environment for effective industrial relations' activities to thrive by assisting it where necessary so as to stabilize the organization and bringing about peace. Effective industrial relations must necessarily adopt humanistic principles and sound human resource department in order to achieve peace.

Keywords: Diversity, industrial peace, unitarist, conflict, human resource

INTRODUCTION

Diversity in itself is a complicated concept given the fact that it permeates all aspects of life in today's multicultural and irremediable heterogeneous society. This complicated idea becomes even more complicated when analyzed in the context of the work place in industry. Many of the conflicts that arise in the work place are as a result of the myriad of diversities in the work please. Cox and Blake (1991) define cultural diversity as 'the representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance.' Thus, they believe that diversity should be seen 'in the context of social systems that are characterized by a majority group and a number of minority groups.' This can be interpreted to mean that, if not a lateral transmission of values among groups with distinct folkways, cultural diversity contemplates some level of group mixing or, at the very minimum, coexistence among different groups with distinct folkways. To truly decipher the dimensions of diversity vis- a- vis the industrial space, thre is need to take a further brilliant look at diversity in such a way that it showcases the idea of 'the other' and a push to mix 'the other' with a certain mainstream culture. In other words, there is an inextricable connection between the idea of diversity with the tension which arises when 'the other' tries to mix with mainstream culture which may dominate the work place. It is in analyzing this mix, this tension, that diversity becomes complicated. The work place becomes a battle ground of ideas such that managing this conflicting and divisive mix, provide a grand challenge. This paper making use of critical analysis seeks to proffer solutions that can surmount challenges of diversity towards establishment of an acceptable peace in the work place. This paper does this by (1) articulating again the concept of diversity in the complex and changing world and hinging it on the idea of 'the other'. (2) this paper locates the tensions in diversity with a view towards creating novel

ideas that can convert diversity to become an instrument of peace in industry through effective industrial relations practice.

Conceptualizing Diversity, locating 'the other'

It is imperative that when considering the idea of diversity within a given social space, there is a latent 'otherness' in such a social space. This is because each social space has an original culture and then other cultures come in to interact with this 'original culture'. This coming together, if successful creates a lived success of social interaction. In the Western countries, the idea of tolerance is advocated to enthrone the diversity these Western nations now represent. Toleration presupposes the presence of an 'original culture' that will do the tolerating of other later cultures, all seeming to live in diffuse interaction. But no matter how diffuse cultures of a place may be, there is the ghostly presence of the other. The 'original culture' seem to have a constructed medium from which to view other cultures and so an 'otherness' is created. Occasionally, certain value analysis shows that indeed there is always an 'original culture' when there is a clash of values. We see that the 'other' culture always gives way to the dominant culture. This shows that there is always a mainstream culture despite the presence of diversity or accepted diversity.

The dominant ideas in the world today are Western in character and these are spread through various contacts. Other non- western cultures, in particular Africans' or black people's, with no dominating powers are aptly called 'the other', that is the hidden other, the unknown, the marginal. In a single univocal culture, any other existing culture becomes "the other" and usually the other is shrouded in mystery, never fully understood or known but is counted as part of the global culture as such or social culture. This counting as a part of global culture is only at the periphery, a periphery that can represent diversity properly so-called. This 'other' contributes to the diversity seen in city's life worldwide. According to Michlic (2004), "in general, 'the Other' has usually been understood only in one way, as a negative entity upon which the individual, groups, ethnic communities or nations construct their identities: "we" are different because we are not like "them." In this sense, 'the other' is perceived as an enemy or threat". The idea of diversity constructs 'the other' by imposing a particular culture, that is Western culture as "The Culture" of the world, while also recognizing the presence of other cultures on the periphery of the culture already constructed as the main culture.

This is done in the midst of thousands of other cultures and so the known 'original culture' perceives the other cultures as palpable threat and so seeks to dominate these other cultures, albeit subtly. If there is no capability for domination of the other cultures by the main or original culture, diversity will not exist hence a "we" and "them" situation is not created and there will be no need to talk about toleration or diversity. So, the metaphysics of diversity is seen from an identity construct that arises from ostracizing 'the other' in the creation of a global culture while also situating 'the other' to be one of the existences within society. This is true since a look at today's cities shows a single univocal and dominant culture which is Western in most cases, with other cultures on the periphery couched with Western categories. The true character of 'the other' is in a dominated zone. There is always the tensions arising from either in the ostracization of the other through environmental cues like buildings, or appropriating the other to adapt it to self as in the case of colonization.

The concept of 'the other' is also linked to the idea of nation-state or nationalists' ideas. Nation states necessarily emphasize the binary opposition "we" and "them". These nations were created to cater for a particular people and these people will have to compete for resources to stay alive or disappear. According to Triandafyllidou (2010), "the notion of the other is inherent in the nationalist doctrine itself. For nationalists (or simply for those individuals who

recognizes themselves as members of a national community) the existence of their own nation presupposes the existence of other nations too. Moreover, as history and Gellner (1983), teach us, the course of true nationalism never did run smooth. Thus, most of the nations existing today had to fight to secure their survival and to achieve their independence. For most national communities, there have been and there probably still are significant others, other nations and/or states, from which the community tried to liberate and/or differentiate itself". The globalization culture concerns the activities of nations in constant opposition to each other. It is the triumph of the Western States that has enthroned globalization as the currency of engagement for the whole world. The same is true in industry. There are certain taken for granted ideas in the industry. For instance, the purpose of industry to make profit and then transform society for good. This is humanism. This is mainly taken for granted. But the process of achieving this is far more complicated than meets the eyes.

Work Place Diversity in a Plural Industry: the edges of human resource management
The work place is as diverse as any society since the persons working within industry are from the society itself. There are challenges to managing a diverse work population. Managing diversity is more than simply acknowledging differences in people. It involves recognizing the value of differences, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusiveness. Managers may also be challenged with losses in personnel and work productivity due to prejudice and discrimination, as well as complaints and legal actions against the organization Devoe (1999).Negative attitudes and behaviors can be barriers to organizational diversity because they can harm working relationships and damage morale and work productivity Esty et al.(1995). Negative attitudes and behaviors in the workplace include prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, which should never be used by management for hiring, retention, and termination practices (could lead to costly legal battles).

Whenever humans are gathered for organized work, then there is need for a coordination of interests. These interests include that of the industry where they work and the interest of the workers themselves. This coordination of interest has been called human resource management. This is guided by labor laws which are created with the management of diversity in mind. The work of the office of the human resources has remained important in an industry if the individual workers are to remain sufficiently motivated for the work at hand. The establishment of human resource offices ensures a competitive advantage of the part of the firm in question. Competitive advantage encompasses those capabilities, resources, relationships, and decisions that permit a firm to capitalize on opportunities and avoid threats within its industry (Hofer and Schendel, 1978). Also, Porter (1985) argued that human resource management can help a firm obtain competitive advantage by lowering costs, by increasing sources of product and service differentiation, or by both. But these positions are secondary in the annals of industry and are not pointing to the basic construct of the industry. Man is a working being. This work is done in a social atmosphere with other people participating directly or indirectly to achieve set goals. A work place is a conglomeration of ideas about life and about the work at hand. For instance, religion being one of the most debated areas of life provides a pointer to the issue of conflict at the work place. Many at work come there with various religious ideas and wittingly or unwittingly try to foster it on others who may or may not share the idea.

Apart from this, religion provides an avenue for the formation of worldviews and can color human relationships. Apart from religion, the work itself provides ideas too. These ideas are not necessarily binding on the workers at all times. As a result of this, divergent ideas are created as to the best way to carry out a particular aspect of the work. In a production firm, some workers may be thinking that the position of the production machine is not appropriate

and can create accidents while other will think that the position of the machine is indeed perfect. These are simple riders. But the interaction and non-uniformity of ideas can create sublime conflicts. This means that not all conflicts can have apparent causes given the fact that many people are not given to baring their minds. Others are incapable of baring it even if they would wish to. Consequently, the work place is a highly complex place that creates an enormous challenge of pluralism or diversity. Diversity is the single reason why there is conflict at work. The understanding and management of diversity in its many dimensions will help in reducing conflicts at work to a healthy level. Healthy level of conflict must involve harmonizing all the divergent views towards creating team spirit. This too can be very tasking. The harmonization of working humans is in the human resource department of each firm that tries to help the firm make profit despite conflicts at work. This means skillful management. Human resource management involves the effective management of people to achieve organizational goals. Generally human resource management is generally defined as the "productive use of people in achieving the organization's strategic business objectives and the satisfaction of individual employee needs" (Stone, 1998, p. 4). However, given the diversity of worldviews this definition hides what the human resource people are actually doing. They manage diversity for productivity. This kind of management poses a challenge since they will have to determine how to retain which worldview and not the other or even to allow all world views in the interest of peace. Or how to determine what would be good for everyone across the board. The ability of the human resource team to do this will go a long way towards determining the level of healthy conflict within the organization. It is only when conflicts are at a healthy level that an industry will be productive.

Traditionally, human resource management have been criticized by many as being usually manipulative and unproductive since most of the rules of engagement immanent at many human resource departments are not sustainable. According to the critical school represented in (Legge, 1996 and Guest, 1997), development of an alternative and critical perspective of human resource management is inevitable and necessary for the evolvement of the field since in general, the critical perspective sees human resource departments as being rhetorical and manipulative, and thus, as a tool of management to control the workers. Rather than being a way for employees to fully develop and contribute in organization and deal with diversity, human resource departments' practices are a way of intervening in an employee's life in order to get employees to sacrifice more of themselves to the needs of the organization despite the hassles of diversity. Human resource departments are accused of redefining the meaning of work and the organization-employee relationship in order to gain the acceptance of such intolerable actions. In other words, the human resource managers in many industries circumvents the work of managing diversity and override the individuals' views thereby creating only one possible conflict within the industry, a conflict between the human resource department and the rest of the employees.

This is not a healthy atmosphere in any sense since enormous amount of energy is invested to maintain the statuesquo. The statuesquo here being production focused and not people focused in any way and says a lot about the priority of the organization.

According to some scholars of human resource management, especially (Guest 1987 and Kamoche, 1994) this is unitarist since an organization cannot set out to achieve only economic goals. Infact, Kamoche (1994) submits that there is a revival of unitarist ethos of the organization in many modern firms, in order to achieve congruence of purpose within the organization. He claims that the ideology of unitarism is being used to control any divergence of interest between managers and subordinates in order to achieve economic goals. All the mismanagement of human resource departments in industries has latent causes since the

causes treated are just issues of labor and relations between employers and employees. The actual problem of industry emanates from diversity of ideas and worldviews, which will go a long way to determine how the aforementioned relationships will emerge. Understanding diversity and dimensions therein will help in developing a viable human resource department that will focus simultaneously on the production and on the people.

This understanding has become even more urgent in the face of the changing nature of work in the era of cyber space technology where space and time does not matter anymore for work and where a complexification of life continues to confront human relationships.

Also, there is the emergence of the 'chameleon firms' whose constant state of flux can unnerve employers and employees alike. According to Sennett (1999), a 'chameleon' organization is a network of semi-autonomous teams in constant flux. Workers are added or shed in response to market demand. Power is centralized in an elite technical-managerial class. The inner management core gives orders to isolated cells or teams who are told what to achieve not how to achieve it. The people in power do not witness what they command.

Labor is seen as purely contractual. There is no commitment, no dependence. And, there is no social cohesion. Such an organization no longer carries on the pretense of the necessity of human resource department while in actual fact they care less about it and so they do not want to know about the hegemonic presence of diversity in work place as long as they have given their orders for a particular project to be achieved. Unfortunately, these unitarist firms increasingly populate the work place diminishing the importance of the person and her dealing with diversity. This colossal neglect of the humanistic dimension of industry leads to more and more dangerous but latent conflicts. Many firms have collapsed in the weight of this neglect of humans and their relationships at work. Many governments trying to stop unitarist practices fail in the face of increasing competition in firms thereby perpetrating untold battles at the work place. In other words, the current perversity of conflict at work is only increasing due to the attraction of unitarist firms that want to achieve results and cares less of the humans and their diversity and also because of the collapse of the traditional ideas of human resource department that manages both human and firms problems. Their motto is really 'work or be thrown out. If you have diversity issues, deal with it yourself provided your dealing with it does not affect firms set goals'. If your personal dealing with diversity issues in anyway affect the goal of the organization, the person is thrown out.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE IN NIGERIA, A POSSIBILITY?

In Nigeria, diversity is rife in industry in terms of the very diverse cultural, religious and ideological situation in the country, plus the increasing Westernization of culture brought about by increased access to the internet, satellite televisions and other media. Nigeria is made up of at least 260 ethnic groups and many diverse religious groups. This means that each Nigerian embodies this diversity and her character is shaped by the effects of this diversity. There is a tendency in Nigeria for violence to erupt in society as a result of not being able to deal with the challenges posed by these diverse forms of life. In a society like Nigeria, dealing with the challenges of diversity is not easy since issues of diversity centers on some advanced intellectual disposition and analysis which is often done privately with little or no discussion in the public sphere. Because of this situation, work places are affected with some high level conflicts in terms of organizations' inability to achieve team work among the employees. Most of the conflicts in industry in Nigeria center on employer/employees relationships, especially as it concerns wages, condition of work and skills involved. These issues have now firmly included how to deal with constant economic downturn in the country brought about decades of bad policies and governance. The constitution of Nigeria has a provision that stipulates

mandatory payment of wages at the end of the month for instance, but not all firms, including government owned firms, obeys this stipulation. Increment of wages within the organization does not invite inputs from the employees in large majority of firms in Nigeria. These have implications on the nature of industrial conflicts.

It is taken for granted that the employers knows how best to settle with the employees. But this is not the case in times when people decide to better understand their rights at work. This can lead to intractable conflict. The same is applicable to conditions of work. Many employers do not have adequate understanding about the necessity of good environment at work. Given the fact that unemployment is rife in Nigeria, there is a great tendency for employers to dump employees at work without considering their immediate welfare. This, most employers reason, does not matter since the level of resignation arising from dissatisfaction of working condition is virtually nonexistence. So unitarism is rife in Nigeria. However, this creates a hidden tension and conflict that can damage many industries. In addition, many within the industry have their skills hidden due to the fact that their knowledge of the work has been sidelined and there is an adoption of a style alien to modern work practices. These employees fearing for their jobs, tow the line at the detriment of the firm since the firm will continue to produce at very low levels. This kind of situation is possible since cultural factors, including worship of the elderly or seniors mandate the junior workers who may have better skills to keep quiet to avoid being seen to be forward or disrespectful.

The above analysis shows the Nigeria workplace in action and it is full of diverse ideas hence diversity is central to Nigeria's industries. The fact that many employers do not consider the inputs of employees in wage analysis is a form of mentality bereft of cutting edge human resource methods. But most employees in Nigeria will not protest rather they deposit their anger in the work creating a complex conflict situation between their work and what they are assigned to do. Thus the firm suffers from dysfunctional effects of this situation. The same is the case with remuneration and working condition in general. The employees may just blank out without the employers knowing simply because the working condition does not allow for optimum input from the employees. Most of the time, if there are discrepancies between the mentality of the employer and that of employees, conflicts is bound to subsist in the company albeit hidden. These conflicts are caused by the disparity of worldview between the employer and the employees.

The understanding of these worldviews will go a long way in managing the challenges of pluralism in the work place. Traditionally, human resource departments do not bother about mentalities and worldviews in their quest to avoid conflict in the workplace. It is believed that conflicts arise only from human behavior without looking at the cognitive causes of such behaviors. Recent empirical studies (for instance, Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1989; Fisher and Govindarajan, 1992; Galbraith and Merrill, 1991) tend to pursue what Snell (1992) terms a 'behavioral' perspective'. In this perspective, firms elect to follow strategies that require employees to behave in certain ways. The central questions are thus which practices will elicit behavior consonant with the firm's chosen strategy, on the one hand, and how certain types of rewards come to be used, on the other? The emphasis in this body of work is upon compensation, incentive, reward and control systems within a firm. There is a focus on how these can produce profit. This position is clearly wide the mark given the flaws inherent in behaviorism. An employee may behave perfectly well in tandem with the perspective of the firm and yet harbors a damaging worldview that can damage the goals of the firm. So the position of this paper points to the fact that there is a challenges of diversity as the principal cause of conflict in industry is not yet addressed in Nigeria. The important question therefore is: Can there be peace in industry in Nigeria?

To answer this question, we must consider the various revisions made to the labor laws in Nigeria and which are taken for granted since no one has ever gone to jail for violating the labor laws. The government of Nigeria brings itself out as fighting to protect labor laws which affect industry. They do this to precisely eradicate conflicts in industry. But a critical look at industry in Nigeria shows that these laws are routinely violated even by government to the extent that the private sector violate the laws in full view of the government. So conflict is rife in Nigeria's industries leading to collapse of so many business organization and thus limiting economic development in Nigeria. To make matters worse, the unitarist mentality is the order of the day in industry. In many cases there is a lack of a healthy industry relationship between the employers and employee. The employee is simply reduced to a slave increasing conflicts. More and more industry does not care about diversity, conflict of welfare in its integral sense. They simply set goals and make employees follow these set goals at all cost. How then can we established sensible modalities for industrial peace in such a chaotic condition in Nigeria?

There is only one option on which all efforts at industrial peace should be based if we hope to achieve industrial peace in a very diverse Nigeria and that is instituting effective industrial relations. Industrial relations entails the relationships geared towards making the work place within industry have the necessary humanist bent requires for the good of both the employers and employees. This will necessarily take care of the diversity seen at work and provide the grounds for industrial peace. According to Fajana (1995) defined industrial relations broadly as 'the totality of orientations, policies, concepts, theories, procedure and sound practice of management conflict at work'. He submitted that 'the activities that are involved are very many, often times involving considerable Naira cost'. At any rate, whether or not these financial costs and other side effects are seen as risks or losses depend intricately on the human resource orientations of managers and their commitment to better the work place for the good of all. Onasanya (1999) defines industrial relations as concerning 'the relationship between trade union and the employers in the industry, and the intervention of government in that relationship.' He opines that the function involves the relations and interactions between employers or management and employees, either as individuals or as groups; between supervisors and workers and his trade union, and between one trade union and the other and covers employment problems and security; conditions of work; remuneration; labour and employment grievances and disputes: level of production efficiency; safety, health and welfare of worker; social security and employee development. Industrial relations is therefore viewed from two angles: the relationships of one worker with another in industry and the workers themselves with the management of industry.

This paper advice that a criteria be set up to manage the workplace conflicts, within effective industrial relations practices, in order to achieve peace. Such criteria can follow the following model. There ought to be a basic understanding on the part of individuals about their moral and ethnic disposition and must be willing to discuss these peculiarities with anyone who cares to know. This can open up inner levels of discussion and introduce familiarity among both employers and employees. The benefit of this cannot be overemphasized. The individual at work is isolated in an important way. She is seen to be alone in her introspection and retrospection about both her personal life and the work she is doing. But if the colleagues at work have some ideas about the inner workings of her being, there is a more relaxed atmosphere since the individual in question will know she is in a familiar place and have the good will of the co-workers and the firm itself. This will reduce inner conflicts between the individual and the work place. Another criterion will be the understanding of group identity. Each individual at work belong to a group and the group has a deep influence on the individual. If colleagues at work have a fair understanding of this particular group mentality, they will be able to positively isolate the individual positioning her for work in another group other than

her own. When these are done, there is also the need to understand sex roles within groups and how the individual perceive her role in context of her culture. The role of women and men are not the same, in a large variety of cultures. This definitely robes off on role playing in the work place. Issues of maternity, leisure, belief and private relationships can have effects on role playing at work place. When there is understanding of the individual and her cultural background, human resource management will have a better human view. It is possible to incorporate cultural matters in the present models of human resource management and industrial relations as the industry pursues greater profit. The other models mentioned in this paper, in particular the unitarist model which has no regard for human resource management and industrial relations, exposes the industry to great conflicts that can lead to outright destruction of both employers and employees. So the best bet is to redevelop the models by incorporating cultural factors as they concern worldviews and mentalities within an effective industrial relations context.

CONCLUSION

Industrial peace is very elusive since diversity increases and its dimensions become ever broader. The industry itself is very large and so this creates and deepens diversity. The Nigerian condition itself is complex and radiates many faulty practiced within industry. There is an increasing adoption of a unitarist industry where the practice is to give all the powers to the management who sets goals that must be achieved without any care as to the welfare of the workers both physically and mentally. This leads to many altercations in industrial practice in including industry collapse. Even the government is complicit in this faulty practice in an era of colossal unemployment. This practice exacerbates industrial conflicts. To create industrial peace in Nigeria, effective industrial relations should be adopted and which understands the complicity of human relations and diversity and the need to mediate this through a humanistic workplace. It is only when industrial relations are practiced effectively with humanistic principles that there will be peace in industry in Nigeria.

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