Brethren and mother’s children: developing an industrial relations pluralism for African realities: a study of industrial relations and personnel management on the Gambian Docks

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Brethren and Mothers' Children: Developing an Industrial Relations Pluralism for African Realities

A Study of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management on the Gambian Docks

By

Alhajie Saidy Khan

A Doctoral thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

of Loughborough University

Loughborough University

Business School

September 2004
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Abstract

This thesis concerns the implications of the clash between formal Western management theories and practices and 'informal' African values, norms and interests, for the employment relationship. The study was carried out within a broad qualitative ethnographic paradigm that focused on the actors' perspectives and the 'social meanings' they attach to them. In that respect, it is about the sociological nature of Industrial relations (IR) and Personnel management (PM) problems in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). An in-depth empirical study of IR and PM at an African port revealed that these problems manifest themselves in consistent patterns of tensions and contradictions between Western management objectives and practices, and African moral values and material interests. The conclusions challenge the unitarist neoliberal perspective as well as the radical, yet materialist analysis of Marxism and postcolonial critiques. It concludes that in the SSA context, broader social and moral issues of the wider community have a decisive influence on the employment relationship. As a result, established Western employment frames of reference are also not entirely suitable for analysing all the relevant social factors. The thesis contributes to existing academic knowledge about IR and PM in three key ways. Methodologically, it points to the need for qualitative ethnographic research in native languages to capture actors' social meaning and probe the informal organisation in SSA. Theoretically, it indicates the need to understand the SSA organisation as part of its wider and specific societal and historical context. Finally, it shows that it is possible to develop pluralist and stakeholder theory to link work, family, and society in an institutional model of IR and PM for SSA.
Acknowledgements

Many individuals have contributed, in various ways, to the research that is described in this thesis and I am very grateful to all of them. I am particularly grateful and eternally indebted to Dr Peter Ackers for his supervisory role and unflinching concern for my personal wellbeing throughout the course of this study. A big acknowledgement goes to Professor Adrian Wilkinson and Dr Ursula Otto for their support and invaluable academic inputs. I am also very grateful to Dr. Laurie Cohen for providing me with some of the most useful material that went into this thesis. I also wish to express my appreciation for her interventions on my behalf in matters of a personal nature. I wish to thank Tracey Preston for putting up with all my requests.

I wish to thank my wife and children for their love and patience, and my friends Saihou Njie and Bai Gaye for their help and company during six-weeks of fieldwork in The Gambia.

A very big thank you goes to all the people at The Gambia Ports Authority and in particular, the Director of HRM and his staff for their help during fieldwork. Most importantly, however, I wish to acknowledge the contributions of all the Mothers' children and Brethren who shared their views on their employment relationships. This thesis would not have been possible without your willingness to share your experiences with me.
Dedication

To Sirandou, my life-long partner, for your love, patience and support.

To all those Brethren and Mothers' children whose employment relationship drama is told in this script. I hope I have been able to render a fair account of what you told me and showed me.
Certificate of Originality

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis, that the original work is my own except as specified in the acknowledgements and footnotes, and that neither the thesis nor the original work contained therein has been submitted to this or any other institution for a higher degree.

..................................................(Signed)

Alhajie Saidy Khan

............. September 2004 (Date)
Glossary of ‘Native’ words/terms and their meaning

Aada/Aardoo: Tradition or Custom
Alfaa/Kelifa: Elder or individual in position of authority
Alkalo/Alkali: Official title for Village headman
Badingo (lou): Maternal expression for relative (s) in Mandinka
('Mothers’ children')
Badinya: Adverb for Badingo
Borm Deka/Sateteeo/Jom Sare: Village head (owner of village)
Borom Kerr/Suteeo/Jom Galleh: Compound head (Compound owner)
Calipha: Supreme head of an Islamic Order
Daira: Local Collectives of disciplines
Dina/Dinoo: Religion/Faith
Fadingolou: Paternal expression for relative
Fula/Mandinka/Wollof: Interviews were conducted in these three
local dialects (in addition to English)
Futampha: Tribal initiation ceremony of the Jola ethnic group
Gammo: Local name for the annual celebrations of the birth of the
Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u)
Hadamaya: ‘The human way’ (actors’ description of traditional ways
of relating to each other)
Half-die: The local name for the neighbourhood surrounding the
docks
Horma/Hormo: Local corruption of the Arabic word for ‘Respect’
Iseenyo (lou): Neighbour (s)
Jijan: One of the three major Islamic brotherhoods
Jola: Ethnic group associated with the initiation ceremony of
Futampha
Kabilo/Galee: Ward comprising of the compounds belong to member of
the extended family clan living a a village/town
Magal: Annual ‘pilgrimage’ and night of religious singing in
honour of the founder Calipha of the Orders
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<tr>
<td>Mourides:</td>
<td>Arguably, the largest of the Islamic brotherhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qadiriyya:</td>
<td>The first Muslim Brotherhood to be introduced to the Senegambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa-ai-domi-n’dey:</td>
<td>Wolof for ‘Your relatives’ (‘Mothers’ children’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sateo/Deka/Sare:</td>
<td>Village/town</td>
</tr>
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<td>Serieng:</td>
<td>Islamic teacher/scholar. Also describes spirituality and the mythical powers associated with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiareh:</td>
<td>Annual religious gatherings in honour of the memory of local Serieng</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegambia:</td>
<td>The area covering Senegal and The Gambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwoo/Kerr/Galeh:</td>
<td>Mandinka, Wolof and Fula for dwelling or homestead comprising more than one inhabited building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talibe/Talibo:</td>
<td>Disciple (ordinary member of an Islamic Order).</td>
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Chapter One
Introduction

1. I: The Problem

'However far-reaching the political, economic, and psychological mechanisms through which imperial powers tried to make colonized peoples play their part in empire, they ultimately had to penetrate inside a plantation, a dockyard, a locomotive cab, or a factory where there were workers, bringing to the encounter their own conceptions of labour, their own interests, and their own wills' (Fredrick Cooper, 1987: 1).

Cooper is talking about the problems of managing waged employment in a colonial context. Yet, both the literature and my personal experience suggest that his observation has relevance in the contemporary Sub-Saharan African (SSA) context. For even now, in many parts of SSA, normative 'stakeholders', such as extended family clans and religious brotherhoods, often pervade authority relations within the business organisation. Western-style Industrial Relations (IR) and Human Resource Management (HRM) have tended to urge businesses to ignore these external influences, as sources of inefficiency and 'corruption' (for example, Blunt and Jones, 1992; Kiggundu, 1989; Berg, 1981). Instead, managers are advised to work with a unitarist conception of the internal life of the organization, isolated from society. Or, alternatively, in pluralist terms, to be only concerned with formal IR institutions, such as
Trade Unions and the alternative economic demands of their members. This thesis is based on a priori assumption, that to the contrary, these external normative institutions are central to the effective management of workplace relationships and interactions in a context where conventional IR structures are often not the main representative channel.

The issues and arguments in this thesis are made against the background of the adoption of the rhetoric of HRM and neo-liberal approaches to IR and organisational analysis in SSA since the early 1980s. It focuses on the issues and practice of employment relations and HRM in a social context where values, beliefs and actions tend to challenge the notion that Western management practices are universally applicable. It is not, however, just about the contextual relevance of specific management theories and practices. It also concerns the extent and nature of prevailing forms of analysis and the appropriateness of the HRM models that result from such analyses. Here, the critique focuses on post 1980s management and organisational literature on SSA (for example, Berg, 1981; Kiggundu, 1989; Blunt and Jones, 1992; Dia, 1996; Marie, 2000; Kamoche, 1997, 2000; Beurge and Offidile, 2001; and Hensen, 2002). With the exception of some African Labour History (for example, Brown, 2003; Cooper, 2000, 1987, 1983; Atkins, 1993, 1988), most organisational and management research on SSA fails to take proper account of the normative traditional institutions and social structures of the wider society and their influences on economic process (including the employment relationship). As a result of the failure to properly acknowledge the extent of the 'social embeddedness' of economic process (Granovetter, 1985) in the SSA context, salient social issues that are central to the employment problem are
subjected to superficial discussion and dismissed as irrelevant and incompatible with the rational values and objectives of the 'modern' business organisation.

There are two principal reasons for this. Firstly, a characteristically unitarist, American approach to organisational analysis is predominant. Secondly, there are no suitable alternative theoretical frameworks that can allow for the analysis of HRM policy to go beyond the workplace, to incorporate a wider range of 'stakeholders' and emerging tensions over values as well as interests. As the following account of my personal experience shows, these shortcomings have had adverse implications for existing management theories and practices for SSA.

'The List': Workforce Restructuring in The Gambia Ports Authority

An example of how the influences of traditional relationships structures and institutions are brought to bear was in the case of The Gambia ports Authority (GPA) in the late 1980s. As part of the public enterprise reform agenda, the Authority entered into a 'performance contract' with the government of the Gambia (the sole owners) in June 1987. Under the terms of the contract, the GPA was required to carry out extensive labour audits in order to determine its staffing requirements to meet the economic targets set out in the contract. Following the audit exercise, a 'labour reserve pool', comprising of about 285 employees (about a third of its workforce) - considered to be surplus to requirements at the time - was created. These employees were to remain on the pay roll until the end of the financial year by which time their redundancy
would have been established, and they would be retrenched. However, during that period the Authority could redeploy individuals from the 'list' as and when required. By the end of the year, however, over half of the original 'list' had been redeployed. This, despite the fact that there were no changes to the performance contract in terms of targets and the Authority had not engaged in any undertakings that were not envisaged when the list was drawn up.

To the unfamiliar observer, corruption and political pressure could suffice as explanations. However, significantly, the external pressures that were brought to bear on senior managers of the Authority came from sources other than the formal political patronage that is often referred to in the literature (see for example, Kiggundu, 1989; and Blunt and Jones, 1992). Instead, employees who were targeted for retrenchment simply reverted to traditional and religious relationship structures to secure their jobs. In that regard, the 'matriarchs' and 'patriarchs' of the extended family clans and the 'Saints' who preside over the religious brotherhoods, and maintain their influence through perceived mystical powers, were the greatest sources of pressure. As a result, most of the decisions relating to these redeployments were taken in the informal environment of the home rather than the formal work environment. In most instances, the process leading to the decision involves the particular worker or elders from her/his extended family buying 'cola-nuts' and making approaches to senior managers either directly or through the elders of the relevant manager's family clan. Alternatively, they may approach a religious leader who they believe has some influence over the manager or other important member(s) of her/his extended family. The manager would then be summoned by elders of his own family or by the religious leader and the case
of the particular employee would be put to her/him. The decision to deploy is made there and the HR department simply receives instructions to implement that decision. The point of this story is that although Business organisations are urged to ignore these external influences, those who are actually involved with managing people find it very difficult or even impossible to heed such advice.

Generally, this thesis accepts the argument that organisational management in SSA is fraught with such difficulties. Fundamentally, the problem is the lack of adequate Industrial relations and HRM paradigm for SSA. This problem is also being compounded by predominant, but unsuitable, approaches to organisational analysis in SSA and the direction that relevant institutional reforms have taken since the middle 1980s. Organisational analysis and institutional reforms, even with respect to employment relations and people management, are dictated solely by the rational economic demands and commercial strategies of private capital. They also tend to ignore and/or dismiss as peripheral, the sociological aspects that are central to SSA employment relations. Instead, they are largely based on demands, which tend to be predicated on the 'extravagant claims of new managerialism' (Ackers and Wilkinson, 2003) conceptualised in the various aspects of HRMism (Keenoy, 1999).

This thesis is intended as a contribution to IR theory as it applies to developing countries in general, and in particular, SSA contexts. It is that theoretical field/discipline, which shapes my choice of concepts and theoretical frameworks. The approach that is proposed by the current research
is one of pluralist institutional reform. A major problem for developing IR theory for African realities, however, is the lack of an adequate African IR paradigm. For that reason, the study draws on the British Pluralist IR tradition as embodied in the Donovan 2 systems analysis (1968). In that respect, I have tried to construct an Africa IR paradigm by an imaginative development of British pluralism especially as embodied in Flanders and Fox's (1970) famous From Durkheim to Donovan article on the Donovan analysis and Ackers' (2002) neo-pluralist development of that work.

The informal issues of SSA IR, however, do not necessarily originate from the workplace activities of managers and shop stewards. Rather, they concern issues external to the organisation. Understanding these issues and developing reasonably credible solutions to the employment relations and Personnel management problems they provoke, therefore, require deeper and wider levels of sociological analysis. For that reason, the thesis argues for a conceptualisation of SSA society not in terms of cultural typologies or an 'African though systems', but in terms of a social system of formal and informal dimensions. To forge a missing or latent link between IR and social system in an African context, the thesis draws on Radcliff-Brown's Social Anthropology (1949), which was also inspired by Durkheim's more extensive sociology of normative systems (Giddens, 1974; Ackers, 2002). For my purposes, however, the concept of anomie is not defined in terms of a state of 'normalessness', but rather, in terms of cycles of tension and conflict between
the normative order of the formal dimension and normative aspirations of the informal dimensions of the social system.¹

1. II: This Research

The argument of this thesis is that existing models for management in SSA are based on analyses, which focus disproportionately on the rational economic demands of global capitalism. And yet, the central issues in the employment relationship in SSA are social and therefore, their proper understanding and resolution require a sociological analysis. Predominantly, the evidence that support the arguments in this thesis, are based on six weeks of intensive empirical investigation of IR and Personnel management (PM) at the Gambia Ports Authority (GPA). The choice of a port as the organisational setting for the study is based, to a large extent, on my personal experience of working there in a managerial capacity. That experience suggests that the cosmopolitan characteristics of a modern African port makes it an ideal setting to examine and observe the collision of Western management ideologies and paradigms, and indigenous African values and norms in a formal business organisation. The thesis drew primarily on qualitative data from sixty-two semi-structured interviews, limited observations and analysis of official documents and publications. The subject of interest was not limited to the nature of workplace relationships and interactions. It was also about how these relationships and interactions are shaped and sustained by the different dimensions of the social system.

¹ This extends Flanders and Fox (1970) analysis of the conclusions of the Donovan commission to a different social context where the normative orders and aspirations of the different dimensions of the social system engage in a vicious cycle of contest for social hegemony.
The thesis is set in terms of triangulation at two levels of analysis. At the national level, it focused on issues arising from investigations of the national IR system in general and in relation to dock employment. At that level of analysis, discussions concentrated on the views of key actors in the employment relationship (that is to say representatives of workers and employers’ associations and government officials responsible for labour administration). The second level of analysis concerned IR systems and processes at the level of the organisation. Here discussions centred on organisational level policy frameworks and draws on the interview data from ordinary employees and managers. The core issue of inquiry concerned the influence of the values and norms of the wider African community on the workplace relationships and interactions between organisational members (managers and employees). For that reason, the analysis also drew upon data from key informants outside the organisation (mainly community and religious leaders) to describe the various aspects of the informal system and how they inform communal and individual beliefs, interests and actions.

The thesis drew on a diverse body of literature to capture various perspectives on the problem and issues of investigation. These included predominant Business School perspectives on the management problems of SSA (for example, Cross-Cultural Management studies and HRM), Marxist, postcolonial and Pluralist IR perspectives. A review of the literature on these perspectives revealed that they are fundamentally limited as explanations for the management problems of SSA. It [the review], however, helped to generate themes and concepts. These themes and concepts, together with my personal experience and tacit knowledge of the problem, provided the basis
for developing the theoretical questions to which the empirical research sought answers. The empirical chapters are fundamentally about actors' perspectives on the general and specific themes and issues that were the subjects of the empirical study. These perspectives are discussed by way of three levels of analyses. The first concerns a historical perspective on the formal national IR system. The aim in that case, is to give an account of actors' perspectives with a view to identify elements that represent continuities and/or disruptions to patterns of IR and PM that represent the country's colonial heritage. The second level of analysis focused on formal organisational level IR and PM policies and processes. Here the aim is to describe the organisational frameworks on which actors formed perspectives regarding organisational level employment relations and PM/HRM. Those perspectives are discussed in the third and final level of analysis.

One of the key theoretical assumptions of the study was that because of different degrees of exposure to Western values and norms, manifestations of the influences of the 'informal' dimensions of the social system will vary between managers and ordinary employees. And, as a result, the two categories of actors will have different takes on the formal organisation and its rational policies and processes. Empirical findings, as the conclusion chapter will indicate, do not entirely support this assumption. The assumption, nevertheless, provided the basis for explaining the contrast between the views of managers and ordinary employees regarding the influences of extended family clans and Islamic brotherhoods on their employment relationship.
The final empirical chapter concentrates on the core issues relating to the influences of the values and normative orders of the wider society on organisational management in SSA. The chapter draws on the main interview data to highlight the character of these influences and their importance to both managers and ordinary employees. The conclusion and discussion chapter adapts British pluralist IR theory (Fox 1966; and Donovan's 1968) and related theoretical developments (Flanders and Fox, 1970; Ackers, 2002, Provis, 1996), to develop an IR paradigm that can help to institutionalise the more compatible elements of the 'informal' system into the formal IR and PM policies and processes of the organisation. The thesis has used official government and organisational documents and publications to describe formal IR policies and practices and the various context for the introduction and development of different IR patterns. Conceptions of the core problems and their solutions, however, are essentially based on critical interpretations of actors' views and, to a limited extent, actions. The manner of these conceptions reflects the methodological issues that also concern the current study.

In order to define the problem and how it might be resolved, the thesis depends mainly on data accessed through in depth semi-structured interviews and limited observations. The conclusions that are drawn from them are based on critical interpretations and explanations of actors' views and actions. In that respect, the study follows a tradition of IR research 'which placed an emphasis on “qualitative reconstruction of the rich tapestry of workplace life”' (Ackers, 1988:41 cited in Greene, 1999: 7). As much as possible, throughout the empirical chapters, priority is given to the voices of ordinary workers and
managers as the analytical tool. For conceptions and descriptions of the two aspects of the 'informal' dimension of Gambian society (the extended family clan and Islamic Orders), the study relied heavily on interview data from traditional community and Islamic leaders and scholars. These categories also included some old dockworkers and GPA staff who are assumed to have greater empathy with the traditional and Islamic aspects of the social system.

The discussions also drew upon and added to the body of literature concerned with organisational management analysis in SSA. In that regard, the study fits in with the objectives (but neither the methods and in some cases, nor the conclusions) of some recent research that also attempted to find solutions to management problems and organisational failures in SSA (Jackson, 2002, 1999; Beurge and Offidille, 2001; Kamoche, 2000, 1997; Mbigi, 1997; Dia, 1996; Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989). It also looked at the Marxist and Postcolonial literature that critiques colonial grand narratives and the use of Western epistemologies to study SSA phenomena. But I question the usefulness of some postcolonial concepts and theories for understanding the management problems of SSA and fashioning realistic solutions to them.

With respect to alternative frameworks of African IR and HRM, the study challenges perspectives that are based on unitarist and neo-unitarist notions of the organisation (Kamoche, 2000) and purely rational economic conceptions of the problem (Hansen, 2002; and Marie, 2000). In that regard, it invoked Kuper (1999, 2000) and questions whether culture, alone, suffices as an explanation for how people think and behave (Dia, 1991; Kiggundu,
 Accordingly, therefore, the thesis casts doubts on the viability of 'trans-continental comparative analysis' that use Hofstede's (1980) framework of culture to establish linkages between traditional SSA cultures and organisational outcomes (for example, Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Dia, 1996; Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989). My findings also question the credibility of Marxist perspectives on the grounds that they do not reflect the native perspectives that are uncovered by this study. The analytical concerns of the thesis are also viewed in the context of a broad methodological critique of quantitative approaches to 'microscopic level' research in developing countries (Greene, 2001; Sathyamurthy, 1999).

In engaging with and adapting some key British pluralist IR theories (Fox 1979, 1966; Donovan, 1968; Flanders and Fox, 1970; and Ackers, 2002), the study also charts some parallels between some major contemporary debates in Western IR (Ackers, 2002; and Provis, 1996), and the key sociological issues of SSA employment relations. In that respect, it draws upon academic as well as policy debates on, for example, issues of 'work-life balance' (Ackers, 2003), Social partnership and IR issues concerning the rights of indigenous people.

The diversity of the literature reflects the complexity of the issues of SSA IR and management. The review of the literature, however, centred on critiques of Cross-cultural management (C-CM), Postcolonial, Marxist and Pluralist IR perspectives on the problems. Themes and concepts of multi-ethnicity, etic and emic cultures, integration and subtractive categorisation, for example, are borrowed from Cultural and Social Anthropological literature that also
informs most C-CM analysis and debates (Dowling et al, 1999; Sackmann et al 1997; Hofstede, 1994, 1980, Ros et al, 1988; Jaeger, 1986; and Hansell and Ajiratatou, 1982). Concepts of ambivalence, hybridity and unconscious resistance are taken from postcolonial theorisations of workplace resistance (Prasad and Prasad, 2003; Bhabha, 1994; and Nandy, 1983). Notions of involvement, organisational commitment, foreign management practices, work related values and alien influences have been borrowed the HRM and Organisational behaviour literature. Concepts of antagonism and exploitation come from Marxist perspectives. Notions of paternalism and indulgency patterns are developed from Industrial Sociology. And employment frames of reference, value pluralism and neo-pluralism reflect the dependence on pluralist IR theories and concepts. These diverse sources of theoretical debates and perspectives are, however, relevant only insofar as they can help explain the employment relations problems of SSA and what role, if any the wider social environment plays in creating these problems and how it might help to resolve them. The following section provides an outline of the thesis in terms of how its chapters help to develop the key arguments of the study.

1. III: Outline of Thesis

The rest of the thesis comprises of eight chapters. Chapters two, three and four discuss the literature on different perspectives on the management problems of SSA, and in relation to the context and history of dockworkers in Africa. Chapter five discusses the methodology for the current study. Chapter six through to eight are the empirical chapters. The empirical aspect is divided into three chapters in other to focus on the different levels of analysis and to
discuss the core arguments in greater detail. The final chapter is the conclusion and discussion chapter.

Chapter two reviews the literature on C-CMS, Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives on the management problems of SSA. It aims to assess their usefulness to unlocking the problem and thus providing some theoretical bases for its resolution. The first part of the chapter looks at the Cross-Cultural studies literature in order to develop a concept of Gambian society and by extension, the SSA context. It focuses mainly on the stream of C-CMS society that uses frameworks of culture to establish linkages between cultural variations and organisational outcomes in SSA. In that respect, discussions centred on Hofstede (1980) Universal Dimensions framework as arguably, the most influential framework used in that stream of C-CMS. There has been an increase in this stream of analysis since the introduction of neo-liberal management policies in Africa in 1980s. This increase proves that it is no longer the case that business academics ignore differences between societies. Instead, C-CMS is offered as the key to understanding why attitudes and behaviour are different. However, like most American policy and academic debates, C-CMS also adopted a typically American tendency to draw on American Cultural Anthropology and appeal to ‘culture’ for explanations for all and every thing (Pierpont, 2004; Kuper, 2000 and 1999). This takes for granted that ‘culture’ is the right way to examine and explain ‘differences in work related attitudes’ and behaviours between societies. Invoking Kuper (1999 and 2000), this study challenges the idea that ‘culture’ is the best approach to unlocking the uneven effectiveness of policies and practices between societies. It concludes that whilst culture is important, so are other
element of society. It argues, instead, for a view of SSA society based on Durkheim and the British School of Social Anthropology's notions of the social system and the 'social whole'. This will help avoid the tendency, as in C-CMS, to adopt notions of the contemporary African nation-state as unified cultures.

The second part of the chapter reviews the literature on Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives on the problem. In contrast with C-CMS, Marxist and Postcolonial theories and concepts are viewed as a 'leftist' non-managerialist perspectives. A more direct motivation for reviewing the Marxist perspective, in particular, arose from Steven Jaros' comment that this study 'could be seen as being managerialist'. Jaros based his argument on the belief that the conclusions could 'provide management with insights they need to enhance exploitation of labour'. Leftist perspectives generally tend approach the problem from the broad view of how Western capitalism exploits and causes the underdevelopment of Africa (e.g. Rodney, 1972 and 1988). My argument is that orthodox Marxism has a linear view of economic conflict between waged proletarians and capitalist that is hard to apply to the SSA context. This is particularly because most paid African workers are not true proletarians (see Cooper, 1983, 1987). Leninist and Maoist versions of Marxism have been attractive to advocates of Africa's own version of socialism – the so-called African Socialism. This appeal, however, lies in the fact that these neo-Marxists perspectives stress the inevitability of conflict between peasants and imperialists. As a result, issues concerning rural peasants, and

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2 In an email reaction (28/04/2003) to a theoretical paper from this study that was presented at the Labour Process Conference in Bristol in April 2003, Steven Jaros expressed some concern 'that without a clear explanation as to how non-negotiation would backfire on management in terms of organizational efficiency, etc' my theory 'could provide management with insights they need to enhance exploitation'. He therefore suggested that I 'bring in some critical theory (Marxian, Labour process, etc) to explain how this could be resisted'.
not urban waged working classes, are the focus of 'African Socialism'. In that respect, the focus is on Marxism concerned with economic development instead of *Labour process*.

Postcolonial perspective derives from the broad orientation that challenges the hegemony of Western grand narratives and epistemologies. Unlike orthodox Marxism, it prioritises the coloniser/colonised relationship with very little reference to the employment relationship. With respect to its broader orientation, however, a postcolonial critique might challenge the idea of using theories of major Western thinkers (for example, Durkheim, Radcliff-Brown and Fox), to develop a concept of African reality and resolve its peculiar problems. A more direct motivation for a review of the Postcolonial perspective on the problem, however, came from recent calls for 'a critical engagement' between 'Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis' (Prasad, 2003). Postcolonial notions of hybridity and mimicry, for example, are useful for explaining certain issues in the employment relationship. However, these concepts also tend to imply a false sense of purity because, in reality, almost all societies are hybrid. The postcolonial perspective on workplace resistance based on the notion of 'unconscious resistance' is, in my view, rather dubious. The idea that you can categorise workers actions as 'unconscious resistance', simply because as a researcher, you are unable to determine their conscious of the oppositional nature of their actions, is to say the least, an unconvincing argument. It suggests that with respect to the analysis of workplace relationships and interactions, Postcolonial discourse suffer from a methodological problem.
The final part of the chapter reviews pluralist IR perspectives in relation to the management problems of SSA. It is based on the conclusion that C-CMS, Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives do not suffice as explanations and therefore, the basis for developing viable solutions. But it is also based on the realisation that even after over 50 years of political independence and the effects of post independent policies and the interventions of international agencies, at its core, formal SSA IR is still based on British pluralist IR tradition that informed colonial labour policies and practice. The emergence of neo-unitarist approaches to employment relations in the form of HRM and various forms of limited employee participation since the 1980s, have challenged the viability of the pluralist perspective. Recent theoretical developments in IR pluralism indicate, however, that at its core, the pluralist perspective still has something to offer to contemporary SSA IR. The theoretical developments that are discussed in relation to the management problems of SSA, however, directly relate to problems of work in Western contexts. Ackers (2002) and Provis’ (1996) arguments and models, for example, are concerned with developments in the 'Western world of work'. The issues that they raised are, however, not very dissimilar, conceptually, from those that could be discern from the findings of the current study. As in Provis, this study is also concerned about how different ‘values’ as well as interests could be managed. In that respect, it takes Ackers (2002) position that we also need to look outside the formal organisation, into the wider community, for answers. These arguments are developed throughout the thesis to support the proposition for a modified version of Ackers ‘neo-pluralist’ framework as the basis for a Values and Interests Institutionalisation model of IR and PM/HRM for SSA.
Chapter three therefore looks at the problem in terms of contextual and historical perspectives. It helps to develop the argument that knowledge of the peculiar SSA context and its history, in relation to the problem is the key to its resolution. This argument springs from the assumption that history is an important midwife for context. The chapter draws upon African labour history as well some recent literature on organisational analysis and management with the aim tracing the contemporary problem to its origins (i.e. when capitalist production was introduced to SSA). In that regard, the review aims to place the contemporary management issues in their historical context. And, in doing so, develop the argument that current management problems echo the social problems that had confronted capitalist waged employment in Africa during the colonial period. Unfortunately, most analyses that try to explain the failures of recent neo-liberal management interventions in Africa have, at most, maintained ambiguous position regarding the social dimensions of the problem. Managers are urged to ignore irrelevant traditional values that are also the source of corruption and bad practice. This research suggests that sometimes actors (especially those in positions of authority) abuse their positions on the pretext of 'pressures from external role set' or 'extraorganisational' commitments (see Dia, 1993; Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989). But, it also suggests that the traditional values and norms of the wider society are anything but irrelevant.

The argument regarding the implications of history and context for contemporary management problems of SSA is developed in chapter four, which discusses docks and African dockworkers as working class category. The chapter begins with the suggestion that there is paucity of the literature
on docks and dock employment in West Africa. As a result, the review concentrates on the literature from elsewhere in SSA (especially East Africa). It makes the argument that the social issues at the core of contemporary management problems, in general, and in particular concerning dock employment, mirror those of the colonial period. And, because these issues also reflect the nature of the peculiar SSA social context, African Dockers, as a working class category, do not fit the 'universal' stereotypes of the dock subculture (Kerr and Siegel, 1954). Therefore, rather than determining working class subculture solely on the basis of analysis of 'interindustry variables' (Kerr and Siegel, 1954; Miller, 1969), the chapter argues for analysis to also take account of the social context in which working class categories are created and evolved. The argument for consideration of social context is further developed in chapter five.

Chapter five concerns the methodology for the current study. It begins by linking the questions raised by the literature to the choice of research methods. It argues the case for methodological pluralism based on a qualitative approached based on a broadly ethnographic paradigm. Although it engages in the broad debate regarding methodology in Social Science research, that discussion is carried out in the context of the argument as to what constitutes the best approach to investigating 'microscopic level' phenomena in developing countries (Greene, 2001, Sathymurphy, 1999). In that respect, the thesis argues for methodological choice to be dictated by theoretical objectives and practical circumstances of research. In the case of this inquiry, those factors suggest the choice of a qualitative sociological paradigm that is capable of accessing native views and the subjective
meanings that actors attached to their views and actions (Weber, 1968). Achieving that objective requires that the researcher also has some empathy with the issues of her/his inquiry and natives' takes on those issues. In other word, 'insight follows from personal experience' (Kuper, 2000: 215; see also, Rosaldo, 1989). Therefore, in discussing the fieldwork aspect of the study, the advantages and potential disadvantages of my personal status, as the 'intimate outsider', are raised. The empirical chapters that follow are based on the argument that social science research should privilege native voices in the presentation of its findings. Accordingly, the accounts that are given in the empirical chapters (i.e. Chapters six to eight) are largely based on critical interpretations and explanations of actors' perspective drawn from the interview data.

Chapter six discusses the formal national level IR frameworks from a historical perspective beginning with the colonial period. The aim of the chapter is to identify elements and patterns in the current IR framework, which represent continuities from the colonial IR system, as well as locate moments and developments that represent disruptions to that system. The historical perspective is divided into four periods representing changing political and economic contexts and their implications for IR in The Gambia. With respect to the continuity/disruption themes, the thesis argues that despite changes in the political and economic policy context and the interventions of international aid and development agencies, there is significant evidence to suggest that aspects of the colonial system are still relevant. But the evidence also show that the influence of indigenous forms of
social relationships and organisations on the formal IR system have become more obvious and relevant in post-colonial context.

Chapter seven applies the continuity/disruption theme to the organisational level to discuss the influence of national level policy on organisational IR and PM policies and practices. The chapter also presents actors' perspectives on the formal policy frameworks that govern the employment relationship between the GPA and two categories of employees. For the relationship between the organisation and her regular employees (i.e. staff directly hired and paid by the GPA), the discussion concentrates on the GPA's Rules and Regulations of Services (R&RS) (2003). With respect to relationship with dockworkers, the chapter focuses on The National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS). Regarding the Authority's relationship with the 740 registered dockworkers; it concludes that the NDLS represents an archaic solution to the contemporary problems of dock employment relations. As for the relationship between the Authority and its regular staff, the findings indicate that while the R&RS do matter and are sometimes used by both managers and employees to defend their respective positions, it allows for extensive managerial discretion. Managers use undefined managerial discretion to operate 'indulgency patterns' in their dealings with ordinary employees. This tendency for 'indulgency patterns' also reflects the consistent pattern of ambivalence, which characterises the formal IR system and processes. A more detailed analysis of actors' perspective is carried out in chapter eight to further develop the theme of ambivalence as the main characteristic of IR at both national and organisational levels.
In chapter eight the thesis focuses on the core argument of the study. Namely: how the values systems and normative standards of the wider African community are elaborated in workers' conceptions of the formal organisation and their attitudes and behaviour towards its rational objectives and rules. The chapter begins with a description of the two informal aspects of social system – the extended family clans and Islamic Brotherhoods. It conceptualises the extended family clan structure as a hierarchy of relationships, obligations and expectations. In their most benevolent form, the relationships are described in matrilineal terms as 'mothers' children' (literal translation for 'relative' in Wolof and Mandinka). The degree of the obligations and expectations between relatives depend on the level within extended family structure that their relationship is constructed. The Islamic aspect of the informal system is dominated by three Orders (Brotherhoods) of the Sufi brand of Islam. The relationship between those who head these Orders (the Caliphas) and their disciples (Talibes), is described as a brand of spiritual and material symbiosis. Although actors' tend to emphasise the moral aspects of the relationships that are sanctioned by these informal dimensions, the findings of the study suggests there are significant material aspects to these relationships and interactions. The implications of these findings for the management problems of SSA are discussed in chapter nine.

Chapter nine summarises the findings and highlights the main conclusions of the study and their implications for IR and PM/HRM theory and practice, organisational analysis, and the management of dock employment in SSA. It argues that SSA IR is characterised by a consistent pattern of ambivalence that can be managed by adapting British IR pluralism (Fox, 1966; Donovan,
1968 and Ackers, 2002) to SSA reality. In methodological terms, the conclusions critique the concept of 'unconscious resistance' on methodological ground. The fundamental methodological argument, however, is for a qualitative sociological approach that would enable researchers to access native perspectives and the social meanings that actors attach to their views and actions (Weber, 1968). With respect to dock employment, the discussion focuses on the dock work ‘gang’ to develop the concept of mimicry as a form of resistance. In that regard, it shows how ordinary Dockers have used a formal IR structure (the gang), to reconstitute social units that resemble social organisation within of the wider African community. For that argument, the thesis borrows from the postcolonial concept of ‘mimicry’ to describe how Dockers’ have used the ‘gang’ to develop alternative informal response to the ambiguities of the formal system. The final part of the chapter engages with the wider academic and policy debates regarding IR and organisational analysis and management, to develop a model of IR and PM/HRM for SSA that is based on an adaptation of Ackers neo-pluralist IR framework. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the current study and direction for future research.
Chapter Two

Perspectives on Management in SSA: 3 Solutions to the Problem

Introduction

The management problems of SSA that are the focus of this study have also been looked at from other perspectives. As indicated in the preceding chapter, since the introduction of neo-liberal macroeconomic management policies and strategies in the early 1980s, there has been a flurry of research in search of explanations for the dismal failures of these interventions. The debate that has emerged from these investigations have further polarised the left/right divide as to what constitutes the best approach to resolving Africa's management problems. The central argument in this thesis is that at core of SSA management problem are social issues that require sociological analysis and social solutions. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to look at some key perspectives on the problem, in terms of how they define it and what they propose as solutions.

The chapter begins with a look at C-CMS' take on the problem. Although it takes a broad look at the C-CMR literature, the focus of the discussion will be on that aspect of the literature that sought to establish links between the failure of neo-liberal management theories and practices, and indigenous SSA cultures. The intention, in that regard, is to explore the limits of dominant C-CM approaches regarding the diagnosis and conceptions of the problem. The
second section discusses the Marxist and Postcolonial views on the problem. As in the review of C-CMR literature, the aim is to assess the left's perspectives in terms of their viability as the way to unlocking, explaining and resolving the management problems of SSA in relations to employment relations. The final section looks at British IR pluralist frameworks. Although the specific 'informal' issues of inquiry are peculiar SSA phenomena, the formal structures and phenomena that these informal elements are being contrasted with, originate from British IR traditions. Besides, some recent theoretical developments indicate that the issues that are currently the focus of academic and policy debates in Britain and Europe regarding employment relations are not so dissimilar from those that concern the current study. It must be emphasised, however, that these perspectives are discussed, only, in the very narrow context of how they might help our comprehension of the IR and management problems of SSA.

2. I: Cross-Cultural Management Studies Perspectives

In this section the literature concerned with conceptions of culture and methodologies in C-CMR is reviewed. It draws on and engages with literature concerned with the academic debate about notions of culture and whether quantitative methods constitute the best approaches to understanding comparative cultural issues of management. The aim is to analyse the various points of view in order to identify or develop a conceptual framework that fits in with the realities of contemporary SSA. Any attempt to conceptualise the culture of SSA must begin with an appreciation for the difficulties associated with the task of defining 'culture'. A fact underlined by Kluckhohn's efforts in
*Mirror for Man* where eleven, somewhat, different definitions of culture were used in a single chapter (1950: 4-5). It does help however, that one does not approach such a task 'intellectually empty-handed' (Geertz 1973: 23). In that respect, this review and critique starts from the broad theoretical idea that almost all SSA is multiethnic (Thomas & Bendinex, 2000; and Kamoche, 200).

In reality, almost all societies are culturally heterogeneous. As Goodenough (1978: 79-80) observed, even in so-called culturally homogeneous organisational settings, 'multiculturalism is the normal experience of most individuals ... for they are perforce drawn into the microcultures of ... others ...' Yet, some of the most influential pieces of C-CMR (Haire et al, 1966; Hofstede, 1980, 1994; Hofstede and Bond, 1987; and Hamden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000, 1997) employ constructs of culture that assume the existence of unitary 'national cultures'. Critiques of this stream of C-CMR point out that they confuse national differences as cultural differences 'without any further theoretical grounding' (Bhagat & McQuaid, 1982: 365; see also, Sackmann et al 1997; Malpass, 1977; Schwab, 1980; Child, 1981; Bhagat, 1979; O'Reilly and Roberts, 1973; Triandis, 1972 & 1980; Dowling et al, 1999; and Gregory, 1983).

Sonja Sackmann and her colleagues (1997) attribute this tendency to the predominant American influence on the field of Cross-Cultural Management research. In that case, the field of C-CM studies developed largely as a response to the United States' (U.S.) post war global economic and political orientations. The global expansion of American business organisations and

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her cold war agenda required some understanding of other political and economic context. In economic terms, the motivation was to have some appreciation for the potential challenges that other contexts may pose for American management models (Vernon, 1971). At the same time that the United States was building global economic hegemony, post war political developments were also having an impact on the emerging field of C-CMR (Sackmann et al 1997). Undoubtedly, the single most significant post war political concern of the United States was the ideological and potentially, military confrontation with communism. In her response to that real and/or potential confrontation, the U.S. adopted a strategy of 'containment' to check the spread of communism by making it less appealing to the newly independent developing countries. To make the alternative – capitalism – more appealing, the U.S. and her allies encouraged economic development as the best possible strategy against the 'communist appeal' (Sackmann et al 1997). This objective gave added impetus to C-CM studies because, as Farmer and Richman (1965) noted, economic development was 'the single most critical social activity in connection with economic progress' (p. 1). The U.S policy objectives, therefore, were to enhance the capacity of American business organisations to do business with and in other countries and to make her political and economic ideologies more appealing. Logically, therefore, C-CMR developed a pattern that surrogates the nation-state for culture. And, thus, the assumption that 'national origin was a given, single, and permanent characteristic of an individual, and so is cultural identity' (Sackmann et al, 1997: 17).
From the pioneering works of Harbison and Myers (1959), Farmer and Richmann (1965), and Haire et al (1966), two focal points of research emerged, with distinct conceptual and methodological implications for the future C-CMR. These distinctions also reflect the contexts and motivations that influenced early ventures into C-CMR. Harbison and Myers (1959) and Farmer and Richmann (1965), were interested in investigating the linkages between economic development and management. If they had any interest in culture per se, it was an implicit rather than explicit one. They were advocates of the convergent hypothesis and passionately believed in the inevitability of universally applicable management philosophies and practices (Sackmann et al, 1997). Farmer and Richmann therefore, wrote, ‘universal convergence is likely to take decades, generations, and even centuries in some extreme cases’ (1965: 394). ‘The jury’, as the saying goes, ‘is still out on that one’. Although their disciples are not as overtly passionate about the potential for global convergence management ideologies and practices, as Kerr (1983) pointed out, many still hold that position. In that respect, the uniform application of 1980s economic recovery and structural adjustment interventions in developing countries tend to bear him out.

The second effect of these earlier ventures into C-CMR was their impact on methodology in social science research. Along with the emergence of the ‘national culture’ construct, social science research in the U. S. was also experiencing what amounts to a paradigm shift towards norms that are associated with physical science research (Redding, 1994; and Sullivan, 1994). *Managerial Thinking: An International Study* (Haire et al, 1966), represents, possibly, the first large scale comparative study that sought to uncover the
linkage(s) between culture and managerial values and attitudes (Sackmann et al, 1997). At the time, they betrayed the emerging fondness for quantitative positivism by proclaiming: ‘we are psychologists and approach this study as such. It ... meant Methodologically, the conviction that the only most precise and quantifiable knowledge possible is knowledge in the proper sense’ (Haire et al, 1966: V). They argued that the virtue of a survey questionnaire as a research instrument is that it makes it ‘possible to assure oneself that each respondent answered exactly the same question, and that the results are strictly comparable from one group to another’ thus, ‘giving up some depth for exactitude’ (p. 2).

Thus, C-CMR assumed a positivist orientation, presenting its findings ‘as though they were transcendent, independent of any society or historical period’ (Sampson, 1978: 1332). The ‘national culture’ concept was criticised not only for confusing differences between countries as cultural differences (Dowling et al, 1999; Sackmann et al, 1997; and Child, 1988), but, also, for lacking in theoretical rigor and construct validity (see Ros et al, 1988; Bhagat & McQuaid, 1982; Child, 1981; Malpass, 1977; Roberts, 1970). Critiques of quantitative survey methods argue that survey questions may not necessarily reflect the essence of the values and realities of respondents (Hoijer, 1964; Hansell et al, 1982). Quite often, this argument is cast in terms of the implications of the linkage between language and value orientations (Hoijer, 1964; Hofstede and Bond, 1987). Despite these criticisms, however, with only a few exception (for example, Triandis, 1972), C-CMR carried on using quantitative survey methods and conceptual frameworks that use the nation-state as a substitute for culture (Sampson, 1978; see also, Dowling, 1999; see
Trompenaars and Hamden-Turner’s (2000; 1997) ‘Seven dilemmas’ are about reconciling differences between national and/or regional contexts. In Hofstede’s (1980), ‘Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values’, however, the quantitative approach to C-CMR took a more colossal dimension.

**Hofstede’s the ‘Universal dimensions’ Framework of Culture**

The original IBM study (Hofstede, 1980) was based on the analysis of surveys conducted in 1968 and 1972 involving 116,000 questionnaires and a sample population of IBM employees from 40 countries (Hofstede, 1980; and Jaeger, 1986; Dowling, 1999). It was, perhaps, the largest databases on work related values ever compiled (Hofstede, 1980; Jaeger, 1986; Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982; & Thomas and Bendinex, 2000). For a theoretical conception, Hofstede borrowed from Kluckhohn (1951), and defined culture as ‘the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one human group from and another’. He noted that ‘culture, in this sense, includes systems of values’ (Hofstede, 1980:21). Invoking Gilford’s (1959) definition of ‘personality’, he also refers to culture as ‘interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to its environment’ (Hofstede, 1980: 21). He considered ‘Societies’ as ‘the most complete human groups that exist’ (p. 21). Paradoxically, but also significantly, he argued that ‘the transfer of collective mental programs is a social phenomenon’ that should be ‘explained socially’ and not ‘reduce to something else like race’ (p. 16).
The paradox of this argument is that one of the major critiques of Hofstede is that he also reduced culture to the status of a nation-state (see for example, Dowling, 1999, Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982; and Child, 1981). In using the 'national culture' construct, Hofstede invoked the concept of 'integration' as the rationale for using the nation-state as the most significant dependent variable in the search for 'Culture's consequences'. He argued that with the exception of what he described as 'newer states', where the degree of integration 'may be especially low, collectivities within societies tend to be more interdependent with other collectivities'. As a result, 'subcultures within a society still share common traits with other subcultures, which make their members recognizable to foreigners as belonging to that society" (p. 21). In this context, 'integration' implies the notion of a 'unitarist' society, which is not representative of SSA reality. Yet, (as I shall discuss later), Hofstede's theoretical framework has been used in several studies, which suggested correlations between indigenous 'African cultures' and organizational outcomes in SSA (Beugre, and Offidile, 2001; Thomas and Bendinex, 2000; Dia, 1996; and Blunt and Jones, 1992). These studies also reflect the extent of the significant influence that Hofstede has had on the direction of C-CMR.

Methodologically, Hofstede followed the physical sciences tradition of Mason Haire and his colleagues (1966). Despite the difficulties of measurement and functional equivalence often associated with this approach, he said that 'in operationalizing constructs about human mental programs, paper-and-pencil survey instruments are easier to use. They produce provoked verbal as well as non-verbal responses whose validity is assumed without further proof, as face
validity' (p.17). At the same time, he admitted, implicitly, that there are inherent difficulties where constructs cannot be directly measured. In that case, he argued that ‘triangulation, ideally, of at least two measurement approaches’ that are ‘as different as possible’ yet, ‘showing convergence in their results’, should suffice for purposes of validity (p. 18). The principal instrument used for measuring the key constructs (values and cultures) in the study of ‘Culture’s Consequences …’ was a questionnaire. This was triangulated with ‘data collected by others’ from ‘different informants’ using similar measurements and other ‘available descriptive statistics’ (p. 18).

Problems of ethnocentricity and language are addressed by using Harry Triandis’s (1972), ‘non-ethnocentric’ data collection technique whereby ‘cross-cultural team of researchers are used to develop the research instrument and translate and back-translate key concept that are relevant to the constructs being investigated’ (Hofstede, 1980:25).

Another major criticism of Hofstede concerns connected issues of levels of analysis and organisational setting (see, Dowling et al, 1999; Ros et al 1988; Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982; and Child, 1981). On problems concerning levels of analysis in the study of culture that is based on quantifiable data, Hofstede warns against the tendency for ‘ecological fallacy’ or its opposite, ‘reverse ecological fallacy’. He describes these as the tendency to ‘interpret ecological correlations ... as if they apply to individuals’ or ‘comparing cultures on indices created for the individual level’ (p.24-25). The issue here is whether we should make an inference about an individual based on aggregate data for a group and verse versa. For example, we might examine the aggregate data on attitudes of employees in a particular organisation towards their bosses, and
discover that on average, employees are afraid to question the decisions of their superiors. To state that on average employees would not question their bosses' decisions is true and accurate. However, the ecological fallacy can occur when we state, based on this data, that people working in that organisation are afraid to challenge the decisions of their managers. This may not be true at all, and may be an ecological fallacy.

To address this problem, Hofstede invoked Mead (1962) noting that 'in anthropological research, validity depends on the very extensive degree of specification,' so that 'each informant is studied as a perfect example, an organic representation of his complete cultural experience' (Mead, 1962 cited in Hofstede, 1980:29). He argued, however, that 'modern nations are too complex and subculturally heterogeneous for their national characters and modal personalities to be determined this way' (p. 29). These complexities create problems of 'functional equivalence'. As a way of dealing with such problems, he proposed that 'the problems of both matching and access are reduced when we can use as a setting for the research organizations that are by their nature multisocial' (p. 30). In other words, multinational corporations. In the defence of his choice of organisational setting, Hofstede argues in Culture and organisations: Software of the Mind (1994):

'Employees of multinationals are attractive sources of information for comparing national traits because they are similar in respects other than nationality: their employer (with its common corporate culture), their kind of work, and - for matched occupation - their level of education. The only thing that can account for systematic and
consistent differences between national groups within such a homogeneous multinational population is nationality itself – the environment in which people were brought up before they joined this employer (pp. 251-2).

The main outcome of Hofstede’s (1980) was the discovery of four ‘universal categories of culture’: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism, and Masculinity-Femininity. A fifth category - Confucian Dynamism – was later uncovered from a study on the cultural implications of the economic success of East and Southeast Asian countries (Hofstede and Bond, 1987). Of these dimensions, Hofstede said they ‘describe basic problems of humanity with which every society has to cope; and’ that ‘the variations of country scores along these dimensions show that different societies cope with these problems differently’ (Hofstede, 1980a: 313). As a ‘Universal dimension’ of culture, ‘Power Distance’ describes the nature of power relationship in a society. According to Hofstede (1980: 65), ‘the basic issue involved, to which different societies have found different solutions, is human inequality’. In IR terms, the degree of power distance should have implications for the extent to which employees in any particular society would be willing to assume oppositional positions to managerial authority.

‘Uncertainty Avoidance’ (A/U) concerns the extent to which members of a society are more or less risk averse and have a propensity for rituals, rule compliance and mobility in employment (Hofstede, 1980; see also, Erez & Earley, 1993). Hofstede describes A/U as ‘tolerance for uncertainty’, which ‘we cope with through the domains of technology, law and religion’ (p.110). The concept emerges from the assumptions that stability of employment and
adherence to rules are two of the best ways of risk aversion.

The third universal category of culture is the 'Individualism' or its opposite 'Collectivism' dimension. It 'describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity ... in a given society' (Hofstede, 1980:148). It is underpinned by the notion of gregariousness and the idea that human societies demonstrate different degrees of it. These differences constitute the variations that different societies show in the relationships between 'individuals and the collectivity'. According to Hofstede, variations in degrees of gregariousness are the consequence of culture and explain why (for example); societies choose to live in either extended, nuclear, clan or even tribal family units (Hofstede, 980:149). This explanation, however, does not address the question of what comes first? Is it the family structures or gregariousness? One implication of this dimension for organisational management in general, and in particular employment relations, is that it could have a bearing on the nature and extent of employee involvement. Echoing Etzioni's (1975) concept of 'moral and calculative involvement', Hofstede suggested that 'we can assume “moral” involvement with the organisation where collectivist values prevail and more, “calculative” involvement where individualist values prevail' (p. 153). On the basis of his 'origins of national individualism differences index', The Gambia, being an 'underdeveloped' country, with 'traditional forms agriculture, extended and tribal family structures, and low literacy rates', falls under the 'low Individualism and high Collectivism' category (1980: 172).

The fourth and final 'universal dimension' uncovered by the original IBM
study is the 'Masculinity' or its opposite, 'Femininity' dimension. This dimension, according to Hofstede (p. 179), concerns the issue of 'whether the biological differences between the sexes should or should not have implications for their roles in social activities'. The predominant mode of socialisation, he said, encourages assertiveness in men and women to be caring. In the context of the organisation, this pattern of socialisation manifests itself in the form of the linkage between perceptions of organisational goals and career possibilities for women and men. 'Businesses' Hofstede observed, 'have masculine goals' and tend to promote men; 'hospitals' on the other hand, have more 'feminine goals and, at least on the nursing side, tend to promote women' (176). In terms of the 'national origins index', a high of degree masculinity is 'less likely if a country is very poor or very rich' (Hofstede, 1980:206). He suggested, however, that high masculinity is 'more easily maintained in warmer climates in which survival and population growth are less dependent on man's intervention with nature'; and in 'poor countries' with 'relatively large' and 'uncontrolled family sizes'. One can extrapolate that the national context for the current study is relatively high on the Masculinity dimension.

The 'Confucian Dimension' (Hofstede and Bond, 1987), as indicated earlier, was uncovered some seven years after the original study was published. Inspired by Herman Kahn's (1971) 'neo-Confucian' hypothesis, Hofstede and Bond sought to find a 'cultural' explanation for the economic success of East and Southeast Asian countries in the 1980s. The gist of their findings was that the collective economic success of these countries can be largely put down to their shared Confucian cultural heritage. This conclusion has two implications
in terms of the practical objectives and method envisaged in this study. Ignoring their variable geo-political contexts, it attributes the contrasting economic fortunes of East and Southeast Asia, and SSA, to their respective standings on ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ values indices of the Confucian barometer. In terms of methodology, it is significant that despite the inclusion of some the same countries, the original study IBM had failed to uncover this dimension. Instead, the researchers used a more imaginative approach to data collection by adapting the HERMIS questionnaire (i.e. the original IBM research instrument) to the local context. To unravel the ‘Confucian dynamism’ dimension, the so-called ‘Chinese value survey’ technique, whereby Chinese social scientist were used to modified some the original HERMIS survey questions for the local context. This makes the point that at the least, exclusively quantitative approaches to cultural inquiry are suspect and that researchers need to be more context sensitive. As the following sections will discuss, Hofstede and the C-CMR tradition he represents have been the subject of extensive testing and criticism.

**Conceptual and Methodological Critiques C-CMS**

There is a significant body of literature that critiques the Cross-Cultural management research tradition that Hofstede represents both in terms of theoretical construct and methodology (Greene, 2001; Thomas and Bendinex, 2000; Dowling et al, 1999; Sackmann et al, 1997; Ros et al 1988; Gregory, 1983; Bhagat, 1979; Sanday, 1979; Goodenough, 1978; O'Reilly and Roberts, 1973; Geertz, 1973; and Graham and Roberts, 1972). Bhagat and McQuaid (1982), for example, argued that ‘pancultural theories of organisational
behavior have not yet emerged' because 'most of the current research fails to specify "culture" adequately' (p. 653). They therefore, urged C-C researchers to carefully assess their reason for undertaking such an enterprise, commit themselves to theory, employ suitable methodologies and constitute multicultural teams to carry out research (p. 653-4). In effect, barely two years after Hofstede, they appeared to be implying that his universal dimensions lack construct validity to constitute the basis of pan-cultural theorisations of organisational phenomena. In a relatively harsher tone, Childs (1981) attributed the lack of conceptual grounding to 'intellectual laziness'. This, in his view, is what accounts for the increasing use of constructs that perceive culture simply as a synonym for nation without any further conceptual exploration. Other critiques attribute the tendency for conceptual surrogacy to the fact that increasingly, the cultures that are the subject of research are often, 'targets of opportunity' (analysis based on opportunistic data) that 'fit into researchers' 'travel plans' (Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982: 686; see also, Roberts, 1970; and Sechrest, 1977a).

'Intellectual laziness' aside, some of these criticisms relate very much to Hofstede (1980). Culture's Consequences is not only about the notion of cultural variations as differences between countries, but the HERMIS database is also a case of 'target opportunity'. Besides, the notion of 'integration' as the basis of conceptual surrogacy implies a unitarist conception of the cultures of the individual countries that were involved in the study. It ignores the fact that even in the so-call 'older nations', with greater degrees of 'integration', the existence of a common 'objective' national culture, does not preclude differences in the specific cultures among groups. This
criticism draws on, arguably, one of the most enduring debates in cultural studies. That debate concerns the ‘emic’/‘etic’ distinction in cultural analysis (Pike 1954; Jaeger, 1986). Pike had suggested that there are two perspectives that can be employed in the study of a society’s cultural system, just as there are two perspectives that can be used in the study of a language’s sound system. In both cases, it is possible to take the point of view of either the insider or the outsider. With respect of C-C studies, the emics/etics debate concerns whether analyses should focus on the differences between the common or etic variables of societies or their unique or emic differences within society (see Sackmann et al 1997; Headland et al 1990; and Triandis, 1980).

Critiques of the quantitative positivist stream of C-C research (Triandis, 1972, 1980; Geertz, 1973; Bhagat and Mcquaid, 1982; Tayeb, 1988; Erez and Earley, 1993; Sackmann et al, 1997; and Baldachhino, 1997) claim that they focus on the general (etic) at the expense of variable that are specific (emic) to the individual contexts that are the subjects of comparison. Hofstede’s (1980) contribution to this debate is to argue for an approach that combines a concern for both, ‘and which can be applied where functional equivalence of behaviors in two cultures can be demonstrated (or ... reasonably assumed) (p. 31-32)’. He went on propose that ‘existing descriptive categories and concepts are applied tentatively as an imposed “etic” that can then be modified so that they adequately represent “emic” variables within each of the cultures ... Categories that are found to be common to both cultures can then be used as derived “etics”’ (p. 33). If this proposition seems mind-boggling, it also appears to be an inefficient approach to understanding differences in social
phenomena. But more fundamentally, the fact that at some stage it would require some modification implies a degree of value judgement as to what categories require modification and precisely for whose purposes.

Critiques, like Bhagat and McQuaid (1982) and Malpass (1977) argued for more refined and theoretically grounded constructs. This way, they insisted, C-CMR could move from the tendency to use static group designs and comparisons, to theoretically specific variables in describing and explaining differences in cultures (Campbell and Stanley, 1966; Triandis, 1972; Malpass, 1977; Bhagat & McQuaid, 1982). To this end, Triandis's (1972) concept of 'subjective' and 'objective' cultures represents a necessary but insufficient contribution. Insufficient, because by his own admission, his construct does not address the need for medium range theories that can identify 'how particular variables subsumed under each of these concepts are related to variables subsumed under adjacent concepts' (Triandis, 1972, p. 24). He defined culture as 'a subjective perception of the human-made part of the environment' (Triandis, 1972:4; see also, Hofstede, 1980; Bhagat & McQuaid, 1982; and Erez & Earley, 1993). This framework views culture as a function of interrelated systems of 'ecological', 'subsistence', 'sociocultural', 'individual', 'interindividual' and 'projective' variables. The notion of a 'sociocultural' system encompassing 'objective' variables (formal institutions and structures); 'subjective' cultures, (referring to norms, roles, and values as they exist around the individual); 'individual' variables, (perceptions, learning, motivation, attitudes); and 'interindividual' variables (which describe behaviours that link the individual with the cultural system), could be useful. This, however, is an over-extension of the concept of culture. It also indicates the limitations of
cultural frameworks as the best way to approach the study of differences in
perceptions and actions between different societies. Critiques that argue for
Triandis' framework generally tend to focus on what they perceive as
conceptual deficits in C-CMR (Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982; Sackmann et al,
1997). However, as the following sub-section will try to show, the 'emic'/etic'
distinction and related concepts of 'objective' and 'subjective' variables, also
have implications for methodology in Cross-cultural analysis.

As in most contemporary C-CMR, Hofstede remains true to the quantitative
tradition of Mason Haire and his colleagues (1966). Most criticisms that are
directed at quantitative, positivist Cross-cultural analysis tend to attribute the
lack of theoretical rigor to the use of inappropriate methods and inadequate
analytical frameworks (Greene, 2001, Sathyamurthy, 1999; Redding, 1994;
Headland, 1990; Ros et al, 1988; Hansell et al, 1982; Goodenough, 1978;
Malpass, 1977; Geertz, 1973; Hoijer, 1964; and Kluckhohn, 1951). Generally,
answers to quantitative survey questions do not reflect the 'subjective
meanings' (Weber, 1949) that respondents attribute to their answers.
Consequently, constructs that emerge from statistical analyses of such data
will neither reflect the 'semiotic essence', nor the historical antecedents of
subjects' perspectives and/or actions (see Goodenough, 1978; and Geertz,
1973). Related conceptual and methodological issues that have implications
for research and researcher's credibility underpin this argument. They include
'emic'-etic' issues in relation to levels of analysis, as well as researcher
subjectivity.

As I have already indicated, generally speaking, C-CMR has an 'etic'
orientation. Perhaps, that should be expected, bearing in mind that C-CMR is implicitly about comparing different contexts. In that respect, C-CM critiques of 'emic' oriented cultural studies argue that such studies tend to develop theories that are based on limited set of observations carried out in the theory developer's own country (Piaget 1973). Piaget argued that only after rigorous testing in various parts of the world, carried out among people varying along dimensions relevant to specific hypotheses, can a theory be called robust' (p. 299). Critics argue that in the final analysis, the 'universal' utility and robustness of such theories depend, in the first instance, on the extent to which they have some relevance for all the specific contexts that are the subjects of comparison (Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982; and Malpass, 1977). In Theory and Method in Cross-Cultural Psychology (1977), Roy Malpass argued for more and detailed analysis of the 'emic' cultures of single contexts as a paradigmatic solution to the problem of 'ignorance of the mind of the other' (p. 1072). His point was that an understanding of and appreciation for the behaviour of a people requires some knowledge of the context of the behaviour plus, the specific ('emic') cultural antecedents of their behaviours. The implication, with reference to Hofstede (1980), is that if and when we conclude that in a particular society, 'subordinates are afraid of expressing their disagreement with the boss's decision' (p. 72), how do we exclude the possibility that economic, material and/or other non-cultural factors, rather than upbringing are the antecedence for such disposition.

Methodological arguments in cultural analysis also concern the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the subject of inquiry. Critiques of quantitative surveys argue for greater familiarity and affinity between the
researcher and the phenomena and/or subject of research (Hoijer, 1964; Hansel and Ajirotutu, 1982). In that respect, one of the main problems that comparative cultural studies must address is the issue of language. This is particularly relevant when the researcher does not speak and/or write the language(s) of the subjects of research. The relationship between language and value orientation, as Hoijer observed, ‘cannot be taken for granted, but it is a problem which must be ethnographically investigated’ (p. 10). To gain a holistic knowledge of the ‘mind of the other’ (Malpass, 1977), it does not help to simply develop ‘plain’ survey questions that are ‘free from home-country local color-almost unimaginative’ (Hofstede, 1980: 28-29). This is especially because, cultural attributes, to paraphrase Hansell and Ajirotutu (1982), may be guised in ‘culturally’ and (if I may add), socially ‘specific contextual cues that have signalling values only for individuals familiar’ with the conceptual world in which they are relevant.

Context, in comparative cultural research, however, is not just about language and familiarity. It also concerns issues of ‘functional equivalence’. Hofstede referred to it as ‘the practical problems involved in getting access to matched samples in different cultures’ (1980:30). In light of the obvious ‘complexity and heterogeneity of modern nation-state’, his solution to this problems, was to select, as the organisational setting, a ‘Multinational organisation’ (Hofstede, 1994: 251). This solution is viewed in contrast with the anthropological approach whereby specific societies are studied in greater depth and conclusions on cultures are based on ‘such in-depth sample studies’ (1980: 29). The rationale for using a Multinational Corporations as the setting for his study is, however, problematic. He argued that Multinational
Corporations make suitable settings for Cross-cultural comparisons of work-related attitudes and behaviours because, even though they may be 'atypical, they are atypical in the same way from country to country' (Hofstede, 1980: 30). The problem with this argument, to invoke Hansell and Ajirirotutu (1982), is that cultures have meanings in relation to the forces that control resources. It is a truism that the power of Multinational Corporations, relative to other sources of power, varies from country to country. Consequently, Jaeger's (1986) suggestion that the influence of the Multinational's own organisational culture needs to be explicitly factored in makes a very valid point. In economic and political context such as the one in which the current study is conducted, Multinational Corporations (especially those with strong organisational cultures), are able to exclude other sources of authority (for example Trade Unions) as potential influences on the employment relationship. That possibility, needless to say, goes against the core of the case of the present study. This observation, as the next sub-section will discuss, is very relevant in terms of implications of Hofstede's findings and conclusions for contemporary C-CMR.

Dimensions of Culture and Organisational Analysis in SSA

Some critiques have argued that C-CMR did not pioneer the conception of culture in terms of universally applicable dimensions (Daniels, 1991). That honour, they argue, belongs to cultural anthropology and, in particular the works of Kluckhohn (1951), Parsons and Shill (1951), Hall (1959), and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). Daniels (1991: 181) underlined this point when he described Hall (1959), 'as a piece of work that has endured for so long
without being subjected to much empirical testing'. Hofstede, however, did not make any explicit claims to suggest that he pioneered a universal framework of culture. Instead, he cited Kluckhohn's (1962) *Universal categories of culture* and Parsons and Shil's (1951) *General Theory of Action*, as antecedents to his Universal dimensions of culture framework (See also Hofstede, 1980:36-37).

Although others may have a better claim to the notion of a 'Universal' framework of culture, there is no denying that Hofstede's framework rules the roost in contemporary C-CMR. This is borne out by the fact that he is, arguably, the most cited Management writer. His study involved the largest empirical testing of existing concepts of managerial behaviours such as; power relations, risk taking, career options and motivational strategies. And, his framework of 'Universal Dimensions of culture' has become an attraction for C-CM researchers who employ culture as an independent variable. As Adler (1991) pointed out, until Hofstede, conceptual frameworks based on universally applicable dimensions were hardly ever employed in C-CMR (see also, Ronen, 1986). Since Hofstede, 1980), significant amount of work, involving varying contexts, has emerged using his *Universal Dimensions* framework. For example: Birnbaum and Wong, (1985) focused on power distance and uncertainty avoidance; Kim et al, (1990) on individualism and masculinity; and Earley, (1993); and Morris et al (1994) on individualism and collectivism. With respect to SSA, one could cite Beugre and Offidile (2001); Thomas & Bendinex (2000); Dia, (1991, 1996); Blunt use Jones, (1992); and Kanungo and Wright, (1983).
However, although four SSA countries were included in the IBM data, these countries were not subjected to any detail analysis. With the exception of Zambia, which was mentioned twice in the text, the remaining three countries (Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria), were mentioned only once to indicate that IBM subsidiaries in these countries were also included in the data. I can only assume that their implicit exclusion from further analysis, may have something to do with the fact they are 'newer nations' with especially low degrees of 'cultural integration' (Hofstede, 1980: 21). The relative irrelevance of Hofstede's findings to the SSA context is also reflected in the suggestive nature of his discussions regarding the implications of his findings for developing country contexts. In that regard, the findings and their implications for managerial solutions in developing countries are discussed in terms of 'colonial associations'. For example, former colonies admire France because like France, 'they' too 'have a tendency towards larger power distance and greater tolerance for autocratic and paternalistic style management'. And similar motivational patterns could be suitable for 'United States, Great Britain, and their former dominions and colonies' (p. 272).

There is some empirical work that suggests that Hofstede's framework is inadequate for accessing and explaining work related values and behaviours in the African context (see Thomas and Bendinex, 200). Notwithstanding, the Universal dimensions framework has been used as the framework of analysis in some influential studies that try to establish links between African cultural traits and organisational outcomes in SSA (Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Dia, 1996; and Blunt and Jones, 1992). Even those that did not explicitly do so, used concepts that are drawn from Hofstede's framework. The latter tended to
conceptualise African cultures in terms of the 'African thought system' characterise by 'respect for age', 'Communalism', greater concern for one's 'social assets' (Jackson, 2002; Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Kamoche, 2000; Ahiauzu, 1886; Nzilibe, 1986; and Ankomah, 1985). Under closer scrutiny, the first two characteristics could be suitable stand-ins for 'power distance' and 'collectivism' dimensions. That aside, almost all these studies shared the managerial motivation that is evident in Hofstede (see Sondergaard, 1994). As Jackson (2002) pointed out, the past two decades have witnessed a substantial increase in trans-continental comparative cultural analysis involving SSA. Some have been direct reactions to what critiques would refer to as failures of structural adjustment policies of the 1980s (for example Dia, 1996). Others appear to be motivated by the desire (if not belief), for an African 'management renaissance' (Jackson, 2000; and Mbigi, 1997). Yet others are motivated by the desire to provide empirical evidence that supports the belief that indigenous African values are incompatible with the rational objectives and ways of the modern business organisation (Blunt and Jones, 1992; Kiggundu, 1989). These issues also have relevance in terms of the literature on Organisational analysis in SSA. Accordingly, they will be discussed further in the following sections of this chapter and elsewhere throughout the thesis.

The position of the current study is that it is not very useful to conceptualise the SSA context in terms 'Universal dimensions' and/or 'African thought systems'. The notion of 'African thought systems' for example, gives the impression, as Beugre and Offidiel (2001: 543) implied, that certain aspects of African culture can be wished away through training and indoctrination. And,
Thomas and Bendinex (2000) have raised important conceptual issues, which suggest that Hofstede 'universal dimensions' have limitations as theoretical frameworks for conceptualising contemporary SSA society. They indicated, for example, that Hofstede's notion of 'collectivism' as an 'aggregation of individuals', does not describe the African 'Communalism system', which describes a 'group united at the core' (p. 514). They also claimed that their conclusions support Singels et al (1995), theory of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' individualism. Meaning in Africa, people can be collectivists in some spheres and individualist in others. As a result, for example, contrary to the general belief that individualist patterns of motivation are unsuitable for large collectivist societies, in the SSA context, motivational patterns that target individuals do not constitute a contradiction. It seems, after all, that Hofstede had a point when he said 'theories developed to explain behaviours in organisations reflect the national culture of their authors' (1980: 255). Put together, these critiques point to the need for frameworks that are contextually relevant and historically derived. They also point to the need for methodological approaches that can enable researchers to access actors' social meanings and privilege native voices and perspectives in analysis and reporting. The next sub-section will develop the argument for context specific conceptions of society by focusing on some of the cultural and social anthropology literature.

Culture: Search for Context specific definitions

I have cited Geetz's (1973) reference to Kluckhohn's desperate attempt to define culture in *Mirror for Man* (1950). In the course of the literature search
for this study, I have developed some appreciation for the difficulty involved in coining a definition of culture that is adequately theoretically grounded. All told, I have uncovered almost ten constructs including: 'the man-made parts of the environment' (Herskovit, 1955; Triandis, 1972); sets of standards to which individuals are committed because of their value orientation (Parson & Shils, 1951); a group's historically derived and selected ways of behaviour, actions, responses and values (Benedict, 1934; Kluckhohn, 1951; Mead, 1959); Symbolic discourse and shared meanings that require interpretation and deciphering in order that they may be genuinely understood and appreciated (Geertz, 1973; Goodenough, 1978); reinforcement contingencies that are governed by a particular regime of rewards (Skinner, 1971); mental programmes that determine how individuals react in a given context (Hofstede, 1980); interrelated systems of subjective and objective variables (Triandis, 1980); and the untested assumption that determine an individual's behaviour (Schein, 1985). These various and to some extent different perspectives, reflect broad and narrow views of culture and suggest, therefore, the need for conceptions of culture to be context specific.

This section focuses on the key conceptual and methodological themes/arguments that emerged from the literature that critiques quantitative positivist approaches to C-CM analysis. The problem with such critiques, however, is that they also give the wrong impression that all contexts are cultural. In any case, the concern of such critiques is for researchers to identify the comparable variables between the context of inquiry and other contexts, as well as variables that are unique to the context of inquiry (see Bhagat and McQuiad, 1982). In other words, researchers are urged to explicitly identify
‘emic’ and ‘etic’ cultural variables in the context of their inquiry. The methodological argument that arises from the conceptual debate also concerns relationship between the researcher and the subject and phenomena of her/his inquiry.

I have already referred to C-CM studies literature that critiques ‘in depth study of a single specific context’ (see Brislin, 1983 and Paiget, 1973). There is, also, a stream of C-CM studies literature that warns researchers against investigating their own cultures (Cronbach, 1975; Hofstede, 1980; and Triandis & Brislin, 1984). The issue, in that case, is that researchers may find it difficult to separate themselves from their environment or to pick out for analysis, aspects that they have always taken for granted (Cronbach, 1975; see also Triandis & Brislin, 1984). The counter argument to this critiques is that cultural analysis requires that the ‘first hand interpretation’ (Geertz, 1973) of ‘any specific contextual cues’, be the prerogative of those to whom such cues ‘have signalling values’, or other wise, who are very familiar with that specific tradition (Hansell & Ajirotutu, 1982). In terms of the broad methodological debate, therefore, quantitative positivism is faulted from generalising from data that is neither ‘first hand’ nor representative of the ‘semiotic essence’ of respondents’ realities (Geertz, 1973; 1993). Culture then becomes an ill-defined mixture of variances, of which any single variable can directly or in interaction with other variables, affects static-group differences (Campbell et al, 1966). If, as this literature suggests, familiarity does count, then perhaps, constructs and predominant methods of Cultural and Social Anthropology, do hold some promise and can be expanded upon to develop context specific concepts of society.
Most of the critique in the preceding section was drawn from the literature concerned with Culture and Social Anthropology (for example, Brown, 1949; Mead, 1949, 1962; Radcliff-Geertz, 1973, 1993; Goodenough, 1972, 1974; and Gregory, 1983). Anthropology, however, is not, by any means a homogeneous, or for that matter, even a united church. Although Geertz's (1973) says 'in ... anthropology, what the practitioners do is ethnography' (p. 6), there are different focuses and prongs within the broad ethnographic tradition of anthropology. Within the 'the interpretive holistic paradigm' of anthropology (Gregory, 1983; and Sanday, 1979), for example, Sanday noted that although 'configurationalist' (Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead) and 'functionalist School of British Social Anthropology' (Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliff-Brown), share a 'commitment to the study of culture as an integrated whole, they are different in the integrative models they choose in the inevitable dialogue between ethnographic fact and theory (1979: 530). 'Whereas Mead and Benedict showed no interest in the “origins” of culture beyond the effect of individuals on it, Radcliff-Brown and Malinowski were especially concern with how each trait functions in the total cultural complex of which it is a part' (p. 531). These distinctions reflect the significant differences between Cultural and Social anthropology.

However, as Harris (1968) pointed out, although the leading figures in the British School of Social anthropology (Radcliff-Brown and Malinowski), employ the same analytical approach and describe the role of customs and institutions as ‘functional’, they also strongly disagreed on the definition of ‘functionalism’. Radcliff-Brown’s (1949) has rejected Malinowski’s (1944) ‘biocultural’ conception of functionalism. He described as ‘useless’, a
definition, which, as he put it, explains culture as the consequent of 'seven biological needs of individual human beings' (1949: 320-321). As far as Radcliff-Brown was concerned, the definition of function in cultural terms must reflect the role of institutions in the preservation of social structures. Thus he wrote: 'This theory of society in terms of structure and process, interconnected by function, has nothing in common with the theory of culture as derived from individual biological needs' (Radcliff-Brown, 1949:322; also see Harris, 1968).

On the issue of how cultural analysis might be carried out, a similar divide exist within the 'semiotic paradigm' of Cultural Anthropology. Mead's (1959) suggested that anthropologists should adopt 'an informant's mode of thought while retaining full use of his own faculties' (p. 38). On that score, advocates of the semiotic paradigm are in agreement that culture is best understood from a 'native view point' (Gregory, 1983; Sanday, 1979; Goodenough, 1974; and Geertz, 1973). This is the point that Geertz sought underline when he wrote: 'The whole point of a semiotic approach to culture is to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in our subject's life so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them' (p. 24). However, Gilfford Geertz and Ward Goodenough (arguably the leading figures of the 'semiotic paradigm'), strongly disagree as to how the 'native view' should be analysed and reported. 'Thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and 'ethnoscience' or 'cognitive anthropology' (Goodenough, 1974), constitute the two prongs of the semiotic paradigm. The distinction between them lies in their respective approaches to the epistemological questions of how culture can be discovered and presented in an ethnographic account.
Geertz shares Max Weber's position on culture as 'webs of significance' in which man has suspended himself. 'The analysis of it therefore', he argues, is 'not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973:5). Anthropology, for Geertz, is concern with ethnography and 'doing ethnography' is not about 'methods ... Techniques and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in ... "thick description"' (p. 5-6).

Geertz opposes all forms physical science approaches to cultural analysis. For him, 'operationalism as a methodological dogma never made much sense in so far as the social sciences are concern, and except for a few rather too well-swept corners ... it is largely dead now' (Geertz, 1973:5). This is hardly true considering the extent to which operationalism is still fashionable in U.S management and social science research in particular. The statement, however, helps to show the extent to which his prong of the 'Semiotic' school opposes the use of quantitative positivist methods in social science research.

His views on cultural theory building, however, place him in direct opposition to the 'cognitive anthropology' or 'ethno-scientific' approach to anthropological analysis (Romney, 1999; D'Andrade, 1995; Gregory, 1983; and Goodenough, 1974, 1971, 1956). 'Cognitive anthropology' involves multiple techniques of ethnography (including the traditional technique of observation) alongside 'ethnoscientific' procedures. In ethnomethodology, 'natives' have prerogative to select informants who can determine antecedents to behaviour and implicit meanings. These behaviours and meanings are then built into a frame by the researcher to establish what Gregory (1983) calls a 'grammar of culture' (p. 362; Sanday, 1979; and Goodenough, 1971). The
extent of quantitative emphasis can vary from those who use cognitive anthropological techniques for semantic analysis by deriving meanings from a lexicon of terms (for example, Kronenfeld, 1996; Gregory, 1983), to those who try to analyse society as a whole from the study of its broadly conceived parts (for example, Romney, 1999; Romney and Moore, 1998; and Goodenough, 1956; 1971 and 1974). Romney, for example, claims that her ‘Statistical model of Cultural consensus’ (1999), can statistically measure the consistency of informants relative to each other and in reference to the group as a whole (p. 104).

Geertz’s position is: ‘one cannot write a General Theory of Cultural Interpretation. Or, rather, one can, but there appears to be little profit in it, because the essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract irregularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them’ (p. 26). He likened his view of theory building in cultural research to the process of clinical inference which, ‘rather than beginning with a set of observations and attempting to subsume them under a governing law, ... begins’ in stead, ‘with a set of (presumptive) signifiers and attempts to place them within an intelligible frame’ (p. 26). He argued that ‘cultural theory is not ... in the strict meaning of the term, predictive’. This has led to critiques that it is ‘merely post facto’ (P. 26). Geertz however, argued ‘although one starts any effort at thick description, beyond the obvious and superficial, from the state of general bewilderment as to what the devil is going on ... one does not start (or ought not) intellectually empty-handed. Theoretical ideas’ he noted, ‘are not created wholly anew in each study; ... they are adopted from other, related studies, and, refined in the
process, applied to new interpretative problems' (p. 27).

Like Geertz, Margaret Mead (1962) was also opposed any attempts to create an image of social sciences, which 'conform to the ideal science, physics' and she was unreservedly supportive of 'those who have insisted on the complexity and uniqueness of significant events in ... the life of a human being' (p. 134). She argued against the use of 'statistics in the analysis of issues that are contextually complex and emotive' and insists that in the study of human behaviour, one 'is forced to illuminate rather than demonstrate a thesis' (Mead, 1949:169). Without any reference to Mead, Geertz also takes a very uncompromising position against quantitative positivism in cultural analysis. Geertz is particularly unreserved in his criticism of 'Cognitive anthropiology', (also refer to as "componential analysis" or "ethnoscience"). 'A terminological wavering' he says, 'which reflects a greater uncertainty' (1973: 11). With reference to Goodenough's (1974) systematic rules and anthropological algorithms, Geertz says that if followed, the systematic rules will make it possible for one to 'pass (physical appearance aside) for a native' (Geertz, 1973:11).

Geertz, however, is not alone in his criticism of 'ethnoscience' (see also, Keesing, 1973; Robertson and Beasley, 2004). Keesing (1972) for example, observed that 'the so-called "new ethnography" was unable to move beyond the analysis of artificially simplified and often trivial semantic domains' (p. 307). He argued that Ethnoscientists tend to focus on 'color categories and folk taxonomies' as ends in themselves without being able to elucidate their relevance to understanding culture as a whole. By focusing on elements rather
than relational systems, he said cognitive anthropologist have ‘failed to reveal a generative cultural grammar for any culture, and while generating elaborate taxonomies, failed to discover any internal cultural workings that could be compared internally or externally’ (Keesing, 1972: 306). Cognitive anthropology is also criticised for leaving critical contextual analysis out of cultural description by adopting inflexible set of rules that tend to impose some form coherence on culture. On that score, Geertz, (1973: 11) questioned ‘whether analyses (which come in the form of taxonomies, paradigms, tables, trees, and other ingenuities) reflect what the natives “really” think or are merely clever simulations, logically equivalent but substantially different, of what they think’. He went on argue:

‘To set forth symmetrical crystals of significance, purified of the material complexity in which they were located, and then attribute their existence to autogenous principles of order ... is to pretend a science that does not exist and imagine a reality that cannot be found. Cultural analyses’ he insists, ‘is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape’ (p. 20).

The preceding paragraphs have helped to illuminate the differences within Cultural Anthropology. They also betrayed C-CM studies’ American roots by showing how much C-CMR has drawn on definitions of ‘cultures’ that originated from American Cultural Anthropology. The multiple and sometimes, over extended and refined definitions of ‘culture’, however, also indicate the core problem of what Kuper (2000) calls ‘the central project in
post-war American cultural anthropology’ (p. x). That problem concerns the elevation of culture ‘from something to be described, interpreted, and even perhaps explained’ to ‘a source of explanation in itself’ (Kuper, p. xi). This problem, however, as Pierpont tried to point out in ‘The Measure of America’ (2004), predates the post war. According to Pierpont, Franz Boas taught us to call ‘the relation between the life of a people and their physical environment’, ‘culture’ (p. 52). Boas’ arguments, however, were rendered in the context of the racial debate that engulfed America – post-slavery. Fundamentally, that debate was about racial differences and racial purity as a political imperative (Kuper, 2000: 11). ‘Culture’, Kuper argued, ‘was now conceived of in opposition to biology’ (p. 11) and ‘our answer to nature’ (p. 12). Some cultural explanation could be useful but as Kuper posited, ‘culture, can only offer a partial explanation’ for human conceptions and actions (p. x1). And I would argue that this is especially so, when our enterprise concerns the examination of contemporary phenomena and context. In that case, it might be helpful to heed Kuper’s advice and ‘avoid the hyper-referential word altogether, and to talk more precisely of knowledge, or belief, or art, or technology or tradition, or even ideology’ (p. x).

It seems to me, that what is needed is a framework that can highlight the subjectivity, historical, contextual and material and social meanings, which define a people in terms of their responses to the realities of their situation at any give time. For that, I propose we look, again, at anthropology. This time, however, we must draw on British School of Social Anthropology, and in particular Radcliff-Brown, for inspiration. For Radcliff-Brown, ‘culture’ had come to ‘denote, not any concrete reality, but an abstraction, and as it is
commonly used a vague abstraction’ (cited in Kuper, 2000: xiv). The framework that is envisaged would ‘avoid the hyper-referential’ and vague abstract word and instead view any given society in terms of functionally interrelated systems of social, traditional and economic dimensions and variables. With that as a starting point, the following section will attempt to define the contemporary SSA context as the basis for developing a concept of contemporary Gambian society.

2. I. 1: Defining Contemporary SSA Society for the present Study

One of the main critiques of C-CMR is the tendency to use constructs of culture that surrogate national differences for cultural diversity (Hofstede, 1980, 1994; Blunt and Jones, 1992). However, what I described as ‘fallacy of surrogacy’, whereby modern nation states are perceived of as unitary cultural domains, is particularly problematic for the SSA context. This is precisely because, for many of the citizens of SSA countries, the state is nothing more than a simple geographical expression of identity. Hallett (1966) captured Sub-Saharan Africans’ tendency for what Hansell and Ajirotutu (1982) called ‘subtractive categorisation’ when she wrote:

‘An Englishman can visualise his country without difficulty. There is no community between his family and nation to which he is bound by an overpowering sense of loyalty. For most West Africans, on the other hand, beyond their family lies their kinship, their village or their tribe, while the nation as a whole is something too new, something composed
of too many diverse elements fully to be gasped, appreciated, loved' (Hallett, 1966: 43).

This helps to make the point that pre-colonial institutions and form of social organisations still have relevance. If, however, it is intended to reflect the alien nature of the modern SSA nation-nation state, then it does not, wholly, capture contemporary SSA reality. In that respect, one could plausibly argue that after over 50 years of independence, the modern nation-state has, for many SSA African, also become one form expression of cultural identity. In developing a concept of contemporary Gambian society, the thesis draws on the literature on Gambian history to reflect the importance of history as the midwife of context.

In reality, the SSA context presents a contradiction between the predominant Western organisational forms, and the continuing manifestation of social values and behaviour that question the values and objectives those organisations represent and promote. It is case of what Guha (1997) described as ‘Dominance without hegemony’. What pertain are formal institutional and organisational forms that reflect the success of the colonial and post-colonial state, and communal attitudinal and behavioural patterns that represent the social resistance to that colonial legacy. Although individuals are keen to enter into waged employment and adapt to the formal regulations and values of modern organisations, they do not consider these formal obligations to have precedence over the obligations and commitments they have as a result of their membership of the surrounding African community. As a result, the context under which management paradigms and practices operate, must take
into account the value orientations and norms of pre-colonial institutions that still have more enduring influences on individual conceptions and actions. As in most of the Sahel (the part of West Africa between the northern fringes of equatorial forests and the Southern tip of the Sahara, see map below), the institutions and social structures that represent the vestiges of pre-colonial normative order and values in The Gambia include extended family clans and religious (Islamic) brotherhoods. These are the two major dimensions that together, with colonialism, contested for political and social hegemony over the inhabitants of the Gambia River valleys during the second half of the 19th century. For the majority of Gambians, therefore, in addition to the influences of the tribe and village, there is also, an overpowering sense of loyal to one's Islamic Order/Brotherhood. That contest, described in the literature as 'The Soninke/Maraboute Wars' (or 'Jihads') (Gamble, 1988; Cruise-O'Brien, 1975; Gailey, 1975; Quinn, 1972; Klein, 1968; Mahoney, 1963; and Gray, 1940), is perhaps the most significant event that helped to define contemporary Gambian society.

Fig. 1: Sahelian countries: (Source: www.yourdotcomforafrica.com)
Islam and Traditionalism: the point of Intersection

Between the mid 14th century (when the first Europeans arrived on the River Gambia), and partition in the late 19th century, representatives of various European powers claimed control over the river Gambia (see Gray, 1940; Curtin, 1975; Gamble, 1988; Gailey, 1975; Sagnia, 1984 for detailed history of The Gambia). Before that the territory, which is now The Gambia, was part of the succession of three ancient empires - Ghana, Mali and Songhai - that dominated the Savannah region of West Africa (Boahen, 1964; & Davidson, 1967). Between the collapse the last of these empires – Songhai – in the 15th century, until partition in 1890, the Gambia River valley was divided into a configuration of small, but independent kingdoms that were ‘closely linked through family ties’ (Quinn, 1972: 12; see also, Sagnia, 1984; Weil, 1971; & Curtin, 1975). For the two and half centuries that followed the collapse of the Songhai empire, the traditional ruling clans of these small independent state maintained order and homogeneity over the inhabitants of their respective states through rudimentary constitutional arrangements that were based on kinship and lineages (Weil, 1971). These political arrangements remained until the mid 1800s, when a violent religious revolution (Jihad), between the ruling animist clans and their Muslim subjects, lasting for some thirty years, engulfed the region and changed its political and social order for the last time before European intervention and partition.

Basil Davidson (1967) gives the year 1066, the year that the Almoravids (a sect of Arab crusaders) invaded and conquered the ancient empire of Ghana, as the date for the introduction of Islam in the region. Although the invaders did not
make any efforts to establish permanent political control over the territories they conquered, their brief presence signalled the arrival and spread of Islam in the region (also see Boahen, 1964). Therefore, even before the outbreak of the so-called ‘Jihad’, Islamic values had permeated Gambian social life through what Quinn (1972: 192) describes as ‘a gradual process of advance and retreat by which Islam had entered West Africa’ (also see the Gibb’s (1929) translation of *The Travels of Ibn Battuta in Africa*). As a result of the gradual process of conversation, Curtain (1975) observes, that as early as the 17th century, Islam had become the ‘most important theme in the political and economic history’ of the region (p. 46). Trade contacts between Arab and other North African Muslim and African merchants resulted in the creation of a small but conspicuous Muslim scholar and trading classes. The literacy and numeric skills that they acquired through contacts with Arab traders and the mythical powers associated with *Surfi* Islamic scholarship, gave these new classes special privileges within the courts of animist traditional rulers. As it were, the emergence of a new and separate professional group fitted well with the norms of ‘a social setting where craft specialists were set-aside in endogamous castes’ (Curtin, 1975: 66). Jobson (1932) gave some indication of the extent of these privileges. He wrote:

‘They have free recourse through all places, so that however the king and countries are at warres’ (wars) ‘and up in arms, the one against the other, yet still the Marybucke’ (Muslim cleric) ‘is a privileged person, and may follow his trade or course of travelling, without any let or interruption of either side’ (cited in Curtain, 1975: 66-67).
The relationship between the contemporary ruling classes and Muslim clergy, as I shall discuss later in this thesis, is not very dissimilar.

For the ordinary citizens (Muslims as well as animist), however, the problems with the ruling classes and their warrior aristocrats (the Chedos), were largely concerned with what (Quinn, 1972: 68), describes as the ‘specifics of their political and economic situation’. Most perceived the nature of traditional animist (*Soninke*) rule, which gave the aristocratic clans undeserving disproportionate share of the benefits of the region’s economy, as unjust, autocratic and contemptuous of people and their properties (see Quinn, 1972; Mahoney, 1963; and Gray, 1940). Generally, these inequities tend to be expressed in economic terms with ordinary people complaining of ‘drunken’ marauding Chedos attacking and pillaging villages (Quinn, 1972; Gailey, 1975; and Gray, 1940). It is not, however, entirely correct to suggest, as Quinn does, that these accusations were not based on any ‘abstruse theological principles’ (1092: 68). Some of the more orthodox clergy, like the ‘Jihad’ leader, Maba Jahou, were concerned that the form of Islam that was observed and practised in the Gambia at the time, was largely a ‘contaminated’ version (Klien, 1968; Abu-Nasr, 1965). In that respect, Islamic principles were subsumed under traditional animist institutions and rituals. One of the most significant problems that Islam presented to traditionalism since its introduction is how pre-Islamic political forms should adjust to ‘the religious and legal claims of Islam’ (Curtin, 1975: 46). The fundamental problem for the more ardent proselytisers, especially from the late 17th century, is whether those who profess Islam – among them some of the traditional rulers and their courtiers
- considered its teachings as divine edicts for the conduct of personal and public life.

These concerns and political problems were, in turn, compounded by patterns of Muslim settlements outside largely animist villages. Inhabitants of these settlements, on the whole, lived according to principles, customs and laws of Islam. Thus, in the prelude to the Islam revolution, to quote Quinn (1972):

'Within the framework of traditional ... states and their elaborate façade of kingships, traditions, and patterns of succession were two societies each with its law and customs, interacting at some levels but essentially in opposition to one and another at the level of basic principles of incorporation' (p. 62).

The gap between religious belief and the practical realities of life in the Gambian kingdoms, to some extent, accounts for the point of intersection between Islam and traditionalism. In the final analysis, the transition from a state of latent tensions to outright violence was against the background of a mixture of the ideals of religious reawakening and a popular desire and willingness for political change (Klien, 1968; Sagnia, 1984; Gailey, 1975; & Quinn, 1972). The success of this revolution however, can only be stated in social terms. By 1890, majority of the inhabitants of the river states professed to be Muslims (Quinn, 1972; and Bayley, 1939). The colonial solution that resolved the conflict between Islam and traditionalism chose traditional rulers as intermediaries with local communities. By the time that solution was imposed, however, 'authority and power' within Gambian society, were
irreversibly dispersed between the traditional and Islamic elements. As a political enterprise however, this Islamic revolution was, on the whole, a failure. Internal rivalries and, sustained attacks against the theocracies that rose from the ashes of traditional rule were ‘terminated by the exhaustion of local initiatives and by the intervention of European powers’ (Britain and France) in the form of ‘a colonial solution” (Quinn, 1972: 5).

Pre-colonial society and the Colonial encounter

Between the arrival of the first European on the Gambia River and the creation of The Gambia in 1889, the imperial drama on the river Gambia centred on James Island - a tiny Island some 20 odd miles from the Atlantic. As a result of hostile reception from the natives, the first Europeans on the River Gambia could only travel four miles from the Atlantic (Gray, 1940). Although subsequent European expeditions ventured furthered along the river, this Island and its immediate surrounding territory was the theatre for the imperial drama concerning The Gambia. For the four centuries just before the partition of the Senegambia, the territory comprising of The Gambia had, at one time or the other, been claimed by the Courlanders, Dutch, Americans, French and British (Gamble, 1988; Gray, 1940; Quinn’ 1972, & Curtin, 1975). Like the Arabs and North African before them, the Europeans also found along the banks of the river, small independent states with heterogeneous populations (Bayley, 1939; Gray, 1940; Gamble, 1988; & Quinn, 1972). Until early 1800s, with the exception of the British settlement at James Island and the French residence at Albreda on the north bank opposite James Island, European involvement with indigenous people was limited to trading
contacts. These two settlements, and the intense rivalry they generated between the British and French in The Gambia, constituted the most significant aspect of The Gambia's colonial history (Gray, 1940; Gamble, 1988; Bayley, 1939; & Sagnia, 1884). However, since the British acquired exclusive trading rights on the Gambia River from the Portuguese in 1588, several colonial settlements also grew along the banks and elsewhere in The Gambia. Most of these settlements were on land that was acquired through treaties with traditional rules (see Gray, 1940; Mahoney, 1963; and Quinn, 1972).

Despite the territorial expansion and increasing colonial presence along the River, colonial policy was consistently underpinned by the needs of trade. These objectives were initially pursued by way of treaties and payments of stipends to traditional rulers and, occasionally force was used in order to have a dominant influence in the affairs of the states. On the whole, however, the relationship between the Crown and the inhabitants of these territories was, to say the least, informal and tentative (Gray, 1940; & Quinn, 1972). This is reflected in the series of correspondences in which the Colonial Office in London warned officials against giving any impressions to settlers that they can rely on government protection for fear that this might involve the colony in 'endless perplexities and expenses' (Macaulay to Peel, 16/01/1852, cited in Gray, 1940 411; also see O'Connor to Newcastle, 21/06/1854; & D'Arcy to Cardwell, 23/06/1866).

With respect to Gambian states, colonial policy was one of non-interference in their internal affairs. Although the 'Charter for the Government of the Settlements of the Gambia River' (Co/66/4690, 24th June 1843, cited in Gray,
empowered the governor to do all that was necessary in the event of an unforeseen situation and when any of these settlements come under attack (also see Gray, 1940), that provision was hardly a priority policy instrument until the outbreak of the 'Soninke-Marabout Wars' (Jihads) in 1862. Series of correspondences at the time indicated that the priority of the Colonial administrators was to ensure the smooth running of the commercial activities of the Settlers. In that respect, traditional rulers were deemed to be more appropriate allies. Accordingly, colonial policy regarding the war between the ruling clans and the Muslims, was to pursue what MacDonnell called 'vigorous administration' which he said 'is better than any treaties to ensure respect from the natives as well as peace and protection for our commerce" (Co/87/48, MacDonnell to Grey, 9th January 1850).

Although the official position of the colony's administration was firmly in support of the traditional ruling clans, this policy did not reflect any homogeneity of views among settlers regarding the ongoing internal conflicts within the states. Colonial policy, during this period was, in the words of Quinn (1972), 'overshadowed by the basic differences in viewpoint, purpose, and perspective between local officials and residents on the one hand and the metropolitan government in London on the other' (p. 97). Despite strong representations by local officials for military intervention in support of the ruling clans, London maintained a strong and unambiguous opposition to any engagement in the internal affairs of the states (Gray, 1940; Quinn, 1972; and Gailey, 1963). This position was underlined in related correspondences between the Colonial Office and MacDonnell (the governor at the time) (see Quinn, 1972; and Grey, 1940).
Within the colonial settlements, there were also differences in views of the colony's administration and ordinary settler traders, regarding the conflict. Colonel D'Arcy (who took over from McDonnell), expressed the official view when he wrote in a letter to the Duke of Newcastle (the Colonial Secretary):

'Where as the bigoted Marabouts' (Muslim clerics) 'are not given to the cultivation of the ground, except by slave labour, and then only raising sufficient grain for home consumption, they weave their own pagnes, or country cloths, they make their own dyes, and of cause do not purchase or trade rum, in fact their earnest desire is to be independent of White traders' (Co/87/73, D'Arcy to Newcastle, 24th May 1862).

This is the view that Gray (1940) projects in his analysis of the situation when he described the Muslims in Kombo (one of the States), as 'a band of malcontents, who were little better than banditti' (Gray, 1940: 390). These views are not, however, shared by the newly self-conscious class within the colony whom Governor O'Connor described in a letter to Grey (28/08/1854) as 'infinity of persons with moderate capitals, in many instances enterprising, active and industrious'. African Times of 23 September 1864, for example, quoted what it described as 'a group of traders, with trading interests in most of the states' as saying:

'Far from being the scourge of civilisation Maba' (the spiritual leader of the Jihad) 'is making vast improvements for the protection of merchants along the River. He has driven away almost all the robbers,
rogues, refugees etc., that would have ruined the traders’ and ‘never falls upon the traders or even ask for any presents or customs, throughout all the territory he commands’ (African Times, 23/09/1864: 31-33).

This view tended to be reflected in Maba’s own correspondences. In a massage to Colonel D’Arcy, he declined to be declared king of the territories he had conquered from animist rulers. D’Arcy quoted him as suggesting that the office of kingship ‘was maintained by plundering the property of others and the title should, therefore be disbanded’ (D’Arcy to Newcastle, 22nd May 1862). Notwithstanding, Gray (1940) says some consider the leaders of the religious revival as ‘religious fanatics who aroused popular sentiments’ leading to some thirty years of upheavals that have ‘put back the clock for close on half a century’ (p. 429).

Even for those who entertain such passionate positions, however, there is no denying the profound effects of these conflicts on traditional institutions and rituals and the attitudes and policies of the Europeans nations that competed for hegemony over the region and its people. Before 1850, Muslims constituted a minority. By the end of that century, however, a majority of the people (including members of traditional ruling clans) profess Islam (klien, 1968; Quinn, 1972; and Gamble, 1988). Also, in the final analysis, Britain’s decision to expand her sphere of influence along the River Gambia was dictated by how France reacted to the conflicts between Muslims and traditional rulers in the region (Quinn, 1972; and Klein, 1962; also see Curtin,
1975; and Gray, 1940 for details of the scramble between Britain and France in the region).

When the 'Anglo-French Convention' of 10 August 1889 formerly partitioned the Senegambia (the region comprising of Senegal and The Gambia), the British sphere of influence had increased to cover territory beyond the pre-1850 colonial settlements. Consequently, instead of 12000 to 15000 people, the colonial administration was confronted with the task of governing a population of some 160,000 (Bailey, 1963, Gamble; 1988; Gailey, 1933; & Gray, 1940). To deal with this new political situation, the Protectorate Ordinance, which had been enacted for the purpose of governing natives in Britain's colonial possessions in Africa, was invoked. Accordingly, for administrative purposes, The Protectorate (meaning all the territory outside the Colony of Bathurst and Kombo St Mary’s) was divided into districts under the charge of native chiefs who were subordinate to European Divisional Commissioners. District chiefs had executive and magisterial powers over native subjects. Because the Ordinance also provided for the enforcement of native laws and customs, the first courts of jurisdiction in the protectorate were the District Tribunals presided over by the chiefs and councils of traditional elders. These arrangements, most obviously reflected colonial sympathies for the traditional ruling clans. However, by the time the Protectorate system effectively came into force in 1902 (Gray, 1940; Quinn, 1972; and Sagnia, 1984), Islamic institutions and rituals had permeated every facet of Gambian society, including the native jurisprudence. The implications of this cultural encounter are evident in the contemporary social context.
Nature of Contemporary Gambian Society

Contemporary Gambian society, therefore, comprises of a complex mixture of elements of the three culture bearers that fought for political, economic and social hegemony over the people in the latter half of the 19th century. Each dimension has relative dominance on certain aspects of Gambian life, but neither can claim hegemony over every aspect of it. The political dominance of the nation-state, reflects, that at least in political terms, the colonial element has emerged as the pre-eminent aspect in this encounter. Despite the pre-eminence of Colonial imprints in the form of the nation state and its 'rational' frameworks, Arabic values and paradigms, in the form of Islam, also pervade every aspect of contemporary Gambian society. However, notwithstanding the pervasiveness of Islam and the political pre-eminence of the nation-state, pre-colonial and pre-Islamic indigenous elements still have a great deal of relevance (see Cruise-O'Brien, 1975; and Quinn, 1972).

The most recent national censures (GG, 2003) showed that The Gambia comprises of five major ethnolinguistic groups (Mandinka, Fula, Wolof, Jola and Sarahuli). Together these groups make up for about 95 percent of the population in (GG, 2002; CIA, 2001) and even though English is the 'official' language, generally Gambians communicate in their indigenous vernaculars. In spite of the many and different ethnic groups, however, almost everywhere, Gambian society is socially divided into three distinct groups: the 'Freeborn', Caste, based on endogamous occupational groups, and 'Slaves' (Curtin, 1975; Cruise-O'Brien, 1972; Quinn, 1972; Haswell, 1975; Gamble, 1967; Bayley, 1939). Before Islam and European conquest, this social stratification provided
the basis for determining eligibility for political office and access to certain privileges. For example, only descendants of 'Freeborn' can be considered as members of the ruling aristocratic clans and have priority access to land and other resources of the state. Unlike India, however, The Gambia Caste system is not based on social hierarchy. The similarity with Indian caste is that the caste in The Gambia is also endogamous and almost always associated with particular occupations (Quinn, 1972). But unlike India, The Gambian system is not based on religious prohibition. Therefore, even though traditionally, people of 'Freeborn' status are prohibited from marrying people of Caste status, the latter are not considered to be socially inferior. People of 'Slave' classification, for their part, are divided into three categories: the captured or purchased and their descendants who, traditionally have no legal rights; those born in captivity (people of this sub-category have complex kinship relations of rights and obligations with their 'Freeborn' masters); and the 'royal slaves' that are used by the ruling 'Freeborn' classes for military and administration purposes (Curtin, 1972: 32). Somewhat like the appeal of Islam and Christianity to Hindu untouchables, the atrocities of 'royal slaves' against ordinary citizens, accounted for the uprisings against traditional rulers.

Among all the ethno-linguistic groups, however, 'the root of ... self identity and the framework for day-to-day relations with others' is, as in the pre-Islamic and pre-European periods, based on 'kinship' (Curtin, 1975: 30; also see Quinn, 1972; and O'Brien, 172). Kinship is based on lineages and the largest form of lineage in The Gambia is the extended family clan, comprising of people of common ancestral descent. The extended family clan is based on bilateral lineage. However, usually, (but not always), people belonging to the
same clan bear the same surname. The ‘clan’, however, cannot be said to constitute an effective day-to-day social unit because its members are usually scattered in villages and towns across ethno-linguistic and even national boundaries. Although the clan is considered to be too broad to be an effective social unit, members, regardless of geographical and social distance, have the capacity to identify and assist each and other at times of need.

The most coherent social unit however, is the segment of the clan living together in a single village or town. Within the village, the basic social unit is the family compound, comprising of members of an extended family, headed by the eldest male member. Families belonging to the same clan tend to live in contiguous compounds that, together, constitute a Ward (Kabilo in Mandinka and Gale in Fula). The eldest male member of that clan living in that particular village is always the head of the Ward. He represents its members’ interest and has the final say in any disputes involving its members and, controls the distribution of the outcome of their collective economic endeavours (Bayley, 1939; Gamble, 1949; Weil, 1971; and Quinn, 1972). When a member of the Ward is in difficulty, every member is obligated to come to his or her aid.

Throughout The Gambia, villages have, however, become increasingly heterogeneous. Even so, settlements in The Gambia are generally defined along tribal lines and leadership often reside with the most senior male member of the lineage of the original founder. Despite the efforts of the colonial administration to maintain this traditional form of leadership, the intercession between Islam and tradition has created hybrid forms of
authority at the level of the village/town. For all intent and purpose, at the village level, power and authority are shared between the Alkali (traditional leader and representative of the state) and an Imam (the Muslim spiritual leader). This however, does not mean that Islam has completely taken over the spiritual functions of the clan. For even now, most Gambians do not depend on Islam as their overall source for spiritual guidance. Traditional rituals such as circumcisions and age-group initiations still invoke the spirits of the ancestors for guidance. At the district level, where the colonial solution helped restored traditional authority, chiefs still depend, to some extent, on Muslim cleric in the execution of their magisterial duties, and litigants and witnesses take an oath by placing their right hand on the Quran before giving evidence.

Therefore, while tribal affiliations constitute very significant determinants of communal conceptions, actions and solidarities, a holistic understanding of the Gambian context also requires focusing on the Islamic dimension. The most recent population survey (GG, 2003) supports the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimate that some 92 percent of The Gambia’s 1.4 million people profess to be Muslim. Christianity and indigenous beliefs account for 9 percent and 1 percent respectively (also see, GG, 2002; and CIA, 2001). Most Gambian Muslims belong to one of three Sufi Muslim Orders/Brotherhoods – Qadiriyya, Tijaniyya, and Mourides (Cruise- O’Brien, 1975; klien, 1968; and Abun-Nasr, 1965). Most of the literature tended to discuss these Brotherhoods in terms of their structures and relationships between ordinary members and the Islamic scholars that lead them, on the basis of the simple spiritual and mythical context of Sufi brand of Islam (Cruise-O’Brien, 1975; Klien, 1968). However, a more detailed discussion in
the empirical chapters, indicate a complex symbiosis of spiritual and instrumental relationships and interactions. In that respect, the role of the Muslim clerics in Gambian society and their relationship with the current ruling classes, are quite similar to what the situation described by Richard Jobson in the early 17th century (see Jobson, 1932; and Curtin, 1975). Now, as then, the influence of Muslim clerics rests predominantly on their knowledge of the Quran and the mythical powers associated with such knowledge. Muslim priests still wield considerable power and authority at all levels and have considerable influence over the political and economic elite (at both national and local levels). Some of these issues are revisited in the empirical chapters and discussed from ‘native’ perspectives.

The formal political system of the nation State has, however, also generated and helps to sustain collective and individual forms of relationships and interactions within Gambian society. Because The Gambia is a former British colony, her ‘formal’ political, legal and social institutions are largely British imitations. In that respect, it would be logical to assume that the literature concerned with the formal aspects of the political systems of other former British colonies could be drawn upon to make sense of The Gambian context. However, the complexity arising from the interface between the imprints of the colonial, Islamic and indigenous traditions could make such an approach problematic. As a result, although some of the issues that are discussed in this brief review can be gleamed from the literature concerned with the SSA context in general, Cruise-O’Brien’s (1975) account of the relationship between ‘Chiefs, Saints and Politicians’ in Senegal, is a useful starting point. Although Cruise-O’Brien’s is the story of social, political and economic
relationships and interaction in a Francophone African context, the religious and indigenous similarities between The Gambia and Senegal make it so relevant.

In their most obvious form, however, as in most SSA contexts, political relationships in The Gambia tend to involve national elite (mainly literate urban residents) and rural intermediaries and notables (Cruise-O’Brien, 1975). These relationships, as in most parts of the world, are often based on a ‘spoil system’ that is principally directed at jobs for the principals and their followers. It is this aspect of relationships and interactions that tends to be the focus of the stream of literature that makes unqualified associations between poor organisational outcomes and SSA cultures and traditions (Blunt & Jones, 1989; Kiggundu, 1988; WB, 1981 & 1989; Nellis, 1986; & White, 1987).

However, as in Senegal (Cruise-O’Brien, 1975), political relationships in this context, also, tend to be rather unstable. Consequently, the influence of the ‘formal’ political system on individual and communal relationships and interactions tends to be ad hoc and tentative. For ‘formal’ political relationships to be more enduring, they need to be also underpinned by ‘clan’ and religious influences. Such influences generally emanate from the Matriarchs and Patriarchs of the segment of the clan that constitutes the extended family and the Saints who preside over the religious Brotherhoods. Accordingly, even in the urban set-up, and among the political and economic elite, relationships and interactions that matter are those that are based on family relationships, a common local origin ('home boys') and a shared religious orientation. When combined, and reinforced by previous ‘experiences of reciprocal exchange of favours’ (Cruise-O’Brien, 1975: 165), a
sense of shared values reinforced by mutual interests engenders even more enduring conceptions and relationships. This in effect, is what gives morality to attitudes and behaviour that are stigmatised in the literature as amoral, nepotistic and corrupt. Such a social context can only be comprehensively conceptualised, as Cruise-O'Brien observed, ‘against a background which includes the broader bases of social differentiation’ (1975: 152).

2. I. 2: A Concept of Gambian Society

The Gambia, as the preceding pages indicate, is a rather complex social context that defies simplistic conceptualisation. In multi-ethnic terms, she mirrors SSA reality. In terms of the social complexity that reflects her history, she is in many respects a unique social context. The social context that is described here cannot be fully comprehended by way of analysis that focuses exclusively on ‘rational’ institutions and processes of the nation-state. Accordingly, frameworks of culture premised on the existence of unitary ‘national cultures’ are neither conceivable nor helpful. Besides, the complexity of the synthesis of ‘rational’ interests, and traditional and Islamic values and normative standards that shape communal and individual conceptions of reality, and the meanings that are attributed to actions, suggest that although ‘culture’ may be important, it does not suffice as an explanation for ‘why people think and behave as they do’ (Kuper 2000: x). And, as well as rejecting the notion of the hegemony of the ‘rational’ aspects, this account of the nature of Gambian society also indicates that it is neither realistic nor useful to attempt to reclaim an untouched version of the pre-colonial and pre-Islamic context. The Gambian context, therefore, challenges views that tend to excessively privilege culture (i.e. culture without politics and economics) as
the root cause and therefore, solution to all management problems in SSA (Beugre & Offidile, 2001; Dia, 1996; Blunt and Jones, 1992; & Kiggundu, 1989). Rather, the preceding section paints a picture of a social context based on, and sustained by a complex synthesis of the 'formal' rational imprints of her colonial and Islamic heritage and value systems and forms of social organisation that predate these heritages.

These complexities suggest that with respects to the issues involve in this study, a sociological conception of the Gambian context, as a 'functionally integrated social system' (Radcliff-Brown, 1949) would represent a more useful theoretical framework. This conceptual framework (see figure 2.II. 1 below) is based on Durkheim's notion of a social system as 'reality sui generis' (Lement, 1991; Giddens, 1971) and Radcliff-Brown's structural functionalist construct, which focuses on the need of the social whole. It draws on Cruise-O'Brien's framework of 'social dimensions' of Senegalese peasant society to develop a concept of Gambian society based on three broad social dimensions. Lement (1991: 321) described 'The reality sui generis' as involving 'the independent variability of ... types of structural components relative to the others'. He noted that 'a generalized value-pattern does not legitimize the same norms, collectivities, or roles under all conditions, for example'.

As the framework indicates, contemporary Gambian society comprises of three broad social dimensions representing elements of the three cultures that fought for hegemony and dominance over the peoples of The Gambia in 19th century. Because none of these cultures can claim hegemony, the framework suggests that a complex synthesis of traditional African, European and Islamic
values and normative standards, dictate how people think and act even in a formal business setting. The employment relationship at the level of the organisation, therefore, is not just about formal rules and processes. It is, fundamentally, also about the relationship between 'mothers' children' (members of the extended family clan) and Brethren (those who share common Islamic affiliations).

Fig. 2.11.1: Functionally integrated Social system of 'formal' and 'Informal' Dimensions

This framework reflects Gambian society as a 'social whole', comprising both informal and formal dimensions. The dotted lines between the two elements of the informal dimension and the formal organisation reflect the informality and indirect nature of the impact of these influences, in contrast with the
formality and directness of the influences of the nation-state. The framework, nevertheless, also shows the informal system, through the traditional extended family clan and Islamic Orders, also ascribes relationships and behaviour between various categories and members of the formal organisation. It, however, also rejects conceptual frameworks that tend to excessively privilege culture in conceptualising contemporary SSA society. Such frameworks also give the false impression that Africans are, some how, totally non-materialistic. There are two basic assumptions underlying this framework. The first is that the 'rational' institutional and policy frameworks of the nation-state have direct influence over the formal policies and processes of business organisations. The second echoes Fox's (1985) observation that some of the conceptions in the minds of those who are recruited by the organisation are shaped and sustained by the values and standards of the wider 'informal' community within which the organisation is located. It shows that Gambians share some common values and interests by virtue of common membership of a nation state. The state, however, does not have the social legitimacy that is required for hegemonic influence over how people think and behave in every circumstance. Rather, each of the three major dimensions of the social system 'regulate indefinite numbers of collectivities and roles, but only specific sectors of their action' (Lement, 1991: 322).

The terms that are used to describe this framework, however, should be seen as convenient definitions. In reality, none of these dimensions can claim to be exact replicas of the traditions they supposedly represent. Instead, the peculiar social structures and forms of human interaction that they seek to legitimise and sustain are, at best, hybrids of the distinct historic traditions
and values that contested for hegemony over the peoples of the Gambia in the mid to late 1800s. Yet, an analysis that involves the complex synthesis of the normative standards and forms of social organisation of the extended family clan system, Islamic Orders and the nation-states, is essential for an holistic understanding of the Gambian context and by extension, SSA reality. The following section involves a review of the literature on organisational analysis in SSA with a special emphasis on labour administration and Industrial Relations.

2. I. 3: Conclusion

A core objective of the C-CMR enterprise is to facilitate the management of attitude change (Schien, 1988, 1990), which ‘has its contemporary manifestation in, and is in some senses now synonymous with, the management of organizational culture’ (Cooke, 1999: 86). Most C-CMR has tended to urge organisations to create ‘strong cultures’ and compel members to identify with such cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Schien, 1990; Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Tayeb, 1995, 1996). This neo-liberal obsession with the ‘creation and management of strong organisational culture’ is reflected in Blunt and Jones’ (1992) framework of ‘progressive model of organisational cultures for SSA’ (see fig 2.2 below). The idea is that by introducing foreign so-called ‘good practices’ to the SSA context, Multinational Corporations will facilitate the progression of SSA organisational cultures from ‘fragmented negative’ ones to the ‘synergistic cultures’ that are often associated with East and Southeast Asia contexts.
As Wilson (2001) observed, the use of dominant typologies of cultural differences (Hofstede, 1980; and Trompenaar and Haden-Turner, 1997), as explanation is problematic. This, she argues, is because ‘for formally colonised countries, whose boundaries were arbitrarily carved out by imperial powers with little regard for the existing ethnic groups, generalisations about national traits become more suspect’ (p. 7). Hofstede, and Trompenaare and Handen-Turner’s frameworks have also been criticised for their dependence on bipolar constructs (Wilson, 2001: 8; also see Osland and Bird, 2000). This oversimplification of cultural differences is attributed to western mindset (Kwek, 1999) that does not discern, for example, that in the SSA context, collectivism takes different forms of allegiances and affiliations (see Thomas and Bendinex, 2000). As a result, as Jackson (2002) noted, the ‘centralised’, ‘dictatorial’ and ‘bureaucratic’ management styles that are associated with
Africa 'are mostly representative of a post-colonial heritage, reflecting a theory X style', which 'allows little worker initiative and rewards a narrow set of skills simply by financial means' (p. 1002). The fact that this management style continues to exist reflects the staying power of the employment management legacy of colonialism and/or the extent to which that legacy has been perpetuated by post-independence governments to protect vested political and economic interests. Or, it may be, as Jackson (2002) suggests, this is the only way post-independence managers know how to manage.

In a critique of C-CMR, Westwood (2001: 241) observed that 'the language of alterity' (meaning representation of modified images of others), 'was an evitable part of the colonial experience and anthropology, but it remains pervasive in comparative management'. 'A well established criticism of change management' (which if I may add it shares with C-CMR), he noted, 'is that it is a ahistorical and acontextual, being wholly about the management of change, with no corresponding analysis of the historical and immediate context of change' (Pettigrew, 1985; Wilson, 1992; cited in Cooke, 1999: 98). Cooke went on to say that 'this critique has hitherto been about change management's willingness to adopt a position where the social, political and ideological circumstances in which it is applied are assumed to be uncontested and as objectively given' (p. 98).

'This determined acceptance of context', in a way, accounts for the adoption of notions of 'national cultures' in C-CMR and its 'continuity with the knowledge/power strategies of the colonial project' (Westwood, 2001: 2410). As well as criticisms of Appropriating the other in the Discourse of
Comparative Management (Westwood, 2001), the management change, and by association, C-CMR perspectives, is criticised for 'appropriating the central ideas' and thus, Writing the Left out of Management Theory' (Cooke, 1999). But what does the 'left' offer as explanations to the management problems of SSA? To try to answer that question, the following section will discuss two 'leftist' perspectives - Marxist and Postcolonial, on the problem.

2. II: Management in SSA: Marxist and Postcolonial Perspectives

In Writing the Left out of Management Theory, Cooke identified 'the left' on the basis of, among others, demonstration of 'a belief in egalitarianism ... a desire for social justice, and a belief in progress through reform or revolution' (1999: 82). He also invoked Pimlott and argued that 'given the left’s primary existence as “both topographical and a state of mind, the role of specific beliefs may be less crucial”, although important’ (Pimlott, 1988: 81 cited in Cooke, p.82). The leftness of the perspectives that are discussed here is evident in their opposition to perspectives that are deemed to be managerialist and/or based on rational economic considerations of the neo-liberal ‘right’. In this case, however, the set of beliefs that underpin these perspectives, are particularly important. In the critique of the Historiography of the Management of Change, Cooke (1999) focused on key ideas from action research, group dynamics and attitude change management, to demonstrate how contemporary management literature has appropriated ‘leftist’ theories and concepts, without acknowledgement. As examples, he highlighted action research Principles of ‘shared change agent/client understanding of the need for and method of change’; group dynamics concepts of ‘social-psychological
process' as the basis for explaining 'the inter-relationship between group and individual behaviour' and; 'approaches to the management of organisational culture' (Cooke, 1999: 86), in their various guises.

Here I restrict myself to Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives on IR and PM/HRM problems in relation to SSA. This review, however, is necessarily about how these perspectives challenge neo-liberal theories and concepts that try to explain the variable efficacy of management practices in different social contexts. Instead, I aim to question whether these 'leftist' perspectives adequately explain workers attitudes and behaviours; and provide the theoretical basis for the institutionalisation of sets of African values and norms in rational organisational policies and routines. So it is not just the oppositional credential of these perspectives that count. Their capacity to help us comprehend the tension between capitalist and African values and norms and how they might be reconciled is even more crucial. If 'rebellion' and 'resistance' are criteria for defining 'leftness', then the 'leftist' credentials, of the Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives on the broad debate concerning the political economy of SSA, are not in doubt. The issue, therefore, concerns the usefulness of Marxist and Postcolonial theories and concepts to understanding the contemporary IR and management problems of SSA.

Although the two perspectives are discussed separately, I consider the Postcolonial perspective an extension of Marxism. I any case, for the purposes of this study of African IR, the commonalities of Marxism and Postcolonial theories are more important than their differences. Said's Orientalism (1978) is commonly regarded as the reference point for postcolonialism (Spivak,
1993; Ghandi, 1998). Ghandi (1998), however, notes an uneasy relationship between Said and Marxism. Bartolovich et al (2002) observe ‘neglect (even ignorance) of Marxism in Post-colonial studies that is often countered by reflexive dismissal of the entire field of postcolonial studies by Marxist writers’ (p. 2). I would argue, however, that insofar as it involves critiques of imperialism and its dominant narratives, Postcolonial discourse represents, in many respects, an extension - an updated version - of a well-established tradition of anti-capitalist and anti-colonial polemics, of which, Marxism stands out (see Ahmad, 1992; Bartolovich et al 2002). Jones (2005) tries to establish the link between these perspectives through a critical analysis of elements of organisation theory in the ‘deconstructivist feminist Marxist’ writings of Spivak.

Quite apart from their common origin, the two perspectives share common concerns to warrant Bartolovich et al (2002), to note ‘Marxism and Postcolonial studies have something to say to each other’ (p. 1). In that respect, they argue the two perspectives are not only similar, but they might draw on each other to make sense of contemporary capitalism and imperialism. Hall (1996) has argued that in abandoning ‘deterministic economism’, the Postcolonial critique has failed to provide ‘alternative ways of thinking questions about the economic relations and their effects’ and instead, merely presented ‘a massive, gigantic and eloquent disavowal’ (p. 258). The issue, therefore, is not whether ‘Marxists have been working in a number of ways from the start on the very issues and concerns ... which have become central to post colonial studies’ (Bartolovich et al 2002: 3). Rather, it is about how postcolonial studies could benefit from Marxist analysis to examine and
explain contemporary issues that concerns postcolonial critiques.

On that point, Loomba (1998: 256) observe that Postcolonial scholars have failed to engage with the 'neo-colonial imbalances in the contemporary world order.' Instead, they tend to 'grapple with the shades of the colonial past more than with the difficulties of the postcolonial present' (p. 257). To deal with contemporary issues of colonialism (such as globalisation), Bartolovich et al (2002) call for an engagement between Postcolonial theory and Marxist analysis because, as they put it: 'Marxism is the theoretical perspective best suited to accomplishing the concerted and effective critique of the violence of the contemporary world order as well as the ravages of the colonial past' (p. 3). These suggest not mere common concerns but importantly, the need for an engagement and dialogue between these perspectives.

2. II. 1: Marxism Perspectives on IR and Management of SSA

Marxist critiques of imperialism and colonialism have always been appealing to African 'revolutionaries' and the immediate post-colonial African political elite. One reason for this appeal is that they tend to provide a simple explanation of why imperialism happened and how colonialism worked to the detriment of Africans. Marx, however, had a rather ambivalent view of colonialism. And, the Marxist credentials of those African 'revolutionaries' who advocated Marxism is subject to debate. Kwame N'Krumah, arguably one of the most prominent of the post-colonial African political leaders, for example, entertained a Marxist perspective on African political economy. In Neo-colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism (1965), he argues that
capitalism had succeeded in the West only by subjugating the working classes within each individual country and by reducing State control over capitalist enterprise. He then posits that despite the success of capitalism in the West, the basis of Marx’s argument had not been invalidated. Rather, the conflict that Marx had predicted as a national one has been transferred, instead, to the world stage. ‘World capitalism’, he notes, ‘has postponed its crisis but only at the cost of transforming it into an international crisis’ (1965: 204).

Marx, however, held a rather conditional view of colonialism as a regressive force and his writings on the subject were consistent with his linear view of global transformation. Accordingly, he believed that by creating capitalist societies, colonialism would bring about the collapse of feudal societies in many parts of world (Marx and Engels, 1972). In that regard, for example, although he was concerned about the burden that Britain placed on India, he was not sympathetic to the loss of aspects of Indian culture. He described Hinduism, for example, as a ‘... brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of . . . the monkey, and . . . the cow (Marx and Engels, 1972: 41). But if Marx entertained such views of the cultures of colonised people, why were his ideas so appealing to them?

The answer to that question, I would argue, lies in the hope that his predictions inspired as well as the achievements and thinking of neo-Marxists like Lenin and Mao Tse-tung. Like most ‘Third’ World Marxism, African Marxists were and still are inspired by Lenin’s views on imperialism and the idea that there are ‘weak links’ in the chain of international capitalist transformation. Both Lenin and Mao disputed Marx’s position that social
change in the mode of production has to come in an ordered sequence of changes from feudalism to capitalism to socialism. Their argument was even more appealing because both had succeeded in establishing ‘socialist’ states in countries with rudimentary capitalist and industrial institutions. It is reasonable to assume therefore, that with regards to views on the nature of capitalist exploitation of Africa and how it might be resolved, Africans were ideologically, more directly inspired by neo-Marxist rather than Marx himself.

Perhaps, as a result, the African political elites who professed socialism also argue for Africa’s own version of socialism – ‘African Socialism’ (Senghore, 1964; N’Kurumah, 1967). This, however, does not mean that they did not draw on any of Marx’s original theories and arguments. In his early writings, for example, N’Krumah (1965) objected to the notion of ‘African Socialism’. Inspired by Marx’s concept of ‘scientific socialism’, he wrote: ‘A Socialism depends on dialectical and historical materialism, upon the view that there is only one nature subject in all its manifestations to natural laws and that human society is, in this sense, part of nature and subject to its own laws of development’ (p. 208). Therefore, in what amounts to an unequivocal rejection of the concept of ‘African Socialism’, he argues: ‘to suppose that there are tribal, national, or racial socialisms is to abandon objectivity in favour of chauvinism’ (p. 208).

In some of his latter works, however, Nkrumah also appeared to share the view of some of his contemporaries (for example, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghore and Seku Toure) that Africa must opt for a modified version of Marx
Tweedie (1967: 1) for example, quoted N’Krumah as saying:

'Some African political leaders and thinkers certainly use the term “socialism” as it should in my opinion be used ... For such leaders, the aim is to remould African society in the socialist direction; to reconsider African society in such a manner that the humanism of traditional African life re-asserts itself in a modern technical community. Those African leaders who believe these principles are the socialists in Africa'.

N’Krumah could have been referring to Senghore, Nyerere and/or Toure (at the time the presidents of Senegal, Tanzania and Guinea Conakry respectively). Although Senghore never advocated Marxism per se, he had argued for the notion of ‘African Socialism’, which must emerge and evolve out of African experience and perceptions (Senghore, 1964). Senghore believed that African societies and African culture emphasised communal values and orientation and that ‘Africans should recover and develop this aspect’ (1964: 5). In political terms, Julius Nyerere and Seku Toure were closer allies of N’Krumah. But even if they were Marxists, Nyerere and Toure certainly were not doctrinaire Marxists. Juluis Nyerere, as Mills (2004) points out, had always remained close to his Christian roots. And, despite his close association with French communists, Toure was a devoted Muslim who saw no contradiction between socialism and Islam. In The Logic of Choice (1977), he argues that Guinea’s socialist revolution was in pursuit of worldly objectives and it therefore need not preclude the adoption of religious beliefs.
that are for the pursuit of eternal objectives. Both Nyerere and Toure pursued socialist experiments that demonstrated their ‘African socialist’ credentials. Tanzania’s village co-operative experiment or ujamaa (meaning ‘familyhood’ in Kishwahili) was based on the idea of extending traditional values and responsibilities around kinship to Tanzania as a whole (see Nyerere, 1968). For his part, Seku Toure was a union leader and the new urban working classes provided the elite power based for Guinea’s struggle for political independence from France. Once in power, however, he focused on the ‘rural proletariat’ as his power base.

The appeal of Marxism to earlier Africa leaders, therefore, lay in its conception of liberation struggle as a ‘proletarian revolution’ that is destined to overthrow the colonial state. For many, that revolution ended with the fall of the colonial state and the emergence of independent ‘sovereign’ African states. But even during the liberation struggle, the usefulness of Marxist theory as an explanation for employment management problems of SSA was limited. For as I indicated earlier, even the urban colonial working classes who embraced Marxism, were never true proletarians.

‘Dialectic materialism’ is fundamentally about gaining insight by uncovering contradictions in the reasoning of one’s adversary. ‘Marxist theory’, according to Thompson and McHugh (2002: 366), ‘has tended to focus on the dynamics and contradictions of capitalism as whole ... neglecting changes in productive processes, organisational forms and occupational structures’. The appeal of the Marxist perspective, therefore, lies in its critique of the institutional framework of capitalism. The colonial state is viewed as legitimising and
perpetuating the inequality of power whereby a small minority has control over the means of production. The Marxist conception of the colonial state in terms of structural injustice and exploitation made it an appealing perspective for Africa’s urban working classes during the struggles for political independence.

This thesis, however, challenges the value of Marxist IR theory as an explanatory paradigm for SSA employment relations. Because my starting point for an analysis of SSA IR is British IR theory, the main alternative paradigm to pluralism comes from Marxist IR theory (not in Marxism in general). The Marxist alternative IR stresses workplace class conflict between economic actors in a formal employment relationship (Hyman, 1975; Kelly, 1998). My aim, in reviewing the Marxist perspective, is to demonstrate that this is not an adequate framework for SSA. Yes, there are other varieties of Marxism that focus not on the workplace or class conflict, but, for example, on modes of productions (MOP). These are interesting and have been discussed very briefly in the following paragraphs. My main point, however, is that Marxist IR theory does not work for SSA because in that context, conflict lies elsewhere.

As oppose to Marxist IR theory, Marxist perspectives on MOP are concerned with issues of economic development. In relations to SSA, the latter tends to be concerned with frameworks of economic transformation from primitive agrarian to capitalist society. In that respect, neo-Marxist ‘modes of production’ debates in Marxism (for example, Russell, 1989; Stewart, 1981; Wolpe, 1980; and Hobsbawn, 1964), are useful for explaining
transformations in SSA society arising from the introduction of capitalism. Stewart (1981) argues 'underlying the preoccupation of scholars who delve into describing, defining, and deifying the significance of various modes of production in pre-colonial African setting is the heuristic value such analytical methods holds for understanding the nature and growth of the state and the impact of Western capitalism' (p. 69). In that respect, most neo-Marxist analyses that deal with the transition from, and engagements between 'primitive' pre-colonial and capitalist modes of production in Africa, centre on the appearance of a class structure and state machinery which correspond at the same time, to changes in the mode of production and increasingly urbane methods of surplus extraction (see Jewsiewicki, 1981; and Steinhart, 1981).

But as Hobsbawm (1964) observed, in a continent of such social diversity, conceptions of MOP that categorise shifts in modes of production 'firmly in one or another of the accepted pigeon-holes has produced demarcation disputes, as is natural when we insist on fitting dynamic concepts into static one' (pp. 63-64). Abele's (1981) study of precapitalist Gamo society in Southern Ethiopia, however, demonstrated the prevalence of extreme exploitation and inequality in a society that for all intent and purpose is classless. He concluded therefore, that in some precolonial African societies Marxist analysis 'which underlines the relation between mode of production and political-judicial superstructure' has significant limitations. In a more immediate social context, Stewart conceptualised a pre-colonial mode of production in the Sahel as a 'lineage mode of production' (1981: 73). He argues 'social class in Southern Saharan societies, as the term has been employed in much descriptive literature, need to be carefully distinguished
from class as an analytical tool in historical materialism' (p. 89). Such conclusions suggest that even in relation to development studies, Marxist analysis of SSA phenomena require a degree of vigilance.

This thesis, to reiterate, is concerned about Marxist analysis of problems of workplace relationships and interactions in a formal business organisational setting. And, as Thompson and McHugh (2002: 366) note: on Marxist influence on 'disciplines concerned with work organisation, it is not the full apparatus of Marxist theory of history and society that has been influential, but a narrow set of ideas'. These ideas they say, are articulated in 'Labour process theory (LPT) set in motion by Braverman's reworking of Marx's analysis of capitalist production'. Marxist perspective on capitalist modes of production, therefore, were, and still are based on the theory of exploitation and the idea that 'the social relations between capital and labour in the workplace are of 'structured antagonism' (Thompson and Smith, 2001: 57; see also Thompson and McHugh, 2002; Jaros, 2003). Reacting to Rowlinson and Hassard (2001) criticism of LPT for focusing too much on the workplace, Jaros counters that orthodox Marxists have been too preoccupied with broader arguments of the exploitative nature of capitalism at the expense of what happens at the workplace. Applied to the SSA context, this argument has two implications. First, because of the preoccupation with the broad arguments, in the euphoria that followed the over throw of the colonial state; the leftist credentials of the so-called 'African socialists' were taken for granted. As a result, the implications of their post-liberation policies for IR were not subjected to any meaningful examination.
The second implication of the broad focus of Marxist perspectives concerns the extrapolation of the notion of 'class theory' to SSA without much concern for that peculiar context and its history. It may be the case, as Marx argued, that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' (1968: 1). Yet this radical notion of the employment relationship, which views the worker as 'lacking in property' and being 'totally dependent on being offered employment' (Fox, 1985), does not hold in the SSA context. I would argue that the workplace in SSA is not necessarily the 'prime locus of antagonism' (Thompson and Smith, 2001: 57) between classes that are defined solely in terms of their relations to the 'means of production'. My personal experience, which is supported by the literature on African labour history, is that most African workers have never been entirely dependent on waged employment for survival. Instead, many maintain access to alternative means of productions (see Cooper, 2000 and 1983; Brown, 2003).

The Marxist take on the management problem is cast in terms of the inevitable global conflict between capital and labour. In that respect, it has a Universalist view that does not cater for the peculiar African context and its history. The key argument in this thesis is that Africa's peculiar social and historical context does matter when it comes to how African workers think and act. In that regard, another problem with the Marxist perspective is that despite all the criticism of neo-liberal perspectives, the Marxist approach to the problem is also, largely in terms of the economic demands and rationally determined needs of global capitalism (Cooper, 1987). Accordingly, Marxist theories of underdevelopment, 'proletarianization' and resistance (Gutkind et al, 1978; Sandbrook and Cohen, 1975; N’Krumah, 1965, 1967; and Fanon,
have always sought to explain the labour problems in terms that privilege the 'African working classes' in the making of history (Scott, 1988).

In that case, Cooper (1983: 15) observes that the structural Marxist conception of African's labour problems 'parallel, often explicitly, the title of E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working class* (1963). Again, this is a very linear view that is very much consistent with the Marxist view of the logical sequence of universal 'class struggle'. The challenge to capitalism and the neo-colonial state in Africa, is therefore, conceptualised as arising from the 'sense of collective identity and class consciousness' (Cooper, 1983: 17) on the part of Africa's waged working classes. Collective identity and consciousness, in the colonial context, are considered to be products of workers' collective experience as immigrant waged workers in colonial urban centres (Scott, 1988; Gutkind et al, 1975; and Cohen et al, 1975).

The problem with this logic is that the context for the Creation of Thompson's English *Working classes* varies considerably from the SSA context. Giddens (1981) attributes the power of Marxist analysis to the emphasis it places on the specificity of capitalism as a general mode of production not as specificity of individual capitalist societies. The problem, then, is that the Marxist analysis of the management problems of SSA 'risks being undermined by too glib an assumption of capitalist dominance' in contexts where 'capitalism has not revolutionized production' (Cooper, 1983: 17). For unlike Europe where the: 'complex development of capitalism entailed the conquest of time and space ... within a seamless web enveloping all of society', in Africa, 'capital's problematic control over the total process of production and reproduction poses severe limits to the dominance of capitalism' (Cooper, 1983: 17). Some
neo-Marxist critiques have acknowledged the validity of this observation. They argue that the pattern of capitalism that was introduced through colonialism was never intended to lead to full proletarianisation any way (see Laclau, 1977 and Meillassoux, 1974). Echoing Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) idea of the ‘periphery’ in the World Systems framework, they argue that capitalist exploitation in the ‘Third world’ involves some sort of connivance between capitalist modes of surplus appropriation and pre-capitalist modes of surplus extraction. In this relationship, Third world governments play the role of pre-colonial traditional autocrats by making available to foreign investors obedient, stable and unorganised workforces (see Laclau, 1977 on contemporary capitalism in Latin America).

The fundamental problem of Marxist analysis is that it fails to account for issues arising from the employment relationship involving workers who retain access to land and their indigenous forms of production and social organisation. In my experience, even now, many workers are keen to maintain ties with the village and its ways of life. For these workers, the idea that the nature of their relationships and interactions with their managers is one of ‘class conflict’ based on their relative positions to the means of production may not make sense. Their work related relationships and interactions, as in all other aspects of their relationships, are also shaped by moral and other non-materialistic considerations (see Brown, 2003). Social identity does not arise from common positions as workers and/or managers, but as members of a particular social class, having status that are determine by birth and sanctioned and sustained by a common social system.
Thus traditional Marxism has serious limitations in understanding the core SSA social dimensions of the management problem. Postcolonial theory, however, offers another radical solution and the following sub-section looks at that perspective on the problem. Here, the Postcolonial literature that critiques the grand narrative of Western universalism (Young, 2003; Prasad, 2003; Guha, 1997; Said, 1994; Bhabha, 1994; Mudimbe, 1988; and Ngugi wa Thiang’o, 1986) is viewed, not as an alternative perspective, but rather, as an extension to Marxism. As with C-CMS and Marxist perspectives, postcolonial theories and concepts are discussed solely to assess their limits as alternative viable explanations and basis for solutions to the problem of inquiry.

2. 11.2: Postcolonial Perspectives on management in SSA

In terms of its broad orientation, the Postcolonial perspective also suggests resistance to colonialism and its discourses, which continue to shape societies, which revolted against and overthrew the colonial state. The postcolonial critique, therefore, is largely about confronting the ethnocentric ideas and distorted typifications based on ‘expressed differences that have served as the basis for the appropriation of the other in the Western history of ideas and values’ (Styhre, 2002: 263; see also, Prasad, 2003, Westwood, 2001; Said, 1994; and Bhabha, 1994).

Accordingly, postcolonial discourse mainly centres on critiques that oppose the grand narrative of Western colonial discourse, and the ‘deep ambivalence’ that is inherent in that narrative (Wilson, 2001). But postcolonial discourse has been described as a further grand narrative (Rattansi, 1995) that is
helping the re-colonisation agenda of the West (Mukherjee, 1996, cited in McLeod, 2000). In that respect, Postcolonial discourse is not, itself, entirely free of ambiguity and contradiction. The hapless inhabitants of the ‘living cemeteries’ on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border and the squatter camps of third world cities on the one hand, and the gallantry of ‘the revolutionaries’ at the Tricontental Conference against colonialisms and the ‘ecofeminists’ of India and the Amazon (Young, 2003), provide rather contrasting and contradictory images of the people of the ‘Third’ world. Such analysis, I would also argue, over-simplifies and polarises ‘First’ and ‘Third’ World differences in terms of space and ideas.

Prasad (2003), however, notes that the ‘postcolonial project’ involves not only the contestation of Western categories and epistemological orthodoxies. It also, he says, includes the investigation of ‘the past and present of colonialism with a view to developing a better understanding of the contemporary conjunction’ (p. 27). He however, admits ‘management and organisation research is generally lukewarm’ towards postcolonial theoretical frameworks of analysis (p. 28). Yet, he argues that certain concepts of postcolonial theory can be helpful to organisational analysis and management research. In that respect, some recent critiques of neo-liberal management perspectives (Cooke, 1999; 2003) have borrowed from postcolonial theories and concepts to explain organisational phenomena, including forms of workplace control. Despite claims of its limitations, this study has also drawn on postcolonial theories of ‘ambivalence’ and ‘mimicry’ (Bhabha, 1994) to characterise SSA IR and describe Dockers’ alternative informal responses to managerial ambivalence and ‘indulgency patterns’ (Watson, 1995). The following section
discusses some postcolonial theories and concepts in relation to their usefulness to comprehending the management and IR problems SSA.

In *Managing Organizational Culture and Imperialism* – a title, 'in homage of Said', Cooke (2003) describes 'the management of organizational culture' as 'such cultural form ... perhaps more mundane than the novel, opera, Western mathematics' (p. 75). He notes that 'as the basis for intervention in the working lives of employees ... Managing organizational culture is however particularly pernicious' (p. 75). The stream of literature that argues for the eradication of aspects of African culture that are not considered to be conducive to progressive forms of organisational culture and management practices (for example, Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989), make such observations so credible. Such propositions, however, are not only fundamentally flawed and morally pernicious; they are also, theoretically and practically problematic. This is because they also tend to ignore the pressing contemporary debate about how organisations may manage cultures and values (Provis, 1996; Rokeach, 1979), and the implications of culture and value management for both unitarist and pluralist IR theory (Coopey and Hartley, 1991; Provis, 1996; Ackers, 2002; Saidy Khan and Ackers, 2002). But such propositions could also be viewed as wake up calls for researchers to more critically analyse cultural and value differences within the organisation so that such differences might be better reconciled. The usefulness of postcolonial theories and concepts, in that regard, should be determined by the extent to which they can explain the problem and facilitate the reconciliation process. The problem, however, is that there is no indication that the postcolonial agenda involves such an objective.
Between the control objective of the 'managerialism' (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001; Child & Smith, 1990; & Lawrence, 1969), and 'emancipatory' motivation of the critical research agenda (Gordon, et al. 1982; Edwards, 1979; & Braverman, 1974), Prasad and Prasad (2003) argue for an examination of: 'the limits/margins of current management scholarship on workplace resistance by means of drawing upon certain aspects of resistance theory that received attention in postcolonial theory and criticism' (p. 95). For that purpose, they offer concepts and theories of 'unconscious resistance' (Prasad & Prasad, 2003; Haynes & Prakash, 1991; and Nandy, 1983), ambivalence and mimicry (Bhabha, 1994), and hybridity (Ghandi, 1998; and Bhabha, 1994), as alternatives for explaining resistance in general, and workplace resistance in particular. The theory of 'unconscious resistance' is of direct concern to this study because it is a new concept of workplace resistance. The notion appears to be the postcolonial alternative to the Marxist emphasis on explicit, premeditated, class conflict.

On the basis of a review of the literature that sought to define 'resistance', Piderit (2000) 'reveals three different emphases in conceptualizations of resistance: as a cognitive state, as an emotional state, and as a behavior' (p. 784). She argues that at the point of its manifestation, resistance constitutes some premeditation and the idea that employee resistance can be overcome cognitively suggests that negative thoughts or beliefs about the change precede acts of resistance. Citing Armenakis, et al's (1993) behavioural definition of resistance, Piderit went on to suggest that acts of resistance are generally preceded by 'a cognitive state', which she refers to as a state of '(un)- readiness' (2000, p. 785). The argument, it seems, is that until they actually
carry out resistance (i.e. at the point of manifestation), actors may not be be conscious of the oppositional nature of the act(s) of resistance they are about to engage in. This seems to me, a rather tenuous argument. The theory of ‘unconscious resistance’, nevertheless, represents a direct opposition to the idea that ‘resistance requires consciousnesses or some measure of ‘reflexivity’ (Clegg, 1994: 295 and 297).

Postcolonial theorists of workplace resistance argue that action does not require consciousness on the part of the actor(s) to constitute resistance (Prasad and Prasad, 2003; Haynes and Prakash, 1991; and Nandy, 1983). Nandy, for examples, argues that insubordination does not always need reflexivity and Haynes and Prakash (1991) define resistance as:

‘Those behaviors and cultural practices by subordinate groups that contest hegemonic social formations’ and ‘threaten to unravel the strategies of domination. Seemingly innocuous behavior (they noted), can have unintended yet profound consequences for the objectives of the dominant’ (p. 3).

The concepts of ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’, as potential or actual forms of workplace resistance draw upon the postcolonial critique of colonial discourse as involving ‘deep ambivalence’ (Prasad and Prasad, 2003: 109; see also, Guha, 1997; and Bhabha, 1994). More directly, they are based on Homi Bhabha’s arguments that colonial discourse exposes the ambivalence of the dominant power regarding its position towards the other (Bhabha, 1994). These ambiguities and contradictions, he says, suggest gaps in the colonial
discourse that signal ‘a discontinuous history’ and ‘mark the disturbance of its authoritative representations by the uncanny forces of race, sexuality, violence, culture ... differences that emerge in the colonial discourse as the mixed and split texts of hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994: 83-84). ‘Deep ambivalence’ indicates failure to establish hegemonic control, which, in turn, suggests gaps and weaknesses in the command and strategies of the colonizer. These gaps, in effect, are the sources of opportunities for resistance on the part of the colonised (Bhabha, 1994). As Prasad and Prasad (2003) observe, the ‘oppositional space’ that arises from this ambivalence, engenders the resistance that Bhabha’s concepts of “mimicry” and “hybridity” ‘seek to adumbrate’ (p. 109). This arguments, suggest that, perhaps, postcolonial perspectives has some potential to explain some of the inherent ambiguities that might arise from the collision of Western and African values and norms at the level of the Firm.

Rather than engendering a sense of resemblance, Bhabha argues that the strategy of creating ‘persons native in blood but English in taste’ (Macaulay 1835, cited in Bhari 2004: 2) or as Fanon (1963) put it ‘Black skin/White mask’, has, instead, lead to the production of mimicry that presents itself more in the form of ‘menace’ than ‘resemblance’. ‘Hybridity’ also describes subversion of the authority of the colonial discourse and the dominant cultural position of the coloniser (Bhari, 2004). In that respect, the inclusion of hitherto excluded subjects into mainstream colonial discourse has caused the deconstruction of the arguments and assumption on which the dominant culture is premised. This concept of ‘hybridity’, Bhari (2004: 2) observes, ‘is a counter-narrative, a critique of the canon and its exclusion of other
narratives'.

Postcolonial theorisations of workplace resistance, therefore, resonate with the stream of management and organisational research that rejects a unitarist view of the contemporary organisation and recognises active worker agency (Prasad & Prasad, 2003). In terms of IR, it shares some common ground with both radical and 'traditional' 'pluralist IR frames of reference' (Fox, 1966).

This study is also based on the assumption of active worker agency and subjectivity that contests managerial hegemony. At the level of organisational analysis in general and, in relation to workplace resistance, however, postcolonial arguments and frameworks could, also, be problematic.

The theory of 'unconscious resistance', for example, is based on some shaky analysis of actors' behaviour. In terms of how it might help facilitate the institutionalisation of alternative values and norms into formal organisational policies and processes, for example, some postcolonial suggestions could also be considered insidious. The theory of 'unconscious resistance' (Prasad and Prasad, 2003; and Nandy, 1983) and concept of 'de-paradoxification' (Styhre, 2002) are especially questionable. Styhre says that postcolonial theorisations, as part of the "post-modern turn" in organization theory and HRM theory' provide 'a more sensitive relationship to the polygonal and polymorphous forms of organizing in contemporary society' (2002: 257). Here, Styhre is also talking about how different values and forms of social organisation could co-exist within contemporary business organisations. Although the aim of his argument has some relevance, his proposition as to how that aim might be achieved is morally questionable and, perhaps, even practically impossible.
The suggestion that the successfully adoption of foreign management theories and practices requires the 'de-paradoxification' and/or elimination of 'ambiguities in the culture of the other' (p. 257), represents a paradox for postcolonial critiques of dominant Western grand narratives. In that respect, the Postcolonial strategy is not very different from neo-liberal suggestions for the eradication of aspects of others' cultures that are not conducive to 'good practice' (see Beugre and Offidile, 2001; and Kiggundu, 1989). The Holistic interpretive critique (e.g. Gregory, 1983) would argue that those ambiguities constitute the essence of the 'other's' social being and are therefore, the basis of socio-cultural variations. 'De-paradoxification' and 'elimination' would, needless to say, involve sanitising the other's values system and in the final analysis, appropriating it in terms that may not necessarily reflect the truth, nor the essence of their existence.

The postcolonial perspective does provide an alternative explanation of workplace resistance and this is not only by way of critiques of predominant neo-liberal perspectives. The notion of 'unconscious resistances' is also an alternative to the Marxist theory of 'class consciousness' as a necessary element of resistance. Haynes and Prakash's (1994: 4) argue, and I think correctly, that whether an action is categorised as resistance or not, should be dependent on its 'material and symbolic context and consequences'. The problem with the theory of 'unconscious resistance', however, is that it does not seem to be based on any empirical evidence of 'unconsciousness' on the part of actors. Rather, it is imputed by academics solely on the basis of their own inability to determine premeditation on the part of workers. Like orthodox Marxist notions of false consciousness, the following comments and
query by Prasad and Prasad (2003: 106) helps to make my point. They argue:

'The dilemmas that the postcolonial theorization of unconscious resistance poses for management researchers (is that) when the categorization of an act of resistance is linked to (or contingent upon) the worker being aware of the oppositional nature of his/her act, an important question that arises is: "How do we as researchers successfully accurately determine whether or not the worker ... was truly aware that his/her action was resistant?"'

To begin with, we could ask them. But must we define actors' action as 'unconsciousness' only because we are unable to determine if they (the actors) are aware of the oppositional nature of that action? Since there is no empirical evidence indicating 'unconsciousness' on the part of actors, I would argue that the issue is more a case of 'ignorance' on the part of researcher rather than the 'unconsciousness' of workers. There is a methodological problem here with implications for the core postcolonial argument regarding the 'appropriation of the other'. It also highlights the problem of what Malpass' (1977) referred to as the researcher's 'ignorance of the mind' of the subject of her/his research. What postcolonial theorists of workplace resistance require, therefore, is a careful re-examination of their approaches to accessing and analysing the voices and actions of the subjects of their research. One solution may be to adopt imaginative qualitative methods of social science enquiry that can enable researchers to access the minds of actors in the employment relationship. That way, their conceptions of what happens and why, could be based on the subjective social meanings (Weber, 1968) that the actors attach
to their perceptions and action.

2. II.3: Conclusion

The preceding discussions indicate that Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives are inadequate as frameworks for explaining and finding solutions to the management problems of SSA. By insisting on defining the problems in terms of 'class conflict' arising from relationships to the means of production, Marxist perspectives are also based on universal and linear concept of the social relations of production. Capitalist development in SSA, however, has not followed the Western pattern. As a result, a linear focus on economic conflicts between capitalists and waged proletariats is hard to apply. African workers are not deprived of alternative means of productions and are, therefore, not totally dependent on paid employment. Since African workers do not fit the profile of true proletarians, their relationship with managers/employers should not be defined in terms of orthodox Marxist notions of 'class conflict'. No doubt, their respective positions as employers and employees may inform their respective views of the employment relationship. Other forms of social stratification and non-materialistic factors, however, also govern that relationship. In this context, relative positions to the means of productions count for very little. What count, are age, and the social status (Weber, 1968) that the wider community assigns to the collective or individual.

For its part, this study has adapted postcolonial theories and concepts to describe some phenomena. Yet, on the fundamental issue that concern the
study (e.g. accessing actors views and the subjective meanings they attach to their actions), postcolonial theories and concepts offer very limited help. The notion of 'unconscious resistance' is problematic because it has no empirical basis. Postcolonial perspectives on how the more compatible elements of the 'informal' system might be institutionalised into formal organisational policies and routines are equally unhelpful. The idea that you need to 'de-paradoxify' others' cultures and eliminate what you consider to be ambiguities is, to quote Cooke, 'particularly pernicious' (2003: 75). It is a strategy that is neither necessary nor useful. The issue, fundamentally, is about who has the right to determine ambiguity and therefore elimination. That in itself, requires accessing the mind of others and the subjective meanings they attach to the 'culture' and values that are considered for institutionalisation or elimination. The problem, in a nutshell, is a methodological one.

The aim of the review of Marxist and postcolonial perspectives is to assess their usefulness, in contrast to C-CMS perspective, as explanations to the management problems of SSA. In that respect, I have concluded that both perspectives have serious limitations. The problems of waged employment in SSA are still, predominantly, about the compatibility of the rational commercial objectives of the capitalist enterprise and the social and moral aspects of the African social system. In order words, it is about the management of diverse and supposedly, incompatible values and interests. As I will try to show in the final part of this chapter, fundamentally, this is what IR pluralism (Fox, 1966) is also about.
2. III: Employment Frames of Reference and the SSA Context

Employment relations 'frames of reference' are important because they ‘determine judgement, which in turn determines subsequent behaviour’ (Fox, 1966: 390). In terms of Industrial relations, therefore, they constitute the ‘main selective influences’ (Newcomb, 1950, in Fox 1966: 390) on managerial attitudes and behaviour regarding policies and their execution, as well as employees' attitudes and behaviour towards those policies and practices. Traditionally, there are two employment relations ‘frames of reference’ regarding organisational reality – Unitarism and Pluralism (Fox, 1966). Although Unitarism appears to have made a grand comeback since the 1980s in the form HRM, the Unitarist theory of the organisation is still widely regarded as an implausible conception of organisational reality (Ackers, 2001; Kamoche, 2000; Provis, 1996; and Coopey & Hartley, 1991). This is even more true of the SSA context, where there are alternative values, norms and forms of social organisation external to the organisation that are more representative of every day reality (see Cooper, 1987, 1983; and Cruise-O’Brien, 1975).

Since the introduction of capitalist modes of production and Western organisational forms, one of the key arguments concerning problems of employment management in SSA has been the ‘undesirable’ influence of African cultures, values and norms on the African's concept of work and her/his attitude towards waged employment (Cooper, 1983, 1987). Despite the apparent cultural heterogeneity within SSA, the literature indicates that the expression of the employment management problem in social terms is not only enduring, but also rather pervasive. Recent literature concerned with
employment in South Africa, for example, highlight similar issues (Horwitz et al, 2002; and Jackson, 2002; Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Mbigi, 1997; Dia, 1996; and Mbigi and Maree, 1995). The call for an ‘African management Renaissance’ (Makgoba, 1999; and Jackson, 2002) is largely a post-apartheid South Africa phenomenon. However, the expression of this phenomenon in terms of ‘Ubuntu’ – ‘humanist’, ‘communal’ ‘stakeholder’ orientation to HRM (Mbigi and Maree, 1995; Mbigi, 1997; & Jackson, 2002) suggests a specific African management philosophy based on some specific ethnic South African cultural values and norms.

Cultural diversity suggests that in other parts of Africa, a managerial renaissance may require a more complex mix of values and norms. For example, in the Sahelian countries, in terms of attitudes and behaviours, individuals are influenced both by traditional ethnic (tribal) cultures, social organisations and institutions, as well as Arabic culture and institutions in the form of Islam and Muslim brotherhoods (O’Brien, 1975). The extent and nature of pre-colonial contacts between Africans and Arab traders in this region have left an indelible and unique cultural mix whereby the dichotomy between traditional African and Arab values and practices is significantly blurred (Trimingham, 1970). Here, rules and codes of conducts that were formulated by Muslim clerics to govern every aspect of life in pre-colonial societies (Davidson, 1967), are still relevant in the formation and maintenance of communal and individual relationships. As a result, despite the length and intensity of the colonial encounter and the ubiquity of current global economic and political systems, the extended family clan and the Islamic brotherhoods
continue to have enduring influences on collective and individual conceptions and actions.

These normative influences and their implications for public administration in Senegal is the subject of Cruise O’Brien’s (1975) *Saints and Politicians: Essays in the organisation of a Senegambian Peasant Society*. The work is a critical analysis of the complex social, political and economic relationship between national politicians, traditional chiefs and the ‘saints’ who preside over Senegal’s major religious brotherhoods. Cruise-O’Brien argues that in most post-colonial states in Africa, the boundaries of the state do not correspond with those of national identity. As a result, in order to comprehend the nature of the influences that shape collective communal values and actions and meanings, several dimensions of society – including the traditional family clan and religious brotherhoods - must be examined (O’Brien, 1975: 153). The nation state, through its institutions and legal frameworks, has a direct policy influence on formal organisational structures and strategies. However, the informal organisations that exist within the formal organisation represent the elaboration of the alternative values and forms of social organisations, which are based on the normative standards of the extended family and religious dimensions of the social system. A too much focus on the informal dimensions, however, risks giving the impression that some aspects of African society have remained untouched by any form of alien influence. Culture alone cannot, as I have indicated earlier, account for the collective conceptions and behaviours in the contemporary context. Economic factors such as labour markets and the social security that is provided by communal relationships and waged employment are also important influences.
The emerging consensus in organisational management research in SSA, however, is that understanding the informal influences and their manifestation in the perceptions and behaviours of African workers, is the key to understanding the issues involved in the employment management in SSA (Dia, 1991 & 1996; Kamoche, 1997 & 2000; Beugre & Offidile, 2002; & Jackson, 1999 & 2002). My argument, then, is that although understanding cultural differences and their implication for differences in conceptions and action is useful, the search for theories that connect cultural values to employment management policies and practices (Cray and Mallory, 1998) in Africa, requires a more fundamental rethink of notions of organisational reality in that context.

The main alternative to the Unitarism is the Pluralist theory of organisational reality. This ‘frame of reference’ is seen as a more plausible conception of organisational reality because it rejects the notion of the organisation as a team with unified interests and objectives (Fox, 1966; Hartley, 1991; and Ackers, 2001). Instead, it emphasises the reality and/or potential for the existence of many and divergent interests, and ‘rival sources of leadership and attachment’ (Fox, 1966: 393; see also, Ackers, 2001: 207-208). However, when the employment relationship is discussed in terms of divergence in, and management of cultures and values as well as interests, traditional formulations of ‘pluralism’ become problematic. The ‘new orientation’ (Provis, 1996), whereby issues in the employment relationship are discussed as much in terms of conflicts of values as interests, suggests, a ‘shift in the problem of order’ (Ackers, 2002: 3) in the employment relationship. This requires, instead, a fundamental rethink of the conceptions of the processes and
structures 'by which differences' in the employment relationship 'are reconciled' (Provis, 1996: 473). In that regard, Ackers (2002) suggests a 'Neo-pluralist' framework (fig 2.4) that will enable organisational analysis to go beyond the workplace to take-in a wider range of stakeholders and tensions over values as well as interests. This framework has a 'stakeholder' perspective in terms of the capital/labour relationship in a business organisation. In terms of range of variables, it represents a critical development in formulations of Industrial relations pluralism of the 1970s. It is therefore not just about issues arising from the differences in the cultural and value orientations of the parties in the employment relationship; it is concerned about the normative sources for those differences.

**Fig. 2.4: Comparison of Pluralism and Neo-pluralism (Source: Ackers, 2002)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1970s Pluralism</th>
<th>Neo-pluralism</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interests</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interests and values</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work place conflict and economic order</td>
<td>Social exclusion and social cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions and collective-bargaining</td>
<td>Moral communities and Social institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The forward march of labour</td>
<td>Civil society and democratic rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The frontier of control</td>
<td>Relationship capitalism and stakeholding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint regulation</td>
<td>Ethical employment regulation</td>
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</table>

The neo-pluralist analysis represents a development in IR theory. In that respect, it is a direct development on Flanders and Fox's (1970) broader and deeper sociological analysis of British pluralist IR as expressed in Donovan's 2 systems analysis (1968). Drawing on Flanders and Fox's *From Donovan to Durkheim*, the neo-pluralist framework connects with, and extents the
Donovan analysis to embrace issues that are central, but not directly about the traditional workplace concerns of the key economic actors. It therefore put Donovan informality into perspective; where it is viewed against the prevailing dominant normative order of centralised, national industry wide collective bargaining. In that respect, what are considered as informal are merely the workplace activities of managers and workplace workers' representatives that are deemed to be usurping the normative order of the formal IR system at the time.

Yet, Blyton and Turnbull (1994) remind us 'it is a maxim of industrial sociology that to understand what goes on inside the workplace it is also necessary to look at what goes on outside it, to consider such factors as the structure of power in society, the nature of communities and the degree of occupational solidarities' (p. 32). Edwards (2004) makes a similar point with reference to Clegg's (1979) classic definition of IR as the "study of the rules governing employment". He argues that this definition 'remains a remarkably robust statement', but only, 'if "rules" are understood to embrace a complex and shifting set of expectations and norms involving the use of power and if influences from outside the employment relationship that shape the rule-making process are taken into account' (Edward, 2004: 266).

In the context of broader debates on social science theory, the neo-pluralist framework also represents an extension of the concept of social "embeddedness" of economic processes into IR theory. In that case, the framework is also sustained by the argument that 'behavior and institutions to be analysed are so constrained by ongoing social relations that to construe
them as independent is a grievous misunderstanding' (Granovetter, 1985: 481-2). This argument accepts the significant influences of 'social network structures' on economic processes (ibid) and the 'social embeddedness of actors in economic context' (Beckert, 2002: 293). Similar arguments are also evident in some of recent IR writings (see the chapters by Nolan and Slater, Brown et al and Rubery and Edwards 2003; see also, Ackers and Wilkinson, 2003). Some of these works, as Ackers (2004) observed in his review of Edwards (2003), argue for alternative sociological explanations for labour market behaviour that challenge free market paradigms and explanations.

In arguing the case for a neo-pluralist approach to IR analysis, Ackers (2002) also noted 'a combination of Dunlop's (1958) American systems theory and the British voluntarist tradition has fostered an approach that abstracts both substantive and procedural workplace “rule-making” from the wider economic and social dynamics of society' (p. 5). The neo-pluralist framework, therefore, acknowledges the social embeddedness of economic processes and behaviour and is consistent with the 'maxim of industrial sociology' that argues for IR analysis to go beyond the workplace and embrace the economics and sociology of wider society (Blyton and Turnbull 1994; Edwards, 2004). In that regard, the neo-pluralist argument is for IR analysis to step away from 'Dunlop's IR subsystem', influenced by Parsonian functionalist sociology. Instead, it argues for an approach that takes 'a functionalist emphasis on institutions' based more on 'Durkheim’s more expansive and flexible sociology of normative regulations' (Ackers, 1992: 6).
In those terms, the neo-pluralist argument also echoes Flanders and Fox's (1970) analysis of Donovan. Like Ackers, Flanders and Fox also invoke Durkheim's notion of anomie – normalessness, to conceptualised IR 'in the general theoretical context of the functions of normative systems and the dynamics of their change' (1970: 246). They argue that 'every system of industrial relations is a normative system regulating employment relations, in short, a system of job regulation' (247). Anomie arises when the 'necessary normative regulation is ... weakened and threatened with collapse, disorder becomes manifest in unpatterned behaviour leading to an undermining of integration and predictability in social action and events'. In Donovan terms, 'disorder emerges as dislocation, disruption and a variety of other symptoms associated with frustrated expectations' (p. 249). The pattern of workplace relationships and interactions that is described in this study does not necessarily fit the descriptions of unpatterned behaviour and unpredictable social actions and events. Yet, they represent the manifestation of the contest between the normative order that is, to a large extent, legitimised and sustained by the 'formal dimensions' of the social system, and normative aspirations of the wider community. They also suggest that in this context, the formal IR system does not suffice as the basis for regulating and explaining workplace relationships and interactions.

They suggest, also, that a framework of analysis that only takes on board the economic and immediate workplace issues of the employment relationship will not suffice as an explanation. Rather, a more viable framework must also embrace the 'informal' social institutions and relations that constraint and legitimise the conceptions and behaviours of the actors in the employment
relationship. The central issues, therefore, are not just the economic and managerial interests and expectations of trade unions and employers' organisations. Here, 'a contract is not sufficient unto itself' for the employment relationship between "mothers' children and brethren", also 'presupposes certain externals, non-economic social norms, values and relationships (Giddens, 1971 cited in Ackers, 2002: 12). When, as in this context, the employment relationships is expressed in terms of the interests as well as the values and social norms of actors, it suggests a shift in 'problem of order' (Ackers 2002) and the emergence of 'new orientations' (Provis, 1996). These require the use of more sociological paradigms as the basis for making sense of the employment relationship.

2. III.1: The New Orientation and IR Pluralism

In its traditional form, IR pluralism is about managing the institutional relationship between the parties in the employment relationship (Provis, 1966, Ackers, 2002). In other words, it is about Unions, employers/managers and the state. The argument for 'organisational culture management' (Tayeb, 1995, 1996; Hofstede, 1994; Schien, 1988), have however, raised issues that challenge the viability of pluralist IR theory for resolving the major issues in the contemporary employment relationship. Recent theoretical developments in pluralist IR (e.g. Ackers, 2002; Provis, 1996) have raised issues and advanced solutions that in many ways are also relevant to the SSA context. As a result, and, also because the IR systems and processes that concern the current study evolved from British IR pluralist theory, the following paragraphs will explore these recent theoretical developments to determine
their viability as alternative explanations to the problems of SSA IR.

The emergence of new forms of workplace relationships has also triggered what is in effect, a definitional debate (Edwards, 2003; Blyton and Turnbull, 1998). Although in some cases the terms ‘Industrial relations’ (IR) and ‘Employment relations’ (ER) are used alternatively (for example Edwards, 2003; and Breadwell, 1996), Blyton and Turnbull (1998) observe: ‘there is nonetheless a tendency for each to place the subject’s focus within somewhat different boundaries’ (p. 7). ‘Using the term “employee relations”’, they say, ‘is a way of circumventing ... prior (mis) conceptions’ of the subject as simply the institutional relationship between workers and employers’ organisations. In that respect, ‘employment relations represents an acknowledgement that “industry” as it has been traditionally defined (that is, good production or manufacturing), is an increasingly less prominent employer of labour’ (1998: 8). Like the distinction between HRM and Personnel Management, the difference between IR and ER, is, therefore, also ‘historically contingent’ (Kaufman, 2003). Despite this terminological nuance and contextual differentiation, the most plausible conception of the employment relationship is still about the management of divergent interests in, and conceptions of the organisation.

‘All told, however, traditional formulations’ of pluralism ‘have tended to emphasize interests and to obscure the difference between pluralism of interests and pluralism of values’ (Provis, 1996: 477). Having said that, some early formulations did in fact, emphasise values and attempted to draw distinctions between interests and values. Flanders (1968), for example,
observed 'industrial conflicts may be rooted in a clash of values as well as conflict of interests' (p. 16). In Beyond Contract, Fox (1974) argued that the 'search for social justice' also requires a considerable degree of 'shift in values, institutions and social philosophy' (p. 359), and in Man Mismanagement (Fox, 1985); he stressed the importance of 'values' to comprehending behaviour in the work place. The performance of the organisation, he said, 'depends in the last resort upon conceptions in the minds of the men and women they recruit for these purposes' (p. 1). Although Fox was writing in terms of employees' 'conceptions of how they ought, or would be best advised in their own interests' (p. 1), very importantly, he also noted that some of these conceptions may be the products of influences and loyalties that are outside the organisation. As a result, he warned that focusing attention 'on the organisation alone, to the exclusion of the wider society in which it is embedded ... is fatal for a full understanding of the issues involved' (p. 4) in the employment relationship. In this regard, he wrote: 'pluralist perspectives on society and the enterprise must be seen not as socially neutral but as having great ideological significance' (Fox, 1985: 25).

Here, Fox is (advertently or inadvertently) signalling the need for 'value pluralist' (Provis, 1996) to look elsewhere outside the organisation for managerial inspiration. It also recalls an earlier argument for 'high trust relationships' based on an appreciation for workers values and interests (Fox, 1974). The issue of trust is a significant point, which the Management of organisational culture paradigm has gives scant attention. If it has, then the idea that it requires the eradication of 'others' values and ways of life, is a very curious, if not ridiculous proposition. Korczynski (2000: 16) has argued that
'agents who act out of social and ethical, as well as economic' considerations and 'who are not narrowly rational and calculative will be more prone to trusting behaviour'. This observation underlines the need for 'culture and value managers' to also understand the social rationale for workers conceptions and actions. The point I wish to make, is that when defined in terms of 'values' instead of just 'interests', pluralism invokes a 'genuine motivational force' (Provis, 1996: 474) that is strong enough to engender moral instead of calculative involvement (Rokeach, 1979; and Fox, 1985). Pluralism so conceptualised, recognises that in addition to common managerial and employees interests, there is also 'plurality of groups whose association arises from a common culture or identity' (Philips, 1993: 151). Collective and social identities are part of the 'new conceptual repertoire' indicating that even in Western societies, 'the problem of order which has been located traditionally by IR in the workplace, has shifted to the relationship between work and society' (Ackers, 2002:3). Although this reorientation of emphasis is noted in the IR literature, its implications for IR theory seem to go amiss. As a result for example, even in the West, there is still paucity of research on the relationship between work and family (Ackers, 2003).

But even in the Western world of work, Provis (1996: 487) notes: 'so far as industrial relations processes are concerned, it is a particular difficulty for value pluralists to say what parties ought to be recognized and encouraged in the process'. I wish to emphasise that wage disputes, work organisation and other issues that are often the subject of collective bargaining remain relevant in the SSA context and unions do exist and articulate these issues. However,
as I have already indicated earlier, formal IR structures and processes, including trade unions and collective bargaining, ‘have lost their potency’. In other words, even before the recent neo-liberal assault, the pluralist pattern has been in severe decline. The tentative breakdown in the ‘normative order’ that began with the acquisition of political independence in the 1960s has become almost total with the ascendance of 1980s neo-liberal patterns of workplace relationship management. In my experience, organisations in SSA do have formal policies and practices in the form of ‘Organisational rules and regulations’. These policies and practices, however, reflect the economic and commercial concerns of management that are based, exclusively on the normative standards and order of the formal dimension of the social system. Yet, some of the more pressing issues in the employment relationship: absenteeism arising from ‘employees’ attendance of funerals’ (Hensen, 2001; Dia, 1991), ‘nepotism’ resulting from concerns for ‘external role set’ (Blunt and Jones, 1992), and the ‘extraorganizational’ activities of managers (Kiggundu, 1989) arising from perceived or real moral obligations to the wider family; are, to say the least, fundamentally social issues sanctioned by the norms of the informal dimensions. The data from this study supports my experience that resolution of these important social issues is largely left to the discretion of individual managers. Ultimately, how they go about discharging that responsibility may very well depend on how much informal, external influence individual workers can bring to bear. Here Unions are not the main representative channels for dealing with some of the more significant issues in the employment relationship.
To fully understand these issues and fashion contextually suitable ways to resolve them requires an analytical framework capable of taking-in the wide-range of stakeholders whose influences impact on workplace relationships and interactions. This would conceive of the employment problem not simply in terms of the internal organisational conflicts of interest between management and workers, but also, in terms of the normative traditional relationship structures and paradigms that shape workers' perception of waged employment and employment relationship. In that regard, both Unitarism and traditional formulations of Pluralism need revisiting. The objective of any revisit must be to assess theoretical developments in terms of their suitability for understanding peculiar characteristics of SSA IR.

2. III. 3: Conclusion

My argument is that both neo-liberal frameworks (e.g. C-CM) and Marxists and Postcolonial perspectives are inadequate because they do not fully capture SSA realities. In that respect, the underlying assumption is that as a result of differences between the SSA and Western contexts, the employment relationship in SSA does not, in all its aspects, conform to Western conceptions. Therefore, understanding the core social issues in SSA IR requires an understanding of that context in terms however it has helped shape actors conceptions of capitalist waged employment in general, and their behaviour in the formal work environment. The following chapter therefore, discusses the implications of the SSA context for management and IR. Because true context needs history, the following discussions will look capitalist production in SSA from a historical perspective.
Chapter Three
Management in SSA: Context and History

Introduction

Cooper's (1987) observation, (cited at the beginning of the thesis), helps to make the point that Africans who work in formal organisations in Africa, bring into the employment relationship conceptions that may be at variance with the 'rational' objectives and processes of the modern business organisation. An appraisal of perspectives on management problems of SSA, must, therefore, also try to establish the extent to predominant perspectives and practices take account of the different but legitimate conceptions of African workers, and the normative values and standards that helped to shape them. The findings of the current study also indicate that the different conceptions of African workers and the 'informal' institutions and values that legitimise them do matter, when it comes to the conduct of the employment relationship. The study also agrees with Cooper that comprehending these conceptions and nature of their origins, and why they matter, require 'looking beyond the workplace to the wider questions about African society and its place in the modern world (1987: 4). In that regard, the study also questions organisational analysis in SSA that excessively privileges the formal organisation, which mirrors the state as a formal Western construct. The importance of history for the contemporary context is that it allows for contrasts and in doing so, our analysis and the perspectives and solutions that emerge, have the benefits of hindsight and previous experience. Accordingly, a
historical perspective is essential for two main reasons. First, it helps to locate
the contemporary conjunction in its historical social context. Secondly, it also
helps to demonstrate the continuities and inconsistencies in patterns of social
organisation and employment that influence contemporary 'rational' forms of
organisational management and the 'irrational' workplace conceptions and
behaviours of 'Mothers' children' and 'Brethren'.

This chapter draws upon African labour history (for example, Brown, 2003;
to define the management problems of SSA (at least the HRM and IR aspects
of it), in their historical and contemporary social context. It also discusses
colonial solutions to the problem. It then focuses on the post-colonial context
in terms of the solutions to the problems. The final part concentrates on
recent neo-liberal perspectives and solutions. 1980s Neo-liberal perspectives
are discussed both in terms the broad academic debate regarding HRM and in
relation to the specific SSA context.

3. I: Problems of Waged Employment: A historical Perspective

Management theories and practices in SSA have been shaped and influenced by
colonial ideology and capitalist modes of production (Kiggundu, 1991; Cooper,
pre-colonial SSA had its own management systems that according to Kiggundu
(1991) were typically small in size and homogenous in terms of membership. It
is necessary, therefore, that when we tell the history of African labour and the
formation and development of an African working class, we make reference to
the nature and character of pre-colonial labour relationships. As Dobbs (1963: 11) points out, 'important elements of each new society, not necessarily the complete embryo of it, are contained within the womb of the old'. In that regard, in making reference to the pre-colonial context, I hope to demonstrate the continuities and inconsistencies that structure workers' conceptions and behaviour in terms of the employment relationship in both colonial and post-colonial contexts.

The nature and character of labour relations in pre-colonial Africa were not as rosy as some idealistic Africanists would want you to believe. To put it bluntly, there was an unpleasant side to it that in the words Balandier (1968: 11) involved 'the gradual accumulation by an aristocracy which originally possessed only the advantage of freedom'. Consequently, this created 'a massive predominance of villagers of slave status, with no access to the means of production and representing a ready source of free labour for the aristocracy (see also, Cohen et al, 1978). Regarding HR/Personnel functions, Akinnussi (1991: 161-2) observed that pre-colonial management systems also 'had their own mode of selecting recruits, inducting them, maintaining discipline and rewarding employees'. However, in certain parts of SSA, these exclusive traditional African management systems had ceased to exist even before the arrival of European colonialism. In most of the Sahel, for example, pre-colonial contacts between indigenous Africans and Arab traders had resulted in a significant Arab influence in the form of Islamic law and Muslim codes of conduct. In terms of labour relations, for example, Adu Boahen (1964) noted that Islamic codes of conduct provided guidelines whereby 'slaves' are able to buy their 'freedom' and thus, having some access to the means of production.
Like pre-Islamic traditional African values and norms, the Islamic influence has endured and is still very relevant. However, the current dominant management theories and practices in SSA evolved from colonial solutions to problems of capitalist production in Africa. Therefore, it is that aspect of Africa’s management heritage that is the main focus here. A historical analysis of the contemporary management problems that is based solely on Africa’s colonial experience could ignore some enduring and relevant pre-colonial values and forms of social interaction that are also central to today’s problems.

The introduction of capitalist modes of production did not mean that pre-colonial patterns had completely disappeared. As most of African labour history (Brown, 2003; Cooper, 2000, 1983, 1987; and Atkins, 1993, 1988), indicate, aspects of the pre-colonial social forms of organisation and relationships have also been influential in shaping both colonial and contemporary African working class cultures and patterns of workplace relationships and interactions. However, there were gradual but irreversible changes in indigenous modes of production since Africa had it first contacts with the outside world (Cooper, 1983; Davidson, 1967). In the Sahel, for example, as early as 1000 AD, the demands of foreign trade (predominantly with Arab North Africa), dictated modifications to domestic modes of production (see Davidson, 1967; and Boahen, 1964). As indicated earlier, the introduction of Islamic codes of practice in this region made it possible, for example, for a ‘slave’ to use the products of her/his labour to buy his/her ‘freedom’ (Boahen, 1964; Abun Nasr, 1965; Klein, 1968; & Quinn, 1972). The colonial period, however, represented the moment, when the continuity from the pre-colonial structures and modes of production and labour relations, was
severely disrupted and there was a sharp change in direction and strategy (Dobb, 1963).

Although subtle, pre-colonial changes to indigenous modes are important. They do not, however, compare with the scale and intensity of the ‘dislocation and decomposition of domestic modes of production, distribution, and exchange that the colonial presence manifests itself (Cohen et al, 1978). Despite the differences in ideology and perceptions of empire, before World War II, all the colonial powers depended on forced labour supplied by traditional rulers for the development, expansion and maintenance of empire (Bourrett, 1963; Kimble, 1965; Cooper, 1983; Akinnusi, 1991; & Kamoche, 2000). As a result, Bourrett (1963) and Kimble (1965) noted that the ‘HR function’ received prominence early in the colonial period. Akinnusi (1991) and Kamoche (2000) attribute the early indigenisation of the ‘HR function’ in Africa to sheer expedience. Traditional rulers were depended upon as suppliers of labour, and subsequently, as ‘pacifiers of the same in the face of vociferous demands and complaints’ (Kamoche, 2000: 40).

Following the First World War, however, the colonial approach to economic production in Africa took a new turn. This was particularly influenced by the realisations, by all the colonial powers, of Africa’s potential as a source for capitalist development. As a result of the change of economic perception and direction, the labour question also assumed a new dimension. By then both Britain and France saw Africa as the source of new economic initiatives for the recovery of their empires from the destruction and indebtedness of war (Cooper, 1990). These new initiatives however, were, as Cooper observed, to
follow the European model whereby the expansion of the imperial economy and the development of colonised peoples are seen as mutually consistent objectives that are better pursued through the employment of private enterprise and initiatives. The fundamental problem for this European-model, however, was the apparent disjunction between industrial conceptions of work and economic reality and the African’s lack of economic urge to work in the manner consistent with the Western industrialist ideal (Cooper, 1987). The colonialists’ view was that ‘to a greater degree, ... the African is independent of paid work for his subsistence, ... and the idea of continuous employment as his main support is entirely strange, and in fact repellent, to his mentality’ (Orde Brown, 1946 quoted in Cooper, 1987: 126).

The idea of continuous employment may not be as repellent to the African as these lines suggest. Orde Brown’s observation, however, reflects the significant issue of the labour problem at the time. On the one hand, it indicates the colonialist entrepreneur’s difficulty in obtaining steady and reliable work from workers who retain their traditional access to land and their connection with the pre-colonial economic system (Cooper, 1983 & 1987). On the other hand, it reflects the African worker’s concerns regarding the implications of colonial industrial work time and space discipline for her/his alternative obligations and relationships, which are the sources of the social bonds that have held his/her society together for centuries. For colonial entrepreneurs, the labour and employment problem in the immediate post war period was to get ‘Africans to produce what colonial states wanted in acceptable quantities in the context of Africa’s own societies and of a colonial state with limited resources’ (Cooper 1981: 1).
The colonial responded by trying to create a separate body of African workers who would 'cease to be African' (Cooper, 1987: 9). This strategy was based on an indictment of the African worker and African society that required the creation of a separated group of African workers, who needed to be protected from the primitive and brute ways of tribal society (Cooper, 1983 & 1987). In East Africa, for example, a Royal Commission set up to study the labour situation following labour unrest in Kenya in the 1930s, suggested the replacement of the:

'Static security' of "African tribal society," that puts all members down to a low common denominator with a more dynamic system of property relations that would allow efficient producers to accumulate land and constitute themselves into a solid, progressive farming class, just as those detached from the soil would be made into a responsible working class' (Cooper, 1987: 129).

The British objective therefore, was to create an African working class that was cut-off from the commitments and social relationships of African society, but unequal with the colonial expatriate worker. The French on their part were concerned with nurturing a class of African 'evolue' who in the grand design of French colonial ideology would represent the empire's African elite that would be the object of 'assimilation'. There was concern, however, that such ambivalent attitudes to African culture could be 'disruptive of those intimate personal bonds, which are the ultimate source of moral restraint and social security and control in traditional African society' (Lord Hailey, 1945: 604 cited in Cooper, 1987). These concerns, along with fears of unpredictable
patterns of industrial conflict in the aftermath of the industrial unrest in East Africa, led to the consideration of alternative forms of social security and social control (Cooper, 1987). The ideas, solutions and practices that are outlined in the preceding paragraphs reflect the main thrust of Western thinking regarding employment management in SSA. As Cooper (1987), observed:

"The quest for a stable, disciplined, properly socialized work force. ... The stress on the role of the state in planning the needs of workers over the course of their life-cycle, the emphasis on managerial control in the workplace, the belief that industrial relations could be rationalized if the proper institutions were created, and the notion that all these dimensions of planning and control could be analyzed in terms of the technical demands of modern production and objectively determined human needs had been part of European and American thinking about industry and the welfare state for much of the twentieth century" (p. 135).

This thinking and the policies and practices that emanate from it are the employment management legacy of colonialism in Africa. In terms of IR, that legacy involved the introduction of European 'pluralist' theories and practices (Cooper, 2000, 1983, 1987; Damachi et al 1979; and Roper, 1958). In their framework of IR systems in SSA, Ukandi Damachi and colleagues argue that 'Industrial relations systems in former colonies were influenced, and continue to reflect those in the metropolitan countries' (p. 1). In their respective accounts on colonial labour in East and West Africa, Cooper's (2000, 1983)
and Roper's (1958) catalogued attempts by colonial officials to introduced metropolitan systems in response to increasing instances of labour unrest in the colonies. The labour problem, however, was part of the broader problem and colonial agenda of acquiring hegemony over the natives and their ways of life (Cooper, 2000, 1983). The introduction of European ‘pluralist’ IR structures and regulations, as I have indicated earlier, were also intended as strategies for ‘social control’. State-organised trade unionism, for example, was considered to be a potentially viable structural replacement to ‘traditional African system of family or tribal mutual aid’ (Luyt, 1949: 36 cited in Cooper, 1987).

For British colonial Africa (including The Gambia), the introductions of British IR patterns began with the adoption of The Colonial Development Act of 1929 (Roper, 1958; HMSO, 1941). That Act legislated for the creation of structures and related legal provisions for labour administration and Industrial relations throughout the colonies. These included the establishment of Labour Departments with Inspectorates responsible for labour administration and the creation and development of imitations of British Industrial relations systems. Further institutional development of pluralist IR structures effectively started after World War II (e.g. Minimum Wage Orders set minimum levels of pay during the War) (Roper, 1958). In the late 1940s, however, Minimum Wage Committees, comprising of all the parties in the employment relationship, were set up to determine minimum levels of pay
and Whitley Councils were established for some public sector services\(^3\) (HMSO, 1949).

Naturally, changes from a customary to a commercialised society necessitated the creation of new forms of economic and social relationships. However, as Roper (1958: 9) observed, the extent to which 'new' modes of economic and social relationship should imitate patterns in Europe is a contested issue. Yet, some of those who advocated Trade unionism in Africa (including Lord Pansfield – Sidney Webb) genuinely believed that Trade unionism can 'guarantee against abuses resulting from undefined authority and subordination' that was characteristic of the employment relationship in colonial Africa (Roper, 1958: 9). In most of colonial Africa, however, the fact that economic change did not keep pace with political developments militated against the effective pursuit of that objective. In The Gambia, for example, despite the introduction of capitalist systems of production and exchange since the mid 15\(^{th}\) century, indigenous political movements that could challenge the colonial status quo did not emerge until after the Second World War. This lack of political development meant that the requisite level of political sophistication required for union organisation and management was lacking. In that respect, Roper (1958), pointed out that though capitalist modes of production and economic activity were introduced to most of West Africa as early middle 17\(^{th}\) century, it was only in the early 1920s that the indigenous peoples started expressing serious forms of political consciousness. Also, in spite the increasing expansion of capitalist modes of

\(^3\) These are imitations of UK Whitley Committees empowered to determine sector minimum wage levels.
production, at the time, most indigenous Africans were still engaged in customary forms of economic activity. On average, less than 10 percent of all the peoples in the four British West African colonies (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia) were in the type of employment (waged employment) that is required to sustain viable trade union organisations (see Roper, 1958).

Despite their relatively low numerical strengths and lack of leadership and managerial capacities, trade unions constituted a significant aspect of colonial social and labour strategy. As a result, colonial governments encouraged Trade unionism through the introduction of supportive legislation and joint negotiating structures and processes of IR. Then, as now, union membership may, therefore, not be a useful indicator of the strength and influence of organised labour. Although colonial governments’ motives were not necessarily altruistic, African workers also used the new institutional forms. Favourable legislation and membership of labour administration structures, gave unions and union leaders political clout and prominent social standing. As a result, trade unions became rallying points for workers on employment related, as well as broader social issues. This ability, to rally indigenous working class, enabled Unions to become the vanguard in the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s and 1960s (see Damachi et al, 1979).

Union activity in British West African colonies dramatically increased in decade before independence to reflect increased political activity resulting from demands for indigenous rule (see fig. 3.1). As the table indicates, during that period Nigeria had three times as many union members as Ghana. Yet, there were twice as many strikes in Ghana as there were in Nigeria. This study
has not uncovered any empirical explanation for the differences in union activity in the two countries during this period. I would hazard a guess and attribute differences to the fact that the demand for political independence had a more aggressive manifestation in Ghana than in Nigeria.

Table 2.1: Union and Strike data on British West African Colonies (1950-1956)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Approx. no of Employed</th>
<th>Paid-up T.U. members</th>
<th>% of Waged labour force</th>
<th>Strikes 1950-56</th>
<th>Total number of workers involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>224,329</td>
<td>46,309</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>112,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>325,834</td>
<td>151,441</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>110,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9,477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from Roper, 1958: 108)

Despite the significant role they played in the anti-colonial struggle, the literature on post-colonial patterns of IR does not ascribe much significance to trade unions. This could be attributed to the fact that most leaders of colonial trade unionism, had, with independence, assumed political authority in their respective countries. Accordingly, the trade unions they headed were also co-opted into post-colonial political parties (Debrah, 2001; Akinnusi, 1991; Abudu, 1986; Cooper, 1983). A more significant explanation, as the findings of this study suggest, is that immediate post-colonial policy environment in most of the newly independent countries was not conducive to the progressive development of Trade Unions. In addition to that, along with the indigenous resumption of ‘formal’ political authority, indigenous forms of social

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4 1956 is seen as the end of the colonial period because Ghana gained independence in 1957.
relationships also re-emerged with greater prominence to challenge impersonal forms of social relationships that could be associated with formal organisations like trade unions. Roper (1958), therefore, questioned the wisdom of 'copying' Western remedies to different social and historical conditions by imposing a concoction of impersonal policies and institutional arrangements on traditional institutions and notions of political authority (p. 9). Although he recognised the need for colonial governments to provide guarantees against potential abuses arising from 'undefined authority and undefined subordination', he queried the adoption of labour relations practices that are solely 'calculated according to personal and social advantage' (p. 9).

In spite of the changes in post-colonial social and political contexts, however, the colonial legacy in terms of the institutional and regulatory frameworks for IR has, albeit with some modifications, survived (Damachi et al 1979). In assessing the evidence of continuity and disruptions to that legacy, the current study takes the form of emerging trend in African labour studies - the so-called 'new labor studies' (Cohen, 1980). In that respect, it approaches the analysis of workplace relationships and interactions in Africa from a point of view that also takes accounts of patterns of social organisation within the wider African community (Brown, 2003; Cooper, 2000, 1987, 1983; Atkins, 1993, 1988). Like most studies within that stream research, the conclusions of the current study also indicate that the answers to some the core problems of contemporary SSA IR, lie elsewhere, in the informal value systems and norms of the wider African community. Yet, predominant forms of organisational analysis in SSA tend to focus on relevant colonial institutions and processes -
that is to say the formal business organisation and the rational institutions and regulations of the nation state (see Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Kamoche, 2000; 1997; and Dia, 1993; 1996).

The consensus that emerged from a BBC African Service debate on the role of Trade unions in Africa (20 November, 2000) support the conclusion of the current study that Trade unions are relatively less relevant in contemporary SSA IR. The views that were highlighted indicated a growing belief among Africans that Unions have, ‘in essence ... lost their potency’ and ‘ceased to be the instrument of economic change that they should be’ (Easmon Jamina; and Ernest Cole, BBC World Service, 20 November, 2000). The predominant view, however, was projected in the argument of a Kenya participant. He argued that ‘the role of trade unions is misplaced. It is largely a vague concept the politicians use to spring to power and co-opt once in power’ (I. M. Kariithi, BBC World Service, 20/11/2000). Another reason for the essential impotency of aspects of the formal IR system has to do with external international factors. Vijay Sekhon’s view, in that regard, also reflected a Marxist perspective on the problem. He attributed the continuing decline in trade unionism in Africa ‘to the selective exploitation of African labour by International Corporations’ (BBC World Service, 20/11/2000).

Sekhon’s comments echo Damachi et al., (1979) and Davies’ (1966) thesis that International Aid also influences patterns of IR in developing countries. That view is consistent with Poople (1993) and Henry’s (1991) views regarding the meditating roles of International institutions and Multinational Corporations in the global convergence of IR patterns. On that point, the empirical findings
of the current study also suggest that Cold war relations between Communist bloc trade unions and some Gambian unions and the multilateral role of the ILO and global union movements, have had some influences on actors perspectives on the IR system. The focus of these collaborations and influences had and continue to been the formal institutions and regulatory processes for IR in developing countries (Panford, 1994; Read and Ericsson, 1986; and Riddell, 1961). Panford’s review of the ILO’s role in labour relations in Ghana, for example, indicate that despite adopting the Convention to protect the rights of indigenous peoples and their traditional ways of doing things (ILO, 1989), the organisation’s efforts are directed at improving the ‘formal’ IR systems of States. Read and Erikson’s Evaluation of ILO/SIDA regional projects for the development of sound IR practices also showed that the focus of these projects was the institutional relationship between the parties in the employment relationship. That relationship is still based on colonial IR patterns. As a result, despite changes in political and social contexts, the net impact of these external influences has been to ensure the continuity in colonial patterns of IR. For that reason, and perhaps, also, as a result of the lack of viable alternative African IR paradigms, IR systems in most of SSA are still, at least in principle, based on British pluralist IR traditions. Accordingly, key actors in the employment relationship still view IR in terms of the parties taking collective stands in the defence of their respective interests (Fox, 1966).

In reality, however, this notion of IR represents an illusion - the ideal pattern that had changed in the 1980s with the emergence of ‘a new pattern of convergence in industrial relations systems’ (Poole, 1993: 105). Poole
described the 'new pattern' as having: 'a significant dependence on markets and free enterprise, coupled with trade unions and the employers relatively free from government intervention, and extensive collective bargaining and tripartite consultations' (p. 105). This description, to some extent, fits in with the neo-liberal management philosophy that came into vogue in the 1980s. In SSA, the new pattern took the form of World Bank and IMF initiated structural adjustment policies. These policies reflected an unusually newfound fate in the market and private enterprise and unitarist IR practices fashioned in HRM strategies and other so-called neo-liberal 'best practices'. The new forms of employment relations that were introduced through these neo-liberal macro-economic agenda and management strategies are the focus of the following section.

3.II: Neo-liberal Perspective: Human Resource Management as IR

Until the mid 1980s, Personnel Management remained the basic administrative title for the management of work related relationships between employees and managers. Industrial relations focused principally on the national institutional relationship between workers and employers' organisations with government providing arbitration and meditative roles. Hendry (1991) has argued that contemporary convergence in patterns of IR is influenced by, among other things, 'underlying economic and technological trends' that are 'mediated also by international institutions' (p. 415). The rhetoric (if not reality) of HRM emerged on the SSA scene as part of the conceptual baggage of the Economic recovery and Structural adjustment programmes (ERP/SAP) that were introduced to deal with the economic crisis
of the early 1980s. In that respect, the World Bank and IMF acted as international agencies that helped to introduce new patterns of IR to the SSA context. These new patterns came to represent significant disruptions to the IR systems that were inherited from the colonial period.

As a construct, distinct from traditional Personnel Management, HRM emerged from the United States in the 1980s (Guest, 1987) as corporate America's reaction to 'the Japanese “Janus” and model of excellence' (Legge, 1995: 79). Coincidentally, it was during this period that SSA was in the throes of a serious economic crisis and in urgent need of foreign capital to avert total economic collapse. Foreign capital however, was available mainly through World Bank and IMF - financial institutions that were largely under American control. Access to capital was therefore contingent on the adoption and implementation of economic reform programmes that were consistent with the neo-liberal economic principles that were in vogue in Washington and London at the time. It is reasonable to assume that when initiatives are intended (as was the case with ER/SAPs) to create a competitive market environment and induce efficiency and economy in management of organisations (Davis, 1991; & Debrah, 2001), practices that are perceived to be antithetical to those objectives must be targeted. Employment practices in SSA have been variously described as sources of corruption (Berg, 1981), paternalistic (Dia, 1993; & Pinto & Morpe, 1994), and supportive of 'external role-sets' rather than the objectives and goals of the organisation (Kiggundu, 1989; & Blunt & Jones, 1992). For these reasons, issues of employment and its management were central to the economic recovery and structural adjustment agendas. In that respect, ERP/SAP focused on workforce restructuring
through redundancies and mass retrenchment, and the liquidation or commercialisation of public sector enterprises. These activities, directly and/or indirectly, also involved issues concerning the management of the employment relationship.

As in most countries where ERP/SAP were introduced, the HRM policies and strategies that were introduced in The Gambia targeted central government and public enterprise workforces. The employment problem was basically about the size of the public sector workforce and whether public resources could continue to sustain the size and rate of employment. The workforce of Public sector enterprises (Parastatals), were particularly deemed to be economically large and characterised by inappropriate skill mixes and staffing ratios (GG, 1985; and McPherson and Radelet, 1995). As a result, they were considered to be significant contributors to poor performance. HRM policy and strategy under ERP/SAP, therefore, included the retrenchment of about a third of the public sector workforce (Nti, 1989; and McPherson and Radelet, 1995), and the introduction of lucrative incentive packages for managers of public enterprises and senior government officials. The latter was deemed to be a necessary incentive for attracting and retaining qualified and competent persons to the public sector. As for the future management of labour, there were obvious indications that HRM was the approach of choice. As in the West (Boxall and Purcell, 2003; and Guest, 1987), Personnel departments in both private and public sector organisations were renamed as Human Resource (HR) departments headed by HR directors and the new language of HRM was evident.
ERP/SAPs introduced new and unfamiliar challenges that brought into sharper focus, and in a different political context, the sociological nature of the employment management problems of SSA. My position is that in its various ‘explicative forms’ (Keenoy, 1999), HRM is based on an employment ‘frame of reference’ that does not reflect SSA realities. Although in some forms HRM espouses a ‘stakeholder’ perspective (Beer et al, 1985; Kamoche, 2000), I would argue that on the whole, ‘applied’ HRM is firmly anchored in the unitarist perspective of organisational reality (see Terry, 2003; Ackers, 2001; Ackers and Payne, 1998; Legge, 1995; Marchington et al 1992; Guest, 1989). It has the ultimate aim to inspire employees ‘to go beyond contract’ (Storey, 1989) and identify with the ‘more or less homogenous value system’ of the organisation (Tayeb, 1996: 189).

In the context of the role of multi-lateral development and financial agencies in the evolution of economic development and organisational management ideology and practices in SSA, the agenda has now shifted from ERP/SAP to Long-term development strategy directed at poverty reduction (IMF, 1999 World bank, 2000). The contemporary intervention agenda is, arguably, distinct from ERP/SAP by its advocacy of soft-HRM processes aimed at engendering ‘ownership’ of identified problems and solutions. In terms of their fundamental aims and conceptions of participation/consultation, however, contemporary interventions represent reworked versions of SAP/ERP. Almost without exception, Poverty Reduction Strategy programmes suggest, as ‘building blocks ... policy reforms aimed at market efficiency’, state minimalism and a leading role for the private sector (WB, 2000: 3). Regarding its participatory strategies aimed at engendering
'ownership', current interventions derived from earlier attempts to legitimise much criticised SAP/ERP policies of the 1980s. Then, as now, both the Bank and IMF place a great deal of emphasis on 'environmental assessment exercises' (Dia, 1996) that are directed, more, at government agencies and officials, than the intended direct beneficiaries of so-called poverty alleviation policies – the poor. Consequently, they do not take on board, in a genuine manner, the alternative normative paradigms and forms of social relationship of the wider African community. For whilst ownership remains a laudable proposition, it would be extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to achieve the level of commitment that it requires, in a context where individual and collective alternative commitments and forms of social organisation are not mere hangovers from the past. Rather, they are, as Cooper (1983) pointed out, 'concrete realities, strongly rooted in ... urban neighborhoods and rural villages' (p. 10).

3. III: Conclusion

The story of 'workforce restructuring in the GPA' (see chapter one) illustrates the extent to which the alternative values and norms of African society are still able to undermine purely economic solutions to the management problems of SSA. Despite mass retrenchments and related policies aimed at curtailing demand, the World Bank admitted a number of retrenched workers were finding their way back into public sector employment and, as a result, the cost of public sector employment in most SSA countries had increased since the mid 1980s (World Bank, 1991). These observation suggest that just as was the case in the colonial period, purely economic and rationally determined
solutions will face challenges from an ‘African social-system’ that also supports alternative relationship structures and forms of social organisations.

The belief that Western HRM is suitable for SSA is based on the analyses of the employment management problem in largely rational economic terms. In that respect, the employment problem is seen simply as an economic problem requiring economic solutions. Workforces needed to be reduced and the demand for formal sector employment needed to be suppressed and those who remain must be motivated to commit to the narrow commercial objectives of the organisation. According to Storey (1989) most formulations show HRM as having ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ versions. In the context of ERP/SAP then, mass redundancies and retrenchments are consistent with ‘the quantitative, calculative and business-strategic aspects of managing the head count resource’ like any other economic factor – ‘hard version’ HRM (Storey, p. 8). On the other hand, the ‘utilitarian instrumentalist’ orientation and ‘developmental humanism’ disposition, as Legge (1995) noted, suggests two different but ‘not necessarily incompatible emphases’ (p. 66). Ultimately, the goal of ‘soft’ HRM is to motivate employees to commit to the cause of the organisation over and beyond all other causes. The objective of HRM strategies and practices is to inspire employees ‘to go beyond mere compliance to management by internalising the goals of the organisation and behaving accordingly’ (Redman and Wilkinson, 2001: 8). Management, for its part, is required to create strong organisational cultures with and clear goals and objectives and compel all employees to identify with those cultures, objectives and goals (Hofstede, 1980; Schein, 1992; Storey, 1995; and Tayeb, 1996).
That organisational analysis in SSA continues to advocate such solutions suggest that analysts have either not learned anything from African labour history, or are merely ignoring its most important lessons. The important lesson from African labour history (e.g. Brown, 2003; Atkins, 1993; and Cooper, 1983, 1987) and also, from some pluralist IR literature (Ackers, 2002; Provis, 1996; and Fox, 1985, 1974), is that in the analysis of the employment relationship, we should also look at social dimensions. Unfortunately, anyone who is remotely familiar with colonial solutions to the problems of waged employment in Africa, cannot fail to see the similarity they have with some recent propositions (e.g. Kiggundu, 1989; Blunt and Jones, 1992). In their 'models of organisational culture', Blunt and Jones (1992), for example, categorised organisational cultures in SSA as 'Fragmented (Negative) Cultures' that are characterised by 'isolated pockets of positive values and belief that do not constitute part of any rational organisational value system (p. 196). These, in turn, are attributed to the 'existence of social systems' that 'constitutes a fertile wider social environment for the emergence of fragmented cultures of this type' (P. 196). And, because individual Africans simply view work as 'an instrumental activity; that is tolerated in order to obtain money', their involvement in the organisation is 'calculative'. 'Work', they argued, 'neither constitutes a central life interest nor a source of psychologically significant experiences in terms of self-actualisation' (Blunt & Jones, 1992: 205). This characterisation is remarkably similar to Orde Brown's view that 'continuous employment is ... repellent' to the African mentality (1946 cited in Cooper, 1987: 126). Characteristically, their solution to this problem is to be found in the potential of Multinational Corporations to introduce more 'progressive organisational cultures'. Alternately, African
organisations could benefit from the transformational leaderships qualities that 'enlightened African managers' will bring back from Western Business and Management Schools.

Similarly, one could easily mistaken Kiggundu's (1989) analysis of the problem for the conclusions of colonial Royal Commission on native labour management. Referring to Leonard's (1986) suggestion that, in terms of strategic management, 'the largest part of a leader's efforts are probably directed at factors external to his or her organization...' (p. 58), Kiggundu warned that: 'A distinction must be made between organization-environment and extraorganizational tasks. The former' he noted 'are strategic management tasks designed to benefit the organisation as a whole, while the latter seek to satisfy individual or collective interests outside the organization' (Kiggundu, 1989: 57). For him, SSA's management problems are the result the social environment that gives 'preference' to '... cultural and religious values and practices that emphasize the influence of the past on the present rather than the independent planning of the future' (Kiggundu, 1989: 63). Again African labour historian will recall the proposition of a colonial labour official for the creation of African workforces, in Africa, that are completely detached from African society (see Cooper, 1983, 1987).

The increase in the literature on organisational analysis in SSA reflects the growing interest in her management problems in the aftermath of the economic crisis in the 1980s. Conclusions such as those of Blunt and Jones and Kiggundu, however, also reflect the determination to justify the neo-
liberal interventions that were introduced to remedy the problems, despite the dismal failures of those interventions. As McCourt (2001: 57) observed, 'a review of the literature on employment reform in developing countries is largely a review of what World Bank and IMF staff have to say about the subject'. One evident of the current dominance of the neo-liberal perspective on organisational analysis and management in SSA, is the increasing dependence on "management" language and practices' in 'Development Administration and Management' (DAM) (Cooke, forthcoming: 6). Despite distinct differences in focus, Cooke argue DAM, 'and through it management, are complicit in neoliberal World Bank interventions in the Third World' (p. 2).

The problem with recent neo-liberal interventions, however, is that they tend to be based on 'acontextual' social analyses of SSA management problems. Accordingly, for example, the World Bank has a universal 'reform tool kit' for all sorts of reforms – including Port reform (WB, 2001). The notion of a 'universal' tool kit for port reforms is particularly significance for the current study on two counts. First, the empirical aspect of the study involved the investigation of dock employment relations. Secondly, the study is also concerned as to whether there is empirical evidence to support the view of a 'universal dock subculture that fits in with the African dock employment. If empirical data supports the argument that Dockers everywhere share a common profile, then, perhaps a universal 'tool kit for port reforms', may not, after all be a bad idea. The following chapter will review the literature on docks and African Dockers as a working class category. The aim, however, is not only to assess the extent to which African Dockers conform to the
universal stereotype of dock subcultures. It is also because I have had the experience of working at a port. On the basis of that experience, I believe that the cosmopolitan nature of the modern African dock (Turnbull, 2000), with its diverse labour force, makes it an ideal 'test bed' for the collision between Western and 'native' norms and values.
Chapter Four

Social Processes and 'interindustry variables': the making of African Dockers and Dock subculture

Introduction

Waterside settlements in Africa had been attractions to foreigners even before colonialism and formal partition. Pre-capitalist economies, however, did not necessitate the type of expansion that occurred on the African waterfront following the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century. Prior to European arrival on the continent, however, most of the waterfront commerce had taken place in East Africa between Arabs and traders of the Swahili speaking coastal states along the coastline of the Indian Ocean (Giblin, 1999). A similar commercially oriented cultural encounter had developed in West Africa between Arab North African and African traders between the 1st and 16th century AD (Boahen, 1964; Davidson, 1967; Giblin, 1999). In the latter case, however, the commercial centres were not on waterfronts. Rather, they were dotted along the southern fringes of the Sahara. And instead of ships and seafarers, these 'ports' received camel caravans and turban wearing Arabs and Barbers. This pattern of culture encounter and mode of commercial activity started to change with the arrival of Europeans on African coasts in the early 15th century.

By the time the scramble for and partition of Africa took place in the late 19th century, seaports had already been established as centres of culture contact.
between Europeans and Africans (Coupland, 1967; and Davidson, 1967; Pakenham, 1992; and Giblin, 1999). At the height of the Slave trade in the 17th century, seaport settlements along the Atlantic coastline of West Africa had developed in response to increasing volumes of trade (mainly involving slaves) between Africa and the Americas (see Davidson, 1967; and Coupland, 1992). Similar developments took place along the East African coastline (Cooper, 2000; Kiajage, 2000). However, in tandem with the sudden realisation of Africa’s potential as a source for the economic development of the West, it was only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that most of Africa’s waterfront settlements evolved into full-blown ports. One implication of this development was the emergence of a specific category of African workers, who earned a living as waged workers on the docks. Like docks everywhere, with time, African ports assumed cosmopolitan characteristics (Turnbull, 2000) and became centres for the exchange of idea as well as goods (Cooper, 2000). In addition to the compulsion to operate under certain alien institutional and regulatory frameworks, as a working class category, African Dockers were also influenced by constant contacts with external influences. As a result, Dockers were at the leading edge of modernity in Africa.

Perhaps, because of the cosmopolitan character of the workplace and constant contact with foreigners and foreign ideas, one may be tempted to describe African dockworkers as belonging to a ‘universal dock subculture’ (Miller, 1969). In that respect, they might also be described as having a high propensity for industrial militancy (Kerr and Siegel, 1954), a ‘casual frame of mind’ (Miller, 1969), and a predisposition for violence and ‘irresponsibility’ (ILO, 1956). The current study, however, supports the view that while some African Dockers may
have attributes that fit the ‘universal’ stereotypes, the African social context did not entirely support the development of these ‘universal’ stereotypes (Cooper, 2000, 1987; Kajage, 2000; Said, 1998). I would argue that the evolution of a dock subculture that fits the ‘universal’ model would require a more extreme collision between capitalist norms and traditional African society.

Despite differences in social and historical contexts, the ‘universal’ models of dock subculture characterise Dockers, everywhere, as industrial militants with a very high propensity to take strike action (Kerr and Siegel, 1954; Miller, 1969). In their influential work on the interindustry propensity to strike, Kerr and Siegel ranked dockworkers with longshoremen and miners as being more combative, vigorous and strike prone. Their work has inspired comprehensive studies of dock labour and dock IR, including Raymond Miller’s (1969) _Problems in Cross-Cultural and Cross-Time Generalizations_. Miller noted that ‘the further local conditions diverge from the patterns’ identified by Kerr and Siegel, ‘the less likely is the existence of a subculture which approximates the universal type’ (p. 304). Yet, his central proposition was that ‘certain widely prevalent conditions of dock work produce a universal dockworker subculture’ (p. 304). These include: the casual nature of dock employment; the exceptionally dangerous and variable nature of work; ‘the absence of an occupationally stratified hierarchy and mobility outlets; the lack of regular association with one employer; continuous contact with foreign goods, seamen, and ideas; the necessity of living near the docks; and the belief shared by Dockers that others in society consider them a low-status’ (p. 305). Citing Adams (1963), Miller said these conditions engender a ‘casual frame of mind’, which generates a sense of opportunism (Crichton, 1963) and irresponsibility.
As a result, Dockers 'do not aim to be more considerate of the general community than they think the general community is of them' (ILO, 1956: 193). Couper (1986: 51) refers to Dockers' 'industrial character' as being shaped by a 'distinctive work environment'. More recent comparative studies suggest that there are more similarities than differences in the workings of local dock subcultures (Andersen, 1992). They also suggest the existence of a universal sense of 'shared notion of entitlement' among dockworkers (Davis, 2000:543) and argued that the 'propensity to strike were rooted squarely in' their 'working and living conditions' (Broeze, 1991: 194).

Dockers have also been portrayed, without any reservation, as: 'uneducated, unskilled and dependent on muscle instead of brains' and as being individuals who 'habituate bars and live in crowded tenements in crime-ridden neighbourhoods ... where gambling and prostitution proliferate' and there is greater propensity for 'violence, brutality, drunkenness ... and other forms of criminal activity' (see Cooke Johnson, 2000: 721). Other than the fact that these generalisations tend to suggest a uniform framework in terms of the evolution of dock work and its related social implications for port communities and workers, they also project a universal profile of dockworkers frozen in historical context. It begs the question as to whether this generalised model works for the Western dock sub-culture – let alone African. These stereotypes are not only 'based on some truth and a good deal of imagination' (Pajwani 2000), but also on conception of the dock subculture defined by Western social contexts and the 'mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century folklore' (Turnbull, 2001). This was the time, when the ports of Europe and America depended on “poverty-stricken workers”, often derided as “the scum of the earth”, the flotsam and
jetsam of industry' and 'the lazarus of the working classes' (Beveridge, 1909 and Sexton, 1936: 32 cited in Turnbull, 2001: 4).

This review is not necessarily a critique of Kerr and Siegel. Turnbull and Sapsford (2001) have noted that Kerr and Siegel two hypotheses for explaining the interindustry propensity to strike – namely: location of worker in society and character of the work and worker – have been subjected to extensive empirical testing and criticism (see for example, Edwards, 1975; Church et al, 1991; and Turnbull et al, 1996). In particular, Edwards (1975) seriously questioned the validity of Kerr and Siegel data. He argued, for example, that days lost in relation to industry employment, represent a measure of strike impact rather than the propensity to strike (p. 553). Among other things, Dock strikes could be especially effective because of the perishable nature of goods. For his part, Cooper (2000: 523) is concerned that 'generalisations about Dockers' as being 'insular, strike-prone, volatile' are made 'without clear empirical basis since no systematic comparison of dock work across time and place has been attempted before' (see also, Turnbull, 2000, for more criticism of Kerr and Siegel's thesis).

Between them, the thirty-nine African countries that have coastlines have about ninety-five Ports that handle international cargo (Ports & Ships, 2004; see also www.export911.com). These ports are divided into three sub-regional Port Management Associations (PMA) - The PMAs of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA), North Africa (PMANA), and West and Central Africa (PMAWCA). The United Nations Economic Commission helped to establish these Associations for Africa (UNECA) in the early 1970s as a way of coordinating
regional co-operation in Sea transportation and commerce (ECA, 1972). Despite the very high increase in the number of Ports and cargo-handling facilities however, African ports handle a very small percentage of the world’s seaborne trade. A report by the Southern African base Shipping Consultants – Drewry, for example, noted that in 2002 African ports handled only about 6 percent of global cargo and that the 8.2 million twenty foot Equivalent Units (TEU) of containers handled by African ports represented a mere 3 percent of the global container throughput (Cited in Port & Ship, February, 2004). Neo-liberal assessments attribute this poor performance to the lack of private sector involvement in the industry.

In that regard, despite efforts to encourage increased private sector participation (see WB, 2001, Sommer, 1999), recent evidence indicate that attempts to involve the private sector in the management of Africa’s ports have not been successful. Overwhelmingly, Africa’s ports are ‘Services ports’ (i.e. publicly owned and operated) (Turnbull, 1999). A World Bank study of recent trends in private sector participation in developing country ports (Sommer, 1999), for example, indicate that of 112 ports projects with private sector participation in developing countries between 1990 and 1998, only 4 involved ports in SSA. The study further indicate that out of the 39 African countries with ports, only Kenya and Mozambique have awarded private contracts for port operations (p. 7). In a paper at the 2nd Intermodal African Conference in Cape Town in February 2004, the head of the Dutch Maritime consultancy group, Maritime Transport Business Solutions, underlined the lack of private sector participation in the operations of African ports (Port and Shipping, February, 2004). He pointed out that in comparison to the global average of 75
percent, private operators account for less than 10 percent of container handling capacity in African ports (p. 3). Despite poor performance and continuing pressure from neo-liberal international financial agencies for greater private sector involvement, it appears that African governments are still reluctant to part with their ports. This, perhaps, points to the strategic business role of docks in the economies of developing countries.

This thesis is about the Africans who work in these Western business organisational forms, their conceptions of their workplace and the formal policies and practices that govern their formal workplace relationships and interactions. It is about a particular category of those workers, Dockers, their own conceptions of their work and themselves, and how others perceive them as an African working class category. This centres on the argument that the specific social and historical contexts are relevant to both the subculture bearers and others' images and perceptions. In that respect, this chapter focuses on the creation and evolution of African dock subculture and, given the peculiar social context and historical experience of African Dockers as a working class, how that subculture compares/contrasts with 'universal' stereotypes. My argument is that while there may be elements of the African dock subculture that supports universal hypotheses and stereotypes, the social and historical contexts of SSA also allows for significant contrasts. And these differences are more important than similarities.

Ports have a 'cosmopolitan' character (Turnbull, 2000) because, as Cooper observed: 'whatever the spatial fixity of a port, the reason for its existence was its links to other equally specific locations. The commodities that travelled
between places constitute the material basis of Dockers’ work, but ideas and social relations travelled along with physical commodities’ (2000: 524). The international character of the dock community has some implications for the development of similar forms of work organisation and methods of workers’ ‘resistance’. The impact of global ideas on local work subcultures, however, is also mediated by the nature and character of specific local forms of social organisation and relationships, as well as the political and historical contexts in which the encounter takes place (Frader & Rose, 1996). The impact of ‘global ideas’ regarding production and related forms of social organisation in the SSA context began, in earnest, with the introduction of capitalism in Africa. As a result, in order to discern the similarities and variability between African working class categories and the ‘universal’ hypotheses, it would be logical to begin with the colonial context. This requires a review of colonial labour policies and strategies in terms of how they have contributed to how Dockers perceive of themselves and their work, and also, how others perceive of Dockers and dock work. It also requires an assessment to determine if, and how those policies and strategies continue to influence the contemporary issues that are taken into account when determining ‘local’ dock subcultures.

4. I: African Dock subculture and the Colonial context

This review concerns the creation and development of an African dock subculture in the context of colonialists efforts to create African working classes. It is not, as one may suspect, intended to represent yet another moral indictment of colonial labour policies in SSA (Cohen et al 1978). Rather, the intention is to use colonialism as the relevant historical starting point and
political context, for an analysis of the creation and development of a particular African working class subculture. As indicated earlier, pre-colonial Africa had its own aristocratic and working classes in the form of ruling clans and communities of 'slave' status. However, the creation of 'African working classes', in the context that the phrase is use here, is consistent with the Marxist argument that: 'the worker becomes a meaningful social category only when labour power becomes a commodity' (Cooper, 2000: 525). In those terms, the African working class is a colonial creation. The introduction and institutionalisation of capitalist modes of production through colonialism, made it possible to classify an entire group of people by virtue of the fact that they sell labour. However, as I have tried to argue in the preceding chapter, the manner of the creation of working classes in Africa has not necessarily followed the universal Marxist model of 'proletarianisation' (see also, (Cooper, 2000, 1987, 1983).

Unfortunately, there still remains a predominant global view of capitalist development based on so-call Modernisation theory (Rostow, 1990). The idea, fundamentally, is that developing countries societies should adopt the characteristics of modern societies (i.e. Western societies) in order to modernise their social, political and economic institutions. The basic problem of this theory is that it obscures the relevance of the specific social and political contexts that shape the reactions of African societies to capitalist industry. The idea that developing countries need to take a linear approach to development that imitates the West, has also contributed to the notion of a 'universal' working class subculture and stereotypes. But even in the context of Western societies, Turnbull and Sapsford (2001) have noted that industrial militancy
and other attributes of the 'universal' dock subculture 'vary quite considerably over both time and place'. As a result, they suggested that conceptualising the dock subculture 'requires a combination of historical (dischronic) and sociological (synchronic) analysis' (p. 233).

The argument that Dockers, everywhere are the same simply because their work is 'dirty', dangerous and casual in nature, is, therefore, difficult to sustain. Dock work may be 'dirty' in contrast to factory work in the West. That does not, however, mean that it is 'dirty' in contrast to work most African workers do. On the argument of categorisation based on the casual nature of their work, the findings of the current study support Cooper's (1983, 1987) assertion that casualism does not carry the same meaning in African as it does in the West. Similarly, as in most African dock labour history (Cooper, 1987, 2000; Kaijage, 2000; and Said, 1998), the conclusions of this study challenge the notion, (at least by association), that African Dockers are also 'isolated masses', who view themselves, as are viewed by others, as an inferior working class category.

When African labour history is focused on the analysis and critique of colonial labour policies and practices, it tends to take a Marxist view that privileges the African working class in the making of history (Scott, 1988). Yet, it seems to me, that when one attempts to conceptualise an African working class subcategory (the African Dock subculture), what is required is to take a broader view of the implications of the introduction of capitalism into African society as whole. That way, conceptions of African working classes would take account of the peculiar African social contexts that have also helped to shape these categories of Africans. In that case, some knowledge of pre-colonial social relationship
patterns and structures is necessary for understanding how African workers resisted and adapted to the new political and economic dispensation. The 'African working classes' are largely a colonial conception, notwithstanding the differences in social contexts. Perhaps, as a result, certain categories of African working classes (e.g. Dockers), are conceptualised in terms of how they resemble their Western counterparts. This, in many respects, is the basis for postcolonial critiques of dominant Western epistemologies and grand narratives concerning the 'Third' World (see Prasad and Prasad, 2003; Young, 2003; Guha, 1997; and Said, 1994).

It may be, as Cooper (1983) suggested, that the process of creating the African working class is not very dissimilar from the *Making of the English working class* (Thompson, 1980). What little difference there is, however, more significant than any similarities. For similarities do not necessarily suggest that industrial militancy and radicalism among African working classes during the period, was solely to fight against becoming a working class. It is very possible that the militancy and radicalism were simply reflections of the patterns of politics at the time, rather than 'the assumption that people with certain relations to the means of production' behaved and 'acted as a collectivity' (Cooper, 2000: 526; see also, Roper, 1958). In that respect, it is reasonable to assume that industrial militancy among African Dockers, at the time, might not, as Kerr and Siegel (1954: 193) suggested, be merely analogous to a 'colonial revolt'. I would argue, that the militancy that African Dockers manifested during that time; was in fact an aspect of the broad strategy of the struggle against colonialism. Similarities that support the notion of a 'universal' subculture do exist between categories of working classes that transcend
national borders and reflect colonial heritages. But, as the findings of the current indicate, there are also significant differences between the African Dockers and Western stereotypes of the dockworker.

These differences question the idea of a ‘universal’ subculture based exclusively on analysis of interindustry variables (Keer and Siegel, 1954; Miller, 1969). Fredrick Cooper has warned that labour history should: ‘not assume the universal working class’. Instead, it should, he argued, ‘look at work and working classes in a dynamic fashion, constrained by the power of capital but seizing possibilities as they arose within and against that system, constrained by their own histories... yet building on a variety of solidarities to adapt to or challenge capital’ (p. 526). The ‘universal’ theory is also problematic because it is based on data that is suspect. Ports and dock subculture that tend to be covered in such studies are not representative because they are predominantly Western or ports of advanced industrialised economies (Weinhauer, 1997; De Vries, 2000). The current study is a single-case study. As a result, its findings and conclusions do not claim to be representative of all Africa’s docks and dockworkers. What it claims, however, is that its conclusions in relation to the profile of Gambian Dockers, suggest that dockworkers are not a homogenous category. And, their differences are also determined by the social context for their creation and development, and their shared local historical experiences as a dockworkers.

Issues that concerned African workers most, during the colonial period, were the space and time discipline required by the capitalist industry. The main trust of colonial labour policy and strategies was to create an African working class.
They required the dislocation of a category of Africans from their communal roots and traditional forms of economic activity, and making them entirely dependent on waged employment. Not only was casual employment deemed undesirable, permanent employment became a precondition for the African to dwell in the city (Cooper, 1983, 1987, 2000). Colonial employment policies were not merely intended to meet the labour demands of capitalist enterprise in Africa. They were also, strategies for the mechanical control of people in their own cultural and social contexts and not withstanding their peculiar forms of social organisation and relationships. On reflection, the strategies are consistent with Bureaucratic Taylorist approach to labour control of the early 20th century. The point to note is that these strategies provided the policy context that shaped the employment relationship in colonial Africa and helped to shape workers' subcultures. So far from being casual workers that could not be subjected to the discipline of factory work (as in the West), African Dockers were at the leading edge of new Western forms of work discipline in Africa.

Like everywhere else, the docks in SSA constitute a very important nodal point in the economic system, especially during the colonial period. As a result of the strategic nature of their industry, dockworkers were the vanguards in the ensuing struggle between labour, capital and the state for ‘urban space, industrial time and waged labour labor in Africa’ (Cooper, 1983: 1; see also, Cooper, 2000; Kaijage, 2000; Shivji, 1986). Because this struggle, at times required techniques of resistance and adaptation that mimicked the militancy of their Western counterparts, dockworkers in SSA are also tagged as the ‘most

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8 Note: The colonial economy was dominated by primary production (not manufacturing) and it's the international trade in primary products that made ports a very critical element in that economy.
militant and most influential group of workers' (Kaijage, 2000: 290). Despite the common trait of industrial militancy, however, the development of dock subcultures in SSA did not exactly follow Western patterns (Sandbrook and Cohen, 1975; Cohen et al 1978; Cooper, 1987, 2000; De Vries, 2000 & Turnbull and Sapsford, 2001). Although some of the issues that shape the subculture (casualism, dirty and dangerous work, rates of pay etc) were similar, their impact on Dockers’ attitudes and behaviour is always mediated by specific political and social contexts. This, inevitably, makes for the development of local subcultures and profile that challenge the ‘universal’ stereotype.

Although docks were arguably the most strategic industry in the colonial economic system, there was no coherent approach to the organisation of dock labour prior to WW II. Even after the War, dock labour reforms were part of the broader post war colonial labour reform agenda. Because a ain objective of that agenda was to create an African working class, it focused on the working life and class structure of the African worker. In that respect, it was a three dimensional strategy involving ‘imparting fear of the sack, socializing a body of workers into its collective place in the labour process, and creating institutions to regulate conflict’ (Cooper, 1987: 124). The creation of ‘institutions to regulate conflict’ constituted the main trust of colonial IR strategy. Colonial labour policies therefore, were, fundamentally, a collection of Western ideas and practices that together, were intended to form somewhat consistent, perspective of the mechanisms supporting and restricting social behaviour. Colonial IR systems were basically consistent with Scott’s (2001) Institutional theory. Accordingly, they consisted of ‘social structures ... composed of cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that, together with associated
activities and resources’ were intended to ‘provide stability and meaning to social life’ (p. 48). The social life that it was intended to stabilise, and give meaning to, however, was the one conceived of by the colonial state. But that form of social life had very little meaning for the African whose ‘industrial life’ it was suppose to regulate. IR systems were transmitted to the SSA context by being embedded in, what Scott called ‘Rational systems’ (pp. 77-83) of colonial governance and authority systems enshrined in the all embracing colonial development Act (1929).

Because of the importance of docks within the colonial economy, dock labour became the focal point of the post war labour reform agenda and the resistance to that agenda. Again, as in the West, the ‘casual’ nature of dock labour was deemed to be most inimical to the time and space discipline that is so central to capitalist industry. The problem with this thinking, however, was that it failed to recognise, as Cooper (1987) pointed out, that ‘casual employment’ does not carry the same meaning in SSA as it does in the West. Because African Dockers maintained their commitment to traditional lands and forms of production, the casual nature of dock labour was ideal for their patterns of production and social organisation (Cooper, 1987, 1983). For this reason, Cooper noted that perhaps, the biggest challenge to colonial labour policy in East Africa was the attempt to decasualise dock labour at the port of Mombassa (2000, 1987).

Some fundamental characteristics of dock employment, including its casual nature, the distinct cosmopolitan character of the workplace and its surrounding community, constitute the basis for the ‘universal’ hypothesis regarding dock subcultures. Industry level variables are, however, not sufficient
explanation for developments in patterns of dock subculture (Weinhauer, 1997). Despite the prevalence of studies that suggest links between casualism and industrial militancy (e.g., Kerr and Siegel, 1954; ILO, 1956; Crichton, 1963; Miller, 1969; & Philips and Whiteside, 1985), casualism, according to Turnbull and Sapsford (2001: 234), 'did not cause conflict; casualism simply created a context in which strike action was more likely'. Data from the current study also suggest that Turnbull and Sapsford's alternative framework of 'institutional arrangements ... employer policy and trade union organisation' (2001:234), though useful, is not a sufficient explanation for the attributes and behaviour of the African docker. This is for two reasons. Firstly, as I have argued throughout this chapter, casualism still does not carry the same importance in SSA as it does in the West. Therefore, the extent to which it creates the context for conflict is debatable. Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that insofar ordinary Dockers are concerned, formal institutional and regulatory arrangements remained marginal to the actual employment relationship processes.

On the whole, casual employment was, and is still a very convenient arrangement for the African dockworker (Cooper, 1987, 2000; Kaijage, 2000; and Said, 1998). The findings of the current study also support Cooper's observation that Port employers were satisfied with the casual nature of dock employment. For them, casual employment was good because it delivers the goods without them having to assume any of pecuniary and legal obligations of an employer. As for the African docker, then as now, casual employment was the best of both worlds - a source of cash that did not require him to sever his ties with his traditional community and its alternative forms of social
organisation and production. Put simply, African docks were (are still are) neither 'isolated' nor a 'mass'. As a result, the job and the income security that came with decasualisation were not incentives enough for them to embrace the space and time discipline required by post-war labour reforms. For the most part, those who engaged in dock labour during the colonial period were largely migrant workers (Cooper, 1987, 2000; Willis, 1993; Kiajage, 2000). In Kenya and Tanzania, for example, the *Mijikenda* and *watu wa pwani* (ex-slaves and native coastal people, and immigrants from the interior), 'established a symbiosis between urban and rural activities, seeking casual labour, mainly on the docks, which would provide cash for a day's work but would not compromise participation in agriculture' (Cooper, 2000: 162). In my experience, there is still a seasonal pattern whereby workers come to docks during the 'dry' season and return to their villages during the 'rainy' season to engage in traditional farming. For Employers, casual employment made it possible to adjust wage bills to actual needs. Despite the practical convenience of casualism, however, by the end of the 19th century, Colonial officials were having similar anxieties about casualism as officials in England had regarding what Jones (1971) described as 'Outcast London' (see Cooper, 1983).

The official line in the colonies (more precisely British colonies), regarding casual employment was consistent with the views in London. As in London, in the colonies, casualism was associated with 'agitation' (Sexton, 1936 cited in Turnbull, 2001: 368), 'vagrancy', criminality and disorder (Foreign office, 1898 cited in Cooper, 2000: 170). In that respect, anxieties about casual labour on

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6 The 'dry season' is also the 'Trade season' in The Gambia when there is increase commercial activity that is also reflected in increase activity at the docks. In that respect, there is also, a seasonal character to dock work.
African docks reflected 'post-Victorian British mores, a conception of class evident in East London, projected in racial terms' (Cooper, 2000: 171). The real problem for colonial officials, however, was that casual labour excluded the socialisation and cultural conditioning of African workers. By constantly moving between port cities and country, African workers were able to maintain access to alternative forms of economic activity. As a result, they were neither susceptible to perhaps, the most potent mode of discipline in the capitalist industry - the sanction of the sack, and they refused to stay in the city long enough to be acculturated (Cooper, 2000). The implications of casualism and urban – rural migratory trends, in terms of the development of workers’ subculture, is that they helped to perpetuate old social structures and cities took on some of the dimensions of pre-colonial and rural African society (Amin, 1974; and Riddel, 1981). In essence, there were limits to rationalisation and Africans in waged employment were never real proletarians. For purposes of representation and protest organisation, therefore, African Dockers depended more on alternative social organisations and structures than formal ‘institutional and regulatory arrangements’. And in many ways, their local work subcultures contrast significantly with the ‘universal’ model of dock subculture.

4. II: Institutional Arrangements and SSA Dock Subculture

In terms of institutional and regulatory arrangements, this thesis is focused on the aspect of port employment concerned with cargo handling operations. In that regard, the main thrust of British colonial labour reform strategy was the introduction of models of the British ‘National dock labour scheme’ (NDLS) in the colonies. The NDLS was introduced in Britain in 1947 with the aim to end
bane of casual labour, by giving Dockers the legal right to minimum work, holidays, sick pay and pensions (see Phillips, 1985). In the colonies, however, decasualisation did not take the form that it took in Britain. NDLS did bring about some decasualisation through the creation and maintenance of pools of 'registered' dockworkers (Roper, 1958; Cooper, 1983, 1987, 2000; Kiajage, 2000). The new arrangements did not, however, give African Dockers any legal rights to minimum work, holidays, sick pay or pensions. Dock labour reforms in Africa were not dictated by any altruistic desire on the part of colonial officials to better the lives of African Dockers. Findings of the current study indicate that as elsewhere in Africa, dock labour reforms were driven by the need for control (Cooper, 1987; Said, 1998). As in The Gambia, Cooper's account of dock labour reforms in colonial Kenya indicates that reforms followed major industrial unrests, which centred on the docks.

Then, colonial officials and entrepreneurs were unsettled by the fact that without any Trade union organisation, African workers could organise and take effective industrial actions that had severely impacted on the entire colonial economy. Dock labour reforms, therefore, were also intended to institutionalise protest, in a manner that was familiar to colonial officials and expatriate economic operators. Consequently, rather than being a progressive development, the new arrangements represented significant disruptions to the social lives of African Dockers. Registration, for example, required daily calls, which meant dockworkers had to give up their right to determine the pattern and frequency of shifting between waged and non-waged labour. And, as Roper (1958) noted in his study of Labour problems in West Africa, Trade Unions were perceived as an organisational challenge to traditional and customary
authority. Evidence from East Africa suggests that this perception was a major factor in Dockers’ views of and reactions to post-war labour reforms (Cooper, 1987, 2000; said, 1998; and Kiajage, 2000).

In his description of casual labour at the port of Mombassa, Cooper (2000: 164) noted that ‘casual labour was quite organised, but not by the employers’ and certainly not by the state. Rather, serangs (sort of middlemen), through their network of relationships, were able to supply ‘ready-made work gangs’ that they also supervised through many stages of the cargo handling process. This account mirrored what happened in The Gambia prior the NDLS (see chapter 7). The gangs which provided labour for cargo handling activities at the colonial ports of East Africa were, in the words of Cooper, ‘largely stable units’ (p. 165). Their camaraderie was further reinforced by their common membership of traditional Beni dance societies that dominated social life in the colonial cities in east and central Africa. In Mombassa, the dance clubs were often organised around the work gangs. The clubs and their officials had names (for example, Scotchi and Settla) and titles (e.g. ‘admiral’) that suggested that as well providing entertainment and being mechanisms for social cohesion among African city dwellers, they also represented ‘a kind of mocking commentary on the power structure of colonial society’ (Cooper, 2000: 165; see also, Ranger, 1975). Incidentally, pre-war attempts to introduce similar labour reforms were abandoned because seranges and their work gangs were not interested in registration. The state and port employers did not push for reforms then, because they were afraid that with access to alternative means and resources, Dockers ‘could withdraw their labour altogether’ (Cooper, 2000: 164). Post War reforms also encountered difficulties because they did not receive the
wholehearted support of employers most of who were satisfied with the casual arrangement.

Turnbull and Sapford (2001: 234) made a valid observation that Institutional and regulatory arrangements 'do not exist in a vacuum'. However, contrary to their suggestion, the interaction of formal administrative processes and structures, technology and product-market situation (p. 234), does not, also suffice as a holistic explanation for a peculiar African dock subculture. Technology and rational economic factors do matter. Colonial experience tells us, however, that even if analysis is only concerned with the formal organisational context, these factors are not sufficient determinants of how and why African workers think and act as they do. A full understanding of SSA dock IR, requires that researchers also look at remnants of the pre-colonial social system as they impact on dock employment relations. Cooper's (2000, 1990, and 1987) accounts of how in the 1930s workers throughout Africa managed, in the absence of any Trade union organisations, to organise and effectively challenge the colonial state, are telling. And, evidence from the current study suggests that African Dockers still rely on pre-colonial values and norms to adapt to and resist the rational regimes of formal business organisations.

Without any 'rational' IR institutions such as trade unions, in the 1930s and 1940s, African workers throughout the continent, succeeded in staging series of strikes, which were so effective as to concentrate the minds of officials on the labour issues in the colonies. These strikes were significant not only for
their impact on colonial economies throughout Africa, but also for the manner of their organisation. In that regard, the strikes focused the attention of colonial officials on the alternative indigenous forms of social organisation and capabilities, which workers used to mobilise various categories of Africans who, in the eyes of officials, have only the common experience of being waged workers. The strikes that brought ports cities of Mombassa, and Tanga (in East Africa), and Dakar (in West Africa), to a standstill for days and even weeks, in some cases, were organised around dance clubs and the 'homeboy' associations of 'evoles' (Cohen et al, 1978, 1972; Cooper, 1987 & 1990).

For those who entertain Marxists perspectives on the labour issues of Africa, these strikes were evidence of 'class consciousnesses' among African workers and signalled the beginning of 'class struggle' in Africa (Barbe, 1964; Friedland, 1969; Shivji, 1986). In that regard, trade unions were seen as the structural expression of 'class consciousnesses' in colonial Africa. This was the thinking behind the comment by the prominent Senegalese Philosopher Iba Der Tham, (1972) that 'the historiography of the African working classes is still that of ideologies, parties, and unions' (cited in Cohen et al, 1978: 22). I would argue, however, that whilst this period of labour unrests could be attributed as signalling the emergence of the modern African proletarian, there are, also, other plausible explanations for workers’ solidarity and organisation at the time. Cooper (2000), for example, observed social processes in colonial cities 'gave rise to relationships and cultural forms that were being developed by workers themselves in ways that companies and
officials could not control' (p. 168). Said (1998: 66), for example, attributed Tanzanian dockworkers’ solidarity and determination during the 1947 strikes to the Muslim oath of Ahlil Badr. Ahlil Badr is significant to Muslims for two reasons. First, it was the first Muslim Jihad led the Prophet Mohammad. Secondly because the outcome of the battle of Badra was a victory for a relatively small Muslim army over a larger non-Muslim force, Ahlil Badra has become a source of inspiration for Muslims at times of adversity.

Bearing in mind my central argument that the management problems of SSA express themselves more as social and moral issues requiring a sociological framework of analysis, Cooper (2000) and Said’s (1998) observations are very significant. The focus of most other studies, however, has been on economic and institutional and regulatory variables of the ‘formal’ dimensions of society (i.e. the nation state and the formal business organisation). Conceptualising African workers’ reactions to formal IR systems and processes in terms of class consciousness and the relationship between formal IR institutions and economic variables is a familiar and therefore, convenient approach. They are, however, not necessarily adequate as approaches to understanding and resolving the management problems of SSA. As I argued in an earlier chapter, for Marxists the ‘class consciousness’ argument is consistent with the European experience of class formation from feudalism to capitalism. Accordingly, the post-war waves of industrial unrests were seen as a necessary condition for the evolution of Africa’s own peculiar form of socialism. Such arguments were linked to the notion of ‘African Socialism’ as Africa’s distinct form Marxism.
The idea of ‘African Socialism’ espoused the view of traditional African society as a classless society imbued with the spirit of humanism and expressed nostalgia for that spirit (Tweedie, 1967). However, that view is neither true, nor is it useful for my purposes in this study. May be it is for that reason that even some leading advocates of this image of African society questioned the credibility of its underlying assumptions (see chapter 2.II for some of N’Krumah’s critique of ‘African Socialism’). Some leading advocates of African socialism (especially among African’s political elite), the argument of ‘African socialism’ was used to justify repressive policies and practices that were not helpful for the progressive development of IR institutions in Africa. From an analytical point of view, formal institutional and regulatory arrangements (e.g. trade unions and Dock labour schemes etc), represented familiar and convenient variables for analysis. These conceptions do provide some limited insight into the management and IR problems of SSA. On the whole, however, they tend to obscure the most significant issues of the problem – the social and moral issues arising from traditional society that have always dogged capitalism production in SSA.

I would argue that the ‘social processes’ and alternative structures and forms of organisation and relationships, have demonstrable implications for the image and profile of the African dockworker. That image challenges the ‘universal’ notion of dockworkers as ‘outcasts’ and ‘isolated masses’, prone to drink, violence and criminality. There is evidence in this study to suggest that in the post-war years, a conspicuous number of those who engaged in dock work on The Gambian waterfront did fit this ‘universal’ stereotype of Dockers.
As I have tried to argue earlier, however, African Dockers, in particular, have tended to maintain strong ties with their ethnic communities. Strong family, ethnic and religious ties meant that on the whole, their image reflects that of the wider African community that is the social context for their development as a working class category (Kiajage, 2000; Cooper, 1987, & 2000). In that respect, the dock subculture is a synthesis of the influences of elements of a global interindustry dimension and aspects of a particularly African social form. In terms of self-image and others’ opinions of them, Kiajage’s portrayal of dockworkers at the colonial port of Tanga represented a paradox. It showed that African Dockers are at once capable of behaviour that reflects the ‘universal’ stereotype and the extreme antithesis to that stereotype. On the wider community’s opinion of dockworkers, he wrote:

‘In most oral traditions, it is stated that landlords were only too happy to put up Dockers because they were good tenants. They paid their rent in time, and conducted themselves in a respectable manner. ... This living arrangement fostered among the Dockers a sense of dual identity’ (Kiajage, 2000: 305).

As for their self-image, Kiajage wrote that Dockers ‘perceived of themselves as a genteel, highly respected occupational group within the Tonga working-class community’ (Kiajage, p. 305). However, Kiajage also noted that the dockworker tends to present a spilt personality. At work, they are known for their obscenity. But when they leave the docks, ‘they would part with their
obscene language as soon as ... they reach the boarder between port and town'. He went to say:

In town ... they were known, and perceived themselves, as wasaarabu, civilised people who were exemplars of deportment and gentility. Many of my informants claimed that it was unusual for dockworkers to be involved in public brawls. A docker spitting in public, for example, would later be warned in private by his colleagues to desist from behaviour that would embarrass members of his “profession” (p. 305).

Kiajage and Cooper’s observations regarding colonial African Dockers challenge the ‘universal’ concept of dock subculture and stereotypes. In a broader sense, they suggest the need for departure from the scholarly preoccupation with the assumption that the only the dimension that counts when one wishes to understand the workplace attitudes and behaviour of African workers, is the formal one (See Freund, 1988). This departure should begin with the recognition that there are broader social influences that also dictate how workers express their awareness and reaction to formal institutional and policy arrangements (Cohen, 1980). And to fully understand these influences, analysis must move ‘beyond the workplace to examine laborers as social beings with positions in communities, families, and broader society’ (Brown, 2003: 8; also, see Cooper, 1983).
This argument very much resonates with Ackers (2002) neo-pluralist view on how to approach the study of issues in contemporary Western world of work. According to Brown (2003), this break with modes of analysis that focus on the formal and formality, was instrumental to the recognition that Africans have their own peculiar approaches to work. This peculiar work culture, she says, is conceptualised in Atkins’ (1993) ‘African work culture’, which is based on E. P. Thompson’s “moral economy” of authority, and adaptation of rural forms of consultation to organise protests (p. 8). Atkins’ claim that she was inspired by the work of E.P. Thompson gives credibility to Cooper’s (2000) suggestion that the making of the African working class is not completely dissimilar from the Making of the English Working Class. The argument, therefore, is not, as Postcolonial critiques would have, for the total rejection of Western conceptions and frameworks of analysis because that would be an absurd thing to advocate. This is precisely because contemporary Africa is also a hybrid society and culture at the border of the West and Africa. To the extent that they are sufficiently abstract, Western concepts can ‘offer an insight about the range of options available for crafting organizations and enhancing their effectiveness’ (Kamoche, 2000: 56). My argument, then, is that to the extent that conceptual frameworks ignore the social nature and context of management and IR, they must not be generalised to other context.

4. III: Conclusion

The literature indicates that ports throughout the world have some common characteristics and serve similar purposes. They represent a significant sector
in the economic systems of countries and their relationship with the global economic system. The nature and organisation of dock work, and the technological innovations involved tend to be similar, and in recent years, ports in both developed and developing economies have become the focus for neo-liberal reforms (WB, 2001; Marges, 2000; Summers, 1999; Turnbull and Wass, 1997, 1995; and Couper, 1986). Mimetic policy and institutional forms have also contributed to similarities in dock labour management schemes and patterns in dock IR. In the case of SSA countries, these tend to reflect colonial traditions. Also, there are similarities in the economic issues of conflict and the intensity and passion with which those issues are pursued. The perishable natures of goods and the industry’s vulnerability to wildcat strikes have, everywhere, enhanced Dockers strike power. These similarities in industry level variables and formal institutional and regulatory frameworks are used to try to sustain the argument for a ‘universal’ dock subculture (Kerr and Siegel, 1954; and Miller, 1969). The ‘universal’ theory is also based on the existence of conditions that are ‘peculiar to dockland communities’ (Miller, 1969; Kerr and Siegel, 1954; and Crichton, 1963).

The argument in this chapter however, questions the viability of the ‘universal’ theory, even for the Western context, let alone SSA. African Dockers have never subscribed to the belief that they are a low status group. Moreover, the technological innovations that have given ‘ghost like qualities’ to ports like Panjang and Rotterdam (Turnbull, 2001: 1), have, for the moment, eluded virtually all of Africa’s port terminals. As a result, cargo handling is still, relatively, an arduous, dangerous and variable work. Particularly in the
developing world, dock labour is generally lacking in occupational stratification, allowing very little room for upward mobility on the job. Dockers, as the findings of the current study indicate, still have no single identifiable employer and by the very nature of their industry, they are in constant contact with foreign goods, seamen and ideas. And, despite attempts by governments to reform dock labour schemes, casualism is the predominant form of employment on Africa's docks. African docks, therefore, do have characteristics that fit the 'universal' stereotype of ports and port employment. However, in a radically different social context, these features assume new and different meanings. As a result, African Dockers also possess characteristics that buck the 'universal' model. The literature from East Africa (Kiajage, 2000; Cooper, 2000, 1987) and the conclusion of the current study, for example, refute the assertion that Dockers suffer from a low status perception of themselves. These studies suggest, instead, that in terms of their self-comportment and behaviour, community role, and self-perception, African dock subcultures and Dockers do not fit the 'universal' model and image.

As for the notion of 'the casual frame of mind' as the basis for the for the 'universal' subculture concept (Miller, 1969: 304), De Vries (2000: 683) observed:

'The notion of "the casual frame of mind" of the pre-1960s' docker harbours much ambiguity, entailing contradictory effects of both solidarity and division amongst Dockers and their varied organisational
practices. Not only were Dockers never a homogeneous occupational group, and the class solidarity that the Dockers as an occupational community engendered was sporadic and limited, but also it was often the image of Dockers sustained by external forces and groups that created the semblance of internal unity. Thus the nature of Dockers’ occupational culture in a variety of port cities, its social and symbolic boundaries, the social agents and structural causes which gave it form in some cases, ... are still open to further research, and in particular call for the reconsideration of the older notion of Dockers as a distinct occupational subculture’.

The notion of the ‘universal dock subculture’ is extrapolated from Inkeles’ (1960) theory of the ‘Industrial man’ and what Allen (1984) critically refers to as class descriptions of ‘traditional proletarians’. According to Inkeles (1960: 1), ‘the distinctive roles of the industrial system ... foster typical patterns of perception, opinions, beliefs and values which ... arise as new subcultures in response to institutional conditions’ which in turn, develop ‘from the occupational structure’. As I have indicated earlier, the ‘universal’ theory has been subjected to extensive testing and criticism. For the purpose of this study, De Vries (2000: 682) observation that ‘most of the known histories of dock labour focus on Western-oriented port culture and ports clearly undergoing some form, albeit highly varied, of capitalist transformation’, suffices for a critique. Docks and dockworkers everywhere share common attributes and characteristics and may be some of these similarities can be attributed to their peculiar work and working environment. The simple fact that docks are ‘located in the path of ideas’ (Cooper, 2000: 526), suggest that forms of organisation,
attitudes and behaviour will be replicated. These similarities, however, must not obscure the significance of variations in social contexts in which Dockers emerge and develop as a working class subculture.

This chapter has highlighted some implications of social and historical contexts for differences between African dock subcultures and stereotypes based on 'universal' hypotheses. And, in so far as resolving the IR and Personnel management problems of SSA, it argued that these differences are more important than similarities. In that respect, it has helped to further develop the argument that the management problems of SSA are fundamentally social. As a result, understanding the problems of SSA IR and developing pragmatic solutions to those problems, require comprehension of their social context and history. As in the literature chapters that proceeded, the current chapter has also raised themes and issues that point to some key general and specific areas of inquiry. The literature, together with my tacit knowledge of the context and phenomena, has raised some key theoretical ideas and questions that must be empirically investigated. The following chapter develops the broad theoretical ideas and questions and discusses the chosen method for that investigation.
Chapter Five

Methodology

Introduction

The thesis has drawn upon different fields and academic disciplines to look at different perspectives on the management problems of SSA. It has, as a result, engaged with some key general debates regarding the nature of the problem and how it might be best understood and resolved. The general issues that are raised in the review of existing perspectives are discussed in relation to the specific issues that concern the current study. In essence, the broad debates that emerged from the literature chapters, centred on some contrasting themes and conceptions. In terms of what constitute the SSA context, for example, the contrast between 'culture' and the 'social system' is highlighted. With respect to IR theory, my argument was to view the employment relationship as involving the management of divergent interests as well as values. On workplace resistance, the review centred the contrast between concepts of 'conscious' and 'unconscious' resistance. The key arguments that emerged from these contrasts of themes and concepts are also based on the following five key theoretical assumptions, which are argued throughout the thesis:

1. IR and PM/HRM problems in SSA also involve fundamental social and moral issues.
2. Quantitative deductive methods and existing frameworks of analysis and some of the major perspective are inadequate for accessing and explaining these very fundamental social and moral issues and how they impact on the employment relationship.

3. As a result of the basic social and moral issues involved, there are significant differences between conceptions of the formal workplace and workplace relationships and interactions between African and Western contexts.

4. With respect to unlocking the problem and resolving it, it is more important to understand these differences than any similarities.

5. To the extent that they are abstract enough, Western theories and concepts can help unlock the problem and develop pragmatic solutions.

The arguments that are made to support these assumptions draw on Western sociological theories and debates that also seek to develop sociological arguments and solution to problems of employment relations (for example: Fox, 1966, 1974, 1985; Flanders and Fox, 1970; Provis, 1996; Ackers, 2002). Essentially, the underlying argument of these concepts is that employees bring conceptions into the workplace that are shaped by the value systems and normative standards of the wider society in which the organisation is located. Social embeddedness of IR processes, however, does not preclude the influence of the formal and rational institutional and policy frameworks of the nation state. Recent theoretical developments to Fox's frames of reference have
argued, for example, that even for the West, other dimension of society (e.g. family and civil society organisations) do matter when it comes to the employment relationship (Provis, 1996; Ackers, 2002). The preceding reviews have also signalled my intention to apply these arguments to the SSA context. For as in the contemporary ‘Western world of work’, the effective management of different values and interests holds the key to resolving some of the management problems of SSA. That, however, also requires thorough understanding of the underlying wider ‘social’ context for differences in values and interests. The conclusion of the current study is that with regards to IR, the problem manifests itself in a consistent pattern of ambivalence between formal Western theories and practices and African values and interests. This ambivalence, however, can be resolved by adapting developments in British pluralist IR theory (Donovan, 1968; Flanders and Fox, 1970; and Ackers 2002) to explain the problem and as the basis for developing a more appropriate African IR/HRM paradigm. Ultimately, however, resolving the problem requires a holistic understanding of the issues it involves. To that end, the empirical aspect of the study had sought answers to the following key question:

1. What is the nature and character of the alternative informal dimensions of contemporary SSA society that also help to shape collective and individual conceptions of reality?

2. How are the values and norms that are sanctioned and sustained by the informal social system elaborated in employee conceptions of the formal workplace and their behaviour towards its rational policies and routines?
3. Are any of the elements of the informal value system and normative paradigms that workers bring into the formal organisation compatible with the 'rational' objectives and processes of the formal business organisation?

4. What effect do these conceptions have on workplace relationships and interactions?

5. What are the implications of these conceptions and behaviour for the formal IR and PM policies and practices of the organisation?

The core argument of the final literature chapter, in particular, is that social and historical contexts do matter when it comes to managing people and their work related relationships and interactions. Put in the context of IR, some of the factors that shape IR systems such as the 'locus and distribution of power' (Dunlop, 1970: 94), for example, are contextually and historically determined. Despite their divergent positions on the problem, C-CMS, Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives, have not taken any clear pragmatic positions regarding the implications of the values and norms of the wider African community for organisational management. And, therefore, they have not fashioned any credible mechanisms as to how these values and norms might be reconciled with the rational objectives of the modern business organisation in Africa. As such, the Marxist perspective on power, for example, does not explain the logic and distribution of power in Gambian society. For power in the Gambian social context, is hardly defined in terms of peoples' relative position to the means of production. C-CMS perspectives that are based on the notion of
'national cultures' do not suffice for explanations either. In the context of the current study, for example, the concept ignores significant multiethnic and multi-social variations in Gambian society. Postcolonial perspectives are too concerned with the coloniser/colonised relationships and do not provide any useful explanation for the problems of workplace relationship in contemporary SSA. The complexity of the social context suggests that a holistic understanding of the social issues that are at the core of the problem, and fashioning pragmatic solutions to them requires some empathy. The argument that understanding the values and norms of the wider community and how they are reflected in actors' perceptions and actions, requires empathy, is the basis for the choice of methodology and setting for this study.

This research arose from my personal experience in Gambian management that led me to wonder why so many Western management policies failed in SSA. In the course of the PhD, I built upon my tacit knowledge of Gambian realities and a formal social science research programme to investigate them further. The core research was a qualitative, interview-based, single-case study conducted with a broadly ethnographic approach (see Greene, 1999). The main interview data is supported by data gathered by way of limited periods of observation, informal chats and formal meetings involving key actors and informants, as well as a variety of documentary evidence. With respect to documentary evidence, the research benefited from both national and organisational documents and publications. In addition to some very useful policy documents, the study had access to minutes and official correspondences, especially concerning an on-going dispute between the dockworkers' union and the GPA. That dispute concerned the reform of the NDLS. Relevant organisational level
policy documents and correspondences have helped to give some added insight into managerial expectations regarding the employment relationship.

This chapter explains the logic and epistemological position that informs the study. It begins with a general take on the methodological debate in social science research as a prelude to the theoretical reasoning and practical considerations for the choice of methodological approach. In that regard, the chapter indicates how the choice was guided and limited by research strategy and the main ontological concerns of the study. It also attempts to address any potential criticisms by highlighting some of the major shortcomings that are associated with the broad paradigm of choice. It then goes on to discuss the organisational setting, providing a brief history and description of the organisation and the theoretical rationale for the choice of setting. This leads into the discussion concerning the sample population and the practical implications that sampling presented in relation to research design and methodology. The final section focuses on the empirical aspects, including fieldwork procedures, data collection, analysis and the reporting of findings. It also discusses pre-field preparations such as the formulation of an interview schedule, drawing up of a potential list of interviewees and negotiations for access. This is followed by accounts of some key field issues and my own role in the research process. This offers a detailed reflexive account of the ethical issues encountered and how I dealt with them in order to render a critical account of native perspectives that is as authentic as possible.
5. I: Methodology and Epistemology in Social Science research

The idea that research methodology should be determined by researcher's epistemological orientation (Cassell and Symon, 1994; Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; and Denzin, 1997) is accepted, but not without significant qualification (Bryman, 1988; Crompton and Jones, 1988; and Baumard & Ibert, 2001). Although stating an epistemological position signals one's theoretical objective (i.e. theory testing or construction), there are other significant factors that should, also, be taken into account when considering choices of research strategies and methodologies. Baumard & Ibert (2001) make an observation that is especially true for qualitative research. They wrote:

'Epistemological positioning is not a choice that is made once and held for the entire research process. The process of compiling data is a continual movement ... between theory and its empirical foundation' and each time there is a movement between the two, "the question of what constitutes a datum returns researchers to the related issues of their epistemological position" (p. 71).

The important point, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1987: 3) note, is to recognise 'the reflexive character of social research, that it is part of the world it studies'. They go on to argue that once that is done, the epistemological dispute in social science research becomes easier to resolve. Then, common sense, rather than creed, becomes the guiding principle behind methodological choice (see Baumard and Ibert, 2001; Gummersson, 2000; Bryman, 1998). Bryman (1998) has pointed out 'the research issue determines
(or should determine) which style of research is employed' (p. 106). My position, therefore, is that both epistemological orientation and therefore, methodological choice, must emerge from the underlying theoretical assumptions and practical considerations of the research.

Coming from this pragmatic position, this study opts for what Bell and Newby, (1977) call ‘methodological pluralism’ (p. 17). In that respect, I do not envisage any debilitating tensions between the ‘intuitive insight’ and ‘enriching novelty’ of qualitative phenomenology and the cautious and control ‘rituals’ of quantitative positivism (see Gouldner, 1967 cited in Bell and Newby, 1977: 17). In a further citation from Gouldner’s Enter Plato (1967), Bell and Newby note that when we depend entirely on quantitative positivism; ‘we ... easily sink into ritualism ... sacrifice the venturesome but chancy insight for the security of controllable routines, the penetrating novelty for the shallow familiarity, the broader for the narrow circumstances’ (pp. 17-18). Gouldner is concerned that ‘reason’ (as he describes the positivist sociology), does not become, as he put it: “methodolatorous” – compulsively preoccupied with a method of knowing, which it exalts ritualistically and quite apart from a serious appraisal of its success in producing knowledge’ (p. 338 cited in Bell and Newby, 1977: 18). The concern here is that we do not end up measuring everything, but understanding nothing.

Quantitative methods do not, as Gouldner seemed to suggest, have monopoly as ‘a constraining force, leading men to conclusions that they do not know or believe in the beginning and, sometimes, to views opposed to those that held initially’ (P. 338 in Bell and Newby, p. 18). But Gouldner also lauds the
‘impersonality of reason’ as a result of which, ‘it inhibits or forbids wilful capriciousness or arbitrariness’ (cites in Bell and Newby, 1977: 18). Although, Bell and Newby question Gouldner’s argument regarding the ‘impersonality of reason’, They accept that his ‘reflections on doing sociological research ... demonstrate clearly ... that it is possible to avoid the pathologies of the various ways of knowing’ (p. 20).

This research draws on the complimentary quality of ‘methodological pluralism’. While being predominantly qualitative, the broad theoretical assumptions that preceded the empirical study could be construed as hypothesis. And, where necessary, the study has also used statistical data from previous studies (e.g. KPMG, 2000; and Felixstowe, 1997), to help explain relevant phenomena (e.g. age profile of Dockers and statistical analysis of issues of disputes in their employment relationship). I therefore follow the tradition of social science research that ‘treated quantitative and qualitative techniques as complementary’ (Hammerseley and Atkinson, 1987: 9). In doing so, the study also draws on Grenier and Josserand’s (2001) argument that ‘content’ and ‘process’ aspects of inquiry tend to be more amenable to different approaches and research techniques. Content aspects are best examined and explained through analysis of quantitative data, whereas ‘process’ is more agreeable to qualitative phenomenological research strategies and techniques (p. 85). For this study, statistical data from other sources are used to describe and explain ‘content’ issues such as employee numbers and categories, union membership and to rate the relative significance of issues of dispute to the respective parties.
Process-based objectives refer to the mutual development between the categories that constitute and thus, help to explain the phenomena of inquiry (Burgelman, 1994). As a result, they require some understanding and appreciation of the ‘interchangeability of organisation and organisational process’ (Grenier and Josserand, 2001: 85; see also Weick, 1979). Cassell and Symond (1994) argue ‘only qualitative methods are sensitive enough to allow the detail analysis of change’ (p. 5). Although quantitative approaches can determine the occurrence of change overtime, they note such approaches are not suitable for describing the change process and the antecedents to change. In the case of the current study, for example, quantitative techniques are not very useful for examining and explaining changes in political, economic and social contexts, and continuities and disruption in IR patterns. A holistic explanation of how categories evolve relative to each other (e.g. Union influence in relation to changes in political and economic policy contexts), requires in depth knowledge (natives’ views) of the categories whose co-evolution you seek to explain (Burgelman, 1994).

In terms of the specific areas and the overall objectives, however, I make no dogmatic distinction between content and process in relation to methodology. As a result, in the context of the broader methodology debate in social science research, this study shares Crompton and Jones’ (1988) position that one should employ any strategy that is appropriate in a given situation. This is not to say, however, that it ignored the epistemological question and the discipline that is central to any respectable academic inquiry. Rather, my choice of method also reflects my concern for reflexivity. Hammersley and Atkinson (1987) argue that it ‘is not a matter of methodological commitment’ but
rather, 'an existential fact' that 'we cannot escape the social world in order to
study it' (pp. 14-15; see also Bell and Newby, 1977). Reflexivity enables one to
develop new theoretical assumptions regarding the phenomena and its social
context, when emerging themes and concepts question the contextual
relevance of existing theories. As the following section will show, reflexivity
was a key element of the empirical aspect of this study.

Although no particular method is chosen to the total exclusion of others,
predominantly, the choice of strategy and approaches for collecting and
analysing core research data falls within the broad category of qualitative
research. A major motivation for my choice was to avoid what Gummesson
(2000) refers to as 'forcing reality into received theory' and causing it to be
'distorted rather than explained' (p. 62). 'Methodological pluralism', however,
reflects my concerns that without theoretical concepts and structures,
outcomes of certain qualitative research (e.g. ethnographic texts), could be
merely good stories with no theoretical and very little practical implications
(Baumard and Ibert, 2001; Greene, 2001; Denzin; 1997; Hartley, 1994; Cassell
and Symon, 1994; Silverman, 1997; Hammersley, 1992; Johnson, 1990;
Bernard, 1988; and Pelto and Pelto, 1979). For these reasons, the execution of
the research process was informed and guided by practical as well as
theoretical considerations.

The broad theoretical ideas that are highlighted at the beginning of this
chapter are, however, intended to form the basis of key research questions
rather than hypotheses. They help to make the argument that qualitative
social research does not preclude the insight of propositions that could be
'confronted with reality via a case study'. The theoretical questions do not, also, reflect any preconceived ideas I might have had regarding the social context and the phenomena of inquiry. They are based, instead, on my 'pre-understanding' (Gummersson, 2000: 60) of the 'foreshadowed problems' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987: 28) that I intended to study. Gummersson (2000: 60) defines 'pre-understanding' as involving the researcher's 'personal experience as an essential element in the process of collecting and analyzing information'. It also involves, he says, the ability to 'demonstrate theoretical sensitivity'. Unlike 'preconceived ideas', which according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1987: 28-29) are not helpful in scientific inquiry, 'foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker' (citing Malinowski, 1922: 48-49). And, as well as emerging from the literature, 'foreshadowed problems' can be based on personal experience. Such experience, however, 'are rendered interesting and significant by theoretical ideas. I that case, the stimulus is not intrinsic to the experiences themselves' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987: 32). By casting them into theoretical ideas, one is then able to turn the 'foreshadowed problems into sets of key research 'questions to which theoretical answers can be given' (p. 32).

Although I take no dogmatic position in the broad methodology debate, the aim of this study is to contribute to the development of social science research methodology for effective study of what Greene (2001) calls 'microscopic level' phenomena in developing countries. After all, as Greene goes on to argue, 'it is at this level that we are more likely to have greater understanding of the everyday relationships between management and labour, and what
consequences such understandings may have for macro economic and industrial policies' (p. 10).

5. II: 'Methodological Pluralism': Limits of dominant paradigms

'It is conventional in research to make a distinction between the qualitative and the quantitative (Baumard and Ibert 2001: 77). However this distinction 'is both equivocal and ambiguous' because 'none of ... criteria' given as the bases of their differences 'allow for an absolute distinction' (ibid). Baumard and Ibert therefore propose a 'multi-method' approach on the grounds that it will enable the researcher to 'exploit the complementary nature...' of the two paradigms (ibid). This is the reasoning behind some of the more imaginative approaches to social science research including; 'triangulation', 'purposive non-probability sampling' and other research strategies that reflect the mutually reinforcing qualities of the two paradigms (see Webb et al, 1966; Warwick and Lininger, 1975; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Johnson, 1990).

Even so, the debate as to what constitutes an appropriate methodology in the study of human interaction and behaviour remains a significant burden for social science research. The qualitative phenomenological research is criticised for lacking in theoretical rigor, being none specific about designs and methods for data collection, too subjective, and 'suffering from a crisis of representation and legitimation' (Borman et al, 1986; Hammersley, 1992; Bryman, 1988; Johnson, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1984; & Baumard & Ibert, 2001; Denzin, 1997; Cassell & Symon, 1994 & Silverman, 1997). Critiques of quantitative positivism, on the other hand, focus on its lack of depth and
extensive 'controlled ritualism' (Bell and Newby, 1977). Survey questionnaires (principal instrument of measurement in quantitative research), are criticised for ignoring the complexity of the contingency between perception and behaviour (Hammersley, 1992). Questionnaires are also criticised for including questions that reflect the essence of researcher's, and not the respondents' reality and assumptions about the phenomena being studied (Hammersley, 1992; Hofstede and Bond, 1987; & Schein, 1983). Consequently, conclusions regarding phenomena in the 'real' world drawn from quantitative positivist research are censured for being based on data from controlled sources that do not reflect reality (Schein, 1990; Hammersley, 1992; Cassell & Symon, 1994).

At the heart of this 'dispute' are two major arguments. The first concerns the distinction between science and common sense. The second relates to the relationship between the researcher and the subject of her/his research (Baumard & Ibert, 2001; Gummersson, 2000; Silverman, 1997; Bryman, 1988; Borman et al, 1986; and Bell and Newby, 1977). Borman et al's (1986) main critique of ethnography is that it is too subjective, burdened with value, not replicable or generalisable, lacking internal validity and of being unsystematic. Denzin (1997) confronts among other things, the issue of representation. He argues that the assumption that ethnographic research 'directly captures lived experience' is problematic because 'such experience is created in the social text written by the researcher' (p. 3). Other than the fact that the participant's representation does not necessarily constitute the most accurate formulation of the phenomena being studied, 'the subject is a textual construction because the real flesh and blood person is always translated into
either an analytic subject as a social type or a textual subject who speaks from the authors pages' (p. 5).

The underlying issue of 'subjectivity' that informs these criticisms is the unfortunate testimony to social science research's debilitating obsession with getting rid of every effect that the researcher may have on the data. It is the only rationale for standardisation in quantitative positivism and the insistence on a direct experience of the social world on the part of qualitative phenomenologist. 'Both positions' according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1987), 'assume that it is possible, in principle at least, to isolate a body of data uncontaminated by the researcher, either by turning him into an automaton or by making him a neutral vessel of cultural experience' (p.14). Bell and Newby's (1977) observe that: 'to read what we call normative methodology, be it ever so positivistic or ever so phenomenological, it frequently would seem as much, if not all sociological research was “context free” – i.e. carried out by non-people in non-places' (p. 10). They therefore, 'take it as one of the main causes of impoverishment of sociological monographs that their authors have not written “simply as a human being”. The divorce of the personal from the so-called scientific', they conclude, 'means that the scientific has not been scientific at all' (p. 14). Hammersley and Atkinson (1987) argue similarly, that 'searches for empirical bedrock of this kind are futile;' for 'all data involve theoretical assumptions' (p. 14).

From both theoretical and practical stance, however, ethnography's commitment to 'reproduction models' is considered to be somewhat problematic (Hammersley, 1992). Even some its strongest advocates have
criticise the presentation of ethnographic accounts as if they represent 'reality' or as if they constitute the 'only true' account of the phenomena that are being described (Hammersley, 1992; Greene, 2001). While there may not be good justification for outright rejection of all 'real world', 'common sense' knowledge, such knowledge does not also deserve to be treated as 'valid' true account of reality, simply on its own terms. 'Rather', as Hammersely and Atkinson (1987) suggest, 'we must work with what knowledge we have, while recognizing that it may be erroneous and subjecting it to systematic inquiry where doubts seem justified' (p. 15). Quite often, especially in the field of cultural anthropology, ethnographic accounts are assessed solely on the basis that they are accurate description of phenomena and 'true' representation of native views regarding meanings and phenomena (Cassell and Symon, 1994; Van Maanen, 1979; Hammersley, 1992; Johnson, 1990; Geertz, 1973). The primary contribution of ethnography in such cases, therefore, is not to help in the deductive testing of theory. But it is not also an inductive enterprise in terms of creating new constructs that may be relevant to that context. Rather, the contribution of the ethnographic account is to produce an accurate description of 'what has been seen and heard within the framework of the social group's view of reality' (Greene, 2001: 8). Ethnographic studies, then, are considered valid merely on the grounds that they describe the social structures, institutions and processes of some 'primitive' tribes as accounted for by the tribesmen and women themselves.

However, contemporary organisational research in developing country settings, are not necessarily about uncovering and explaining the institutional arrangements and, social processes and organisations of some 'noble savages'
and/or pre-historic tribesmen. Typically, it involves the study of organisations that have structures and processes that are, at least in principle, consistent with Weberian institutional forms and processes. In this respect, ethnography must not been viewed or used as an alternative paradigm and the ethnographic account should have no need for ‘reproduction models’. Instead, ethnography must be viewed as a method – an approach (Geertz, 1973), with characteristic advantages for accessing and explaining specific areas of inquiry that have relevance for overall ontological and epistemological objectives of the research undertaking. What is required, therefore, is a serious rethink of the precepts and practices of ethnographic research (Hammersley, 1992) in relations to the theoretical objectives of the study and the practical circumstances of the particular research undertaking. That way, one is assured of the requisite theoretical rigor and methodological explicitness that is required of a decent scientific inquiry. What makes these particular accounts ethnographic is the blend of prior knowledge, in depth interviews, observations and my personal role in the research process.

5. III: Epistemological orientation and Choice of Methodology

The defining criteria for choice of methodology, therefore, are the research objectives and my ‘preunderstandings’ regarding the problem of inquiry, and the practical realities that I envisaged and encountered in conducting the empirical work. In that respect, I approached this study with the personal experiences that gave me an inside and outside perspective on the problem. I grew up in The Gambia and worked in a management capacity, in the organisation that is chosen as the setting for the research. But I also have the
comparative experience of living in the West and experiencing its world of work. As a result of these dual personal experiences, actors' had referred to me both in terms of an insider with common experiences and an outsider with alien views and perspectives. On the issue of pressures arising from the demands and expectations of the extended family, for example, a senior manager referred to our common experience saying: 'you know as well as I do that we all come from families that expect us to help each other'. On the subject of the financial burden of 'naming ceremonies' and 'traditional initiations', however, an old dockworker referred to views as those of 'Western educated people' (Interview Notes). I am therefore, neither starting 'from a state of general bewilderment as to what the devil is going on' nor for that matter, 'intellectually empty-handed' (Geertz; 1973: 26-27). The broad theoretical ideas and key research questions, therefore, emerge from my personal 'pre-understanding' of that social context and 'foreshadow problems' both as an insider and outsider. In the final analysis, however, they are developed through a systematic casting of these personal experiences in the context of the general areas of inquiry that sprang from the literature.

The relationship between research aims and research method is also defined by epistemological orientation. That, however, does not imply that specific methods are exclusively beholden to a particular epistemological position. Broad qualitative paradigms do have characteristic advantages that make them suitable for theory development. Ethnographic approaches, however, can also be used for theory testing. Hammerseley and Atkinson (1987) have cited works by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), and Ball (1981) as examples where ethnographic methods are used to test the theory that 'schools
differentiation of pupils on academic and behavioural criteria, especially via streaming, tracking, and banding, polarizes them into pro- and anti-school subcultures' (p. 25). As a method of social science research, however, the strength of qualitative methods lies in their capacity to aid theory development. Following Greene (1999), I have chosen, as a method for the core research, a qualitative interview-based single-case study within the broad ethnographic tradition (p. 86). The choice is dictated by practical circumstances and theoretical imperatives. This study is first and foremost about understanding organisational phenomena in a complex multicultural and multi-social context. In that respect, Brannen's (1996) observation and suggestions regarding ethnography is a good starting point. She notes that 'in multicultural settings organizational learning takes place in a problematic milieu of mismatched values, expectations, and misunderstandings' (p. 117). In such 'complex multicultural context', she suggests 'ethnography, ... as an appropriate methodological tool to use in surfacing a more meaningful concept of culture that might generate more sensitive readings of organizational culture' (p. 117).

Ethnographic techniques are particularly advantageous when the primacy of research involves micro-level phenomena. Van Maanen and Barley (1984), for example, believe ethnography is a useful tool for examining social and cultural phenomena, as they are 'enacted and sustained at the individual level by ongoing interactions between actors in specific organizational context' (p. 35). I would argue that ethnography is be even more useful when the task also involves (as was the case in this study), examining and explaining how communal values dictate patterns of social relationships and interactions at
both group and individual levels in a specific organisational context. By its very nature, ethnography constitutes 'the most effective method of accessing insight into microlevel cultural phenomena' (Van Maanen, 1988: 2). As such, it has a greater capacity 'to depict the activities and perspectives of actors in ways that challenge the dangerously misleading preconceptions that social scientists often bring to research' (Hammerseley and Atkinson 1987: 23). In that respect, the intimacy of the fieldwork situation helps to dispel any misconceptions, and the 'depiction of perspectives and activities in a setting allows one to begin to develop theory in a way that provides much more evidence of the plausibility of different lines of analysis' (ibid: 24). Arguably, the greatest advantage of qualitative ethnography lies in the flexibility it allows in research design and the reflexivity that it allows the researcher. The reflexive qualities of qualitative ethnography have been particularly useful because they enabled me to raise new questions as and when required during the field process, as well as seek answers to those already set out in the interview schedule. Raising of new questions indicated the extent to which the study privileged actors' perspectives and meanings regarding the issues of inquiry. Notwithstanding, the research was general guided by the key theoretical questions, which also dictated the specific areas of inquiry and the research design for collecting and analysing relevant primary data.

5. IV: Assumptions, practical issues and Research design

The literature has helped to develop a profile of the social context and the organisational forms and issues of inquiry in terms that are familiar even to the Western mindset. In substantive terms, however, formal business
organisations in SSA exist and operate in social contexts that in many respects are also quite unfamiliar. The most obvious implication of differences in social context is the fact that conceptions of reality and the behaviour of those who work in these organisations are also, influenced by unfamiliar (though not to me) value systems and normative standards. A holistic examination and explanation of such unfamiliar value systems and normative orders, and the conceptions and actions they sanction and sustain, requires flexible research strategies that allow, where necessary, for constant movement between the 'substantive' and the 'formal'. In terms of dock employment relations, for example, there was a constant need to contrast various aspect of the actual behaviour and views of ordinary dockers, against the formal rules of the NDLS on the one hand, and managerial perspectives and expectations on the other. Quite often, as was the case with the informal 'gang welfare scheme', there were contradictions between the views of various categories of actors as to whether managers and employers are aware of the existence of such a scheme (see chapter 8). The clarification of such contradictions in the views of actors regarding the substantive behaviours of workers and the expectations of the formal rules required continuous checking and counter checking. As a result, one is able to start with some familiar analytical ideas and extend their range of application to unfamiliar context and hitherto unknown substantive realities (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987). The key, of course, lies in the degree of abstractness of the original analytical framework (in this case, the neo-pluralist framework of organisational reality).

This research is principally an exploratory one. Its main aims were to examine and explain how the alternative institutions and value systems of the wider
community influence the employment relationship in a particular SSA social context. This context also has certain characteristics that could present practical problems, which without careful consideration can prove fatal to any research undertaking. The most obvious of these are the related issues of language and literacy. Self-administered survey questionnaire was not an option simply because an important category of actors (i.e. ordinary dockworkers), comprises, almost exclusively, of illiterate, multiethnic individuals, who speak different ‘unlettered’ tribal dialects. Potentially, a multi-lingual team of researchers could have been helpful. That solution, however, was not just impractical for costs reasons, but it also has significant adverse theoretical implications for data. Funding constraint aside, that solution has the potential to bring two problems of a theoretical nature. These issues concern the potential for multi subjectivity and ‘reactivity’ between different researchers and data sources (Webb et al 1966). There are, also, potentially, problems that could arise from the fact that individual researchers, who would have also doubled as interpreters for illiterate informants, may have different level of linguistic competence. On their own, these concerns have the potential to put the credibility of the data into question. Having a single researcher to carry out all the interviews, however, does not necessarily guarantee that problems arising from linguistic ‘incompetence’ on the part of the researcher would be completely remedied. Yet, the fact that I am able to speak the different tribal dialects was important in terms of access and the overall success of the empirical research. Another consolation is that by using a single researcher, the data was subjected to a consistent degree of reactivity. These theoretical considerations and practical
circumstances, rather than methodological dogma, dictated the research design and strategy.

The broad theoretical ideas that define the 'foreshadowed problems' also inform the research design and strategies including, choice of organisational setting, sample selection, data analysis and reporting. This study is not merely concerned with associations between variables - i.e. the influence of respective social dimensions on employees' conceptions of the workplace and work related relationships and interactions. Quite importantly, it also concerned the social processes that represent the elaboration of those influences in the formal workplace, the meanings that actors attach to those processes and how actors and institutions relate to each other (see Hartley, 1994). Accordingly, though it was necessary (perhaps even essential) to show some understanding of the content variables (factors that influence employees' perceptions and behaviour), it was even more important to examine these variables in their

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**Fig 5.1: Research design for Primary data collection (Triangulation with method)**

- **The Organisation**
  - Observation
    - Work process
    - Official meetings
    - Conversations/chats
  - In-depth Interviews
    - Dockworkers
    - Regular employees
    - GPA management
  - Organisational policy documents, correspondences and publications

- **Semi-structured interview guide**

- **Formal Dimension**
  - Government Officials
  - Union and employers' reps.
  - Official documents and publications

- **Informal Dimension**
  - Community elders
  - Religious leaders/scholars
  - Social commentators
  - Community opinion leaders
various aspects and in the process of their relationships within a particular social context of the organisation (Hartley, 1994; and Gummesson, 2000). For example, it was necessary to examine and explain tensions arising from different tribal and religious affiliations and, how different levels of exposure to Western values are manifested in actors' perspectives of the 'informal' system and its influence on various categories of actors. The research objectives outlined above and the theoretical considerations that underpin them, represent the basis for the research design. The design is based on the conviction that qualitative methods are better suited for the analysis of change; and flexible enough to allow for 'the responsiveness to individual's and organisation's conceptualisation of themselves' to be a key basis for readiness to develop new theoretical ideas and 'alter old ones as the research progresses, in light of emerging insight' (Cassell and Symond, 1994:4). It [the research design], also reflects a great concern for context. In that respect, the choice of a single-case study design is intended to highlight a real and natural organisational setting and underpin the concern with phenomena as 'defined, enacted, ... and made problematic by persons going about their normal routine' (Van Maanen, 1983: 255).

In all its three distinctions – exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Yin, 1994), case study research, in contrast with quantitative strategies, according to Gummesson, 'is usually considered less prestigious' (2000: 85). This is often because theoretically, such research is considered to be less rigorous and its abilities to generate theory and provide the basis for change are deemed to be doubtful (Hammersley, 1992; Bryman, 1998; and Hartley, 1994). On that score, Hartley (1994) notes: 'Without a theoretical framework, a case study
may produce fascinating details about life in a particular organisation, but without any wider significance' (1994: 210). However, she goes on to say that a case study 'cannot be defined' solely 'through its research techniques'. She argues that although case study 'often includes qualitative methods ... rather, it has to be defined in terms of its theoretical orientation'. The emphasis in that case is 'not necessarily substantive theory but rather ... on understanding processes along side their (organisational and other) context' (p. 210). For his part, Sen (1980) took issue with the critique of case study that it involves 'description' that 'is largely a matter of mere observation and reporting'. He argues that such criticism 'is unreasonable because descriptions involve analysis and explanation' (p. 353). Citing Kjellen and Soderman, Gummesson, 2000) argues that case studies can actually 'generate theory' and provide the basis for 'change'. He wrote:

“If a change process is going to succeed, the researcher must have a fundamental knowledge of the studied organisation and its actors, must have an ability to develop a language and concepts appropriate to the specific case, and must concentrate on processes likely to lead to understanding -Verstehen–rather than conducting a search for causal explanations” (Kjellen and Soderman in Gummesson, 2000: 86).

Theories derived from case studies, according to Yin (1981), are usually inductive. Much like detective work, they are developed through the systematic piecing together of evidence. ‘Such detective work’ according to Hartley (1994), ‘is undertaken not only to understand the particular and unique features of the case(s), but also to draw out an analysis which is
applicable on a wider basis' (p. 211). Needless to say the various aspects, which together constitute the overall research design/strategy, are also informed by the theoretical assumptions that underpin the research objectives. So far, the discussion has centred on the broad methodological issues and the basis for my choice of research method and strategies for data collection and analysis. In the following sections, the chapter focuses on the specific aspects of this research, including setting, sampling, data collection and analysis, and reporting.

5. V: Empirical Study: Setting, Sampling, Data collection, Analysis and Reporting

Fetterman (1998) warns: 'no study, ethnographic or otherwise, can be conducted without an underlying theory or model' (p. 5). Fieldwork, he tells us, is the 'key' to ethnographic-base research (p. 2). Hammerseley and Atkinson (1987), however, are reluctant 'to give advice about how to do ethnographic research' because 'such research cannot be programmed, that its practice is replete with the unexpected' (p.28). What this means, is that although the research design is less rigid (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 1987), and the researcher begin with an open mind, she/he does not enter the field with 'an empty head' (Fetterman, 1998: 1; see also Geertz, 1973). As Hammersley and Atkinson point out, 'doing no preparation or being haphazard ... are not options' (p. 28). Pre-field preparations for this study were driven and constrained by the need for reflexivity and the of range issues specified by the 'foreshowed problems'. With these in mind, preparations for empirical work included: the identification of setting and negotiations for
access; sampling design to the point of identifying some key informants and developing a 'potential sample list'; and drafting of interview schedules.

5. V.1: Organisational Setting, Access and the Organisation

'Naturalistic conceptions of studying fields and settings', according to Hammersely and Atkinson, 'often discourages the systematic and explicit selection of aspects of the setting and the need to move outside of it to pursue promising theoretical leads' (1987: 44). But, even in naturalistic inquiry, site selection must be based on practical circumstances and theoretical considerations (Gummersson, 2000; Fetterman, 1998; and Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987). In the case of this study, however, choice of setting was also influenced by my tacit knowledge of the context and the issues of investigation. In that respect, the selection of The Gambia Ports Authority (GPA), as the organisational setting, was based on two related theoretical assumptions. The first was the belief that a significant category of workers will entertain conceptions and behaviour that are predominantly legitimised and sustained by the 'informal' dimensions of the social system. This assumption was based on my experience of Gambian dockers as largely illiterate and having greater empathy with the informal values and norms of the wider Gambian community. The second theoretical consideration concerns the diversity of the workforce. The assumption in that respect is that illiterate dockers and Western educated managers will have different perspectives on the influences of the 'informal' system on the employment relationship. As a result, the GPA would make a good setting for internal comparison and
triaration (Baumard and Ibert, 2001; Grenier and Josserand, 2001; Fetterman, 1998 and Brannen, 1996).

Although at the time I did not know of any, there might have been organisations of similar profile that meet these theoretical criteria. However, choice of organisational setting was also determined by some pragmatic considerations. In that regard, my tacit knowledge and experience, which accounted for the decision to do research in The Gambia instead of other SSA countries, also made the GPA a more attractive proposition. Although that experience and tacit knowledge, as I would explain later, had, to some extent, been a source of some undesirable attention during the fieldwork, I am convinced that without them, the field experience would have been less pleasant. My knowledge of the wider social context and the network of relationships that I had built while I worked at GPA were invaluable in terms of access and building trust, at a time when the political situation had put a premium on the latter. Gambians have become uncharacteristically less trusting of each other. Many attribute this to the current political situation. As one interviewee who declined to be on tape put it: 'Now-a-days, you have to be very careful what you say. Even if you say the truth, as longer some people think it is against the government, they will report you and you could be pick up and detain for a long period of time by the NIA (National Intelligence Agency)' (Interview Notes). Despite the advantage of personal experience and tacit knowledge, however, gaining access did not prove as easy as I had anticipated. But, even in that case, my knowledge of the social context and in particular the bureaucratic tradition and in The Gambia, had enabled me to carry on where individuals without such knowledge and empathy would have given up.
Negotiating Access

I started negotiations with the management of GPA for access in early September 2002 by way of an email to the Managing Director. At the time, I did not think a detail personal introduction was necessary because he was a former colleague and I thought we had a good working relationship. However, in the email I introduced my research with a brief and clear outline, and promised to follow the email with a formal letter of request for permission to enter his organisation and carry out research. Because of my experience of the bureaucratic tradition of The Gambia, I was not at all surprised that the email was not even acknowledged. Notwithstanding, by the end of September, I sent a formal letter of Request for permission to the Managing Director. At the same time, I sent a self-introduction letter to the officer of the government Commissioner of Labour. I had hoped that as the national agency for labour administration, the Department of Labour was a good starting point for investigating national level issues and arrangements for IR. Neither letter was acknowledged. Nevertheless, because of my personal knowledge and experience of the context and the manner of individuals I was dealing with, I was never seriously concerned so as to consider alternative settings. The sacking of the Managing Director and his replacement by an unfamiliar personality, further complicated negotiations with the GPA. At that point, I decided to use the well-tested and often reliable Gambian network of ‘informal’ channels in the form of influential friends and relatives. In the final analysis, although I did not receive any formal written permission, I was confident that once I arrived in The Gambia, I would be in a better position to
arrange access. That self-assurance, however, was based, fundamentally, on tacit knowledge of the social context and the general attitude of Gambian bureaucrats and organisational 'gate keepers'.

The Organisation

The GPA was established under the 1972 Ports Act as a statutory public enterprise with a mandate to manage and operate in any port in The Gambia, such facilities that are deemed to serve the public interest. Under the Act, the Authority was given a 'specific remit to maintain, improve and regulate the use of the Port of Banjul' (the principal port of The Gambia) and all the port facilities that were transferred to it under the Act (Felixstowe Port Consultant, 1997). Therefore, under the Act, as well as the Ports of Banjul, Kaur and Kuntaur (the latter two are the major provincial ports on the River Gambia), the GAP assumed regulatory and operational responsibilities for all the jetties along the river Gambia and all the ferries that operated along the river. In the context of the Structural Adjustment and Economic Recovery programme, the Public Enterprise (PE) Act 1989, a further legislation with relevance to the GAP was enacted. The most significant element of this Act, in relation to the current study, was the introduction of the performance contract system between government and public enterprises. The general implications of this policy have been briefly referred to in the literature chapter. With respect to IR and PM/HRM, its implications of the PE Act will be discussed in greater detail in chapters six and seven.
The management of the infrastructure and the facilities, and the cargo handling operations at the Port of Banjul constitute the most significant aspect of the Authority's undertakings. The Port is located on the estuary of the river Gambia, some 26 nautical miles from the Atlantic Ocean, on the south side of the city of Banjul - the main commercial and administrative centre of the country. The entrance channel from the ocean has a minimum draft of 8.5 metres and a maximum depth of 10 metres. Since 1997, an additional berth has been constructed to provide three aprons. Additional storage facilities (including a container terminal) have also been constructed. Currently, the port has a quay area of about 750 sq. metres with a fixed roro ramp, 38,000 sq. metres of open storage, and 3000 sq. metres of covered storage (GPA, 2002). It was estimated to handle about 1.5 million tonnes of cargo annually (Government of The Gambia, 2000). The GPA's own publications estimate the port has a container movement rate of 17 per hour and bagged and general cargo handling rate of 1000 tonnes per shift and 48 tonnes per gang hour respectively (GPA u/d).

The port of Banjul, as in most developing countries, is organised on the 'service port' model (Turnbull, 1999). Accordingly, the GPA controls all port activities, including the development and maintenance of infrastructure, superstructure, cargo handling and all the day-to-day-operations of the port. The object of Public Enterprise Act of 1989 was to give a more commercial orientation to the port's operations. As a result, the management of GPA was given some autonomy in return for meeting certain commercial and 'social' targets. Even so, management prerogatives were subject to central government control and veto.
The organisation is directly run by a so-called ‘management team’ headed by a Managing Director (who is also an executive member of the board of directors to which he is answerable). The rest of the team comprise of the Deputy Managing Director and four Directors of Human Resource, Finance, Traffic Operations and Maritime and Shipping Services, and their immediate assistants. The board is appointed by the head of state upon the recommendation of the line ministry (i.e. Department of State for Works and Infrastructure) and includes three non-executive members (one of whom serves as chairman), the permanent secretaries of the departments of Works and Finance (ex-officio members), and the Managing Director of the GPA. Clause IV.1 of the ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ (MOU) between the government of The Gambia and the Authority gives the Board responsibility ‘for the good governance and management of the Enterprise’. The same clause instructs the Board to ‘delegate’ the ‘day to day operations of the Enterprise’ to ‘management’ (GG, 1997).

The Authority directly employs about 400 people and has access to a pool of some 714 registered dockworkers for cargo handling operations. The former include employees of the Ferry Services and the Dockyard. Until recently, these two outfits were independent business entities operating as public enterprises. Currently they operate as subsidiaries of the GPA. The Dock labour force, on the other hand, is administered under the NDLS, which, in turn, is administered by the Department of Labour. The role of the GPA in the administration of the scheme is, to say the least, ambiguous. At the time of the fieldwork, the GPA’s relationship with the dockworkers’ union, was to say the
least, rather hostile. In terms of the main core data, these two categories of port employees constituted the main source of interview data.

5. V.2: Sampling and Sample Design

As in detective work, my sample selection was based on the principle that researchers involved in case studies must prove the credibility of their source(s) of evidence (Johnson, 1990). Fundamentally, the issue concerns the representativeness of selected samples. The sample selection was consistent with notions of ‘stratified/clumped, non-probability sampling design’ (Johnson, 1990), ‘theoretical sampling’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and/or ‘judgemental sampling’ (Fetterman, 1998), which are associated with qualitative social science research. Case studies – especially single-case studies, are often criticised for involving small sample sizes and being susceptible to selection bias (Silverman, 1993; and Bryman, 1989). This is the basis for critiques of ethnographic, case study research, as being idiosyncratic and therefore, not generalisable to a different or wider population (Bryman, 1989; and Royer and Zarlowswki, 2001). While it is true that case study research and non-probability sampling typically involve small sample sizes, single-case studies, according to Yin (1990), are generalisable to wider and different context. Yin’s argument is that when the objectives of the study are to test existing theories, apprehend unique phenomena and/or unravel phenomena that hitherto, had not been accessible, single-case studies represent a more appropriate strategy.
The question of replication, however, is not, on its own, a fundamental argument for my choice of sampling technique. The more fundamental motivation lies in the argument that in certain circumstances, theoretical objectives and practical realities of research make 'non-probability sampling' a more appropriate sample selection technique than 'random probability sampling' (Johnson, 1990). In terms of their respective advantage, Johnson notes:

'Probability sampling, under optimal conditions, yields the researcher a representative picture of various features of the population. Given valid theoretical assumptions, nonprobability sampling yields a small number of informants who provide representative pictures of aspects of information or knowledge distributed within the population' (1990: 23).

The content aspects of inquiry require access, description and explanation of 'representative pictures' that are central to this study. In that regard, the specific areas of inquiry concerned two issues: the character of the external factors in the social system, which influence the employment relationship; and the nature, current status and relative strengths of the organisations of the parties in the dock employment relationship. In general terms, my prior knowledge coupled with the literature has provided some basic understanding of the social system and its major broad dimensions (see Gamble, 1949; Gray, 1940; Quinn, 1972; Hodge, 1971; Klein, 1968; O'Brien, 1975). Government and official documents and publications of the respective organisations of the parties have provided some original insights into the 'formal' IR and PM system, at both national and organisational levels. These sources, however,
could not suffice for detailed insights into the substantive activities and perspectives of the actors, how and the extent to which their actions and views are influenced by different dimensions of the social system, and the social meanings that they attach to their actions and utterances.

For insights as to if and how workers' workplace relationships and interactions represent elaborations of the values and norms of the wider community, one needs to access the perspectives of ordinary workers and their observable actions in the workplace (see Titscher et al., 2000; and Silverman, 1993). As indicated earlier, there is an underlying theoretical assumption that levels of formal education and social standing moderate such perspectives and actions. This particular theoretical assumption was fundamental to the choice of deliberate 'judgemental' sample selection technique. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) argue that: 'in sampling people, a researcher works from a sociologically axiomatic base: in any human organisation, people stand in different relationships to the whole of that organisation, in some important respects probably viewing and using it differently; and that these differences can be gleaned from what people say and how they act (p. 14). The sampling design (see figure 5.2 below) is therefore based on the sociologically obvious base that different categories of actors in this IR drama have different levels of education and social standing. Consequently, therefore, they will have different takes on the IR and PM/HRM problems. Furthermore, their perceptions of the influences of the informal aspects of the social system on the employment relationship will also reflect their levels of education and social standing. As the empirical chapters
indicate, these assumptions have not, however, been entirely supported by the findings.

Figure 5.2: Sampling design?

Research objectives ← Sample clusters ← Theoretical objective/Issues of Inquiry

Cluster 1: Regular Staff
Management (8)
Reps Staff Association (2)
'Ordinary' employees (4)

Cluster 2: Dockworkers
Gang Foremen/Headmen (6)
'Ordinary' dockers of various categories (13)
Reps of Dockers' union (3)

Cluster 3: External sources
Government Officials (6)
Reps of General of General/umbrella unions (past and present) (6)
Religious & traditional community sources (3)
Employers' Reps (3)
Private Lab. Consultant (1)

Internal comparisons of Perspectives on Organisational level issues:
- Formal IR/PM Policies/practices
- Dock labour scheme
- Character of relationships
- Sources of influences on perspectives/behaviour
- Role of unions (dispute resolution, pay determination, work organisation & welfare)
- Managerial concerns (absenteeism, productive, extra organisational activities)
- Obligations to the community

Contrasts: Perspectives on social system (SS) & national IR/PM policy frameworks:
- Views on dimensions of the SS
- National Employment policy
- Informal system & national policy
- Evolutional in patterns of IR
- Contemporary IR (nature of influences & roles of the parties)
- Dock labour scheme

The sampling design is also based on the assumption that difficulties of understanding micro level cultural phenomena are also exacerbated in situations where divergent ethnic and status cultural assumptions define peoples' conceptions of reality and their actions in a given context (Brannen, 214)

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7 In some cases, an individual fall under more than one category of actors. For example, the Director of Traffic Operations is interviewed both as a management and staff representative category. Also, some of older dockers doubled as community and religious sources.
1996). The tension between workers of different tribal groups regarding the objectives and implications of certain traditional ceremonies (see chapter 8), for example, made it more difficult to suggest in aggregate terms, their views on that aspect of the informal system. Likewise, as expected, Religious and traditional community leaders held different views on the effects of ‘informal’ influences on organisational outcomes. The views of Community and religious leaders had, however, been very useful to building concepts of the extended family clan and Islamic orders and how they function. In that respect, what I was able to learn from them helped me to determine and explain, for example, how and to what extent managers also operated within the ‘informal’ systems. For their parts, senior government officials and managers gave insights into policy expectations, which when contrasted with those of ordinary workers, helped to gauge the difference between the substantive activities of ordinary workers and the expectations of the ‘formal’ rules and regulations. The clustered sampling design, therefore, reflected the theoretical necessity for contrasts of perspectives on ‘representative pictures’. And, how patterns in their mutual and separate evolution, both within and between the two levels (organisational and national), have been affected by the changing political and economic policy contexts. The strategy of ‘deliberate sampling for heterogeneity’ (Cook and Campbell, 1979 in Johnson, 1990: 23), therefore, is consistent with the theoretical objectives for contrast of perspectives and actions of the different categories of actors in this IR drama.

The underlying assumptions for the sampling design, therefore, are that there will be variability in perspectives and behaviour relating to the issues of inquiry. And, that these differences will be contingent on the degrees of
empathy that the respective categories of actors and individuals have with the value systems of the different dimensions of the social system. In the pre-field ‘sample wish list’, I had envisaged a ‘typology of informants’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987: 116) that would enable me to go beyond the superficial establishment of casual relationships between different value systems and discernable conceptions and behaviours (Turnbull, 1999). Rather, I aimed for informants whose perspectives and actions will allow for triangulation and whose knowledge of the context and phenomena of inquiry will enable me to get under the rhetoric of the formal organisation and gain deeper insights regarding the relevant issues and phenomena. I was, however, concerned that I do not pre-empt the outcomes of my investigations. Although the ‘sample wish list’ did prove useful, in the final analysis, sample selection was decided as the research progressed, determined by emerging themes and issues, current state of knowledge and my informed judgement as to how emerging issues and themes are best pursued and developed (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987; and Glaser and Strauss, 1967 on theoretical sampling). As with sampling, the entire empirical aspect of the research was guided by the principle of reflexivity, by luck and by accident.

5. V.3: Fieldwork

The fieldwork took place in The Gambia during a six-week period from 21st July to 28th August 2003. When I left for the fieldwork, the ‘little’ matter of access had not been resolved. Naturally, the first cause of action was to restart negotiations for access with the GPA and for an appointment with the Commissioner of Labour to discuss my research and how his department
might help. Initially, both the Managing Director and Commissioner proved rather illusive. And, the fact that my arrival coincided with the anniversary of the Military coup d'etat which brought the current government to power, did not help at all. When I finally met the Commissioner of Labour, he requested that I 'write a memorandum' detailing the objectives of my research and the 'a list of questions I need answers to'. In my memorandum, I outlined the main research ideas. Regarding his demand for 'a list of the questions I wish to ask', I made it clear that should he grant me an interview, 'I cannot guarantee that I will be asking the exact questions that I might put on a list'. I went further to explain that the nature of my research is such that subsequent questions generally emerge from responses to preceding one. Perhaps, as a result of that, even after receiving the memorandum he requested for, it took another two weeks and the personal intervention of his Permanent Secretary, before I was able to meet the Commission and his staff for formal interviews.

I had a similar experience with the GPA. When I was finally allowed a visit three days after initial contact after I arrived in The Gambia, the Managing Director was 'too busy' to see me. At least, that was what his Secretary told me. Instead, his Secretary said he had 'instructed' her 'to tell the HR Director to minute and send' the formal letter of "Request for permission" I sent to him some ten months ago, 'for his consideration' (Secretary to MD, GPA). Unfortunately, the Secretary could not 'recall where she had directed that particular letter' and suggested that I draft another letter. This was done and on Thursday 24th July 2003, I receive formal permission with the provision that all future matters relating to my research be referred to Human Resource and Administration Department.
Once inside, the informal network of relationships I had built while I worked in the organisation proved to be more relevant and important than any 'formal' arrangements. I sought old acquaintances and informal conversations with former colleagues of all categories, became important sources for identifying and accessing individuals 'who are especially sensitive to the phenomena and areas of concern' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987: 116-117). Although almost all these sources declined to go tape, they proved, importantly, to be very willing informants. There was, however, a down side to the relationship I developed with former associates that severely tested my determination, as it were, to be the 'intimate outsider'. At the time of the fieldwork, there was an on-going dispute between the Gambia Dockworkers Union (GDWU) and the GPA. In specific, conventional IR terms, the issues of dispute concerned, among other things, demands for increased and differential rates of pay for night work, social security and welfare payments and transportation (GDWU, Memorandum to Cabinet, 23/07/2003). These issues, however, were subsumed under the all-embracing dispute/debate concerning the reform of the National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS). As this dispute/debate falls under the remit of the of the national IR system, the issues that arose from it had significant bearings for the direction of this research.

In that respect, some of the emerging issues did not only necessitate changes to the draft 'sample wish list' and interview schedule, they also tested my own objectivity as a researcher. At times I had the impression that some of my former associates were not able to dissociate my position as a colleague (albeit a former one), and my current role as a basic researcher. And, like them, I
struggled to draw a line between my personal relationships and professional role as a researcher (Bell and Newby, 1977). As if my views on the dispute counted for anything other than the objectives of my research agenda, former associates on both sides gave me the flattering impression that my sympathy for their respective positions do really matter. The contest for my ‘allegiance’ was unrelenting and sometime, even disturbing. Managers arranged interviews for me with dockers who were their allies and vacated their ‘Air conditioned’ offices (a luxury in the hot and humid summer), for me to carryout interviews. For their part, officials of the dockworkers’ unions invited me to their private strategy meetings and gave me access to material that they considered ‘confidential’. Like Laura Bohannan in Return to Laughter (1964 cited in Bell and Newby, 1977), I quickly learned to play one side against another in a bid to build further trust on both sides and gain access to their respective inner sanctums of power and influence.

In a way, I succeeded in doing that but at some cost. I had access to meetings and some very useful and supposedly ‘confidential’ material that I might not have had access to. In the process, however, like Laura Bohannan ‘I had allowed myself to become too absorbed’ in their affairs (1964: 156 cited in Bell and Newby, 1977: 15). It is for others to decide if and to what extent I have succeeded in rescuing myself from that position in terms of the objectivity of my reporting. This dispute and some of the issues arising from it also had implications for substantive aspects of the data collection process, including continuous reflections on the pre-field draft interview guide and amendments to the ‘sampling wish list’.
3. V. 4: Data Collection: Interviews and Official Documents

Notwithstanding the ‘sample wish list’, the aim was to interview as many informants in each category as is possible given the constraints under which my informants and I had to operate. Unfortunately, a bit too often, potentially useful informants were not available for interviews and even when they were, the rather intimidating political environment proved a major constraint on their willingness to discuss some important issues. Consequently, accessing official documents, including some of the so-called ‘confidential material’ proved very useful. Not, as Baumard and Ibert (2001: 76) suggests, as a mechanism for limiting ‘interaction with the field’, but rather, as complementary means of gaining insight into the issues of interest.

The core data collection was mainly by way of ‘semi-structured’ interviews using open-ended questions. As indicated earlier, pre-field preparations included the development of an interview schedule including two sets of questions. The schedule was not intended as rigid standardised procedures. Instead, it was intended to encapsulate the issues I intended to cover. In that regard, it reflected my conception of the ‘foreshadowed problems’ and key research questions that require theoretical answers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1987). The schedule was indeed useful as a starting point as it guided me through the initial stages of the empirical research. By the beginning of the second week, however, the research process had assumed a pattern of ‘dialectic interplay of data collection and data analysis’ (Hammerssley & Atkinson, 1995: 205). As a result, the draft interview schedule and its sets of
questions required constant revisions to articulate emerging issues and themes throughout the period of fieldwork.

The two draft sets of questions that comprised the schedule were directed at two main categories of actors – managers/employers and ordinary employees (especially dockworkers). Varying the questions was intended to serve comparative and representative purposes, whereby responses can be compared and categorised 'in the context of commonality' or differences 'of beliefs or themes' (Fetterman, 1998: 38). The open-ended character of the questions and predominantly informal and conversational nature of the actual interviews reflected my position as the 'intimate outsider'. In theoretical terms, the 'semi-structured' and informal conversational approach indicated my agreement with Fetterman that this is 'most valuable when the researcher understands the fundamental of a community from an emic perspective' (1998: 38). Although informal conversational types of interviews can be difficult to control and are susceptible to generate 'contaminated' data (Fetterman, 1998: 39), their ability to 'stimulate respondents to talk more' and on their own terms (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987: 113), was an overriding concern. With the exception of few that took place at the department of Trade, Industry and Employment (DoSTIE) and the office of the Commissioner of Labour, most of the interviews were conducted on the premises of the GPA during the day and on some nights. Although most of the night interviews were carried out when dockers were on their breaks, managers were generally willing to give employees breaks to be interviewed. Representatives of Shipping agencies and government official were generally interviewed in their respective offices and community and religious leaders were interviewed in
their homes at different times of the day (depending on what is convenient for the interviewee). The researcher conducted all the interviews in three main languages – English, Mandinka and Wolof. On average, sessions lasted about 25 minutes.

A total of 62 ‘formal’ interviews involving 55 individuals and a number of unaccounted informal conversations were carried out during the six-week period. 7 of the formal interviews were repeats or follow-ups involving key actors and informants. They included: the Director of Human Resources, the manager of cargo handling operations, former and present Secretary Generals of The Gambia Maritime and Dockworkers’ Union, 2 senior government officers, and two gang bosses with some 75 years experience between them. Unfortunately, almost all the interviewees declined to be on tape citing unspecified ‘political’ and ‘security’ reasons. Only 6 interviewees (all of them ordinary dockworkers) were willing to go on tape. As a result, interview sessions were made a bit more difficult because of continuous note taking during sessions and reconstruction immediately following interview sessions. To ensure that the report reflects the ‘rich tapestry’ of native views, interviewees were asked to repeat responses that could be used, as ‘quotes’ that would enrich the qualitative presentation of the findings.

5. V.5: Data Analysis

In the final analysis, the usefulness and relevance of any research undertaking, be in theoretical or practical terms, depends very much on how collected data is analysed to arrive at research conclusions. This exercise, like
data collection, is driven by the research objectives and related theoretical debates and themes of the research (Allard-Poesi et al, 2001; Hartley, 1994; and Yin, 1989). In other words, 'in essence', the research 'problem or its definition is the driving force' that determines the research analysis (Fettermann, 1998: 3). It should be obvious that this study will have very little need for statistical techniques of data analysis. Usually, case studies of this type employed content or discourse techniques of data analysis (Allard-Poesi et al 2001). Allard-Poesi, however, qualifies this position arguing that statistical techniques can be used to analyse qualitative data and so can quantitative data be analysed using qualitative analytical techniques. The point of this qualification is that the coherence of analysis and the value and relevance of research conclusions are determined by the extent to which one's chosen analytical approach is in tune with her/his objectives and underlying assumptions. These do not only determine the categories, themes and concepts around which data is organised, but they also determine one's levels of analysis (Titscher et al, 2000; Fettermann, 1998; and Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The specific themes and concepts around which data is categorised are spelt out in table 5.1 below.
### Table 3.1: Coding: Analytical Framework of Empirical chapters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empirical Chapter</th>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Themes/Issues</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Level IR Frameworks: A historically Contextualised Account of Key Actors' perspective</td>
<td>Interviews: Senior managers, Union officials (past/present) and Govt Officials (past/present)&lt;br&gt;Published: Central government, Trade union and organisational policy documents and publications</td>
<td>• Disruptions and continuities in patterns of IR&lt;br&gt;• Influences on changing patterns&lt;br&gt;• HRM&lt;br&gt;• Social control&lt;br&gt;• The common good&lt;br&gt;• Social partnership&lt;br&gt;• Relative power/influence of the parties&lt;br&gt;• Limitations of formal structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Organisational Frameworks</td>
<td>Interview: All categories of employees; Government officials&lt;br&gt;Observation: limited&lt;br&gt;Published sources: Government and organisational documents and publications</td>
<td>• Workplace relationships/Interactions&lt;br&gt;• External sources of Influence&lt;br&gt;• Illusions of formality&lt;br&gt;• Rhetoric of HRM reality of PM&lt;br&gt;• Role of organised labour in the employment relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal System: Employees and Managers as ‘mother’s Children’ and ‘Brethren’</td>
<td>Interview: All categories of workers (especially dockers); State officials; Community and religious leaders and opinion shapers</td>
<td>• Society&lt;br&gt;• The ‘family’&lt;br&gt;• Relatives&lt;br&gt;• ‘Aarda’ (tradition/culture)&lt;br&gt;• ‘Dina’ (religion)&lt;br&gt;• Obligations and expectations&lt;br&gt;• Values&lt;br&gt;• Respect and elders&lt;br&gt;• Sharing&lt;br&gt;• Looking after each other</td>
</tr>
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The ‘representative pictures’ of the phenomena of inquiry are viewed at two levels of analysis – national structures and regulatory frameworks for IR and ‘formal’ policies frameworks for employment relations at the organisational level. These are the focus of empirical chapters 6 and 7. The final and core empirical chapter focuses on the informal system and its influence on actors'
actual conceptions and conduct of their employment relationship. In that respect, however, that level of analysis also highlights some perspectives on 'formal' national and organisational level arrangements. These perspectives generally question the hegemony of the nation state as the only dimension of the social system that matters as an influence on the employment relationship. The overriding consideration throughout the study concerned the scrupulous need for reflexivity. Accordingly, unlike most research, whereby analysis follows data collection, here, data collection and analysis were simultaneous research activity (Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 1987). The focus of analysis in this study is the 'perspectives' of the actors and givers of information and therefore, as the researcher, I tried to avoid be considered 'defendant and jury' (Baumard and Ibert, 2001: 76). The empirical accounts are also about the voices that rendered those accounts as evidence of their views on the issues of inquiry. In effect, the analysis of their perspective is central to what the study was intended to find out, in substantive terms. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1987):

'Besides contributing to sociological theory, perspective analysis also aids our assessment of the validity of information provided by an account. The more effectively we can understand the account and its context – who produced it, for whom, and why – the better we are able to anticipate the ways in which it may suffer from biases of one kind or another as a source of information' (p. 107).

The credibility of this research, in terms of its substantive objective, rests, ultimately, on the credibility of the accounts presented in the empirical
chapters as 'native viewpoints'. The final section of this chapter outlines the pattern of reporting and the theoretical rationale behind it.

5. V.6: Reporting

In the accounts that are presented in the following empirical chapters, I aim for two main objectives. Firstly, to provide detailed descriptions and explanations that will do justice to the complexities of the phenomena of research. Secondly, I wish to give an assessment as to the extent to which these complexities are accounted for in existing IR and PM theories and practices concerning SSA in general and in particular, The Gambia. In the pursuit of these objectives, new themes and concepts had emerged that were not expected. These themes and concepts have been considered and discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis, as the basis for new assumptions about the IR and PM/HRM problems of SSA and how they might be resolved.

These accounts constitute the view of the actors in this particular employment relationships and individuals with informed insights on the social context and issues of research. For insight on the 'informal' social context, the thesis relies on data from community leaders, religious scholars and, to a limited extent, a 'Social commentator'. Although use of data from the latter source has been limited, I am particularly concerned about the methodological implications of using data from a 'social commentator'. Yet, I refer to such data on the grounds that a 'social commentator' does not carry the same meaning in The Gambia as it might in Western contexts. In the African context in general, but particularly in the context of investigating and understanding the nuances of
the informal dimensions of the social system, a ‘social commentator’ derives from the element of society that serves as custodians of the traditions and oral history of the indigenous element of society. Data from this source, however, is not privileged over and above others. The significance of this source lies in the fact that a ‘social commentator’, as the terms applies here, refers to individuals who by virtue of their traditional status as ‘praise singers’ and oral historians, are deemed to have useful insights on the informal aspects of the social system that concern the current study. But, even in that context, data from this source is not used without critical consideration. For in so far as this study is concern, the views of this informant represent merely one take on the phenomena of investigation. They are therefore, checked against data from other sources (such as traditional community leaders), who also have some empathy with the normative paradigms of traditional Gambia society.

The views of the various actors and other informants were collected mainly through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, triangulated with data collected through analysis of official government and organisational documents and publications. The fact that these documents and publications contain data that represent the official view made them good sources for contrast against individual and group perspectives from the main interview data. On the whole, the following accounts of research findings reflect the extent to which there is convergence/divergence between the actors (employees, Managers/employers and Bureaucrats), as to what constitutes the specific philosophical position regarding the IR systems and PM/HRM policy frameworks in The Gambia. The rhetoric of actors/informants reflect the inherent divergence, as well as convergence in the underlying values and
interests that shape their conceptions and actions regarding their workplace and work related relationships. Despite the divergence arising from their respective positions as ordinary workers and managers, the two categories of actors share some perspectives on the 'informal' system. That pattern of convergence is a result of their relationships as 'mothers' children' and 'brethren'. They attend each other's naming ceremonies and funerals because as one of them put, 'we all come from a family and belong to the same social system' (Interview notes: Senior manager, GPA). Notwithstanding, managers/employers and ordinary workers differ significantly on issues basically as a result of their respective degrees of empathy with the 'informal' system. Managers and government bureaucrats, for example, speak of traditional naming and initiation ceremonies as 'lacking in any added value' (Interview Notes: Senior Secretary, DoSTIE). For their part, a senior docker summed up the position of ordinary workers when he remarked: 'what you Western educated people call wastefulness; we call it our aarda (tradition) and dinaa (faith) (Interview Notes). The key issue concerns why and how they have come to develop divergent perspectives on shared national and organisational arrangements that are expected to govern a very important and specific, and to some extent, shared aspect of their lives.

Doing justice to the complexity of the issues involved requires a holistic understanding and in depth accounts of relevant phenomena. It is not sufficient to say that traditional African values are not conducive for good practice. Nor, however, it is sensible to argue for the incorporation of elements of the 'African thought system' without specifying why those elements are important to different actors and without tracing the origins of those elements
and the underlying values systems that legitimise and sustain them. Some insight into the latter is particularly required to sustain any hybrid organisational forms that might emerge from such incorporation. That also requires a critical presentation of native accounts whereby individual accounts represent useful checks against each other. Accounts are therefore significant to the extent that they help to build a picture of ‘consistent tendencies’ as well as, present unique but theoretically significant perspectives that may be representative of the views of any particular group of respondents (see Greene, 1999: 126). As a result, although the ‘native views’ that are presented in the empirical chapters are mainly illustrated by quotations that are more widely shared by respondents of different categories, where necessary, significant departures from the general trend are noted and illustrated.

The focus has almost always been on the perceptions and actions of individuals and groups regarding ‘formal’ regulatory and institutional arrangements that are intended to govern their employment relationship. Consequently, data that constitute the basis for these accounts is predominantly qualitative. While there are instances where quantitative data (largely from official documents and publications) are used to illustrate and clarify issues (e.g. number of dockworkers and their age profile), the use of quantitative measurements is kept to the very minimum. This is especially because the object of these accounts is not to compare numbers or proportions of individuals holding different perspectives. Rather, they are intended ‘to gain a general feel of the predominant frame of reference, orientation and to focus on the qualitative substance of the evidence’ (Greene 1999: 127). The ideal ethnographic tradition requires dependence on ‘native’ perspectives as
the basis for developing 'thick description' of phenomena (Geertz, 1973). However, in this case, due to the nature and character of the political context, the 'voices' of managers and government bureaucrats are treated with some caution. This is because while they may on occasion reflect personal views, on the whole, they tended to emphasise the official line and as a result, resonate with views and positions already highlighted in official documents and publications.

5. VI: Conclusion

Themes, issues and concepts that are related to the research agenda set out in chapter one, resonate through all the empirical chapters. The detailed examination and explanation of the major findings, in relation to existing theories and debates, however, are made in the concluding chapter of the thesis. Accounts of empirical findings begin with an overview of the regulatory and institutional framework for IR in The Gambia from a historical perspective in chapter 6. The aims of this chapter are: to identify patterns in the continuity regarding colonial IR structures and processes; elucidate on the circumstances and moments that represent interruptions to that system; and render an account of actors' perspectives on historic and contemporary patterns of IR in The Gambia. In chapter 7, the focus shifts to the 'formal' organisational level policies and routines for IR and PM/HRM. Formal organisational policies and processes are generally gleaned from organisational documents concerning general personnel management and employee welfare matters. For employees and managerial perspectives on formal policies and practices, however, the account focuses on the main
interview data from managers and regular employees of the GPA. The third and final empirical chapter represents accounts of actors' perspectives on the core issues of research. These include: The nature of the 'informal' dimensions of the social system and their peculiar forms of social organisation, relationships and interactions; how patterns of these 'informal' relationships and alternative forms of social organisations are brought into the formal organisation and manifested in the attitudes and actions of actors; and what are the views of the actors regarding the consequences of 'informal' influences for the employment relationship and overall organisational outcomes.

The final chapter summaries the thesis and highlights its main conclusions. The chapter also draws together the themes and concepts that emerge from the literature and actors accounts that form the empirical chapters and discusses them in terms of the relevant academic debate concerning IR and organisational management in SSA. In that regard, it also presents the model for IR and PM/HRM for SSA that emerged from the study.
Chapter Six

National Level Industrial Relations System: Historically contextualised Account of Actors’ Perspectives

Introduction

This chapter presents an account of the perspectives of major actors on formal institutional and regulatory arrangements for IR in The Gambia. These perspectives are contextualised in a historical framework of patterns of IR, beginning with the colonial period when existing ‘formal’ structures and enabling regulations were introduced to the Gambian context. In that regard, the objectives of the chapter are to highlight patterns of continuity and moments of disruption, and their implications for existing national IR structures and processes. The continuities and disruptions are highlighted in the context of the presence of imprints of colonial innovations and cultures, changes in the formal policy environment, and social changes, particularly in the form of the re-emergence of elements of pre-colonial authority relationship patterns. Accordingly, some perspectives reflect continuities in pluralist patterns of Industrial relations that represent The Gambia’s colonial heritage. These colonial patterns exist alongside unitarist forms Employee Involvement (EI) and ‘social partnership’, which represent disruptions brought about, largely, by the intervention of International agencies.

I have argued that the hegemony of the nation state and its institutional and regulatory arrangements over actors’ conceptions and conduct regarding the
employment relationship is contested (see chapter 2: I). It follows, therefore, that changes in the formal policy environment cannot, alone, account for changes and/or continuities in formal administrative and management systems. For that reason, the chapter also looks at the role of the indigenous and Islamic value systems of the wider community, in the changing political context and their implications for actors' perspectives regarding the evolution of national level IR systems. The roles of the 'informal' value systems are discussed in greater detail in chapter 8, where the focus is on the interface of organisational and inter-personal level conceptions and activities concerning workplace relationships and interactions. Therefore, in terms of the influences of the informal value systems, this chapter is only concerned with actors' accounts in relation to the role of the 'informal' system in changes in patterns of 'formal' national level IR.

The argument has been made elsewhere (see chapter 2: I), that the tendency to associate the failures of the modern nation state in SSA with indigenous forms of social interaction, is based on distorted typifications. This thesis is not intended to be an apology for 'traditional' African cultures and values. The construct of Gambian society as a 'social system', therefore helps to make the point that while the nation state may be lacking in hegemony, it is unrealistic to expect, or for that matter assume, that contemporary African societies can reclaim unadulterated forms of their pre-colonial values and social systems. Analysis of any contemporary phenomena, therefore, must be in the context of a sort of hybrid social system of different, but also complementary social aspects.
It is from that theoretical view of SSA society as a social system that this chapter attempts to present a holistic account of key actors’ perspectives on the national level institutional and regulatory arrangements for IR. Their views are triangulated with data from official documents and publications, to render an account on the evolution of IR patterns in The Gambia since the colonial period. What emerges is that in the context of a ‘hybrid’ social system, exclusively focusing on the ‘formal’ and formality will provide misleading and partial pictures of what ever it is one aims of understand. The focus of the chapter is on the main interview data, supported and given context with information from official documents and publications, limited amount of observation, and my tacit knowledge of the issues from an emic advantage.

The accounts in this chapter are reported in a manner consistent with what is highlight in the final section of the preceding chapter. Accordingly, individual accounts represent useful sources of contrast of views on the IR system in its various stages of evolution. Accounts that help to build a picture of consistent tendencies are important and will be highlighted. But so also, will unique perspectives that may be representative of the views of any particular group of actors. As a result, ‘native views’ are mainly illustrated by quotations that are more widely shared by respondents representing the different parties in the employment relationship. However, where necessary, significant departures from the general trend are noted and illustrated (see Greene, 1999: 126).

The chapter begins with a review of IR in the colonial context. The aim is to elucidate on the nature and circumstances for the introduction of national IR frameworks. That way, I hope to identify and locate the points of disruption
that allowed for the emergence of the different perspectives on the IR system and expectations of the actors regarding national level arrangements for governing the employment relationship. This will form the basis for detailed accounts of actors' perspectives on the evolution of the IR system in The Gambia. These perspectives are discussed in a framework of changes in the political and economic policy context since Independence in 1965. The chapter highlights patterns of IR in four political and economic contexts: the colonial period (1929-1965); the immediate post-colonial context (1965-1985); economic recovery and structural adjustment environment (1985-1994) and, in the contemporary political and economic context (1994-present). The framework is defined in terms of economic and political changes in the 'formal' system. However, any changes in the economic and political policy environment are only relevant, insofar as they relate to actors' perspectives and expectations of the IR system.

6.1: Industrial Relations in The Gambia: A Historical Perspective

Industrial Relations systems in SAA are, almost without exception, colonial inventions (see Roper, 1958; Damachi et al., 1979; Cooper, 1983, 1987). Although some knowledge of pre-colonial forms of labour relations, described by one elderly dockworker as being 'consistent with our traditional values of harmonious relationships and mercifulness' (Interview Notes), may be useful, existing structures and regulatory arrangements that the focus of actors' perspective, are, as I have

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8In Studies in the Development of Capitalism London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1963:11), Dobb has argued that elements of present can always be discerned from the past and as a result, it is necessary to reflect on the past in order to have a better and more holistic comprehension of the present.
argued elsewhere, in essence, all colonial inventions. This historical perspective, however, is more about evolution in the rhetoric rather than substance of IR. The Gambia’s ‘Social partnership’ model (figure 6.1) indicates that the existing IR system is also, largely, an imitation of British and European frameworks of IR and labour administration. In that regard, the thesis that Industrial relations systems in former colonies were influenced, and continue to reflect those of the former colonial powers (Damachi et al, 1979) is supported. It is for that reason that this chapter begins with accounts of perspectives on colonial labour administration and IR in The Gambia. To understand the present conjunction with respect to IR, however, it is useful for a historical perspective to take the form of comparative accounts of views on the state of IR in the colonial, immediate post-colonial and contemporary contexts.

Fig. 6.1: Framework of IR: The Gambia’s Social Partnership Model

![Diagram of Social Partnership Model]

Figure 6.2 below is a summary of changing political and economic contexts since independence and their implications for IR as seen by some key actors. It is intended, as I indicated earlier, to help locate, examine and explain the circumstances and points of disruption that allowed for the emergence of new rhetoric and perspectives on IR at the national level. In terms of the differences between the ‘traditional’ conceptions of IR as an aspect of
Personnel management (representing continuity) and HRM aspects of 'employment relations', this historical perspective takes the position that the difference between the two notions of the employment relationship is 'historically contingent' (Kaufman, 2003: 21).

Fig. 6.1: Political and Economic contexts and the changing Patterns in IR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political/Economic context</th>
<th>Underlying Policies &amp; Patterns of IR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1929-1965:</strong> Colonial context; economy dominated by Foreign Private Trading Houses.</td>
<td>Colonial Development Act (1929): Creation and development joint IR structures and enabling legislation; Institutionalisation of protest through Unions; IR as instrument of liberation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1965-1985:</strong> Political independence and the Cold war; creation of Public enterprises as the centre piece of development strategy</td>
<td>Expansion in public sector employment, marginalisation of joint IR structure, promotion and enactment labour unfriendly legislation and the re-emergence of and increase influence indigenous political authority structures and relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1985-1994:</strong> Economic reforms and Structural adjustment; increased involvement of Multi-national Financial Agencies in the formulation of economic and social policies</td>
<td>Introduction of neo-liberal macro-economic and management policies and strategies; private sector led economic and social development agenda; decrease in the role of the State in economic activity; call for greater participation in public governance; introduction of the rhetoric of HRM and continuing marginalisation of joint IR structures and Organised labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1994-Present:</strong> The second republic, new political dispensation and new international associations and engagements</td>
<td>New long-term economic and social policy initiatives, Private sector still the main focus of development policy, engagement with the ILO and the rhetoric of 'Social partnership' as underlying principle for IR.</td>
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Parts of The Gambia came under British rule as early as 1816 and with the formal partition of Africa, in the late 19th century; The Gambia became a British colonial possession. However, as elsewhere in British Africa, the passing of the Colonial Development Act (1929) represented the beginning of formal colonial intervention in the employment relationship in The Gambia (see Roper, 1958, Ruslan, 1954; HMSO, 1941). The institutions and regulatory
arrangements introduced by that Act represent Gambia’s colonial legacy and their continuing relevance represent continuity in patterns of IR. The Colonial development Act created formal IR structures and Policies in The Gambia. It legislated for the creation of the Labour Department with an Inspectorate that had direct responsibility for labour administration, including the creation and development of British type Industrial relations institutions and structures, including Trade Unions (TUs). The first Gambian Trade Union - the Bathurst Union9, was established and registered in 1933. This was followed by the Gambia Labour Union in early 1937 and later that year, the River and Commercial Workers’ Union (the forerunner of the present Maritime and Dockworkers’ movement), was registered (see Roper, 1958; HMSO, 1941). Although the act provided for the creation of joint IR forums and structures, the institutional development of these structures and forums effectively started after the War. A Labour Advisory Committee and a Minimum Wage Committee, with legal powers to enforce its decisions, and comprising of employers, unions and government representatives, was established in 1948 to replaced the Minimum wage Order that was in place during the War. A year later, Whitley Councils were established for some public sector services10 (HMSO, 1949).

Despite changes in social contexts, and political and economic policy environments since the independence, these institutions and structures have remained (albeit they may be less relevant). The section immediately

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9 Until early 1970s, the Gambia capital was called Bathurst. It was named after Earl Bathurst the Colonial Secretary in 1816 when British settled the Island of St Mary, on which the capital is located.
10 These are imitations of Whitley Committees empowered to determine sector minimum wage levels.
following is about actors’ perspectives on IR in the colonial era, their views on relative roles of their respective organisations during that period, and the relative relevance of these institutions and structures for the conduct of the employment relationship.

6. II: Support, Tolerance and Protest: IR in the colonial context

Changes brought about by the colonial encounter, from customary to commercialised societies, necessitated, as Roper (1958) noted, the creation of new forms of economic and social relationships throughout Africa. However, Roper (1958: 9) also observed that the extent to which ‘new’ modes of economic and social relationship should imitate patterns in Europe is a contested issue. Yet, some of those who advocated for Trade unionism in Africa, at the time, genuinely believed that Trade unionism can ‘guarantee against abuses resulting from undefined authority and subordination’ (Roper, 1958: 9). In the case of The Gambia, however, two main factors militated against the effective pursuit of that objective. Firstly, economic change did not keep pace with political development in terms of levels of education and as result, the requisite level of political sophistication was lacking (see chapter 3). Secondly, because of its small size and apparent lack of resources, the Gambian economy was not able to generate the level of waged employment that could sustain viable Trade union organisations. As a result, although capitalist modes of production and economic activity were introduced to the area as early as middle 17th century, it was only in the early 1920s that indigenous peoples started expressing serious forms of political consciousness. In 1924, for example, on the basis of the standard imperial
view of the lack of democratic maturity, the Colonial Secretary rejected calls for the creation of representative institutions in The Gambia. He argued that ‘education and political consciousness had not reached a level to make the elective principle viable’ (GG, Confidential Correspondence, 1924). In terms of employment creation capacity, by the end of the 1950s, The Gambia had fewer than 5000 individuals classified as waged employees. Of that figure only 3 percent was classified as paid-up Trade Union members (HMSO, 1960; also see Roper, 1958).

The creation of Trade unions and the encouragement of Trade unionism, therefore, did not reflect any political foresight on the part of colonial administrators. Rather, it was a capitalist strategy, intended as a form of institutionalising protest as a mechanism of social control (see Cooper, 1987, 1983; and Damachi et al, 1979). Colonial IR systems were, therefore, founded on the pluralist notion of managing conflict by institutionalising it (see Fox, 1966; Marchington et al, 1992). Organised labour, however, as one senior labour official put it: ‘was and is lacking in numbers and organisational capacity’ (Interview Notes). Colonial officials and entrepreneurs believed, however, that there was need to socialise indigenous workers into a ‘working class’ and for that purpose, Trade unions were viewed as potential alternatives to indigenous forms of social organisation (Cooper, 1987, 2000). That belief provided the motivation for encouraging Trade unionism and giving union leaders the necessary clout and influence by way of membership of joint IR structures and forums. Union membership, therefore, was never a useful indicator of the power and influence of organised labour. It was their capacity as Movements, capable of rallying workers round employment related, as well
as broader social and political issues relating to colonialism and the 'struggles' against it, which made colonial Trade unionism a powerful and potent force for liberation. The acquisition of such powers and influence, however, depended, in the first instance, on a tolerant and encouraging colonial government. Although the motives of colonial governments, as Roper (1958) observed, are not always altruistic, former Trade union officials have nostalgic memories of 'the days when government use to consult and listen to the unions' (Interview notes: Ex Union official). A former activist believes ‘workers and ordinary people considered union leaders to be very powerful because they sat on the important government institutions and had easy access to senior colonial officers’ (Interview notes: Former Union Activist). In its relationship with organised labour, however, it would appear that the colonial state was focused on individuals rather than organisations. For ‘Once their leaders became politicians, unions lost their importance among ordinary workers’ (Interview: Ex labour official).

The fact that most Union leaders assumed political roles following independence reflects the role of trade unions in the post-War independence movement. That Ghana (a relatively smaller colony compared to Nigeria), recorded twice as many strikes as Nigeria in the late 1950s (see chapter 3), indicates that Union activity in British West African, at the time, reflected the intensity of indigenous demands and struggles for political independence. Although Gambia’s small size might have accounted for the very few instances of strikes in that country, it may also be that the limited number of strikes reflects the very low intensive nature of the anti-colonial struggle in the country.
Yet, some of those who took part in the events that undoubtedly marked the zenith of Trade unionism in colonial Gambia refer to their actions in the terms of the ‘struggle for self-determination and political representation’ (Interview: Former Union Activist). The four-day strike (24 to 28 January 1961) organised by the Gambia Workers’ Union (GWU) and involving daily-paid workers in the capital, Bathurst (now Banjul), represents, arguably, the most significant event in Gambian trade union folklore. Records indicate that at the time, a wage claim by the GWU had been brought before the Commercial Joint Industrial Council (CJIC) for negotiation (ILO, 1961; HMSO, 1960). In a deposition to the ILO Committee of Freedom of Association, the government claimed that workers’ representatives did not give ‘notice of any intended strike action ... at any Joint Council meeting’ (ILO, 1961: 1). If that was the formal rule, however, there were indications, even before the strike formally began on 24th January that certain categories of workers were not intending to play by it. A week before the strike began, Dockworkers at the Port of Bathurst, which, also, turned out to be the main focus of the strike action, ‘refused to work on vessels belonging to certain trading Agencies’ (Interview: Former Docker and ‘Union organiser’). The high point of the strike was the invasion of the dock by workers during which the Secretary General of the GWU was arrested. In a deposition to the ILO, the British government alleged that the union leader was arrested and detained because ‘he took part in an illegal procession’ during which strike workers forced their way ‘into the Marine Dockyard, where government staff were attacked and injured’ (ILO, 1961: 1). TUs, naturally, do not share that view of the events late January 1961. The current Secretary General of the GWU, for example, believes that the arrest and detention of his predecessors ‘was nothing but an illegal act on the part of the
government'. He noted however, that the incident 'helped to bring the plight of Gambian workers to the attention of the United Nations and Trade Unions in other parts of the world' (Interview notes).

In terms of its outcome, some of those who participated in the strike agreed with the view of current leadership of the GWU that the strike was 'very good for the image of Trade unionism in The Gambia' (Interview: Ex Official, GWU). International reaction, however, does not entirely support that view. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, for example, agreed with the British government that the strike was illegal and the arrest of the Union leader was as a result of 'incidents arising in the course of a public procession for which the police had refused permission for reasons of public safety' (ILO, 1961: 2; see also HMSO, 1960). Union representatives, however, do not only dispute the illegality of the strike, but also point to a number developments, which suggest the strike had some good and tangible outcomes for their members. According an Ex Union official, they [workers] decided to take strike action because 'after four weeks of negotiations we realised that they' (the Government and employers) 'were wasting our time so we called for strike action and started demonstrating without permission' (Interview Notes). As to whether their demands were met, he claimed the strike 'brought big dividend' and proved that 'the union was here to stay'.

In terms of tangible outcomes, he said: 'daily wage was increased from 4 Shillings to about 7 Shillings, we received free transportation and sick leave entitlements and annual leave was increased from 10 to 14 days'. For the current Secretary General of the GWU, however, the strike was the reflection of 'the central role Unions played in the fight to end colonialism'. Accordingly, for him:
'The most significant result of the events of January 1961 was that the Union's reputation among workers was enhanced and it proved to the colonial government that our union had the influence and organisational capacity to fight for the rights of its members and play a leading role in the liberation of the people of this country' (Interview Notes).

For that reason, 'the political history of our country will never be completed without a genuine documentation of the role of organised labour' (Ex Official, Gambia Teachers' Union). It does appear that at the time, many ordinary indigenous Gambians also associated Trade unionism with the anti-colonial struggle. The 1961 strike and the man who led it, for example, have been immortalised in songs that constitute part of the Independence movement folklore. One such song talks of the bravery of the union leader and the cowardice of the colonial governor who was so 'scared at the sight of the union leader that he escaped to London in search of help from the Queen' (Interview: Local Historian). Recalling the strike, the local historian who is also a traditional praise singer, claimed that 'ordinary citizens who also depended on the wages of employed relatives joined thousands of workers and brought the capital to a stand still' (Interview Notes). There is no documentary evidence, however, as to the number of workers who took part in the strike. Considering that only 3 percent of the estimated 5,000 waged employees were classified as Trade union members, such estimates should be taken, as it were, 'with a pinch of salt'. The point such comments and estimates help to make, though, is that for many Gambians, the strike was and still is perceived of in the context of the struggles for self-rule. There is no indication, however, that in the aftermath of this apparent falling out (between Trade unions and their main benefactor – the colonial administration), the government took any steps to curb the powers and influence of Organised labour. Instead, in the
years leading to Independence in 1965, unions remained to be the most organised urban force in the Independence movement. Notwithstanding, they continued to enjoy relative independence and maintained their representations on all the joint Industrial relations structures and processes. As one former activist put it, 'although the relationship between some unions leaders and the government was not as cordial, government officials continued to recognise and accept us as the representatives of Gambian workers' (Interview: Ex Union Activist). In effect, Trade union leaders were new forms of native authority created by colonial rulers for their own ends. These leaders, however, went on to develop lives of their own and real positions of authority in Gambian society.

Actors' accounts, however, indicated that Union leaders had not been very successful in carrying over the authority and influence they demonstrated during the colonial period, to the post-colonial context. Their failure, however, cannot be solely attributed to the relationship between labour and the post-colonial government. It also had to do with the overall relevance of the colonial IR system for the new political and social context. The following section discusses that context in term of fundamental changes in economic philosophy and the nature of power and its distribution within post-colonial Gambian society. Needless to say, these changes had implications for developments in patterns of IR (see Dunlop, 1970). To tease out moments of disruptions and elements that represent them in relations to continuing patterns of colonial IR, the post colonial context is divided into the immediate post-colonial period (1965-1984); the years of neo-liberal economic ideology (1985-1994); and period since the 'second Republic' during which The Gambia also signed relevant ILO Conventions (1994-present).
6. III: 1965-1985: Period of Marginalisation and Hostility

In the context of the framework of a historical perspective (p. 194), this period represents the immediate post-colonial context. Characteristically, the period between the attainment of political independence from Great Britain, and the eminent economic crisis and the introduction of neo-liberal economic and management policies and strategies in the early 1980s. Along with political independence, however, there were changes in the macro-economic policy environment and patterns of social relationships that also had implications for IR structures and processes. In rendering accounts of some of the actors' conceptions and perspectives on IR during this period, there is, again, a great deal of reliance on actors' voices, which are contextualised with information from official publications and documents. Where necessary, however, specific events and issues are used as points of reference. On balance, the data indicates that the IR system that was inherited from the colonial government had been subjected to increased and varying pressures. Notwithstanding, elements of that system still exist and are being sustained and legitimised by aspects of the contemporary social system.

Actors' views on the implications of post-colonial political, economic and social changes for the formal IR system, have tended to be dictated by what they considered to be the impact of these changes on their respective organisations. Having said that, there is a consensus among key actors that TUs did not have the same degree of relevance and influence they had during the colonial period. 'Trade unions', according to one former Labour official, 'were a formidable urban force and played a leading part in the anti-colonial struggles. But they did
not have any significant transformational influence during the post-colonial government' (Interview Notes). In that regard, changes in economic philosophy and strategy, and patterns of social relationships and interaction, proved to be inimical to the progressive development of the IR machinery. In addition to the marginalizing and constraining effects of the new economic policy environment and patterns of authority relationships, 'internal squabbles within Organised labour also contributed to the demise of Trade unions' (Interview Notes: Ex labour Official).

The Gambia seems to be an exception to the pattern, in SSA, whereby leading Trade Unionists assumed political authority or, alternatively, developed cosy relationships with the post-colonial political elite (see Debrah, 2001; Damachi et al, 1979). In The Gambia, union leaders neither ascended to political authority, nor had any special relationship with the new political elite. My hunch is that this had to do with the fact that Trade unions were Urban based and their power base was among the urban working classes. The new political elite, on the other hand, comprised predominantly of rural folk, whose power base was the rural farming and peasant classes. The relative independence of Trade unions from the ruling political party has caused some sympathetic commentators to observe that 'in maintaining their independence, Trade unions provided the only solid and consistent opposition to the neo-colonial exploitation of the Gambian workers and people' (Interview, Union organiser and Political Activist). In reality, however, post-colonial Unions never had the numerical strength or 'organisational capacity to represent an effective opposition to government policies regarding Industrial relations' (Interview: Commissioner of Labour). The demise (if you will), of Organised labour and the marginalisation of IR structures in the post-
colonial context, can be attributed to the ideological orientation of the immediate post-colonial political leaderships; changes in economic philosophy, policies and strategies of the new government; and the resurfacing of pre-colonial patterns of social authority relationships and interactions. The latter factor arose from the predominantly indigenous rural character of the new ruling elites.

Although political independence was gained with considerable help from TUs, once in power, the post-colonial political leadership developed an outlook on the ideological orientation and objectives of Union that was often cast in Cold war rhetoric. On that score, Union leaders believe that the government was unsettled by what the Secretary General of GMDWU described as 'the good relations we had developed with many sister unions in former communist bloc countries' (Interview notes). Another union activities noted: 'because of our contacts in the communist countries the government saw us as communist agents whose sole aim was to lead an uprising of the masses against the state' (Interview: Ex Activist). An exaggeration, perhaps, but his comments indicated that, at least, the ideological divide between the state and labour was not supportive of the progressive development of aspects of the IR machinery that was bequeathed to the country by the colonial state. Little wonder, therefore, The Gambia, for example, failed to ratify the ILO Conventions on free association until 2000. For Trade Union leaders, an even more significant evidence of government hostility towards organised labour 'was the 1977 decision to ban unions under the pretext of a very dubious law regarding the mismanagement of union funds' (Interview: Former Activist).
Government officials and employers, however, did not accept the view that government had been hostile to TUs. According to one former labour official, ‘government, at no time attempted to stifle the development of IR structures’. He even disputed the argument that ‘IR structures have been largely dormant and useless since independence’. Instead, he attributed the decline in Trade union influence to the ‘lack of managerial and organisational capacity and constant bickering and internal conflicts within labour movement’ (Interview notes). As for employers’ representatives, the problem with the IR system in general and Trade unionism in particular, is that ‘Trade union leaders had ceased to be passionate about the interests of their members’ (Interview: Former Executive Member, Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry). As a result, a representative of Shipping Agencies observed: ‘they became less concerned about the development and proper functioning joint IR structures, and these structures became marginalized and largely redundant’. In his view:

‘Even now, union officials are busy looking after their own interests. The state of Joint industrial relations forums does not constitute a priority for them. Instead, they are mainly interested in the funds they can get from their members and relevant International Agencies because, as a matter of fact, they treat these funds as their personal resources not as the collective property of their members’.

It is not only representatives of the other parties that attribute the decline in the IR machinery and in particular, Union influence, to the leadership of organised labour. Ordinary due paying union members are equally concerned that ‘most of the external assistance that unions receive from international agencies and sister unions in developed countries had been misappropriated’ by their leaders (Interview: Dockworker). It may that the Cold war political ideological orientations of the immediate post-colonial government adversely influenced
the attitude of the state towards Trade unions and contributed to the relative ineffectiveness of the formal IR system. This, however, is only a very partial explanation as to why organise labour declined in influence, and the formal IR machinery became relatively irrelevant for some workers.

In economic terms, for example, in the first five years after independence, government decided to take over the operations of colonial foreign private commercial Houses such as the United African Company (UAC), ELMITE Wharf, Gambia Oilseeds Marketing Board (GOMB) and Gambia River Transport (GRT). This decision, together with the decision to convert various government departments into public enterprises (Parastals), as part of the ‘First Five-year plan for Social and Economic Development – 1975-1980 (GG, 1975b), also had significant impacts on the IR system. These economic decisions, alongside legislation prohibiting public employees from union membership, meant that the management of the employment relationship of most Gambian workers was outside the jurisdiction of the formal IR system. For Trade unions, it meant that they lost the memberships of those who were working in the nationalised private businesses, and the vast majority of the newly employed could not be depended upon for new recruits. One union representative argued: ‘the decisions on the part of government to take over the companies where most of our members worked and to then prohibit them from remaining in unions because they have become public sector employees, were the most damaging actions taken by the government against workers in The Gambia’ (Ex Union Official).

Senior government bureaucrats and employers (some who have been ‘senior people in the private sector during period’) (Interview notes) however, sympathised
with what one of them called ‘the logic behind the government decision at the time’ (Interview Notes: Representing of Shipping Agency). An Ex executive member of the Gambia Chamber of Commerce who was also the ‘Assistant manager of the provincial Operations of one of the leading private commercial Houses during the colonial period’, for example, argued that ‘Putting some of these commercial houses into public hands was necessary because these companies were the biggest sources for the revenue needed to finance the social and economic development of a newly independent country’ (Interview).

Although union officials agreed with the strategy of ‘nationalisation’, they argued ‘there was no economic or social justification for prohibiting public servants from union membership’ (Interview: Ex Secretary General ‘Gambia Teachers’ Union (GTU). Some union activists believe the decision to pass that law was politically motivated. In that regard, as one union official would have: ‘it was a natural reaction from a neo-colonialist government towards progressive associations of workers whose sole objective was to fight for the rights of ordinary workers’ (Interview: Secretary General, GMDWU). Government officials, however, argued that there was no underlying political motive for prohibiting public employees from joining Trade Unions. Instead, ‘the only motivation’ according to one former senior Labour official ‘was to protect a small and potentially fragile economy against serious economic and administrative disruption’ (Interview).

Whatever the motivations, the implications of that law for Trade union organisation and influence are not in dispute. In terms of organisational capacity, unions were denied access to workers with the requisite managerial and organisational capacities (most Gambians with such competences and
capabilities tend to opt for public sector employment). In terms of membership, over 60 percent of the waged labour forced (UNDP, 2000) could not join a union. As one union official noted: 'having excluded almost 90\% percent of the waged labour force from union membership, in a country that has very limited potential for employment creation by the private sector, union membership could only fall as retired or dead members could not be replaced' (Interview: Secretary General, GWU).

Without access to public sector employees whose numbers include the most qualified and capable individuals in terms of management and organisation, unions depended for membership, on a low skilled and peripheral workforce. These include seasonal hotel workers, Taxi drivers and other informal sector workers. As well as being seasonal workers, the vast majority of 'informal' private sector employees are either engaged in family businesses or other forms of employment where 'subordinate relationships' lack formal definition. The employment relationship between the parties in these sorts of employment, tend to be regulated and sustained by 'informal' forms of social relationships.

In addition to the unfavourable economic policy environment and labour legislations, the labour market situation also constrained the development of the formal IR machinery. In the two decades immediately following political Independence, tangible economic development outside the public sector, was mainly in the form of seasonal tourism and very low-level industrialisation. Neither required a high skilled technical and/or managerial workforce. The supply of the type of low skilled workforce that the pattern of economic

\[ \text{This estimate is a statistical exaggeration. According to latest studies, about 60 percent of the waged labour are categorised as Public sector employees.} \]
development required exceeded demand. As a result, the labour relations took place, as it were, in a buyer's market, giving employers greater leverage in the employment relationship. This advantage was sustained and even enhanced by a State whose 'attitude towards labour relations issues was at best indifferent and at worst, hostile' (Interview: Private Labour Consultant). According to this interviewee:

'Employers' position was strengthened by a supply driven labour market context and an employment relations system directed by state machinery and dependent on the legislative process rather than negotiations. For every person in waged employment in The Gambia, there are ten equally capable individuals willing to take up his job in the event that he falls out with his employer' (Interview).

The poor state of the formal IR system and, in particular organised labour, was exacerbated by internal squabbles that dogged the Trade union movement during this period. Arguably, the only union activity of note during this period was the GWU led strike of 1977 in support of Public Utility workers. This strike was significant not only because it was the first and perhaps, the only major post-colonial industrial action that directly targeted the State, but perhaps, more importantly, for how its failure helped to expose the division within the Trade Union movement at the time. Officials of the GWU believed the strike failed because 'it was not widely supported by workers, especially Dock and Maritime Workers' (Interview: Secretary General GWU). An official of the GMDWU accepted the view that 'their refusal to support the Utility workers was crucial to the outcome of the strike' (Ex Secretary General, GMDWU). He, however, attributed their refusal to the attitude of the leadership of the GWU, who, he
claimed: 'had forgotten that the success of the 1961 strike was largely due the central role played by our members. But since then, the executive of the GWU has failed to give us the recognition and respect we believe we deserve and the failure of the 1977 strike has made them realised how much the entire Trade union movement needs us' (Interview Notes).

Even now, the rhetoric of the respective representatives of the two major General unions betrays evidence of tension and suspicion within Organised labour. Senior Union officials, however, tended to down play their differences and instead, attributed the state of post-colonial Industrial relations largely to 'a hostile government who see union officials as opponents of the government' (Interview: S.G. GMDWU). In reality, however, there are deep differences within organised labour, which have allowed both employers and government to ignore some and extend mere token gestures to others. The dispute among unions, according to a former senior official of The Gambia Teachers' Union: 'dates back to the struggle for political liberation in the late 1950s when the Trade union movement in Africa was split between the more radical sphere comprising of members of the Casablanca Group, and the more Western friendly Monrovia/Brazzaville group of states' (Interview). In the context of Cold war ideological differences within SSA, Trade unions also took different ideological positions. According to this informant, 'Unions that shared government's Western capitalist ideology were favoured against those that had close relationship with the Communist bloc. This', he insisted, 'is the genesis of the internal fighting between the main unions. He lamented the fact that 'even now, their leaders cannot resolve their historical differences for the good of workers'.

This study began with the implicit, but strong notion that the state of Trade unionism (especially in terms of density) will be a very useful indicator of the state of the formal IR system. However, analysis of interview data at the initial
stages of the fieldwork suggested that responses to questions relating to union density will not be very useful 'measures' of union activity and/or influence over the 'formal' IR system. Instead, I was convinced that the most useful 'measurement' of union influence and relevance would be the nature and extent of union involvement with the formal IR machinery. I therefore focused on TU activities and involvement in joint IR structures. In that respect, however, 'there has been no significant disputes - certainly, no significant strike action since 1977 when government successful faced downed the Utility workers' (Interview, Commissioner of Labour). With respect to the functioning of joint IR structures, particularly regarding collective bargaining, even ordinary union members believed that these structures are not very relevant in their relationship with employers/managers. Accordingly, more than half of the ordinary employees interviewed claimed they are 'not aware of the existence of JICs' and those who are, do not believe 'they serve the purposes for which they are created'. One dock headman who has been 'at the Ports for the past 45 years', for example, claimed: 'for all the years I have been here, I have been a union member but I cannot recall any meeting of the Port JIC in the past twenty years' (Interview notes). With respect to wage determination, he insisted that workers 'depend on the goodwill of the government and the management of GPA not any JIC or union'.

Since joint IR structures have been, to say the least, dormant, union activity and influence is synonymous with the activities of individual officials. Union leaders have in turn, adopted the role of community leaders by way of intervening on behalf of individuals and small groups rather than acting on behalf of their respective organisations. According to one Labour Inspector 'most of the time union activities are in the form of face-to-face confrontations between union
officials and private business operators such as managers of hotels and other tourism related businesses. Sometimes we’ (meaning officials of the Labour Department), ‘get involved if the Union representative or individual manager complains to the Commissioner’ (Interview Notes). While such encounters may have helped to enhance the reputation of individual union officials among certain group of workers, they have not had any transformational impact on the overall IR system or for that matter, on broader social debates within Gambian society. According to one employer, ‘the confrontations between people who call themselves union leaders and individual employers have very little impact in terms of what we think of unions’ (Interview). Employers generally share government’s position that ‘unions can play an important role in national development’ (GG, 2001: 2). However, in terms of specific roles and influence in the employment relationship, the general view among employers is that ‘unions are not very important in the relationship between employers and their employees’ (Interview: Ex Executive member GCCI). Unions, as he saw it, are ‘like any other civil society organisations’. They ‘can play a part in the wider objective of national economic and social development. But with respect to how much we pay our employees and their general conditions of work, unions do not represent a relevant variable’.

On balance, these accounts of actors’ perspectives indicate that in particular, the influence of Trade unions in the employment relationship had withered significantly since independence. They also suggest that the IR system and machinery that was inherited from the colonial period had, by the mid 1980s become less relevant. Yet, perspectives also indicated that this system is still being restructured and revived to serve some legitimising role for the state.
The preceding paragraphs have discussed the relative declines in union influence and the utility of formal structures and processes that represent colonial initiatives at IR in The Gambia. So far, these declines have been discussed in the context of developments in the political, economic and labour policy environment in the 20 years following independence in 1965. In terms of the factors that have had some impact on the development of post-colonial IR in its entity, however, these also, represent only partial explanations for the state of the formal IR system in the two decades immediately following independence. The following sections will look at other factors in the context of post-1984 macro-economic and management policy orientation, which, in many respects, had greater disruptive effects on the colonial IR system and the nature of workplace relations it envisaged.


There is also a thesis that suggests IR systems are also influenced by International Aid (Damachi et al, 1979; and Davies, 1966) and the mediating roles of International institutions (Poople, 1993; and Henry, 1991). As discussed in the preceding chapter, in the immediate post-independence period, for example, the ‘Soviet gold’ (Littlepage and Bess, 1970) was used to influence the Cold orientation of some Trade unions. The relatively insignificant impact of these efforts could be attributed to the counteracting effect of government’s position and its attitude towards Trade unionism. However, beginning in the early 1980s, other International influences, with far more significant impacts on the IR system and machinery were introduced to The Gambian context. 1980s international interventions had greater impact
because they also had the full backing of the state. In terms of the continuity/disruption theme, however, these new influences represent a more obvious disruption. Yet, they can also be construed to represent continuities in colonial patterns of IR.

Even in the immediate post-colonial period, when the policy environment was perceived as hostile to the development of Trade Unions, the underlying principle for Industrial relations was based on a pluralist conception of organisational theory. Accordingly, despite the relatively hostile ideological and policy environment of the time, the underlying principle for The Gambia’s IR system was based on a pluralist European tradition. The basis for maintaining existing IR structures and mechanisms was to enable the parties in the employment relationship to take collective stands in the defence of their respective interests (Fox, 1966). The World Bank/IMF sponsored neo-liberal economic management interventions of the 1980s, however, represented a major disruption to that pluralist tradition that is The Gambia’s colonial legacy. This disruption was specifically by way of the rhetoric (if not reality) of HRM. As in the West, HRM introduced new Unitarist forms of Employee Involvement (EI) that challenged the existing pluralist IR machinery, which had already been significantly undermined by unfavourable economic and labour policies.

The broad policy stance of the interrelated programmes through which HRM was introduced has been discussed in greater detail in chapter 3. However, it may be necessary to reiterate that the main focus of these programmes was to build and sustain private sector capacity as the basis for social and economic
development. Accordingly, new notions of people management and related IR legislation reflected the preferred role that is given to the private sector in the new national economic management agenda. In that respect, the labour Act (1991) (that amended of the 1976 Trade union Act), and the Public Enterprise Reform Act (1989) represented very significant shift in IR and economic philosophy of the government of The Gambia.

Although the formal IR system was relatively dormant and in many respects, irrelevant in the years immediately preceding the introduction of ERP/SAP, until then, ‘a fundamental intension of Labour legislation has always been to provide “minimum framework protection” for workers who are generally considered to be the weaker of the parties’ in the employment relationship (Interview: Private Labour Consultant).

In that respect, ‘the law has always recognised Trade unions as representative organisations of those most deserving of protection’ (Secretary General, GWU). However, one obvious element of the neo-liberal agenda in relation to IR was its very vague definition of the role of workers’ organisations. Not only were Trade Unions redefine as a ‘civil society organisations’ in the context of another rather vague term - ‘public governance and national development’ (WB, 1990), Gambia’s labour laws were amended to extend the principle of ‘minimum framework protection’ to employers organisations (GG, 1990).

As far as employers and State officials are concerned, however, the extension of the ‘minimum framework protection’ principle is ‘consistent with government’s long-term strategy to provide the type of Industrial relations environment that can attract private sector operators to The Gambia’ (Interview: Labour Economist, GG). Accordingly the objective of the 1990 Trade union legislation, he insisted, is to
‘ensure equal recognition and protection, in law, for both workers and employers’ organisations and their respective representatives’ (Interview notes). ‘This legal development’, as a private Labour consultant saw it, ‘represents a fundamental shift in the intention of the law in terms of whether employers are equally deserving of state protection under the basic framework for protection’ (Interview Notes). The general view among workers’ representatives, however, is that ‘the intention of law has always been to provide protection for ordinary employees who are almost always considered to be the weaker party in the employment relationship’ (Interview: Secretary General GMDWU). The Government, however, does not perceive of its role as a ‘provider of protection for any party against the other’ (Interview: Senior Labour Inspector). Rather, the state ‘has a responsibility to create the enabling environment for industrial peace and its policies and strategies, in that respect, must be consistent with national development strategies and objectives’ (Interview: DPS, DoSTIE). And, because the long-term national development objective is to ‘transform’ the country into a ‘nation thriving on free market policies and a vibrant private sector’ (GG, 2001: 9; and 1996: 1), ‘related national institutional and regulatory arrangements, including labour administration, must be conducive to attract and support a private sector led economic and social development strategy’ (Interview: Labour Economist).

The management (or should that be mismanagement) of Public Enterprises (so-called Parastals), has been cited as one of the major factors for the economic crisis that warranted the introduction of ERP/SAP. Logically, therefore, the Public Enterprise Reform Act (1989), as the phrase implies, was specifically directed at reforming these institutions. The act legislated for the adoption of private sector management strategies and practices by the
Parastals that remained in Public hands after the late 1980s privatisation spree. The centrepiece of the Act was the legislation of commercial contractual relationships in the form of 'Performance Contracts' (P/C), between Parastals and the government of The Gambia (their sole owner). Although the details of individual P/Cs varied depending on the nature of the Enterprises and the economic and social rationale for their existence, the underlying principle was the same. All the P/Cs I reviewed required, for example, that 'government control over the Enterprise shall be limited to budgetary and policy matter' (GG, 1987: 4). Regarding PM (or is that HRM), all the P/Cs required that management 'rationalise staffing levels in relation to the Enterprise’s commercial targets and social obligations' (GG, 1987:5 and 1988; 7).

Although all public Enterprises have their own ‘Rules and Regulations of Service’, organisational level policies and rules must, as one senior manager put it, ‘be consistent with the directives outline in the documents that regulate our relationship with the owners’ (Interview notes). Regarding HRM, the more urgent concern of P/Cs is for management to adopt ‘effective HRM strategies as the basis for maintaining appropriate staffing level and efficient utilisation of the Enterprise’s Human resources’ (GG, 1987: 7). Apparently, the concept of ‘popular participation’ that dominated official rhetoric at the national level, hadn’t filtered to the organisational level. Rather than explicitly stating what form employee participation should take, the GPA’s P/C with government, for example, asked management to devise mechanisms for ‘effective employee participation’. For more detail on the privatisation aspect of the ERP/SAP agenda please see chapter 2 on the Introduction of the neo-liberal economic development agenda.
involvement in the operations of the Enterprise’ (GG, 1987: 7-8). Staff Associations (SA) - imitations of French comite d’entreprise (Ackers, 2003: 226), that were introduced in the 1980s, provide a sort of framework for limited employee involvement. Interview data indicated, as one executive member of the GPA Association suggested, that ‘Staff Associations were introduced to The Gambia in the 1980s, through Senegal’ (the neighbouring Francophone country) 13.

The nature and role of SA will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter where the focus is on organisational level IR. Although existing contractual relationships between the government and Public enterprises requires staff representation at Board level, it does not specially mention any role for SA in the organisation. SA, therefore, are not conventional IR structures and have no conventional IR role. Besides, they are organisational level structures that comprise solely of public sector employees whose employment relationship is neither defined nor, for that matter, regulated by the national level framework for IR. The general consensus was that Staff Associations exist to assist management with the ‘administration of staff welfare’ (GPA, 2003: 4).

Relevant government and organisational documents and publications, in conjunction with interview data, suggested that the notion of employee

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13 The story is that the Gambia Public Transport Corporation (GPTC) where the current Managing Director of the GPA was recruited influenced the GPA Staff Association. According one of the founding members of the GPTC Association, their own Association, was ‘the product of the good relationship’ they ‘have with their Senegalese counterpart’ ‘SOTRAC’ (Interview: Ex-president of the GPTC Staff Association).
participation envisaged by ERP/SAP and their related policy stance is consistent with 1980s forms of EI (Marchington et al, 1992). 'Participation', in the context of national development and 'good governance' agendas, is defined in terms of 'grassroots participation in the policy-making process' (WB, 1990). With respect to the management of the employment relationship, however, neo-liberal notions of 'participation' anticipate a limited form EI based on narrow commercial objectives (Terry, 2003; Ackers and Payne, 1998). In the case of The Gambia, these commercial objectives are sold to ordinary employees as the 'common good' (GG, 2002) that 'all members of the organisation must strive to achieve' (Interview: Ex Executive Member GCCI). Assuming that the GPA is representative, evidence indicated that management also uses the SA to communicate its objectives and to engender employee ownership of these objectives. Officials of the GPA SA seem very keen to defend management's position describing it as 'the common objectives that all our members share' (Interview: Social Secretary GPA, SA).

The political context had changed with the Military take over in 1994 and in terms of the contractual relationship between Government and Public enterprises, P/Cs have been replaced by 'Memorandums of Understanding' (MOU). Some managers insisted 'now attitudes towards workers and their interests have changed significantly' (Interview: Traffic manager, GPA). Yet, there is every indication IR at the national level is still informed by the neo-liberal management ideology of the 1980. But this thinking and practice are not simply extant; government thinking and policy regarding national level macro-economic management are helping to sustaining them. The next
section looks at the contemporary context and its implications for the ‘formal’
national level IR system.

6. V: Gospel of private enterprise & rhetoric of ‘Social Partnership’

Perhaps the most significant development in terms of IR since 1994 was
government’s ratification of the ‘eight core ILO Conventions’ in 2000 (GG,
2002). This new International association accounts for the introduction of the
rhetoric of ‘social partnership’ as the underlying principle for IR. A report on
the ILO sponsored sensitisation seminar noted that The Gambia’s ‘social
partnership is based on a tripartite relationship between workers and
employers’ organisations and the government’ (2002: 4). The Labour Act
(1990) and related legislation, however, still define the institutional and
regulatory mechanisms for IR at the national level. Despite the rhetoric of
change, certain sections and clause in the 1990 Act are verbatim copies of
related colonial pieces of labour legislations. The Act, nevertheless, is a
comprehensive legislative framework covering, inter alia, the role of the
Commissioner of Labour (as the administrator of the Act), the constitution
and modus operandi of joint IR structures, including Labour Advisory Boards
(LAB), JICs, and Divisional Industrial Tribunals (DIT). It also legislates for
recruitment and selection; conditions and contracts of employment; wage
protection; procedures for legal action against wrongful dismissal (including
dismissal during industrial action); regulation of workers’ and employers’
organisations; and the collective bargaining role of Joint Industrial Councils
(JICs). The Commissioner of Labour has responsibility for administering the
Act under the supervision of the Department of State for Trade, Industry and
Employment (DoSTIE). Industrial sector LABs and JICs, comprising of representatives of workers, employers and government, at least in theory, serve as forums for joint dispute resolution and determining sector minimum wage levels. Ultimately the courts are the final forums for redress.

By referring to this framework as a 'Social partnership', however, actors are reflecting the ideal envisaged in the employment relationship rather than the reality it represents. In reality, there are two outlooks on the framework and, for that matter, the principle of 'social partnership' as the bases for national level IR system in The Gambia. These differences in perspectives regarding the purposes of the system and the expectations of the actors can also be attributed to the conceptual vagueness of the notion of social partnership (Terry, 2003; Brown, 2000; and Ackers and Payne, 1998). However, a more immediate factor is the ambiguities that result from the use of a single model to pursue objectives that are in some respects, mutually exclusive. It is a contradiction arising from two different but interrelated levels of policy. The ambiguity lay in a framework of 'social partnership' that at one and the same time, seeks to advance the unitarist objectives of private enterprise and support and sustain the pluralist reality of the employment relationship. It is precisely for that reason that different actors are able to make competing conceptions and lay different and sometimes irreconcilable claims and expectations to the same IR framework.

The official government line is that the objective of the social partnership is to 'maintain industrial peace in pursuit of the national interest' (Interview, Commissioner
of Labour). In that regard, officials tend to literally invoke the ILO position that 'free and independent organizations of workers and employers' can 'act as pressure groups for more participation, transparent and accountable government' as well as help to 'raise productivity and economic competitiveness' (ILO, 2003: 3).\footnote{Compared with the World Bank, the ILO's position is more explicit in terms of the potential role 'social partnership' promises to workers and their representative organisations. For the World Bank, the notion of 'Social partnership' refers to a broad 'civic engagement' agenda that envisages a role for NGOs in public governance (Rueben, 2004: 1; WB, 2000).} In terms of 'the national interest', however, State interpretation of 'social partnership' invokes a notion of a 'neo-corporatist form of economic management at the national level' (Ackers and Payne, 1998: 533). This interpretation, needless to say, is very consistent with the neo-liberal workplace management strategies particularly, in terms of 'the low political profile occupied by organised actors in industrial relations, especially on the labour side (see Crouch, 2003: 105).

Managers and government bureaucrats insist the ERP/SAP and their related policies positions are dated and have been replaced by a new policy initiative – the so-called The Long-term development framework (GG, 2001; 1996). The 'Long-term framework' that was launched in June 1996 under the theme: Gambia Incorporated: Vision 2020, however, is fundamentally, a confirmation of the intention to continue the private enterprise initiatives of the ERP/SAP. Accordingly, it aims to 'transform' The Gambia into a successful economy on the back of 'free market policies and a vibrant private sector' (GG, 2001: 9; 1996: 1) (Italics for emphasis). Regarding IR and HRM (or should that Personnel management), the official line is reflected in the comments of a senior government official that: 'although government has the
responsibility for creating the enabling environment for Industrial peace, it also has a greater responsibility to ensure that policies in that direction are consistent with the "Long-term framework for social and economic development" (Interview: DPS, DoSTIE). Since the attainment of the 'long-term' development objectives is contingent on 'free market policies and a vibrant private sector', another senior official observed that 'related national institutional and regulatory arrangements, including labour administration, must be conducive to attracting and sustaining private enterprise initiatives' (Interview: Senior Labour Official, DoSTIE).

'Neo-corporatist' interpretation of 'social partnership' can also be discerned in the rhetoric of state officials and employers/managers in relation to the ongoing dispute between the GMDWU and the management of The GPA. In their respective addresses to the National Stakeholders' Workshop on Dock Labour Reforms (18 September, 2002), both the Secretary of Works and Infrastructure (who has ministerial responsibility for the GPA), and the Secretary of State for Trade, Industry and Employment, insisted that 'government's priority is to sustain and improve on the competitive edge gained by the Ports Authority'. 'The extent of government involvement in that dispute - up to the level of the Vice Presidency', one senior government observed, 'is motivated by the need to protect the national interest in terms of the long-term goals set out in Vision 2020' (Interview notes: DPS, DoSTIE). In terms of what constitutes the 'national interest' in this context, these particular groups of actors seem to share very similar view. In his contribution to the same Workshop, the President of the GCC&I proclaimed 'a new era in employer/employee relation', characterised by an end to 'confrontation, antagonism and acrimony and a steady move towards a new paradigm of consultation and co-operation.
for the attainment of the common good' (quoted in the final Report of the GPA Dock Labour Reform Workshop, 18 September 2002). Recalling the contributions of the two Secretaries of State and the President of the GCC&I at that Workshop, a representative of the Shipping Agencies argued that the 'attainment of the common good requires the enhanced utilisation of human resources to increase productivity and profitability of the Port industry' (Interview notes). As for the management of the GPA, the 'national interest', means an 'efficient' organisation that is 'attractive to ship owners' because it can guarantee 'cost savings and increased productivity' (MD, GPA). With reference to the Dock labour scheme, the Managing Director argued that these objectives could not be realised if 'the Ports services remain rooted in old and inefficient practices' (quoted in the Final Report of the National Stakeholders' Workshop, p. 26).

Government and managerial/employers' perspectives on the 'social partnership' framework (as the following chapter indicates), have major implications for personnel policies and practices at the organisational level.

For their part, workers' representatives' believe the 'social partnership' framework 'presents an opportunity for workers to reassert themselves and claim a central role in labour administration and the socio-economic development of the country' (Interview: Ex-Secretary GTU). In that regard, one union official believed that the 'new employment policy framework reinforces the principle of workers' right to make demands and the role of unions to articulate these demands at the national level' (Interview: Secretary General GWC). There are, however, workers' representatives who are less optimistic. The President of GMDWU, for example, insisted that: 'While there is this talk of social partnership between us and them, some managers are sucking our blood and some government officers continue the
practices of the previous government by ignoring the legitimate demands of the working classes and insisting on applying laws that undermine us' (Interview Notes).

It appears that the optimism among some senior union officials is based on their expectations from The Gambia's new engagement with the ILO. The Secretary General of the Confederation of Gambia Workers (CGW) for example, insisted that 'now that government has committed itself to relevant ILO Conventions, it cannot deny any group of workers, including civil servants, the right of free association' (Interview notes). In reality, however, there is very little evidence of change in government's IR policy that could have any significant transformational effect on workers and their organisations. And in spite of some 'intensive lobbying' by unions (Interview: Ex-Secretary General, GTU), a recent ICFTU bulletin accused the government of The Gambia of 'violations of core labour rights'. In a 2nd February 2004 publication, it (ICFTU) 'called upon the government of Gambia to apply the core labour conventions it has ratified' and to bring labour legislation 'into line with ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98' and extend 'the right to organise, collective bargaining and to strike ... to civil servants' (p. 1). Because the law that prohibits public sector employees from union membership has not been repealed, despite the ratification of the relevant ILO Conventions, Unions still do not have access to employees with the requisite organisational and managerial capabilities. Besides, the union membership of 75,000 that is claimed by union officials (see table 2 below for a breakdown), is, to say the least, highly exaggerated.
Table 6.2: Estimates of Trade union membership supplied by Union officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Umbrella/General Union</th>
<th>Some Affiliated unions</th>
<th>Approx. membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gambia Workers Union</td>
<td>Transport, Mechanics &amp; allied workers&lt;br&gt;Building &amp; Construction Workers&lt;br&gt;Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Workers</td>
<td>3,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederation of Gambian Workers</td>
<td>Commercial &amp; Industrial workers&lt;br&gt;Drivers, Mechanics &amp; Allied workers&lt;br&gt;Painters &amp; Petit Construction workers&lt;br&gt;Hotel &amp; Catering workers&lt;br&gt;Maritime (Seamen's union)&lt;br&gt;Carpenters and Joinery workers&lt;br&gt;Medical Research Council workers</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia National TUC</td>
<td>11 unspecified affiliates</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table indicates, 30,000 of these are said to belong sector and industry unions affiliated to the CGW, which, according its Secretary General, 'is not affiliated to the umbrella Gambia National Trade Union Congress' (GNTUC) (Interview). The remaining 45,000 are said to belong to unions that comprise the GNTUC (Email: WFTU, 28/01/04). The figure of 45,000 was also confirmed by the Deputy Secretary General of the GNTUC (who is also the Secretary General of the GWU). According to the latter, the GNTUC 'comprises of the GWU and 11 other sector unions whose identities I cannot specify at this time' (Interview). The leaders of the two general unions (GWU and CGW) claimed to have affiliation with 17 and 10 sector unions respectively. From table 4.1 above, however, it appears that in some cases, they are laying claims to the affiliation of the same unions.

15 These figures were first obtained during face-to-face interviews during the fieldwork in The Gambia in the Summer 2003 and confirmed in follow-up telephone conversations with union officials in February 2004 and an Email from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) received on 28 January 2004.
Besides, there is no documentary evidence from either Unions or relevant State departments to support these figures and the Deputy Commissioner of Labour considered them to be 'highly suspect' (Interview). Pressed during an interview, the Secretary General of the GWU claimed: 'at the moment, the GWU may have as many as 12,000 members. He however, claimed that 'due to poor organisation and lack of proper record keeping skills on the part of some of the affiliated unions, there is no up-to-date statistical evidence to support this estimate' (Interview). Recent employment statistics on The Gambia, however, casts serious doubts on the validity of these figures (see UNDP, 2000; GG, 2001, U.S.A, 2002).16

6. VI: Conclusion

This historical perspective suggests that the 'formal' national IR system in The Gambia has lost potency and has become less relevant in the post-colonial context. Joint IR structures, which were the sources of workers' power and the authority of their leaders, have become very marginal to the actual relationship between employees and employers. In the Cold war context of the immediate post-colonial period, government had been relatively hostile towards organised labour. Changes in the macroeconomic philosophy and policy had further constrained the progressive development of the IR system that was bequeathed to The Gambia by her colonial masters. The introduction of new paradigms of workplace management in the past two decades has put further constraints on the system. These paradigms have generally been subsumed under neo-liberal macroeconomic reform agendas and forms of

16 These publications estimate that The Gambia has a workforce of some 400,000 individuals of which 82% are engaged in agriculture either as self-employed or on the family farm. According to the U.N Human Development Report on The Gambia (2000), only 11% of the workforce is in waged employment. The remaining 7% work in family businesses in return for basic subsistence. Of the 11% that is in waged employment, 6% are public employees – legally barred from Union membership. On the basis of this data, one can extrapolate that there are less than 20,000 workers in The Gambia that are eligible for Union membership.
economic management at the national level. In that respect, they were first
couched in the rhetoric of employee 'participation' as aspects of HRM.
Currently, they are referred to in terms of a 'social partnership' between the
parties in the employment relationships. The conceptual vagueness of 'social
partnership' has, however, enabled the different actors to have different and
sometimes irreconcilable takes in terms of their conceptions and expectations
of the national level frameworks for IR. In that regard, their respective
interpretations and expectations are sustained by the same government
policies and proclamations (real and imagined). Whilst insisting on the gospel
of private enterprise as the way to successful economic development, the State
is also seeking to be identified with the 'free association' values and principles
that underpin the pluralist ideals of IR and constitute the ideological basis of
ILO Conventions. Accordingly, the underlying principle for IR in The Gambia
as outlined in Background Paper to the National Tripartite Workshop on
Labour Disputes and their Settlement in The Gambia (19-20 December
2002), resonates with the with the ILO'S position that:

'Labour relations systems Are based on the recognition that the three
parties are complementary partners ... This entails, inter alia, that
workers through their freely chosen organizations will articulate their
viewpoints and demands, that employers will defend their interests
through their own organizations, and that government will provide the
basic framework for minimum protection and harmonious relations
and create an amicable climate for the achievement of development
objects' (ILO, 2002:4).
Although the account of actors’ conceptions and expectations in this chapter suggest some changes in patterns of IR, it also points to continuities. It indicates that what has changed, especially since the mid 1980s, is by and large, the rhetoric rather than substance of IR. Beyond the rhetoric, however, there has been very little difference in terms of the principles and the ideals that HRM ‘participation’ and ‘Social partnership’ represent. How these changes have impacted on ‘formal’ organisational level policies and practices, and employees and managerial perspectives on those policies, is the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter Seven

IR & Personnel Management at Organisation level: Perspectives on Dock Labour Scheme & Personnel policies and Practices of GPA

Introduction

The preceding chapter focused on key actors' perspectives regarding The Gambia's national level IR system and machinery. In that regard, IR is viewed in terms of collective relations between the representative organisations of the parties (see Ackers, 2002) and also involving government as 'independent'arbiter. In this context, however, government also plays a major part as an employer. The national IR system, however, is problematic for two main reasons. Firstly, it assumes, and rather erroneously, that collective IR structures are central to the 'field of vision' of all the parties when it comes to the actual conduct of the employment relationship (Ackers and Wilkinson 2004). Secondly, by identifying government as guarantor of 'minimum framework protection', the framework seems oblivious to the inherent ambiguity in the state's role as, also, the major employer in the country (ILO, 2002: 4).

In relations to this chapter, the historical perspective, also, gave us some ideas about national policy frameworks that inform formal employment relations and Personnel management policy and practices at the level of the organisation. Here, I use the terms 'employment relations' to refer to the entire employment relationship as involving both the individual and collective
dimensions of workplace relations and interactions (see Edwards, 2003). By Personnel management (PM), I am referring to the formal workplace policies and practices of the organisation. When, therefore, these policies and practices are described as HRM, it simply reflects the influence of 'new' neo-liberal people management strategies (Storey, 1989) on managerial rhetoric.

In relation to chapter 6, this chapter, also helps to distinguish between workplace PM and national level IR (Gardner and Palmer, 1992; and Ackers, 1992). The chapter, however, is intended as an account of actors’ perspectives on the work relationships between the GPA and two distinct categories of workers. Accordingly, it presents perspectives on the NDLS and the ‘Service Rules and Regulations of GPA’. These two frameworks respectively govern the relationships between the GPA and registered dockworkers and between the organisation and its regular employees. The latter category includes employees that are directly hired by the GPA and therefore, having a direct employer/employee relationship with the organisation. The NDLS, on the other hand, is a national level framework for the administration of dock labour in The Gambia and is administered by a central government agency.

The chapter draws heavily upon official documents and publications to present detailed descriptions of the two policy frameworks. However, as in the preceding chapter, for perspectives on the two policy frameworks, the focus is on the main interview data as the source of key actors’ views. Because some of these perspectives tended to be cast in the context of the on-going dispute concerning the reform of the NDLS, views of ordinary employees are also drawn upon to help clarify issues and concepts. In that case, the chapter also sets the scene for the key arguments that are presented in the final empirical
chapter regarding the perspectives of ordinary employees on formal IR system and PM policies and practices.

The chapter begins with a description of NDLS followed by an assessment of the Scheme. The focus, in that case, is on the issues that are believed to be relevant to the key actors whose relationship the NDLS is intended to regulate. In many instances, the views of the actors are given context by way of individual or collective positions on the on-going dispute and debate concerning the reform of the NDLS. The second part of the chapter examines the policy framework for the management of the relationship between the organisation and her regular employees. For that the thesis concentrates on the GPA's Rules and Regulations of Service (GPA, June, 2003). The main objectives of the chapter are: to tease out aspects of the frameworks that deal with policies and processes relating to Employment relations; examine and discuss the views of some key actors regarding the policy frameworks. It also aims to highlight actors' views regarding their own roles and those of others in the IR/PM drama at the GPA; and to show how the organisation's policies and practices are influenced by national policy, bearing in mind that the GPA is a State own enterprise.


Like all national level IR structures and processes, The Gambia's NDLS was also a colonial invention. However, although the British and Gambian Dock Labour Schemes have similar structures that serve similar functions, they differ fundamentally in terms of their core objectives. For example, for both
Britain and The Gambia, the National Port labour Board (PLB) comprising of the representatives of the parties in dock employment, is the key structure of the NDLS. In terms of responsibility, however, the British PLB had a wider remit and authority (GG, 1963; Felixstowe, 1997). As in Britain, The Gambian PLB also has responsibility for the registration of dockworkers and the allocation of work. Unlike in Britain, however, The Gambia's PLB is not responsible for paying the wages of dockworkers or providing them with training and medical care (see GG, 1963, 1990; and Felixstowe, 1997). Fundamentally, the immediate motivations for establishing the Scheme in the two countries vary. For Britain, the creation of the NDLS was, principally motivated by the desire to de-casualise dock work. The aim of the British NDLS was to 'end the scourge of casual labour', guaranty 'minimum work, holiday, sick pay and pensions' for dockworkers (Newham Docklands Recorder, 18/08/1988). This rather ambitious agenda, perhaps, accounts for the considerable powers that were given to unions under the Scheme. According to the *Newham Docklands Recorder*, the NDLS gave unions 'absolute veto over dismissals and control over recruitment. Registered dockers laid off by any of the 150 Firms bound by the Scheme have to be taken on by another or paid £25,000 –meaning virtually “job for life”’ (1988: 6; see also Felixstowe, 1997).

However, as I have argued in chapter 4, in SSA, casual employment does not carry the same meaning as it does in the British or for that matter, European context. The same could be said for developing countries like India where, despite the stated intention of the Royal Commission on Dock labour (1931) to decasualise dock work, it has not still been possible to grant permanent
employment status of dockworkers (Datta and Sharma, 1997). In the case of The Gambia, however, it seems that the colonial official who fashioned the country's NDLS in the early 1960s were conscious of the fact that total de-casualisation was an unnecessary objective to aim for. Although a certain category of dockers - 'on shore workers' – did gain permanent status as direct employees of the GPA, even now, the vast majority of dockworkers remain in casual employment. As in East Africa, casual waged employment fits in quite nicely with dockers' alternative indigenous forms of economic activity and social organisation (Cooper, 2000, 1987). As a result, de-casualisation was not, a motivation for introducing the NDLS.

Again, as in East Africa, waterfront labour unrest and the need to introducing similar mechanisms of social control, were the more immediate motivations for the colonial state to create the NDLS. In that regard, The NDLS, it seems, was a direct reaction to the series of strike during in the latter years of the colonial period, climaxing with January 1961 strikes, which caused major disruptions to the colonial economy. That strike, arguably the biggest and most significant act of industrial action in The Gambia up to and since that time, was focussed on the waterfront. In the aftermath of the 1961 strike, government set up a Commission of Inquiry to review 'the basic terms and conditions of employment appropriate for unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled labour as well as tradesmen' (Interview: Former Senior Labour Official). Since the docks were the focus of the strike, the Commission 'was given a specific remit to review the administration of dock labour and provide some recommendations for government's consideration' (Interview). In its final report, which was presented to the Colonial Legislative Council as Sessional paper No. 2 of 1961, the Commission
recommended the creation of a ‘sub-committee of the Ports Joint Industrial Councils (PJIC) to regulate the organisation and administration of dock labour’ (P. 6). That sub-committee was constituted as the PLB and given legal status by the Port Labour Board Act (1963, 1990). Although the Act has been subjected to several review since 1963, even now, the PJIC together with that PLB and related legislations, constitute the NDLS of The Gambia (figure 1 below represents a basic framework.

Fig. 7.1: Framework for the management of the NDLS

In terms of organisational level employment relations between the GPA and the category of workers responsible for cargo handling, this framework is the focus of this chapter. The accounts are therefore intended to represent Key actors’ perspectives regarding its viability as a framework for managing the currents issues involved in dock labour on the Gambian waterfront. As the model indicates, the PJIC and PLB represent the joint IR structures for what may be described as the administration of the procedural and substantive
aspects dock employment relations in The Gambia. The PJIC, however, predates the NDLS as it was created as part of the post-war colonial IR machinery that was legislated under the Colonial Development Act (1929). The PLB comprising of ‘representatives of an equal proportion of the employers and trade unions connected with the industry’ (GG, 1963, cap. 35; 1990 cap. 56.01), therefore, is more directly associated with and responsible for the administration of dock labour.

For The Gambian context, the PLB is unique not only because it is peculiar to Dock labour, but also because of the specific and detailed nature of legislative provisions regarding its character and modus operandi. The primary legal instrument for the introduction and management of the NDLS was a Labour Ordinance in the form of ‘The Port Labour Board Rules’ (Legal Notice No. 61 of 1963, Cap. 35). This legislation predates both the Gambia Ports Authority (as a legal entity) and the current labour laws (1990), and neither this study, nor the two major studies concerning the NDLS that preceded it (KPMG, 2000; and Felixstowe, 1997), have found any evidence of it being significantly amended, let alone repealed. Instead, its provisions have been incorporated (almost verbatim), into the existing Labour Act (1990) as the ‘Port Labour Board Rules’ (1990, cap. 56.01). These provisions continue to sustain the PLB in its original form, as the institution with powers ‘to determine those workers to be registered’ as dockworkers and responsibility for their ‘recruitment and discipline’ (GG, 1990: Cap, 56.01.1). Similarly, the provision of 1990 Act regarding the composition of the PLB is a verbatim copy of rule 4 of the 1963 ordinance, which states that the PLB:
'Shall consist of three representatives of employers and three representatives of trade unions (called representative members) together with three independent members appointed by the Governor with the consent of both employer and trade union members of the Port Joint Industrial Council. One of the independent members shall be elected chairman... An Officer of the Labour Department shall act as Secretary and Adviser ... but shall have no voting rights' (GG, 1963: 138, 1990, 56.01.2).

The Commissioner of Labour under the Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment (DoSTIE) is responsible for the administration of the scheme. As the Scheme administrator, he also serves as Secretary and Adviser to the PLB. The day-to-day running of the Scheme is entrusted to the Port Labour Inspectorate under the Commissioner. As in the UK, the Inspectorate maintains the Register of Dockworkers and, as required by the rules, upon registration, each registered dockworker is assigned a unique registration number and issued with a certificate endorsed with his photography and signature or thumbprint. The certificate represents the individual's Pass or ID Card, which allows him (for they are all men) access to Port areas and on board vessels to carry out cargo handling duties. The register is maintained in a gang structure that currently stands at 18 gangs of 21 dockers (including Head and Foremen). The gangs are scheduled to vessels in strict rotation and when a gang is not able to get its full complement of members, Supernumeraries are drafted in. Unlike the UK, the PLB in The Gambia neither pay dockers' wages, and nor does it provide training, medical care or any form of social security. As the only registrar of dockworkers,
however, the PLB is the sole supplier of dock labour and has direct responsibility for the discipline of the dock workforce. In that regard, it serves as an intermediary agency in the employment relationship between those who demand for dock labour – GPA and Shipping Agencies – and those who provide that labour - dockworkers and their representative organisations.

In its current form, the NDLS was based on, and continues to envisage, the provision of labour in a context dominated by private shipping agencies as the users of dock labour. In that context, (when the NDLS was established) neither the supplier nor the users of dock labour were ‘ready to engage a permanent labour that would be utilised only for a few days a month’ (Interview Notes: Former Labour Officer). Therefore, since the original PLB Act had not been subjected to any noteworthy review since 1963, the current Act makes no provision for one of the basic elements that define the employment relationship – the identification of the party that must assume the basic obligations of an employer (Edwards, 2003). With the exception of aspects of on-the-job supervision, and the payment of wages, all aspects of the relationship between the demanders and providers of dock labour, are mediated through the PLB. Any body requiring dock labour must get it through the PLB, which also has powers ‘to prescribe working instructions together with appropriate penalties for failure ... to comply with these instructions’ (Rule 9, PLB Rules, 1990). As a result, even though ‘employers’ (a misnomer in this context), have the right to refuse the employment of any dockworker whose behaviour or attitude they consider ‘inappropriate’, only the PLB has powers to determine and institute disciplinary action against registered dockers. Issues of discipline and the status of those who use dock
labour (particularly the GPA), are some of the key contentious issues in the on-going dispute and debate regarding the reform of NDLS.

The NDLS was introduced in a context whereby the demand for dock labour was almost always made by private Shipping Agencies and Commercial houses and provided through private contractors in the form of 'strongmen' in the mould of the Sirangs of the colonial ports of East Africa (see Cooper, 2000' 1987). The basic character of this arrangement (i.e. private Shipping Agencies being the main users of dock labour) remained until 1972 When the GPA was established under the post-colonial Public Enterprise creation project. With the creation of the GPA, two developments, with significant implications for the organisation and management of dock labour, took place. The first concerns the decision to hand over all Quay (on-shore) cargo handling operations and related staffing matters to the GPA from the PLB. The second, and perhaps more important development, was to give the GPA sole responsibility for all cargo handling operations on Gambia's ports. As a result of these developments, a certain category of registered dockworkers came under the direct employment of the GPA. Also, all requests for dock labour by Shipping Agencies are made through the GPA as the country's sole cargo-handling operator. Currently there are 8 Shipping Agencies representing 5 major Shipping companies that make regular calls at the Port of Banjul, as well as various, but less regular Shippers (see table 7.1 for details). These Agencies, through the GPA, have access to some 740 dockworkers that are currently on the PLB register (Table 7.4 for a breakdown in rank and category).
With the current arrangement, upon receiving information from Shipping Agencies regarding vessel arrivals and labour requirement for cargo handling, the GPA makes requests for allocation of dockworkers from the Port Labour Inspectorate. The inspectorate sends confirmation of allocation in the form of Form PLB/1. The Form specifies the Gangs (including the names and registration numbers of members). Because the cargo handling operations of Shipping Agencies is contracted to the GPA, Shipping Agencies have no direct responsibility for paying the wages of dockworkers. In instead, Agencies pay the GPA, at the ‘on-going international rate for cargo handling and in hard currency’ (Interview: Secretary General, GMDWU). There is no minimum wage level that the GPA is required to pay dockworkers. Instead, it calculates the rate of pay based on ‘internationally recognised criteria’ (Interview: Senior Stevedoring Supervisor, GPA) 17. The aggregate wages for the vessel, which is based on the kind and amount of cargo handled, is paid to the Gang foreman who, in turn, pays the individual members of the Gang.

The Shipping Agencies, together with the GPA constitute the Ports’ employers’ Association. Like the dockworkers’ organisations, (e.g. GDMWU), they are represented on both the PJIC and the PLB. When the NDLS was established in the 1960s, one Shipping Agency – the Elder Dempster Shipping Lines—dominated the port industry in The Gambia. The expansion of the Port of Banjul since the late 1970s, particularly ‘in response to increased re-export trade with

17 The issue of Dockworkers’ rate of pay in relation to the rates paid to the GPA by shipping Agencies is a source of great suspicion between the GPA and the GDMWU. Although the GPA emphasises the fact that it has recently increase dockers’ wages out of sheer goodwill, neither the Authority, nor the Shipping Agencies were forthcoming in terms of the rates the latter is paying the former for handling various categories of cargo, nor, for that matter, what constitutes the ‘internally recognised criteria’ on which dock labour rates are calculated.
neighbouring countries, which was spurred by the cost competitiveness of the GPA’ (interview Notes: Director of Operations, GPA), has resulted in increases in the number of Shipping Agencies. The dock labour force has, likewise, increased ‘to reflect increased activity’ at the Ports (Senior Labour Officer).

Table 7.1: Shipping Agencies that operate at the Port of Banjul (Source: GPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shipping Agents</th>
<th>Shipping Company Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castle Oil</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia Shipping</td>
<td>OTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delmas</td>
<td>Delmas Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate Shipping</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimpex</td>
<td>J. Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Shipping</td>
<td>CMBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Shipping</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASR</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like everywhere else, the nature and organisation of dock labour in The Gambia has changed considerably since the introduction of NDLS in the early 1960s. The level of containerisation has increased from 191 TEUs in 1980 when it was first introduced at the Port of Banjul, to an estimated 38,000 TEUs in 2002 (GPA, 2002). There has also been a steady increase in quantities and varieties of cargo handled at the Port. For example, recently, the GPA constructed ‘farm tanks’ to deal with the increasing amount of liquid cargo being handled at the Port. These new technological developments, at the least, have brought about the need for new skills and competences that should have a bearing on the relationship between dockworkers and the management.
of the GPA. The role of new technologies in bringing about changes in the organisation of cargo handling and the overall conduct of IR on the Gambian waterfront has been substantial but it is by no means exclusive. Changes in the broader national political and economic policy environment (see preceding chapter) have also had a major impact on the overall national IR machinery.

These changes, together with social developments in the wider Gambian community, have brought about challenges that the existing institutional and regulatory arrangements had not envisaged. Consequently, what exists as the NDLS appears to be IR structures supported by archaic legislation that does not addressed the fundamental issues and problems in the organisation and management of dock labour and for that matter, the employment relationship between the parties. In its current form, therefore, the NDLS is a symptom of the apparent organised disorganisation that best describes the current management of dock labour in The Gambia.

7. Ii: Archaic Solutions for Contemporary Problems

As indicated earlier, the basic framework presented here represents only the ideal envisaged for a 1960s context. As to why it was necessary to introduce such a scheme, the official line is that 'the ports were the most important link between the country and the outside world at the time and economic necessity required an organised approach to the administration of dock labour' (Interview Notes: Ex Senior Labour Officer). A retired official of the GPA who runs a Shipping Agency advances a similar reason observing that 'it was necessary to organise dock labour because, at the time, sea transport was the most realistic means of getting goods from and to Europe and as a
result, more than any other sector, the economy depended on the smooth operation of the port' (Interview Notes). Dockers' representatives, however, have another explanation. They argue that the introduction of the scheme was directly related to the part played by dockworkers in the industrial unrests at the time. As one former docker and Union official put it:

‘In the early days the Scheme was good for dockers because with registration we knew we could set up a very good organisation and monitor our members. But when the idea was first put to us, most of us believed then that government and the private traders were trying to restrict us and prevent us from fighting for our rights as workers as a result we were a bit cautious' (Interview notes).

Clearly, the current leadership of the GMDWU is equally sceptical about what the Secretary General of the GDMWU refers to as ‘the wholesale reform of the dock labour scheme' (Interview Notes). As it happened, at the time of the empirical study, the single most important IR issue in The Gambian concerned the viability and relevance of the existing NDLS. The rhetoric of the key actors (at least those of managers and employers), regarding the issue of debate/conflict echoes those of some senior British government officials during the 1989 debate over the repeal of the British dock labour scheme. Accordingly, the GPA Managing Director’s argument against ‘port services rooted in old and inefficient practices' (see chapter 4) resonates very much with Norman Fowler’s description of the British Scheme as ‘a total anachronism which stood in the way of a modern and efficient Ports’ industry' (House of Parliament 6/04/1989). As indicated elsewhere, the implications of this debate for the fieldwork in terms of the issues that were relevant to
respondents was profound. And, although all the key players in this IR drama agree that the Scheme needs reforming, they entertain some fundamentally different views as to what the problems are and what form the reforms should take.

The impression one gets is that the NDLS is fundamentally flawed and as a result, it is incapable of effectively addressing the key issues arising from the contemporary context. In that respect, this study supports the conclusions of the two major recent studies on the reform of the Scheme (KPMG, 2000; & Felixstowe Port Consultants, 1997). These studies respectively concluded that the 'current Scheme' is 'unworkable within the framework of existing legislation' (KPMG, 2000: 14); and 'does not satisfy the needs and requirements of the Gambia Shipping, Port/Transport community' (Felixstowe, 1997, chap, 7: 1). Primarily, both studies are concerned that the incorporation of the provisions of the 1963 legislation regarding the powers and modus operandi of PLB into the 1990 Labour Act, has created what KPMG describes as an 'abysmal gap between the provisions of the law and applicable rules on the one hand and the operation of the scheme on the other' (p. 14). The key issue, in that regard, is that the existing machinery gives no consideration for variations in the circumstances for the introduction of the PLB in 1963 and the current realities and circumstances of dock labour that needs to be addressed. Consequently, as it is, the Scheme fits in with the symbolic rather than practical use of IR structures and the law is incapable of adequately addressing some of the major issues of the employment relationship between the parties (figure 7.2 is a breakdown of some the major issues). A summary of responses to questions relating to the issues that
are important to key actors suggest that the lack of an identifiable employer for dockers; the age profile of the existing dock labour force; gang size; pay and condition (particularly in relations to night work); discipline and grievance procedures; and flexibility and productivity are some of the most important issues that any reform of the NDLS must address. Naturally, these issues are of relative significance and priority in terms of how they are perceived by the respective parties involved in the debate.

A breakdown of issues that concerned respective representatives of the parties during meetings and from S.W.O.T analysis carried out by the Felixstowe Study (1997) indicates significant differences in priorities. Tables 7.3 and 7.4 below represent a comparison of the issues that are important to port employers and dockworkers' representatives. The absence, from both tables, of the issue of the lack of an identifiable employer for dockworkers may have more to do with the timing of the two preceding studies rather than the significance of the issue itself. On that issue, the Secretary General of DMWU noted: 'because at the time of Felixstowe study the GPA had not been forthcoming as to what its actual intentions were regarding the Scheme, we did not consider the idea of who should be responsible for pensions and severance benefits for our members who may have to retire as a result of the reform of the Scheme' (Interview).
Table 7.2: Issues Important to Management & Port users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Importance (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of Labour force</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline/Restrictive practices</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security/Safety/welfare</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages &amp; Bonus scheme</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age profile</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Issues</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3: Breakdown of Issues of Concern to Dockworkers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Importance (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay security &amp; Conditions</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/working methods</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus scheme</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang size/over manning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Felixstowe, 1997

As an indication of actors' conceptions of issues in terms of their relative significance, therefore, the Felixstowe study is somewhat dated and the more recent KPMG study (2000) did not engage in such analysis. Although the main interview data suggest that these issues are still important to key actors, it also suggests that at this stage in the reform debate, the issue of the lack of an identifiable employer had assume greater significance. And that has tended to have repercussions for actors' perspectives on how some of the other major issues of contention might be resolved. The problem, in that respect, is that although the GPA has become the 'de facto employer of dockworkers since taking over sole responsibility for cargo handling and assuming some of key responsibilities of an employer' (Interview: Commissioner of Labour), its management refuses, 'on legal grounds' (as the Deputy Managing Director put it), to be identified as such. The relevant clause of the 1990 Labour Act reflects a 1963 reality whereby private Shipping Agencies were the predominant employers of dock labour. Accordingly, PLB Rules (1990) still defines employers of dock labour as 'Shipping Agencies operating in the Gambia and includes the Collector of Customs or his representative' (GG, 1990, cap. 56, Section 158). The failure of the Act to specifically identify an employer, it seems, was and is still a
deliberate decision on the part of government and port employers, to keep an arms length. According to a former senior Labour Officer, who claims to 'very conversant with the scheme':

"When the Scheme was introduced, the matter of an identifiable employer was exhaustively discussed by the Council and it emerged that the government did not want to be seen as employer of Dock labour; none of the Shipping agencies was ready to engage a permanent labour that would be utilised a few days a month; and the Union with the partial support of the shipping agencies bitterly opposed the question of a contractor to act as the employer of dockworker" (Interview notes).

As a result and also 'due to the failure to bring the law in line with the current situation' issues of retirement and 'who has responsibility for the payment of pensions and other severance benefits have not been adequately attended to' (Interview: DPS, DoSTIE).

According to the Commissioner of Labour, the agenda for the reform of the NDLS has shifted since the Felixstowe and KMPG studies, in the sense that 'neither the GPA, nor the Dockworkers' Union deny the need and inevitability of reforms' (Interview Notes). Their respective positions regarding Gang size and overmanning have converged and they are agreed that the age profile of the current labour force 'is unsuitable for the rigors and strains of cargo handling' (Interview: Port Labour Inspector). Yet, for the representatives of dockworkers, a distinction must be made between the debate surrounding the reform agenda, and the conflict arising from management's refusal to discuss some specific demands. The Secretary General of the GDMWU tried to make this point when he insisted:
'The Union is concerned about how the scheme should be reformed and we have sent our views to the authorities. However, the timing and the form the reform will take is a matter for the government. What concerns us now and what the GPA should be talking to us about at the moment, are our overall rates of pay in general and in particular, the rate for night work; social security contributions; and compensation for our members who were involved in accidents some of which were fatal. At the moment they [the GPA] are refusing to talk to us using the issue of reforming the scheme as a pretext for engaging in poor industrial relations. We have warned them as well as the relevant authorities in the central government that if they do not sit down and discuss these matters, we shall resort to strike action by the 1st of September' (Interview Notes).

For representatives of 'Port employers', however, the resolution of all the issues in contention hinges on the direction that the reform of the NDLS takes. Whilst admitting the 'GPA has been acting as the de facto employer', one senior manager insists, nevertheless, 'the issue of the employer of dock labour is, at the moment settled by the relevant law and it does not identify us as the employer of dockers' (Interview notes: Deputy MD, GPA). The review of wages and working condition, managers insist, 'must therefore be contingent upon the review of the entire dock labour scheme'. That, according to the Director of Traffic Operations of the GPA 'must include: the rationalisation of the labour force with the removal of old dockers and the reduction of gang sizes to reflect existing technology, and the institution of structures and procedures that will ensure that the GPA has a say in the organisation of work and discipline of bad workers' (Interview Notes).

The problem for those responsible for reforming the Scheme, however, is that 'at the moment, the whole reform thing boils down to the fact that some body has to pay for the reform and that includes severance pay for potentially redundant dockworkers'
The notion of 'rationalisation' is based on the two related issues of gang size and over manning, and the 'unsuitable' age profile of the existing dock labour force. Managers and representatives of Shipping Agencies are concerned that, in spite of the introduction of 'costly and new technologies and increased containerisation, gang sizes have continued to increased since the 1980s' (Interview: Manager, Traffic Operations). And, notwithstanding increases in gang size, managers claim that 'Shipping Agencies are constantly complaining about the actual lack of adequate manpower on vessels' (Interview: Director Maritime and Shipping Services). The latter problem, in particular, has led to personal accusations being levelled at the Scheme administrator. A senior Director, for example, suggested that the PLB was engaged in 'creating ghost dockworkers'. As he put it:

'Although we are not always around to count the number of people on a shift, we know very well that there is hardly an occasion when you get a shift with a full complement of gang members. Since we hand over the wages for all the 21 members of the gang to the Headman when work on a vessel is completed, we cannot guarantee that what we payout is going to distributed among 21 dockers. It is very possible that there may actually be only 17 members in the gang and the wages for the remaining four are distributed between the certain individuals' (Interview).

The current dock labour force is estimated to be 740 men of various categories, divided into 18 gangs comprising of 21 members (see table 7.5 for a summary breakdown of registered dockers). 'Gang sizes', according to one former senior Labour official, are 'greatly influenced by employers as users of the dock labour force' (Interview). However, it is not only the size of gangs that concern senior managers and Shipping agents. Related to that is, also, the concern for
gang composition. On this issue, the conclusion of KPMG study (2000) has a great deal of support among managers and employers. The problem, according to KPMG, is that ‘apart from being unusually high’, gangs ‘are incomplete and lack the capacity to carry out their duties without the inclusion of supplementary workers’ (p. 7). These problems, in turn, are compounded by the rotational deployment procedure required by the PLB Rules. Rule 15 of the PLB requires that gangs be deployed ‘on strictly rotational basis’. That, according to some ship owners and managers, ‘means that gangs are not deployed on the basis of the adequacy of their numbers and their capacity to carry out the task required on the type of vessels that need to be worked on’ (Interview: Representative, Gambia Shipping Agency).

Table 7.4: Complement of Breakdown of Registered Dockworkers (Source: PLB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gang Headmen</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dockworkers</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Foremen</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangway men</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winch men</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Winch men</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tally Clerks</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernumeraries</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>740</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significance of the age issue lies in the fact that at this stage of the reform debate, it has become, arguably the most contentious issue and its resolution, it appears, is fundamentally linked to the issue of ‘an identifiable employer’ for dock labour. In that regard, ‘the capacity of the aging labour force to carry out the difficult and dangerous task of cargo handling and keep the Ports competitive is very central
to the reform agenda' (Interview notes: Senior Labour Economist, DoSTIE). The issue here involves what the KPMG study (2000) calls the future of 'old dockworkers' who constitutes more than 60 percent of the entire dock labour force' (KPMG, 2000: 6) (see table 5 for the age distribution of the current dock labour force). Although actors are not agreed on what constitutes 'old age' in the context of dock work, all the three major reports on the reform of the NDLS since the late 1990s - National Stakeholders' Workshop on Port Labour Reform (18-19 September, 2002), the KPMG Review of Dock Labour Scheme (December, 2000), and the Felixstowe study on behalf of the government of The Gambia (1997), refer to the fact that over half of the current dock labour force is over 50 years old. In all these reports, the issue of the age profile is highlighted in the context of concerns for the lack of provisions for the retirement of older and infirm dockworkers. According to a former Senior Labour officer, this was 'another deliberate omission dictated by the casual nature of dock employment, and the fact that the initial intention was for the PLB to be a temporary arrangement for the supply and administration of dock of labour'. Consequently, he said, 'dockworkers have the notion that they would only retire at death' (Interview Notes).

Table 7.5: Age distribution of Registered Dock Labour Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage of RDWs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55 years &amp; over</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 55 years</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 49 years</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 44 Years</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39 years</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from KPMG 2000)
This profile indicates that close to 60 percent of the current workforce is 50 years or over. The KPMG study also indicate that 60 percent of the most senior dockers (i.e. foremen/headmen) are above 55 and about 80 percent of second tier of dockworkers (Assistant foremen/headmen) are 55 year or over. Similarly, 18 of the 22 dockers categorised as winch men are shown to be over 50 years old (KPMG, 2000: 6). The Felixstowe study, which carried out an analysis of available bio-data on some 264 dockers (about 43 percent of registered dock workers), concluded that 8 out of 11 Dock foremen/headmen are between the ages of 65 and 72 years (Felixstowe, 1997). Bearing in mind that most of the dockers were born in rural areas at times when proper records of birth were hardly kept, the reliability of the latter age profiles may be subject to dispute. My personal hunch, however, is that significantly, they reflect the reality and in spite of technological advances, my observation of cargo handling on the Gambian waterfront suggests that it is still a young man's game in terms of physical requirement. In any case, the GPA and representatives of Shipping Agencies have seized upon these reports as 'one major reason to reform an old and unproductive Scheme' (Interview: Traffic Manager, GPA). Representatives of Shipping Agencies point to 'numerous instances of damage to ships' equipment and cargo' as resulting from the 'old age of dockworkers' (Interview: Officer, J. Shipping). The KPMG study has recommended that dockworkers who are 50 years and above 'should form the bulk of those to be retired' (2000: 6) as part of the 'inevitable redundancies that would arise from any approach to reforming the Scheme' (DPS, DoSTIE).

The fact that managers and representatives of shipping Agencies almost always refer to the KPMG study when they give an opinion on the 'age' issue
may, according to the President GDMWU 'have something to do with the fact that that study was commissioned and paid for the GPA with the explicit blessing and perhaps, even contribution from the Shipping Agents' (Interview Notes:). In that respect, representatives of Dockworkers accuse the GPA of 'ignoring the conclusions of the Felixstowe study on the issue because they are not considered as favourable to their position' (Interview Notes: SG, GMDWU). Although the Felixstowe report also suggested the retirement of 'old dockworkers', it went further to propose various options for reforming the NDLS. Further more, it also suggested that whoever takes over cargo handling operations under the reformed scheme, must be responsible for the severance pay and the pension of retired dockers.

Another issue, which is also related to the age issue, concerns the use of unregistered worker as substitutes for registered relatives who, for one reason or another are not able to work their shifts. The problem, in that respect, as one Senior Labour Inspector saw it, is that:

'Once a person is registered and is issued with a registration card, they think that any of their relatives can work as dockers as long as they are able to show the Card when they show up for work. This is particularly rampant among older dockers and those who go back to their villages during the rainy season to work on the farms' (Interview Notes).

For the Scheme administrators and the management of the GPA, the use of non-registered workers represents 'a particularly difficult and serious problem especially when it comes to compensation and insurance claims involving non-registered dockworkers involved in accidents on the job' (Interview Notes: Commissioner of Labour). To buttress this point, a Stevedoring Supervisor narrated a story
involving a non-registered individual who 'sustained fatal injuries when he fell into the hatch while working a shift'. The unfortunate chap', as he described him:

'Had used his brother or cousin's (I am not sure) registration card to get work on a vessel and since the man was not supposed to be there in the first place, he was not covered by our insurance Policy. Naturally, the Insurance Company refused to pay any compensation. In the end the only money that went to his family was a token amount given by the GPA and this was out of sympathy' (Interview Notes).

Ordinary Dockworkers, as shall be discussed in greater detail later, have views suggesting a different perspective on this issue and generally, the logic of those perspectives have a significant bearing on their attitudes and behaviours towards the formal IR machinery. For now, it should suffice to note that the data also indicates that the use of unregistered relatives is not only peculiar to old, infirmed and/or for that matter, those engaged in alternative forms of employment in the village. It reflects a 'pattern of indulgency' (Watson, 1995). For it appears to be a regular part of the Scheme, whereby both managers and Shipping Agencies ignore 'selected rule infringements' by dockers. The objective, in this circumstance, however, is not necessarily in return for their 'co-operation in matters which, strictly speaking, they could refuse (Watson, 1995: 267), but instead, to avoid confrontations with potential to expose their own failings as employers.

This study took place at a time when, arguably, the most significant debate on what form the management of waterfront labour in The Gambia should take, since the establishment of the NDLS in the early 1960s, was taking place. The
case of managers and employers for a 'fundamental revamp of the existing Scheme' (Interview Notes: Director Traffic Operations GPA), is, in many respects, sustained by the 'continuing pressures that are being brought to bear on the government by its development partners for such reforms to be effected' (Interview Notes: DPS, DoSTIE). Whilst issues of the age profile of the existing labour force, over manning, and pay and conditions may be of some significance to the representatives of the parties, it does appear that at the heart of the problem, also lies the issue of how much 'control' each party wants to have over the organisation and management of dock work. Managers and port employers, for example, are peeved that they have 'very little control over people who they pay and provide raincoats and other protective gear for and yet, when these people fail to turn up for work or do things that adversely affect our operations, we can do very little about it' (Interview Notes: Traffic Manager, GPA). The sense of 'powerlessness' among senior managers and representatives of Shipping agencies, 'to do something' about the tendency for dockers 'to constantly subvert and circumvent the PLB rules' to the extend that 'even when they are suspended from work, they are still able to collect their wages without ever actually working for those wages' (Interview Notes: Senior Stevedoring Superintendent, GPA), is a major source of anger and animosity toward dockworker, and an incentive to push for the Scheme to be reformed.

For their part, ordinary dockworkers, (as shall be discussed in the following chapter), perceive of their attitude towards discipline and the use of non-registered relatives, as being consistent with traditional and Islamic principles moslaha and hadamayaa (tolerance and the human way). The leadership of the Dockworkers union does not consider issues of disciplinary procedure and the deployment of non-registered workers to be 'that important'. Instead, raising
these issues constitute ‘simply diversionary tactics used by the GPA to avoid discussions ... on the more important issues‘ (Interview Notes: SG, GMDWU). The President of the Union argues that ‘now that the GPA and Shipping Agencies are so keen about reforms and in particular about getting rid of some our members and having control over those who remain, they must also, first and foremost, accept responsibility for ensuring that those that are going are properly and adequately taken care in retirement‘ (Interview Notes). ‘That‘, the Union’s Secretary General interjected, ‘would require that the GPA formerly take responsibility as the employer of the dock labour force and sit down with us to negotiate reasonable terms of retirement prior to any decision regarding the form reforms should take‘ (Interview Notes). On that issue, Unions and senior government officials are in alliance. The Commissioner of Labour, for example, accused the GPA of ‘hiding behind legal technicalities, when for all intent and purpose, it is the sole and de facto employer of the dock labour force‘ (Interview notes).

As it is, the NDLS is in state of flux, the debate regarding its reform is currently at an impasse and it appears that the parties are looking up to government to break the deadlock. Or are they? The answer may depend on the organisational capabilities of the Union and the ability of its leadership to keep members united around a common agenda. That in turn, depends very much on ordinary employees’ conceptions of the formal IR machinery and its real role in their employment relationships and interactions. That would be the focus of chapter 6 - the core empirical chapter of the thesis. Meanwhile, the next section looks at the ‘formal‘ aspect of the employment relationship between the GPA and its regular employees.
Unlike its relationship with the dock labour force, which is governed by a national framework for IR, the relationship between the GPA and those in its direct employment is regulated by formal organisational level Rules and regulations of Service (GPA, 2003). This category of workers includes all those directly recruited by the Authority (except contract workers), to carry out managerial, clerical, on-shore cargo handling activities and any other form of manual/clerical work. It specifically excludes 'registered dockworkers'. In that regard, what amounts to the organisation's IR policies and guidelines for practice, are set out in the *Gambia Posts Authority Service Rules* (*S.R*) (2003). These rules had only been amended in June 2003 (a month before the fieldwork commenced). At the time of the empirical study, employees were sensitised through series 'staff sensitisation seminars' organised by a management committee, which was headed by the Deputy Managing Director (*Internal Memorandum*, 15 June 2003). In terms of application, the document states the: 'Rules embody the terms and conditions of service in the Gambia Ports Authority, and apply to all employees of the authority except officers on contract and ... dockworkers and other privately hired casual labour working in the Port' (Rules 0101.1 & 5, p. 5).

The rules cover most HR issues as they relate to the specific organisational context of the GPA; including recruitment and promotion, pay and incentives, disciplinary procedures, staff welfare and safety and separation. Managers, however, are quick to point out that they 'also reflect national policy on human resource management' (*Interview Notes: HR Director, GPA*), and are 'consistent with
the broader laws on employment relations, which are based on traditional English law' (Interview Notes: Legal Officer, GPA). What is intended, however, is that the Service Rules, at the least, 'reflect the spirit of the terms of the contractual relationship between government and the GPA as a State owned enterprise' (Interview Notes: DPS, DoS). That relationship, as indicated in the preceding chapter, is currently defined in the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (1997) between the government and the enterprise. The MOU has replaced the Performance Contracts (P/C) (1987) that served as the basis for this relationship under the terms of the Public Enterprise Act (1989). The current arrangement, however, is also based on a national level policy context that privileges neo-liberal private enterprise economic principles and management paradigms and strategies. And, perhaps, for that reason, even when the HR Director speaks of his work as 'involving largely routine administrative tasks' (Interview Notes), those tasks are described in terms of HRM policies and practices.

One cannot help but notice how managerial rhetoric is dominated by talk of the 'value of employee participation and commitment in the running of the organisation' (Interview Notes: HR Director, GPA). Yet, neither the MOU, nor the P/C is in any way specific as to how the principle of 'employee participation' may be pursued at the level of the Enterprise. As a result, Public Enterprises in The Gambia are largely left to their own devices to fashion their mechanisms for employee participation. In that respect, the GPA has opted for, what in many ways is consistent with 1980s limited forms of Employee Involvement (Marchington et al 1992). Rule 1305 of the Service Rules (GPA, 2003: 40) proposed the creation of a Staff Association (this has been briefly discussed in the preceding chapter). Consistent with the French model, which it is an
imitation of, the Rules state that ‘a Staff Association be set up and initially funded by the Authority to take care of all welfare requirements of the staff’ (Rule 1305: 2). The annual general meeting of the Association has also become the forum for electing the Association’s president who doubles as Staff representative to the Authority’s Board of Directors, as requested by the MOU (1997).

The Staff Association, however, is not an IR structure and does not constitute a significant organisational level IR development. Perhaps, because they are aware that as Public sector workers, they are banned from forming and/or joining any TUs, neither managers, nor ordinary employees, consider the Association as a conventional IR structure. When asked if he thought his role on the Board includes ‘bring up employees’ grievances for discussion’, the current president of the Association quickly pointed out that he does ‘not see his role on the Board of Directors as an employee representative in terms of a traditional union leader who may be required to bring up collective or individual demands and grievances of employees at Board meetings’ (Interview Notes). Both the HR and Maritime and Shipping Services Directors supported this position. The HR Director emphasised the point that the ‘only legitimate channels for employee demands and grievances are those stipulated in the Service rules and regulations’ (Interview Notes).

It is understandable, therefore, that officials of the Staff Association do not seem to entertain even the illusion of it having an IR roles. Instead, the Constitution of the Association (April, 2002), stipulates as its mandate, to raise and manage its own funds independent of the Authority, and to meet the social and welfare needs of her members. In that regard, it has helped to ease
some of the financial burden on the ‘formal organisation’. In addition to underwriting most of the costs of the Organisation’s social and sporting functions (the GPA has a football team in the First Division of the Gambian League), the Staff Association also provides ‘soft’ personal loans to employees for various purposes. Despite this seeming financial independence, however, the Service rules require the Association to operate within the scope of the ‘formal organisation’. As a result, for the ‘administration of Staff welfare’, it is required to act ‘in consultation with Department of Human Resource and Administration’ (Rule 1305.1). This provision, in addition to general HR functions that fall under its remit, underscores the role of the HR department in the management of employment relationship between the GPA and its regular category of employees (see figure 5.).

Fig. 7.3: Framework for PM at the GPA

![Diagram of the organizational structure at the GPA](image-url)
The composition of the Board and how Directors are selected are specified in the MOU. Under the MOU, the Head of State is mandated to nominate, 'in consultation with the Line Ministry' (in this case the Department of State for Works and Infrastructural Development (DoSWID)), two members 'one of whom shall serve as a non-Executive Chairman'. It also proposed the inclusion of the Managing Director as Executive Director, the Permanent Secretaries DoSWID and Finance and Economic Affairs (DoSFEA), an Employee representative and other Executive Directors of the GPA 'as alternate Directors representing management' (MOU, 1997: 18). The 'HR' (Personnel) functions of the Board are, however, limited to the appointment and discipline of Senior categories of employees and to act as the final organisational level forum of appeal for employees against managerial decisions (Service Rules, 2003, Rules 0202 & 0703). As in all aspects of the Authority's activities, 'HR' (Personnel) issues in general and the management of the workplace relationship between the organisation and its employees are, in accordance with the directives of the MOU 'delegated ... to management' (MOU, 4.1, P. 12).

The focal point for all Personnel (HR) issues and activities is the Department of Human Resource and Administration headed by an HR Director who doubles as Board Secretary. The label 'HR Department', however, is misleading. This is because for all intent and purpose, the modus operandi of the department is more consistent with conceptions of Personnel Management than HRM (see Redman and Wilkinson, 2003; Torrington and Hall, 1995). Accordingly in terms of what are described in the HRM literature as 'strategic functions' (Bacon, 2003; Boxall and Purcell, 2000; Purcell, 1999;
Schuler and Jackson, 1999; Kamoche, 1996), the department's role is very limited. Rather, on the basis of its activities and tasks, *Personnel Management and Administration Department* is a more representative label.

In addition to having administrative responsibility for the management of staff welfare, the Service Rules also require that all personnel related matters be communicated to, and from the Managing Director and the Board, through the department of HR. For disciplinary procedure, for example, the rules stipulate that 'as soon as a Head of Department becomes dissatisfied with the work or behaviour of any employee subordinate to him, it shall be his duty to inform the employee, in writing, *through the Human Resource & Administrative Department*' (GPA, 2003: 22) (Italics for emphasis). It goes on to say that if 'the employee' fails to 'exculpate' her/himself, 'the head of department shall ... recommend ... alternative disciplinary action to the *Director of Human Resource & Admin* who 'shall impartially consider the recommendations ... and make appropriate recommendations to the Managing Director' (pp. 22-23). As it is, because the Director of the HR department has the tendency to consider a strategic role for the holder of his position, he is concerned that 'much of' his time 'is spent on these mundane administrative aspects of his job' (Interview Notes). He argues, therefore: 'even though I am a very senior official I consider myself to be no more than a glorified clerk doing stuff that most members of my staff are perfectly capable of doing' (Interview Notes).

Most senior managers, however, find the existing arrangements and the role the HR 'quite satisfactory' (Interview Notes: Corporate Services Manager). In that regard, the 'role of the HR department in the relationship between managers and
subordinates is normal for all Parastatals' (Interview Notes). Some senior managers, however, believe the HR Director to be 'considerably powerful'. As one put it: 'because he can intervene and influence the course of action that can be taken against any member of staff, most employees consider him to be more powerful than all the other Directors' (Interview Notes: Traffic Manager). Interview data also suggest a predominant concern among senior managers that 'the Service rules give too much discretionary power to the Managing Director' (Interview notes: Director of HR & Admin). One implication of what one senior manager calls 'these blanket discretionary powers', is that they are being used 'to turn this place into a family business' (Interview notes). This observation, (as shall be discussed in the following chapter), also has implications for ordinary employees' perceptions of, and attitudes towards the formal Personnel management policies and practices of the Organisation. For career prospects, for example, many of them depend on alternative, 'informal' forms of relationships, interaction and mediation.

7. V: Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the organisational level IR and PM machinery of the GPA. Although the NDLS and the GPA's Service Rules and Regulations are organisational level frameworks, the data indicates that both are legitimised and, to some extent, sustained by the broader national policy frameworks for IR and people management. In that regard, it is intended to stage the scene for the next chapter by way of giving the reader some idea of the formal organisational phenomena on which employees' formed perspectives. In other words, formal institutional and regulatory frameworks provide the basis for
assessing the influences of the ‘informal’ dimensions of the social system on employees’ conceptions and perspectives on their workplace relationships and interactions. The formal system, therefore, does matter because the ‘informal’ system does not exist totally independently. Instead, it interacts with the formal system and secretes around it.

In the accounts relating to NDLS, the chapter presents a basic framework that identifies the key players and the basis and character of their relationship in the provision and management of dock labour on the Gambian waterfront. It has also sought to highlight some of the problems that are associated with the existing framework. In that regard, the accounts are largely based on the perspectives of key actors, given in the context of an on-going dispute and debate surrounding the reform of the NDLS. While these perspectives highlight some conventional IR issues such as pay and conditions, safety and productivity, they also brought forth issues that situate the NDLS in a historical context. The basic issue of the lack of an identifiable employer for the dock labour force, which fits in with the evolved natured of the relationship between the parties, suggests that the NDLS is a colonial imagination, which in the current form, suffers from institutional indolence.

With respect to the relationship between the Organisation and its regular staff, the relevant accounts indicate the policy framework for PM is in the form of Service Rules and Regulations (June, 2003). This policy document, as rule 0101 (p. 5) stipulates, defines the nature of, and processes involve in management of the relationship between the GPA and all its employees, ‘except officers on contract and dockworkers’. The model that is presented as a
description of the framework, suggests a central role for the HR and Administration Department. That role, however, is more consistent with conceptions of old fashion Personnel Management than conceptions of HRM as people management orthodoxy. For purposes of managing the employment relationship, however, the closest the Rules come to creating any thing that even remotely resembles joint IR structure, is the Staff Association. This arrangement, however, for all intent and purpose, represents a forum for the exercise of 1980s style of EI based on the narrow commercial organisational objectives. The GPA, however, is a State own Enterprise and accordingly, and in the context of the historical perspective presented in the preceding chapter, its formal frameworks are consistent with national level economic management policies and strategies. The paradox, however, is that while national level policy frameworks are predominantly inform by the neo-liberal ideology that came into vogue in The Gambia in the 1980s, the GPA has yet to make the transition (that is if that is actually feasible), from traditional PM to ‘HRM. As a result, what pertain are simply PM practices coughed in the rhetoric of HRM.

The intention in this chapter is to provide descriptive accounts of ‘formal’ organisational level frameworks for IR and PM on the Docks. As a result, the accounts have disproportionately focused on official policy documents and publications and the views of elite actors on the ‘formal’ aspects of organisational level employment relationship. In that respect, it provides the background against which more detail accounts of the perspectives of ordinary employees and workers on the formal aspects of organisational IR and PM will be rendered. The following chapter will attempt to give that account and in
doing so, will revisit of the key theme, namely: the influences of the indigenous and religious dimensions of the social system in shaping actors perceptions of and behaviours towards formal organisational policies and practices.
Chapter Eight


Introduction

The preceding two chapters focused on the ‘formal’ arrangements of IR and PM at both the national and organisational levels. In terms of the social systems concept of analysis, the concentration, so far, has been on the ‘formal’ dimensions of the social system. The preceding chapter focused on formal organisational level arrangements. But, it also strived to make the point that two frameworks that were the subject of key actors’ perspectives, are in fact, legitimised and sustained by formal national level policy frameworks. A major consequence, therefore, is that as at the national level, the IR and PM policies of the organisation also tend to be subsumed under the economic and commercial objectives that are themselves based on the macro-economic objectives and strategies of the state. As a result, organisational level policies are also intended to serve diverse purposes including, the legitimisation of certain forms of political authority and providing evidence of State compliance with the dictates of certain external influences (see chapter 4). In terms of employees’ attitudes and actions in the actual conduct of their work related relationships and interactions, however, the dominance, let alone hegemony, of the ‘formal’ institutional and regulatory arrangements are seriously challenged. It follows, therefore, that for their conceptions of the employment
relationship, one may also have to look elsewhere, for a more holistic understanding and explanation of the influences that actually shape the attitudes and actions of ordinary employees and workers.

The historical perspective on IR system (chapter 4) was rendered in the context of the 'continuities' in colonial patterns of IR and post-colonial 'disruptions' to those patterns. In that regard, the ideological orientations of post-colonial political actors and the economic philosophy of the immediate post-colonial government had some significant implications for the IR machinery. Similarly, in more recent years, external influences, in the form of International development and Financial agencies are very evident in the official rhetoric, if not substance, concerning IR policy. The colonial influence and post-colonial disruptions are significant because as chapter 4 indicated, 'formal' organisational level machineries (chapter 5), radiate with elements of the colonial imagination in the form of the NDLS, and the rhetoric and ideals of 1980s paradigms relating to employment relations. The colonial imprints and the latter influences that have been brought to bear on 'formal' IR structures and processes are important. Although these systems still have some relevance, their implications for how individuals actually go about conducting their work related relationships and interactions might however, be greatly overvalued.

As elsewhere in SSA, as mechanisms for social control, colonial IR structures and related legislations, were meant to help institutionalise protest (Cooper, 1987, 1983; and Roper, 1958). These innovations, however, also proved that those who imagined them were significantly ignorant of some major aspects of
the social context for which they were intended. They were, superimposed on pre-colonial institutions and processes that had, at the time, already survived some three centuries of colonial rule (Dia, 1996). Ironically, some Colonial policies and practices helped to sustain many traditional forms of authority relationships and interactions. As a result, one of the most significant post-independent social developments was that along with indigenous re-assumption of political authority; elements of pre-colonial institutions and processes also re-surfaced and assumed greater significance as influences on the attitudes and actions of individuals and collectivities. The nature of these influences, in terms of how they are elaborated in the attitudes and actions of workers in the conduct of their workplace and work related relationships and interactions, and the sources of the underlying values and norms that inform those attitudes and behaviours are the subjects of this chapter.

The chapter begins with a brief description of the social system in terms of its major dimensions. This is followed by detailed descriptions of the two major ‘informal’ dimensions of the social system — Extended family clans and Muslim Brotherhoods. The descriptions focus on the key dimensions that are perceived to be relevant to the theoretical arguments of this study. Although account of the description will, to some extent, be also informed by my tacit knowledge of the social system, as in the preceding chapters, it will be predominantly based on native perspectives gleaned from the main interview data. Sections V and VI, focuses on the nature and character of the influences of the ‘informal’ dimensions in terms of individual attitudes and behaviour in a formal organisational setting. The accounts that describe the elaborations of

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18 The British colonial policy of ‘Indirect Rule’ is classic example (see Basil Davidson, 1967).
the values and norms of the informal dimension will be rendered, almost exclusively, through the voices of the actors in the form of the main interview data. In that regard, the chapter is sociologically focused, in that it is mainly about the group(s) views rather than individual differences. It aims to discern from ordinary dockers' attitudes and behaviours, the existence of conceptions and processes that represent alternatives to the formal IR policies and processes of the State and the Firm. The final section looks at the organisation’s coping strategies with the influences of the informal dimensions on their subordinate relationships and interactions between the organisation (managers) and ordinary employees.

8. I: Informal Dimensions: Family Clans and Islamic Orders

The framework of contemporary Gambian society (Chapter 2.11.4) is meant to reflect a synthesis of the value systems and norms of the cultural traditions that fought for hegemony over the peoples the Gambia River valley between 1850 and 1900. When that conflict ended with the imposition of the colonial solution in the early 1900s, three major social dimensions emerged. Each of these dimensions has its dominant sphere of influence but none can lay claim to absolute hegemony over every aspect of the society. Consequently, the contemporary Gambian social system comprises three major dimensions. The nation State representing the imprint of the colonial tradition and comprising of the formal aspects of the social system has political dominance but little social hegemony. Indigenous value systems and authority structures have baseline expression in the extended family clan structures headed by Matriarchs and Patriarchs. The third dimension is the Arabic element in the
form of Islamic values and norms and having institutional expression in Muslim brotherhoods or Orders comprising of Saints and their disciples.

The preceding two chapters have focused on the Nation State in terms of its influences on the ‘formal’ national and organisational level institutional and regulatory arrangements for IR and PM. The structures and legislative arrangements that represent this aspect of the social system, undoubtedly have some relevance both in terms of the internal logic of legitimising certain forms of authority, and the external objectives of government. Besides, for analytical purposes, Trade unions, JICs, national arbitration boards, etc, are very familiar and amenable to some dominant Western approaches and fields (e.g. IR itself) of academic enquiry. For that reason, and perhaps, also as a result of the relative dominance of the nation state, organisational analysis has tended to be disproportionately focussed on the ‘formal’ dimension of the social system. ‘Dominance without hegemony’ (Guha, 1997), however, has engendered extreme ambivalence. As a result, managerial rhetoric and behaviour concerning the influences of the ‘informal dimensions’, also exudes extreme ambiguities. Accordingly, in formulating national employment policy, one may consider it desirable, or even essential; to ‘elicit the views and recommendations of the grassroots’ authority figures such as ‘head Chiefs’ (GG, 2001: 1). At the same time, however, you have little problem insisting that ‘traditional considerations and norms are not relevant at the level of national policy formulation’ (Interview: Senior Economist, DoSTIE).

Although predominantly a stable in the rhetoric of national level actors, such characteristic ambivalence is not necessarily limited to that category of actors.
It is also evident at the organisational level, particularly in the rhetoric of managers. Such characteristic ambivalence, for example, is discernable from the following observation by a senior manager at the GPA. He said:

'Although we must take into account our peculiar traditional and social context, we must, however, bear in mind that people have used this to justify actions and behaviour that are not in the national interest. I mean people who use their positions to give jobs to their relatives even when there more qualified and competent people looking for those same jobs. The end result is that we have incompetent people running the country and ruining the economy' (Interview Notes).

Such views on the influences of the 'informal' dimensions on work related issues are quite common. Interview data from this study, however, also suggest that the role of these influences in shaping attitudes and actions in many and varying contexts of formal organisational life, is not only inevitable, but also may be desirable. The argument, in that regard, is almost always cast in the rhetoric of communal 'obligations' and 'expectations'. As one senior manager put it:

We all come from a community and belong to “families” who have contributed to our education. I therefore consider it my responsibility, for example, to provide for the education of my uncle’s children and help them get employment, just as their father had brought me up and provided for my education up to Secondary school. In the process of getting them jobs, I will use my influence, as that is what is expected, I expect colleagues I helped in the past to return those favours. This is the way and I am sure as a Gambian, you would do likewise. We are required to look after our elders and relatives. That is how our society works' (Interview Notes: Director S&M Services, GPA).

19 As in most of SSA, ‘family’ here refers to a significantly larger number of individuals. As one manager put it: ‘in this society ‘family’ is any one you share a village or family name with.
Comments like that also support the argument that aspects and elements of the informal dimensions of the social system make it difficult to sustain any form of ‘associated action, outside the traditional types of communal action’ (Roper 1958: 25; see also Brown, 2003; and Cooper, 1987). I must emphasise, however, that like the colonial solution, the Islamic element also represented a disruption to the pre-colonial indigenous traditional order. The Islamic dimension, however, predated the advent of colonialism and despite the predominant Islamic influence; Islamic institutions generally operate outside the formal system. Empirical evidence supports the central argument that the ‘informal’ social dimensions exert enormous influences that pervade, particularly, the subordinate authority relationship between manager/employer and employee. As one senior manager pointed out: ‘because we are part and parcel of the same social system, even the Managing Director needs society’s approval and he is therefore susceptible to the pressures from his family and “Maraboutes”’ (Interview: Senior manager, GPA). Accordingly, the ‘extraorganizational tasks’ (Kiggundu, 1989) that managers engage in, and the ‘expectations of the external role set’ that are said to engender ‘bad practice’ (Blunt and Jones, 1992), are perceived of in terms of one’s ‘obligation to the community that had a collective responsibility for her/his up-bring and social well-being’ (Interview notes: Community leader and ‘local historian’).

8. II: The Extended Family Structure: Hierarchy of Relationships between ‘Mother’s Children’

Even after some four centuries of foreign influence and dominance, pre-colonial and pre-Islamic extended family clan and kinship structures remain
to be the basis for self-identity, individual and collective interactions and relationships (Curtain, 1975). This particular relationship form has been described in great detail in chapter 2.II. The Gambian extended family clan structure is based on bilateral descent (matrilineal and patrilineal) lineages. However, although members of the extended family are largely identified by a shared surname that descends from the patrilineal lineage, in its most benevolent context, the Mandinka term for the clan relationship has a matrilineal expression. In that regard, the relationship between a large number of near and distant relatives is expressed in terms of expectations and obligations to badinningolou—literally translated as 'your mother's children'. Its patrilineal expression — fadinngoolu, connotes the hostility that tends to characterise the relationship between children of different mothers having a common father. For this study, the focus will be the matrilineal form of the extended family clan relationship.

As indicated in chapter 2, in its broad form, as kinship based on bilateral descent from a common ancestry, the clan does not constitute an effective social unit for defining one's obligations to her/his relatives. The Clan system is, therefore, a hierarchical, stratified framework of relationships that are sustained through intermarriages and other forms of social exchange (see figure 6.1 below). Relatives of common ancestry tend, generally, to settle in different villages and towns across ethno-linguistic and even national boundaries. The clan structure and relational processes are, however, sustained by various forms of social interactions. These include inter-clan marriages and temporary child exchanges that are intended 'to sustain badinya (family relationships) among members and ensure that their children know each other.
and never forget their aarda (traditions) and where they came from' (Interview Notes: Community Leader). Clan relationships also tend to be territorial defined. At each level of the hierarchy (physical or otherwise), the relationship has a rhetorical expression describing its physical or substantive nature and character.

**Figure 8.1: The Extended family Clan: Hierarchy of relationships**

The basic unit of the Clan structure are the extended family compounds that make up the *Gales/Kabilos* (wards) of the members of the Clan living in the same village. Eldest male member of the 'immediate' extended family (comprising of brothers and sisters and their respective families) acts as the head of the extended family compound. Although married female members generally tend to relocate and become part of the immediate extended family of their husbands, according to one dock Foreman who is also an 'Alkalo' (Village Headman), 'on rare occasions the reverse happens whereby husbands move to the compounds of their wives'. In the latter case, 'the husband usually is also related to the
wife in other way – for example, they could be cousins’. Otherwise, such arrangements, he said ‘are considered abnormal and frowned upon by the husband’s badingolou’ (Interview Notes). Another elderly docker who was present at the interview observed that ‘no family prays for female members of marriageable age to live in the family compound and no family is proud of a male member who takes a wife and decides to go stay in the wife’s compound. It is not uncommon, however, for ‘a man to marry his uncle’s daughter and decide to live in the maternal home even, if only temporarily’ (Interview Notes). Married female members who leave the family compound would usually send their children to be raised by their grand parents. The reason being: ‘when the child grows up and returns to his father’s compound, at least he would have had some knowledge of his maternal origin and therefore will not ignore the mother side of the family’ (Interview Notes: Compound Head). The oldest male members of the compound have immediate authority and responsibility over their respective households. However, this interviewee pointed out: ‘even where the matter may concern only one particular household, it is dealt with collectively and the “borom kerr” (wollof for Compound head) ‘has the final authority on all matters involving the section of clan living in his compound’ (Interview Notes).

At the level of the compound, the relationship between members of the extended family is benevolently expressed in terms of one’s relationship with ibadinngolou or saidomi Ndey (respectively Mandinka and Wollof for ‘your mother’s children’). This expression may be used to describe one’s relationship with other members of the Gale. Generally, however, relationship at that level of the clan structure is defined as iwoolunyolu – lateral translated as ‘those you are born with’. The word does not only indicate the numerical strength of those involved, but it also reflects the distant nature of
such relationships. The relationship and therefore, obligations and expectations between *iwoolunyoluu* are not as intimate and strong as between *badinmahuu* (*mother’s children*). One’s obligations are first and foremost, to your ‘*mother’s children*’.

Villages/towns in The Gambia generally comprise of several extended family clans identified by their respective *Gales/Kabilos*. Traditionally, the village head is always the eldest male member of the village/town’s founding clan. This process of determining leadership, however, is gradually being replaced by Western paradigms of leadership selection. While this development may not be relevant to the structure of the extended family as a traditional relationship form, its implications for authority relations among different and to a lesser extent, within the clan are profound. For the nation-state and its key political actors, the emerging process represents ‘the expansion of the democratic process to the grassroots’ (interview Notes: DPS DoSTIE). Community leaders, for their part, see ‘unnecessary interference intended to undermine the authority of our elders and undervalue our aarda (tradition)’ (Interview Note: Village Headman). In terms of significance, however, relationships based purely on shared village membership do not command the moral obligations and expectations of *baadinya* (*mother’s children’s way*). Even although people, wherever they may be, organise in pursuit of ‘their common causes’ as members of the same village, and do help each other individually, and in all sorts of ways, their relationship is expressed in terms of ‘*deka n’dorr*’ or ‘*see-n’yo*’ (Wollof and Mandinka for neighbour). Laterally translated, the phrases mean ‘living together’. Since your *Dekan’dorr* and/or *Seen’yo* is not necessarily your ‘*mother’s child*’, your relationship tend to be tentative and based on ‘the
obligations you have to the village and the expectations of the village elders whereas the relationship between badinngolou is based on the moral obligation to building the reputation of the family and sustaining the “badinya”, “aarda” and well-being of the family’ (Interview Notes: Community leader).

In its broadest form, the extended family Clan comprises of all those who can lay claim to a common maternal and/or paternal ancestry. Since the most common way of identification is a shared family name that is paternally descendent, there is a tendency to view the Gambian family clan system as based on paternal ancestry. This, however, is not necessarily true, because although ‘people tend to refer to the father's lineage when they talk about their descent, mother's side of one's ancestry happens to be the most secured and benign side of your family. This is why People even refer to very distant relatives in maternal terms as “badinngolou” or “saimboaka” (plural forms of ‘mother’s children) (Interview Notes: Oral Historian). Relationships that are based on the broad concept of the extended family clan may be spread across ethno-linguistic or even national boundaries. Such relationships, therefore, also tend to be tentative and vaguely defined. As a result, the level of moral obligation and expectation that they invoke may be relatively insignificant determinants of workers’ attitudes and behaviours toward each other, particularly in formal work settings. Having said that, Gambians are also infamous for the tendency to use ‘distant relationships as the basis of their expectations of those they consider to be more prosperous relatives even if they don’t actually know them’ (Interview Notes: Director of Maritime and Shipping Services, GPA). As a result ‘people can claim that because your great-great grandparents were some how related, they have a right to make demands of you and they strongly believe you have a moral obligation to oblige’ (Interview Notes: DPS, DoSTIE).
The model of clan structure presented here suggests that the level of the clan structure at which relationships are constructed also determines the extent of matriarchal/patriarchal influence on the collective or individual. The nature and character of these influences in terms of how they might have a bearing on individual or collective interactions and relationship, therefore, suggest a tendency towards inner and outer group formations. Consequently, the extent to which individuals have a sense of shared rights and obligations to one another depends on whether they consider each other as badinn'go (my mother's child), deka n'dorr (neighbour) or woluun'yo (relative). The extent to which one besieges a relative and the extent that the latter obliges, are dependent on perceptions of the level of the extended clan relationship hierarchy at which their relationship is constructed. A senior manager put it this way:

‘In my position, there are demands from a very large number of relatives for financial and other sorts of assistance and I do my best to help. But I get really worried when I am not able to help members of the family at home. For example, I feel very bad when I am not able to help my younger brothers and cousins to find a job. You know, these people are what you describe as close relatives and it is my obligation to take care of them just as my elder brothers and uncles helped to bring me up’ (Interview notes: Director of S & M. S, GPA).

On balance, the rhetoric of respondents regarding their obligations to and expectations from extended family indicates that the level at which relationships are formed have some bearing on the degree of one’s obligations and expectations. Your relationship with iseen’yo (neighbour who is not necessarily your badinngoo), is based on ‘your collective obligation to a common...
village and the expectation that members of the village should always take collective action for the good of the village' (Interview Notes: Village Headman). Neighbourly relationships, in the context of the extended family clan structure, are, however, very important sources of individual and collective social security. A dockworker of 'rural origins' tried to make that point saying:

‘One should not down play the importance your relationship with your deka ndorr. ‘Where I come from you depend on your neighbours to help on the farm and look after your family when you are ill. And when you are away from home as most us are, you don’t just depend your baadinggoloo because only few of them may be living near you, you tend to have a great deal of closeness with almost everyone who comes from your village. So as you can see, most of the time, you depend on your neighbours a lot and your relationship with them is certainly more important than what you usually have with those you consider to be your iwoolunyolou’ (Diaspora clan members) (Interview, Gang Foreman).

But his observations also indicate that those obligations and expectations are not static in time but rather, they tend to adjust to changes in society.

In terms of formal workplace relationships and interactions, therefore, it is the category of the clan that one counts as ibadinn’gy that has greater influence on how you relate to and interact with others. As one elderly employee observed, ‘a senior officer is more likely to yield to pressures from her/his baadinn’go’. This however, does not mean that other categories of the extended family relationship have no influence. As the respondent further observed, ‘it is quite common for people to be given jobs simply because they are from the same place as one of the senior people. If you check this place, you will realise that many of the people working here are from the same place
with some of the senior managers' (Interview Notes: Gang headman and 'Community leader').

Presenting a framework of the extended family clan as a hierarchy of relationships is helpful to the argument that the degree of influence is contingent upon the level at which the relationship is constructed. The data supports the general argument that extended family clans have significant influences on individual and collective attitudes and behaviours in many contexts of social interactions in Gambian society. An elderly dockworker made this point when he said that 'even in the urban area where people tend to develop Western life styles, you must make every effort to locate ibadinngolou and maintain contact with relatives (Interview notes: Gang Headman). However, the data also indicates that the degree of influence that the matriarchs/patriarchs have on individuals, particularly in the context of their workplace attitudes, actions, and interactions, is contingent on the level, within the clan structure, at which their relationship with a particular individual is constructed. In the subordinate relationship between managers and their staff, 'those who have “mother’s children” up there are treated differently from the rest of us' (Interview: Crane operator). The preceding comment indicates the significant influence that the extended family relationships could have on the employees' conceptions of the Employment relationship. Later on in this chapter, workers' perceptions regarding workplace attitudes and practices that represent the elaborations of the values and norms of the extended family clan relationship will be discussed in greater detail. The next section, however, will be devoted to a detailed description of the second major 'informal' dimension of the social system – Islamic religious Orders/Brotherhoods.
8. III: Saints and Disciples: a relationship of Spiritual and Material Symbiosis

The Gambia’s population is estimated to be 90 percent Muslim (GG, 2003) most of who belong to the mystical Islamic Order of Sufism. Naturally, therefore, Islam has a very significant role in Gambian society. That influence, generally, is mediated through the relationship structures of the three dominant Sufi Muslim Orders or ‘brotherhood’ - Qadiriyya, Tijaniyya and Mourides – that most Gambian Muslims belong to. As Islam itself, these Orders came to The Gambia through Senegal and, perhaps, as a result, ‘Gambians tend to join local chapters of Senegalese based brotherhoods’ (Interview: Local Imam). The Qadiriyya represent the oldest Sufi Muslim Order in the Senegambia. Like it, the Tijaniyya brotherhood, which is the second oldest Order, also has its roots in North African Sufism. Unlike the Qadiriyya, however, the Tijaniyya Order was introduced to the Senegambia by an indigenous Islamic scholar – El hajj Sheikh Umar Taal - who was himself initiated into the Order during a visit to Macca around 1850 by its Algerian founder Ahmad al-Tijani (Abun-Nasr, 1965). But unlike the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, the Mouride Order is an indigenous creation that in many respects represents a peculiar African adaptation of Islam. In that regard, its members exalt the vision of Ahmadou Bamba (a native Senegalese who founded the Order) for ‘adapting the Islamic faith to the local realities and ways that strengthened the cohesion and faith of indigenous people in their resistance to colonialism and the temptations of Christianity’ (Interview notes: Arabic Teacher and confessed Mouride). ‘The absolute truth of such a claim’ according to a local Imam ‘is debatable. What is without
doubt' he said, 'is that Sheikh Ahmad Bamba has been able to adapt Islam to the needs of his followers as to be able to claim their complete devotion to him and the Order he founded' (Interview Notes).

Although Qadiriyya is the oldest of the three Orders, currently the Tijaniyya and Mouride Orders claim larger followings and greater prominence. One Islamic scholar attributed the emergence and current dominance of the two Orders to 'disillusionment of Muslims throughout the region, with the leadership of the Qadiriyya for failing to challenge the authority of the Touba (White man) and fight against the spread of Christianity among our peoples' (Interview Notes). Because of their common Sufi origins, however, 'both the Tijans (followers of the Tijaniyya Order) and Mourides have practices that have their origins in the teachings of Adul Qadri Jalani' (the Iraqi born Sufi scholar who founded of the Qadiriyya Order) (Interview notes: Local Imam). Despite their shared origins and common practices, however, they also have major differences that could be discerned from their peculiar rituals and modes of worship.

Although one can claim membership of any of the Orders by virtue of birth, members are required to follow specific practices that distinguish them from other brotherhoods. According to the self-professed Islamic scholar, 'the fact that your parents are Tijans is not enough. Every Tijan must know and perform our wîrds (litanies) and special prayers that distinguish us from all other Muslims. A true Tijan must observe and perform Jawharat al-kamal wazifa because it is our unique and most celebrated form of worship (Interview). The uniqueness and importance of the Jawharat prayer lies in the belief among disciples that at certain points during this prayer 'the Prophet Mohammad and the four original Caliphs of Islam descend from heaven
to join the congregation’ (Interview Notes: Islamic Scholar). The Mourides also have their peculiar litanies and modes of worship that are, however, the subject of great deal of controversy regarding the extent to which some of those practices are in line with the teachings of Islam. Although most of the Muslim scholars and leaders who were interviewed duelled considerably on this issue, it does not appear to be very pertinent to the focus of this Thesis. It suffices to say that ‘most Muslim scholars consider some of their beliefs and practices to be un-Islamic and improper’ (Interview Notes: Local Imam). According to the Imam ‘Sheikh Amadou Bamba’ the founder of the Mouride Order ‘was very modest and orthodox in his teachings and commanded his followers to observe the five fundamental obligations of Islam. Unfortunately’, he went on, ‘some of the more extremist followers insist that Bamba was a Prophet of Allah and was spiritually created thousands of years before the holy Prophet Mohammad’. For some of his followers, however, the founder of their Order was not just a Prophet. He was a Prophet who ‘after receiving a vision from Allah, founded the holy city of Touba (the headquarters of the Mouride Order in Central Senegal) ‘that will some day equal Macca in importance for Muslims everywhere’ (Interview Notes: Islamic Scholar and ‘devoted Mouride’).

In addition to entertaining such beliefs, Mourides are conspicuous for a particular form of social organisation called Diara. A form of informal Islamic school and collective farm that attract disciple ‘who believe in Bamba’s teaching that work is a form of worship of Allah’ (Interview Notes: Islamic Scholar and ‘devoted Mouride’). Generally, disciples get together to establish Dairas where they engage in unpaid work for the Saint for as long as he desires. Some are known to have engaged in ‘this form of worship for 30 - 40 years working for Bamba’ (ibid). For a particular group of Mourides, working for the Saint has become an
acceptable substitute for conventional forms of prayers. The Baye Faals (a distinctive branch of the Mouride Order that was founded by Sheikh Ibra Faal, allegedly first and arguably most illustrious disciple of the founder Saint), ‘have made work their primary religious duty. They refuse to pray and/or fast, tolerate and engage in drinking alcohol and smoking’ (Interview Notes: Arabic Teacher and Tijan).

Despite these differences, those who preside over the Islamic orders are primarily Muslim scholars. Sufism, however, is a mystical brand of Islam and as a result, these, otherwise Muslim clerics, are identified with the cult of saints. More than anything else, it is this identity that accounts for their influence over their disciples regardless of their social or political status. All the brotherhoods are hierarchically structured institutions headed by the Calipha, who is almost always the oldest male descendent of the founder. Although the Calipha is the highest source of authority and influence within the entire brotherhood, the Seringes (Wolof for teacher), who head the subgroups of the Order at regional and village levels; also ‘have considerable authority and influence over local disciples’ (Interview: Local Imam). Seringes, who are also senior disciples of the Calipha, are generally referred to as Marabout (a French term for Muslim clerics). In the Senegambia context, the term (Marabout) assumes a special meaning through its identification with the cult of saints, a cult that is a particularly important feature of Sufi Islam (Aas-Rouxparis, 2003). Like the Calipha, the Seringe is also a cleric who is also believed to have some ‘mystical powers that enable him to become the conduit through which the brotherhood exerts its influence on its members’ (Ibid).
The Orders require complete submission from their members in return for the spiritual intercession of the founders through the existing Caliphas and local Seringes. Their intervention may be in the form of spiritual deliverance as well as material betterment for the disciple. A disciple can only be attached to one Calipha at a time. According to the Local Imam, during 'njebbel' (ceremony of submission), the disciple presents himself before the Calipha or Seringe (depending on the level of the relationship), and declares 'complete submission of body and soul and to do everything he orders and abstain from anything he forbids him from doing and the Seringe confers his blessing on the Talibe' (student/disciple) 'by spitting into his/her hands'. The latter then becomes the guarantor of the spiritual well being of the Talibe, 'on condition of his absolute obedience'. The Imam recalled that the founder of the Mouride Order had declared that 'whosoever becomes his disciple and seeks refuge with him shall go to paradise and shall not know hell' (Ibid).

The relationship between 'Saints'/Maraboutes and their Talibe, therefore, are a symbiotic one based on guarantees of spiritual protection and self-devotion. This symbiotic relationship has many forms of practical expression including; for example, the obligation on the part of disciples to be present at annual commemoration of the death of the founder of the order, the giving of gifts and provision of free labour for the Calipha and/or his local representatives. Disciples, who are able to fulfil these and other obligations, 'expect, in return, benefits in the forms of prayer and supernatural interventions from the Sereing' (Interview: Islamic scholar and Community leader). In addition to the benefits that may accrue from the intercessory prayers of the saints, disciple also believe that Saints and Sereings 'command power over supernatural forces, and can, through the preparation of amulets and the use of Islamic magic formulas and processes, afford protection
against various malevolent spirits' (Interview Notes: Islamic Scholar). For these reasons, one senior government bureaucrat, who claims to be 'conversant with these issues', observes that:

'Politicians and Managing Directors, in particular, are very keen on traditional festivals and Shiarehs because in addition to the fact that most of these big Marabous have large followings that can make a difference in terms of votes, most senior officials believe the Du’a (prayers) and fetish powers that are associated with the Marabouts can help their personal careers and help secure their positions even when they blatantly engage in corrupt practices and misappropriation of public funds' (Interview: Senior Government Official).

The foregoing descriptions of the 'informal' dimensions of Gambian society are, however, only theoretically useful. In reality, drawing a dichotomy between the indigenous and Islamic values and norms is not so simple. In terms of influences on peoples' perceptions and actions, there is a syncretism of the two dimensions of the social system. Yet, difficult as it may be to make a dichotomy, it is possible to discern their specific influences on individual and group interactions and relationships even, in a formal business organisational setting.

8. V: Elaborating the values and norms of the 'Clan'

"I am because we are, because we are I am" (Mbiti, 1990).

This quote helps to make the point that in African societies, individuals find meaning and security by belonging to a community. Individual and communal
relationships and interactions, in any context, are therefore, sanctioned and influenced by the values and norms of the wider community. As in most of SSA, in The Gambia, belonging to community is made possible primarily by blood ties and relationships forged through the extended family and encompassing ancestral and contemporary moral codes of conduct. The extended family represents the crucial link between the individual and clan, which is the source of individual and collective protection and stability for the family, its members. Individual members have expectations and obligations for one another that are also expressed in the conduct of their communal relationships and interactions, even in a formal work environment.

In the following paragraphs, I intend to give an account of attitudes and behaviour, based predominantly on workers and managers’ perspectives and limited amount of observed behaviour. These perspectives and behaviours, in many respects, represent the elaboration of indigenous traditional values and norms in the conduct of relationships and interactions in a formal workplace. The data from which this account derives was collected using two different sets of questions that aimed to access managerial and ordinary workers perspectives, views and opinions on issues pertinent to the employment relationship. For managerial perspectives, interview questions focussed on processes and criteria for wage determination; the existence, character and nature of informal groups/organisations within the ‘formal organisation’; disciplinary procedures and; engagement with the wider community outside the organisation. With respect to the perspectives of ordinary workers, interview questions focussed on union membership and perceptions of trade unions; reasons for membership of any other work related organisation and
the main objectives of such organisations; common procedures for dealing with problems at work; and reasons for absenteeism during the last 12 months. As in the preceding chapter, these issues are discussed in the context of the existence of two levels of personnel management and IR at the GPA. The first level of analysis concerns the influence of the informal social system on the character and conduct of the relationship between the GPA and the dockworkers.

8. V.1: Doing it the 'Human way': alternative approaches to the employment relationship

The official position and rhetoric leaves the impression that the current dispute between the GPA and dockworkers and their union centres on conventional ER issues. Yet, detailed analysis of related interview data suggests that it also involves fundamental issues that are, perhaps, more peculiar to The Gambia and perhaps, similar social contexts. Pay and conditions, work organisation and safety, disciplinary and dispute resolution procedures are very familiar IR issues in any context. However, in The Gambian context, workers perspectives suggest that in terms of underlying meanings of such familiar issues and they might be resolved, attitudes and actions are heavily influenced by indigenous and Islamic values and norms of conception and action. In that regard, in terms of their relationship and interactions with one and other and with management and Shipping agencies, dockworkers define their attitudes and actions in terms of hadamayaa - a Mandinka term that laterally translates as 'Human way'. 'Hadamayaa', according on old dockworker (who claims to be 72 years old), 'is the best way to
relate and interact with each other because it is consistent with our ardoor (culture/traditions) 'and dinoo' (faith) (Interview Notes: Dock Foreman and Village Headman).

And, 'according our Ardoo', he said, 'when you are in trouble, the person you turn to first is your alifaa' (elder). Although in the contemporary context the term alifaa or kelipha (Wollof for elder) is also used to describe a superior officer/manager or political leader, the term is generally reserved for elderly people or indigenous authority figures. Dockworkers also use it in deference to older colleagues who also tend to dominate the more senior ranks of their trade. For dockers, the indigenous and Islamic influence is not limited to the terms they use to identify members within their ranks. Empirical data also indicates that they have used the work 'gang' to develop by analogy, and recreate traditional authority status and social structures in their formal workplace. In the context of the relationship between them as ordinary workers and in their collective relationship with employers/managers, 'older dockers play the role of peace maker and peace keeper between us and the port and shippers' (Interview Notes: Winchman). In a way, therefore, by recreating traditional authority structures, dockers may also, deliberately or otherwise, be usurping the roles and authority of their representatives and thus, undermining the formal IR machinery.

Yet, with the exception of a couple of ex-union officials, who claim to be 'protesting against the manner in which we were removed from office' (Interview Notes: Ex-Treasure GDMWU), almost every docker interviewed for this study claim to be members of the GDMWU. Very few of them would, however, 'run to Union officials for help when they are in trouble or when they want something from management'
(Interview: Gang Headman). On the other hand, the following response from a ‘gangway man’, to the question: ‘What course of actions are you mostly likely to take when you are in trouble at work?’ is very representative. He would, he said: ‘first try to resolve the problem by directly appealing to the boss. If that does not work, I will then ask the keliphos here to intervene on my behalf’ (Interview Notes). But it is not only Dockworkers who find traditional authority figures useful alternatives for conflict resolution. Responses from managers suggest that sometimes, they too operate within the informal system. As the Traffic Manager noted, ‘sometimes managers also approach older dockers or the elders in the community if and when we think that they can help resolve problems with an individual or group of employees’ (Interview Notes).

As an aspect of ardo (tradition), Hadamayaa (the ‘human way’) however, also invokes the rhetoric of expectations and obligations to ones badinngolou (‘mother’s children’). In that regard, a senior managers comments concerning the expectations of those ‘who have contributed to’ his ‘education’ (see page 272), is very pertinent.

Because ‘that is how our society works’, (Interview Notes: Gang Foreman), dockers have different takes on some of the major issues of contention regarding the reform of the NDLS. On the issue of the use of non-registered workers, for example, managers and Shipping Agencies hold very negative opinions (see preceding chapter). The general belief is that the practice is mainly confined to ‘old and infirm dockers and those who engage in alternative employment in their villages during the rainy season’ (Interview Notes: Port Labour Inspector). Some senior managers, however, also believed that ‘some dockers are
using their registration cards to make extra money without ever being directly engaged in any
cargo handling activities themselves' (Interview Notes: DMD, GPA). In that regard,
mangers pointed to the fact 'a number of registered dockers are actually full-time
businessmen with shops and stalls in the market and only use their cards to make extra
money by allowing non-registered individuals to work their shifts in return for half, or even
more, of the wages they make' (Interview Notes: Manager Traffic Operations).
Although I had no evidence of what a Stevedoring Supervisor describes as
'wage sharing between card holders and those they use to work on their behalf' (Interview
Notes), the PLB register comprises of several individuals who 'have not been
involved in any cargo handling activities for a considerable period of time' (Interview
Notes: Manager Traffic Operations). They include a 'gang headman', who is
one of the riches men in The Gambia and also happens to be Consular
representative for European country. With reference to this particular
'docker', the Traffic Manager commented: 'this man has not set foot in a vessel for
almost 30 years but he is still on the register and gang headman for that matter. As far as we
are concerned, he gets paid whenever his gang is deployed even though he is never there to
work the shift' (Interview Notes).

For many dockworkers, however, giving your mothers' children access to your
Card simply constitutes hadamayaa. A Winchman referred to it as 'just a simple
way to help them earn some money to be able to look after the family'. In his view, 'There is
nothing harmful about that and ... what you need to be aware of is that your relative's family is
yours too and if he not able to look after them, in the eyes of Allah it is your responsibility to
do that' (Interview Notes). Such views may, however, be misleading because
registered dockers do not always allow relatives access to registration cards
out of sheer benevolence. For some, 'particularly older and infirm dockers who are no
longer able to cope with the hard work involved in dock labour' (Labour Inspector), the
Registration Card does not represent individual job ownership. 'The card' as one docker would have it, 'is a family property that any of the younger and able members of the family can use to generate income for the family' (Interview Notes: Dockworker). Accordingly, a docker who claims to be 'one of oldest people at the docks' said he 'cannot understand why this is an issue at all'. As far as he is concerned:

'Ports and Shipping Agencies should only be concerned that the work is done properly and not whether one or two of those who did it were registered dockworkers or not. The family', he insists 'should not be deprived of income only because one of us is unable to work when there are other members of the family who are capable of doing the work' (Interview Notes: Dock Foreman).

Besides, the casual nature of their work means that 'almost all dockers engage in other forms of income generation' (Interview Notes: SG, GDMWU). He argued that 'If the Ports and Agents want our members to hang around whether they have work or not, then they should employ them as full-time worker. They cannot just sit down and do nothing. Who is going to look after their families?' Another docker made the following comments:

'Here we only work when a vessel is available. I go back home to my village as frequently as possible and during the rainy season both my wives and I cultivate our farms back home. Therefore, we spend most of our time at home. One of my sons stays here with and when my Gang is scheduled to work they contact me and I come down. When it is not possible for me to come, any available member of my family or someone from my village works on my behalf. If he is family, there is no problem because the money he makes goes to the family. If he some who comes from my area, then when I get paid, we share the money' (Interview Notes: Gangway man)
The argument that the GPA and the Shipping Agencies should concern themselves only with the proper execution of cargo-handling activities rather than who actually does it is an important issue of dispute between the parties. Managers claimed to be ‘concerned about very basic problems that may arise in the event of an accident’ and are unhappy that ‘dockers can absent themselves from work but still be paid wages’ (Interview Notes: Traffic Manager). But according to one Shipping representative, ‘it is also about having some control over those who work for us’ (Interview Notes: Shipping Clerk, Cargo Ltd.). The extent of employers and managers’ dissatisfaction with existing disciplinary procedures of the PLB is exacerbated by the belief that ‘even the PLB is powerless to deal properly with dockers’ (Interview Notes: Traffic Manager, GPA).

The existing arrangements for the administration of dock labour in general and in particular the formal disciplinary procedures; seem very convenient and ideal for many ordinary dockers. Many of those interviewed agreed with the position of one Winchman that the ‘PLB Rules have sometimes been useful because the arrangements are ok with most us’ (Interview Notes: Winchman). However, particularly in terms of attitudes towards the formal disciplinary processes of the PLB, most dockworkers believed the policies and practices of the PLB are ‘not consistent with our aarda and hadamayaa’ (Interview: Foreman). Consequently, for purposes of discipline and other issues that affect them as workers, dockers have devised alternative processes that are based on indigenous traditional and Islamic values and normative orders. For that reason, the work gang (supposedly an aspect of the formal system), has been adapted as a sort of alternative informal forum for self-discipline, work
organisation and the management of informal welfare schemes that have been
developed and managed by dockers themselves.

Among other things, therefore, issues of absenteeism and the deployment of
non-registered relatives as substitutes are matters 'between the members of the
gang that should not concern the GPA or agents' (Interview Notes: Winchman). In
India (Datta and Sharma, 1997) and East Africa (Cooper, 2000 and Kiajage,
2000), dockers also use 'native' authority titles such as Sarange and Tindel to
describe some of the senior ranks within the work gang. In The Gambia, most
issues (be they are individual or collective in nature), are presided over by the
gang Headmen (a title also used for the Village head). Within the gang, he is
almost always the (or one of the) older member. As in the village, he joins with
the other elderly members to constitute a sort of council of the kelipha or
alifaa to the rest of the members. In the event of any dispute among members
or between a member(s) and GPA or any Shipping Agent, 'it is the responsibility of
the headman to convene a meeting of the gang and just like how it is done in the village, the
issue of dispute is discussed and resolved by way of consensus and moslaha' (tolerance)
(Interview, Gang foreman). And, 'because we all have a common aarda and dinaa
(religion), and can identify with each other's situation, we believe we are better suited to
deal with our problems ourselves without involving the members of the Board because even
though some of the Board members know our ways, most them have Western education and
are not very conversant about the way we do things' (Interview: Headman). According
to this interviewee, gang members 'know each other well enough to know that none of
us will absent himself from work without good cause'. As a result, 'we will not run to the
PLB because one of us fails to report to work because we are confident that they may be either
sick or have pressing family matters that they need to attend to' (Interview Notes).
For ordinary dockers, obligation to the family is an important one and it is central to their arguments regarding the use of non-registered relatives as substitute workers. Whereas managers and Shipping Agents are concerned about the issue in relation to basic real and/or potential HR problems, dockers tend to justify their actions on the basis of their ‘obligations to help their “mothers’ children” and ensuring the family is provided for’ (Interview: Headman). In that regard, one dockworker argued ‘since the Ports and the Agents are not prepared to provide any form of social security, we will do all we can to ensure that no one looses income and that includes accepting other members of our families and friends to work our shifts when we are not able to work ourselves. It is not as if we are stealing goods or causing any damage to their goods. We are only helping each other and our relatives and that is what hadamayaa is all about’ (Interview: Gangway man). But the rhetoric indicated that ordinary dockers’ actions are not solely dictated by the moral order of their native and religious culture. There is, also, an economic rationale for how they think and act. In the absence of formal schemes for social and income security, gangs have fashioned alternative forms of social security to look after the welfare of members. For example, almost all gangs have an arrangement whereby:

‘Each member pays part of his wages into a collective savings accounts from which members can borrow during emergencies and occasions such as the annual Muslim feast of Idil Adha to buy a ram to slaughter. It is a common understanding’ among us that sick colleagues do not loose their wages even if they are not able to work the shift’. As a result, ‘when any of us is sick, we ensure that we work even harder so that the sick colleague’s absence is not noticed because the work is slack. Since we are not paid individually, when the headman collects our wages, the absent member’s
wages are put aside and one of us takes it to him at home' (Interview notes: Gang Winchman).

Official documents indicate it was only very recently that the GPA started paying social security contributions on behalf of registered dockers. Dockers, however, 'have always had their own informal insurance schemes since the early 1970s' (Interview Notes: Ex-Secretary General GDMWU). In the event of the death of a colleague, for example, members ensure that his name is not immediately struck off the register. Instead, in what could be described as an interesting example of how the informal system has crept into patterns of thinking and action in the formal business setting, 'the gang will work three shift put together the wages he (the dead member) would have earned if he had been alive and able to worked those shifts. The headman will form a delegation of gang members and other senior dockers to present the money to the deceased's family' (Interview Notes: Headman). Apparently, dockers believe that 'managers are aware of this practice' and they condone it because, 'it is consistent with the norms of our society and even though it may be illegal, no manager would want to be seen to be trying to put a stop to such it' (Interview Notes: Senior Stevedoring Superintendent).

As an aspect of the informal dimension of the social system, the influences of the traditional extended family clan are not just defined and expressed in terms of one's obligations to your 'mother's children'. They are also been replicated at the formal organisational level. In what fits in with Bhabha’s (1994) notion of ‘mimicry’, dock gangs (a structure sanctioned by the formal system for the administration of dock labour), have become the structural...
context for the elaboration of those ‘informal’ indigenous and Islamic values and paradigms.

Accordingly, in so far as ordinary dockworkers are concerned, the informal practices of the gang including, covering for sick colleagues, the use of relatives and friends as substitutes and aiding the families of deceased colleagues (in the manner described above), reflect the ‘hadamayaa and aarda of our society’ (Interview Notes: Foreman and Village head). ‘Our aarda’ according to him, ‘requires that when a member of the community is sick or infirm, the rest of the community come to his aid by cultivating his farm and providing for his family’. Similarly, in terms of disciplinary procedures, ‘most dockers do not appreciate the impersonal character of the PLB and consider some the sanctions it can impose to be inhumane’ (Interview Notes: Senior Dock Labour Inspector). On that point, most of the dockers interviewed believed that the PLB should only be involved in disciplinary proceedings in extreme circumstances. According to one senior docker, ‘you should only deny someone his wages or livelihood if he deliberately causes a colleague to loose his capacity to provide for his family through serious or fatal injury on the job or if he is consistently disrespectful. But for something like being absent or giving your card to someone to work for you, those are matters we can settle between us without involving any officers’ (Interview Notes: Winchman). One Senior Labour Inspector thought that ‘in terms of discipline, some of the older dockers view the PLB as a formal court and, generally, most ordinary Gambians don’t like going to court’ (Interview Notes) That view is supported by the following comments made by a dock foreman who claims to be ‘one of the oldest people on the here’:

‘For most of us, the government’s way of resolving disputes is not acceptable. Is like going to court. The PLB has written rules that it follows and these rules have been
written by people who have very little knowledge of our arrdoo. Hadamayaa requires that when there are differences you sit down and discuss the problem and ensure that your “voices meet” (reach a consensus). You can only make peace by ensuring that “your voices meet” otherwise, there will always be antagonism and that is not a good thing. Even when it is necessary to punish someone, you must always bear in mind that the individual has people to look after’ (Interview Notes: Foreman).

As indicated earlier there is a great deal of fuzziness between the indigenous and Islamic elements of the social system. As a result, the Islamic influence on the employment relationship can also be discerned from rhetoric concerning the influences of the extended family clan. Hadamayaa or ‘the human way’, for example, is in reference to Adam, the biblical character that represents the origins of humankind. Similarly, the word Moslaha, (propensity for tolerance), is a corruption of Arabic for ‘harmonious relations’. In more specific terms, however, the influence of the religious dimension among dockworkers is expressed in terms of naa dinoo or sun’ou dinaa (respectively Mandinka and Wollof for ‘our Faith’). Even in that context, however, ordinary employees tended to perceive of their dinoo or dinaa as being an aspect of their aarda (tradition). One old dockworker observed, for example, that ‘Islam is our aarda because we do all things according to the teachings of the dinaa’ (Interview Notes). Another docker who claims to be ‘the imam of his local mosque’ noted that ‘because Islam is central to every thing we do and how we do it, even before we start work on board a ship or do anything for that matter, we all get together and recite suratul Fatiah’ (the first chapter of the Quran) (Interview Notes: Gangway man). Despite such conflations between religion and indigenous traditions, however, it is possible to identify from workers’ rhetoric, the distinct sources of authority, and
values, and the forms of obligations and expectations each legitimises and sustains.

With respect to dock employment, however, the impact of informal influences on the employment relationship is itself moderated by other factors. These include the casual nature of dock labour, the indirectness of the employer/employee relationship and the informal controls dockers exert through the gang structure. On the influence of the Islamic elements, there were allegations that some dockers have 'used their religious connections to get their jobs and receive preferential treatment from their brethren on the Board' (meaning PLB) (Interview Notes: Dock Labour Inspector). Some dockworkers even admit to having 'closer relationships with colleagues who belong to the same Daira' (Local Brotherhood Organisation/Group) (Interview Notes: Dock Winchman). However, in terms of the relative impact on the manger/employee relationship, the influence of the Islamic dimension is more relevant to the relationship between the GPA and its regular staff. Nevertheless, a significant, number (more than half) of the dockworkers interviewed claimed to have 'missed a shift during the last 12 months as a result of commitments of dinaa'. A dock Foreman underlined the importance of dinaa, saying: 'like most Gambian Muslims, we also have among us, Tijans and Mourides and many of us attend the annual Magals of our Dairas. But because we cover for each other, even if people are absent, our work is not affected for the bosses to notice' (Interview notes: Dock Foreman). And, perhaps, for that reason, managers 'are not particularly concerned about the effects of Magals and Gammos on cargo-handling operations at the ports' (Interview Notes: Senior Port Labour Inspector).
In relative terms, interview data suggest that generally, the influences of the informal dimension tend to have its greatest impact on the more direct subordinate relationship between managers and regular employees of the GPA. The following section, therefore, focuses on the influences of the informal dimensions on this aspect of dock employment relations. The objective is to give an account of workers and managerial perspectives on the organisation's formal personnel management policies and practices; and how managerial and employees' attitudes and actions are influenced by the 'informal' values systems and norms of the wider society. Where necessary and possible, accounts of individual experiences and actions will be given in order to assess the extent to which such actions are congruent with the values and paradigms of any of the two aspects of the informal dimensions of the social system.

8. VI: Formal Policies and Informal behaviours: Managers and Employees as 'mothers' children' and brethren

Dock labour is casual and, certainly not the sole source of livelihood for those who engage in it. Many, like one of the Winchmen interviewed for this study 'followed in the footsteps of older relatives and have, also, helped younger relatives to secure employment as dockers' (Interview notes). As a result of the tentative nature of that employment, however, the implications of helping one's 'mother's children' or brethren, at the expense of others, may not be so obvious. However, the nature of the labour market makes regular waged employment a luxury that is hard to come by. Consequently, the implications of similar gestures, in the context of the relationship between managers and regular
employees of the GPA tend to be more obvious and adversely perceived by others. By giving jobs to relatives, for example, senior managers are said to be ‘turning’ public organisations ‘into family enterprises’ and employees believe ‘when it comes career progression and how you are treated, it matters that you have someone at the top’ (Interview Notes: Director of M&SS; & Senior Forklift Driver, GPA). Comments and observations of these nature tend to lend support to the negative attributions of ‘corruption’ and ‘nepotism’ that some of the literature associates with organisational cultures in SSA (for example, Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989). Interview data suggest, however, that particularly managers, entertain very ambivalent perceptions regarding the influences of the informal dimensions on workers and managerial attitudes and actions. The balance of opinion tends to reflect this ambivalence. Interviewees gave views that reflected their negative perceptions and at the same time, expressed beliefs which indicate that they rate the values and norms of informal dimensions of the social systems as ‘important aspects of Gambian society that are recognised and valued as an indication of horma (respect) for our traditional values and way of life’ (Interview, Community Leader and PRO).

All Gambians can lay claim to an extended family clan and, ‘many of us belong to a Daira’. As a result, ‘we are all someone’s ‘mother’s child’ and/or Talibes’ (Interview: Driver). Consequently, according to one of the Directors at the GPA, ‘in this society, no one is immune to the pressures of family, even top government officials and of course, Managing Directors, are susceptible to the influences of elders and “Maraboutes”’ (Interview). As a result, both managers and ordinary employees operate within the informal system and, entertain views and engage in acts that represent elaborations of the values and norms of that system. Like the
matriarchs and patriarchs of the extended family clans, the influence of the Saints over the Talibes is also evident in individuals' perspectives on formal organisational policies and the conduct of their work related relationships and interactions. Commenting on the influence of Sereings on individuals, an employee observed that their influence is 'so strong that sometimes sharing a Daira with a manager is all it takes for you to be promoted over your more qualified colleagues' (Interview Notes). As indicated earlier, there is a serious down side to these influences with respect to conflicting views of 'fairness' regarding the use of managerial prerogatives. Managers, for example, argue that 'because of too much pressure from relatives and Maraboutes', they are 'not always able to apply the letter of the rules impartially' (Interview: HR Director GPA). For their part, ordinary employees talk of colleagues 'receiving underserved favourable treatment from managements' and 'getting promotions that they do not deserve' (Interview Notes: Crane Operator). To illustrate this point, a group of on-shore cargo-handlers gave a story regarding one of their colleagues. In many aspects, the Service Rules of the organisation, which covers all regular employees, specifies the type of sanctions that are applicable for certain violations. In particular, the rules stipulate persistent absence and/or lateness constitute offences punishable by 'withholding of wages and/or dismissal from service (GPA, 2003). Yet this group of workers spoke of a colleague who 'persistently violates the rules and always gets away with it'. In the words of one the interviewees:

"This man comes to work when he feels like it. And as for coming on time, he only does that on the rare occasion when he is not suffering from the effects of too much alcohol from the previous night. He receives more warning letters in a year than most people do during their working lives. Yet, he is still here and the only punishment he has ever received, is that on one or two occasions some of his wages were withheld."
He has never been suspended nor has he ever missed out on his obligatory annual promotion. Any one of us would have been dismissed a long time ago. The only reason he is being treated this way is because he has his "mother's children" (relatives) in high places' (Interview Notes: Forklift Operator, GPA).

Another colleague believes their colleague 'gets away with what most people would have been sacked for because he is a member of a very prominent Muslim family whose head also happens to be the Sercing of a very senior manager and that manager takes care of him and gives him all the protection' (Interview Notes: Store Labourer).

For their part, managerial rhetoric betrays a sense of frustration with the effects of external informal influences on their with subordinates. In addition to the 'frustration of not being able to apply the rules and regulations of the organisation effectively' middle level managers, in particular, lament the fact that 'some employees take advantage of their family and religious relationship with more senior managers to undermine' their 'authority' (Interview Notes: Corporate Service Officer, GPA). Even relatively more senior managers have expressed similar sentiments. In that regard, the HR Director tells a story concerning an employee whose 'application for a personal loan was denied by his head of department because he did not meet the basic criteria'. However, upon the intervention of 'the man's uncle who is to be a very senior member of the government' the 'Managing Director asked that the decision be reconsidered'. He remarked: 'these are the kind of situations that these pressures create for us ... your authority is seriously undermined' (Interview Notes).

As far as the Islamic brotherhoods are concerned, managerial concerns tend to focus on group absence that occur at the height of the annual religious festival of the different Orders. The fact that large number of staff take time off to attend the
Magals and Gamos of all the numerous Dairas all over the region, is always a problem for the organisation' (Interview Notes: Personnel Office, GPA). In that regard, many managers make particular reference to ‘the annual “Magals” (pilgrimages) that are organised by the brotherhoods in honour of their founders Saints. Most managers express a great sense frustration that ‘any attempts to discipline those who persistently absent themselves to attend these events could antagonise the predominant Muslim community and its leaders.’ As a result, ‘the only thing we can do is to try and cope as best we can during those periods’ (Interview Notes: Manager, GPA).

The accounts given in the preceding sections generally focused on the negative aspects of informal influences on organisational policies and processes. But these views and illustrations, as I have briefly indicated earlier, only represent part of the story. The main interview data and limited personal observations also indicate that actors entertain more positive views of the implications of the values and norms of the informal system. While it may be true that ‘family pressures can result in wrong decisions being taken by managers’ (Interview notes, Director of S&MS), it is also true, as the Director of HR indicated, that ‘sometimes, management has found community elders to be useful resources in the resolution of disputes between us and individuals or groups of employees’ (Director of HR, GPA).

Relationships that are based on ‘informal’ value systems and norms are formed and sustained on the basis of the principle of reciprocity of obligations and expectations. That principle, interestingly, seems to engender a degree of commitment whereby employees ‘feel obligated to commit to the objectives of the organisations because they do not see any differences between the objectives and goals of the organisation and those of their “mother’s children” who happen to be managing the organisation’ (Interview Notes: Local historian). This observation also reflects
paternalistic tendencies that are also consistent with indigenous relationship forms in Gambian society. In that respect, managerial success is also defined in terms of 'community achievement'. The following remark by a Forklift operator makes the point: 'because many of us here come from the same area as the head of the organisation, we consider him to be one of us. We are all therefore concerned that he succeeds because that would mean that we have succeeded as a family and that enhances the standing of our community in the country' (Interview notes). The GPA's current workforce, however, is less homogenous in terms of the origins of its staff. Besides, the younger generation of employees are particularly keen to attribute their employment exclusively to 'academic qualifications and technical competence' (Interview Notes: HR Officer). Perhaps, as a result, they also tend to be particularly harsh in their criticisms of the paternalist patterns that older employees are inclined to recall with nostalgia. A Senior Accounts clerk in his 'mid 20s', for example, argues that 'as a result of the current difficult economic conditions, those at the top are even less discreet about overlooking more qualified candidates and instead giving jobs to relatives who, most of the time, don't know what they are doing' (Interview Notes). Older employees, however, entertain rather melancholic views of recruitment and selection practices of old, which were legitimised and sustained by the paternalistic expectations and obligations of the 'informal' system. A 'retired sailor' who is currently engaged on a 'part-time contractual basis' renders the following account of how people came to work at the ports during, as he put it, 'the old days':

When I started working here - that was on 2nd November 1961 - most of the people working at the Marine Department (the fore runner to the GPA), were from half-die (local name for the neighbourhood surrounding the Ports area). Most of us were brought in by our fathers, uncles and brothers and we started as
apprentices. As it turned out, when the Marine Department was converted into the GPA, the first Managing Director and almost all the senior staff came from Half-die. As you may realise, although at the moment some of the senior managers come from other communities including, the “deh” (Wolof for rural areas), ‘even now, many of those who lead the organisations are originally from Half-die. When my last child finished school, I had no problem finding her a job. I held her hand, and brought here to one of Directors and said to him here is your little sister she has finished school and needs a job. He helped her because that is his obligation. My daughter now works in the office at the Ferry Services and may be in the coming year Ports will send her abroad for further studies. You see, some of these young officers have their uncles and other elders still working here who are very proud of their achievement and want them to get greater success because that will make all of Half-die proud. We look after each other and those us who are down here know what is going on and will not let any body undermine them’ (Interview Notes).

The idea of using ‘informal’ authority figures and paradigms to sustain formal institutions and help achieve organisational objectives and goals is not, by any means, new to the SSA context. The ability of traditional chiefs to provide and pacify the labour that helped to build and sustain empire, (see chapter 2), however, was largely based their capacity to instil fear amongst the indigenous population. The comments of the ‘retired sailor’, however, suggest that in the contemporary context, the nature of the relationship between informal indigenous authority figures and those who manage formal organisations is a more complex mixture of moral and material obligations and expectations. In some respects, his comments expose this complexity. The material aspect of the relationship between mother’s children and brethren is an important aspect of the informal system. In return for jobs and gifts, managers expect the commitment of their mother’s children to their own success and from the
Saints, 'they anticipate protection mainly in the 'form of Du'a (prayers) and the provision of amulets and mythical interventions against evil spells and bad luck' (Local historian & Social Commentator).

But there is also, a very significant moral dimension to relationships and interactions that are informed by the values and normative standards of the informal dimension. In that regard, the relationship is expressed in terms of horma (respect). Ordinary employees, especially older ones and those that have greater empathy with the informal dimension, expect 'every good person, whether you are the president or just an ordinary labourer, must have some horma for “aarda” and that means commitment to the good of the family and community and horma for elders and leaders of the dinas' (Interview notes: Senior Security Officer).

In terms of their implications of the attribution of horma for formal organisational objectives, policies and processes, the moral aspects of informal influences tend to have practical expression in the form of the 'extraorganizational' (Kiggundu, 1989) obligations and commitments of groups and/or individuals. These include attendance of all sorts of traditional and religious ceremonies and events, and having some concern for the overall social well-being of others. As discussed elsewhere (see chapter 2), some of these traditional activities are often cited in the literature as sources of wastefulness and bad practice. To access perspectives on the nature of 'extraorganizational' obligations and their implications for perceptions of actors towards formal organisational objectives and their actions in a formal organisational setting, interview questions focused on issues of absenteeism. Individuals were asked if they had been absent from work during the past 12
months, the reasons for their absence, and what they consider to be the implications of their absence for the organisation. Again, the rhetoric of responses indicates a sustained pattern of ambivalence. The ambiguity in perceptions and behaviour, reflect a complex mixture of material and moral motivations that inform views and actions regarding the rationale for such activities and their worth in the contemporary context.

In terms of material implications, perceptions also reflect a class dimension. In that case, perhaps because Western educated Bureaucrats and managers stand to gain from the collapse of the traditional forms of family responsibilities, their views also tend to support notions of wastefulness that most of the literature associates with traditional African social events and activities. In that regard, the view of a senior government official, that 'for a poor country engaging in such lavish ceremonies and festivities that have no value added outcomes, amounts to wasting limited resources that could be put to better use' (Interview Notes: Senior Secretary, DoSTIE), is representative. At the level of the organisation, related managerial rhetoric also indicates the predominance of perceptions that are based on rational economic considerations. Accordingly, the external traditional and religious obligations of employees are a 'major source of financial pressures and cause for absenteeism' (Manager, Corporate Services).

The HR Director observed that 'the excesses of naming ceremonies and, now a days, funerals, and the fact that many employees always want to attend annual Gammos and Magals, mean that management is not only having to deal with increasing demands for personal loans, but at certain times of the year, we have to take extraordinary measures to
cope with mass absenteeism because many of our employees are away attending Magals in Senegal' (Interview Notes)²⁰.

Although many ordinary employees also lament the increasing financial cost of organising naming ceremonies and other traditional and religious obligations, they also have views that reflect, perhaps, that they stand to lose most from any collapse of the 'informal' system. As a result, their concerns about the financial implications of the obligations and expectations of the informal social system are guarded and qualified. Many of those interviewed believed that 'by themselves, these activities are neither wasteful nor are they the direct cause of the financial hardship that many Gambians are facing at the moment' (Senior Security Officer, GPA). Apparently, the wastefulness has to do 'with individuals who try to show off and the financial difficulties simply mirror 'the current economic situation'. Another employee, who claims to be a 'committee member of his local Daira', argued that: 'in terms of what people are required to do, nothing has changed. What has changed is that times are getting increasing hard and it is getting increasing difficult to meet the expectations of family. As for the Magals, increase transport fares are particularly making it more and more difficult many to make the annual trip and because there is constant shortage of petrol, many people get stranded and are not able to return to work' (Interview Notes: On-Shore Supervisor). As this comment indicates, ordinary employees do not make unqualified associations between their external traditional obligations and the 'wasteful use of limited resources'. Instead, they attribute the 'financial pressures' that managers complain about, to the current economic conditions. In that regard, this interviewee went on to argue that:

²⁰The founders of all the Islamic Orders in The Senegambia are Senegalese and as a result the headquarters of all the major brotherhoods are in Senegal.
"The activities that some of you Western educated people consider to be wasteful we consider to be part and parcel of our aarda and dinaa. Our parents and grand parents have organised naming ceremonies in the same way and the way weddings have been conducted since the time of our ancestors have not changed either. For me, as a Mourides, I follow the footsteps of my parents and great grand parents, and go to the Magal at Touba every year. As you can see, these things have not changed. What has changed is that some greedy individuals are taking advantage. Because these are part of our aarda and dinaa, people will do anything to observe them properly and nothing is going to stop us from doing so. However, greedy businessmen are doing everything to make money out of poor people who are just trying to fulfil their traditional obligations and obey Allah’s commands by paying their respects to His chosen servants. But because of greed, the cost of rice, sugar, transportation and everything else that people require to fulfil the basic obligations of our tradition and dinaa, are constantly increasing. Our fore fathers have observed and respected our traditions and dinaa and we must do the same. That is what Allah and our ancestors expect of us. If we find it difficult to do that, that is simply because nowadays, everything is difficult" (Ibid).

On the whole, the data suggests the prevalence of such views, especially among ordinary workers. It further indicates that the values and norms of the ‘informal’ system, in the form observance of ‘extraorganizational’ obligations, constitute important aspects in the social lives of Gambians. Accordingly, the Public Relations Officer of the GPA Staff Association observed:

‘Even in the urban area where people tend to develop Western life styles, people from the same village or clan tend to create and maintain their traditional relationships. When some body from your village or family has a traditional or religious event, as is the case in the village, you are obligated to attend. This is important because going to these events demonstrate the extent to which one is connected and in tune with his
background. Since the number of people who attend your events reflects your standing within the community, you would want to attend as many of them as possible because you expect people to reciprocate when you have one' (interview Notes).

The sense of obligation to one's aarda and the incentive of some form of reciprocation, are reinforced by the potential resentment that one may face if your relatives conclude that you are not showing adequate commitment to the communal causes. As a result, 'those who are not able to be physically present at family events and activities of their Order, will make financial and other forms of contributions and their more intimate relatives will always make sure that other members of the family are aware of their contributions' (Interview notes: Community elder). The fear of resentment is particularly a strong incentive among ordinary employees. Of the 55 ordinary employees interviewed, 48 claimed to have been absent from work during the preceding six months as result of family or religious commitments. More than half of those would 'deliberately' absent themselves from work to fulfil their family and religious obligation 'even if it means losing their jobs'. To that end, a Forklift driver, for example, believed that 'it is difficult to get a job these days, but with Allah's help, it is not impossible to find one' (Interview Notes). As a result, he said when he was 'refused permission' to attend his 'uncle's funeral, I decided to go anyway because it is too important an occasion to miss. Many members of my family were there and my absence would have been noticed and that would have been very upsetting to my aunt and cousin' (Interview notes). Likewise, the level of expectation, in terms of the potential benefits that may accrue to those who diligently observe their traditional and religious obligations, is relatively higher among ordinary workers. Almost all the ordinary workers interviewed,
believed that 'maintaining good relations with family and complying with teachings of the dinaa are more important than keeping their jobs'. One interviewee put it this way:

'The job is important because it is a means of looking after yourself and your family. But one must always remember that before you were able to look after yourself, other people took care of you. I mean was it not 'your mother's children' who look after you? Without them, where would you be now? Therefore, if it comes to making a choice between obeying the manager or my elders, I have no problem. I will take the side of my family because they are the ones who looked after before I had this job and when I am too old to look after myself, they will be the ones who will look after me' (Interview Notes: Truck Driver, GPA).

Another interviewee insisted that 'with or without permission', he 'will travel to Touba every year to attend the Magal because with the blessings of Bamba (the founder Saint of the Mouride Order), I can always get a better job and besides, I anticipate a better life in Anjanna' (heaven) (Interview Notes: Shore Labourer). As to whether they are concerned that their colleagues might not be able to cope during their absence and how managers feel about their attitudes and behaviour; the nodding gestures from those present suggested most of them agreed with the interviewee's position that 'all of us here have our commitments to family and dinaa that are more important than this job. We therefore understand each other's position better and we will always protect each other when it comes to matters of family and dinaa' (Interview). With respect to how managers might view such attitudes and behaviour, another employee remarked that 'managers ... come from similar backgrounds with the rest of us. Like everyone else, they too have their family commitments and some them are Mourides and Tijans and they regularly attend Gammos and when they are not able to attend
personally, they give money to close members of their families to represent them' (Interview: Quay Labourer).

The strength of the moral dimensions of 'informal' relationships and interactions, however, does not obscure the significant material element. For many, it is this material aspect that accounts for the corruption and nepotism that is associated with organisational management in SSA. As one elderly worker observed, 'though people always emphasise the need to maintain affinity with their tradition and values, they also anticipate material benefits from family relationships and religious affiliations' (Interview). Such material benefits are mainly in the form of obligatory exchanges of gifts between mother's children, and the use of alleged mythical powers by Saints to endow their Talibes, 'with good fortunes and protection from evil spirits and bad people' (Interview Notes). During naming ceremonies and funerals, for example, relatives and friends bring gifts and presents. Most of the interviewees, however, downplayed the significance of such gestures claiming, instead, that 'being present at such occasion represent a more significant and expected gesture' (Interview Notes: Foreman). However, according to one Social Commentator, 'now a days, the amount of donation or value of the present you give tends to determine how you are received and treated during your stay'. Responses also suggest that those who make donations expect similar gestures from friends and relatives when they have an occasion to celebrate or grieve. A middle level manager, for example, noted that 'particularly in the urban areas, when people have naming ceremonies, they look forward to the donations of money from relatives and friends and of course, you expect people to equal your generosity' (Interview Notes: Traffic officer, GPA). However, even in the rural areas, 'where' according to a Quay labourer 'in the past, giving few cola nuts sufficed as a good gesture, now people
expect a lot more especially from relatives who are in paid employment' (Interview). To support that view, a manager who claims to 'come from the rural areas' noted:

'In the past, when you visited your relative in the rural areas, people will give you fowls, rice, and all sorts of presents and they do it out of love as a relative and pride at your success. Now, no one gives you those things just because you are relative. They expect some thing and if a so-call relative gives you a fowl that is not worth more that 50 dalasi (about £1), be rest assured that in a week or two he or she will show up at your door or office with a problem in excess of 250 dalasi (Interview Notes: Harbour Manager, GPA).

For many employees, material obligations to relatives and brethren are also a source of corruption and misappropriation. To that end, some employees are particularly concerned the expectations that society has regarding people in senior positions. For example, many interviewees expressed the view that 'society expects people in senior positions to be able to send elderly relatives to Mecca for annual Muslim pilgrimage. But How many managers', one employee asked rhetorically, 'are paid the kind of money it takes to do that?' (Finance Officer, GPA). In the view of one of his colleagues 'the only way most people can meet such obligations and expectations is to engage in bribery and corruption or stealing' (Interview Notes). Almost every one present during that exchange of views agreed that the annual pilgrimage to Mecca is an important aspect of Islam that the Quran sanctions every Muslims, who can afford it, to undertake. All of them however, said 'corruption and stealing are against Islam and money acquired through such activities should not be used to fulfil any of Allah's commands including performing the hajj' (Interview Notes: Accounts Clerk). Yet, according to the Director, M&SS 'all those you talked to you very well know that in many cases corruption and stealing are what it
takes, particularly for public employees, to fulfil that particular expectation of our elderly relatives' (Interview Notes). 'The problem', as he saw it, is that: 'everybody knows and admits that corruption and embezzlement are wrong, but we all also know that is what many people engage in order to meet some of the expectations of society. So, society turns a blind eye on their improprieties and instead, because of what they can do with their ill-gotten money, their social standing is enhanced' (Interview Notes).

There is a material element to the religious dimension of informal relationships and interactions as well. In addition to attending the festivals of their respective Orders, Talibes make material gestures as a show devotion to the Sereings. For rural farming Talibes, material gestures as a show of devotion are 'mainly by way of free labour for the Sereings whereby Talibes get together and spend days working on their Sereings' farms' (Interview Notes: Imam). Although some Talibes provide free labour for the Sereing in anticipation of the 'rewards in the hereafter, many more expect rewards right here and now and that usually, takes the forms of special prayers by the Sereing and protection for relatives who are in high positions in government and business organisations' (Interview Notes: Quay Labourer). The influences of Dairas and Maraboutes are reflected in the rhetoric of all categories of employees. 'Managers' according to one Forklift driver; 'tend to be very discrete about their relationship with Maraboutes. They want the rest of us to belief that the only reason they are in their positions is because they have the educational qualification. But we are not fools. We know all of them have big Maraboutes and it is because of the Maraboutes that some of them have been able to keep their jobs otherwise, they would have been sacked because everybody knows they are corrupt and incompetent' (Interview Notes). 'Maraboutes', he went on, 'are required by Allah to be honest and provide prayers and advise to their Talibes to maintain straightforward lives. Unfortunately, now you have Maraboutes who are only interested in money and they don't care where it comes from or how it is earned. This is why incompetent and corrupt people are able to get and keep very good
and powerful jobs here' (Interview Notes). Despite such comments, both managers and ordinary employees believed that such material gestures constitute a 'very important' part of the relationship between Saints and their disciples.

Ordinary employees who speak negatively about the material aspect of the relationship between senior government official and managers and their Sereings, are, also quick to point out that they are 'not against the idea of people giving money to their Moro' (Mandinka for Marabout) because, as one Shed supervisor pointed out, 'we all give money to our Sereinges because it is the most convenient substitute for taking time off to go and work on our their farms' (Interview Notes). Although those who make material gestures to Saints anticipate benefits from mystical sources, in certain circumstances, some of these gestures are done in anticipation of rewards of more obvious and tangle origins. Accordingly, one respondent noted that 'some people don't just expect Maraboutes to pray for them. In particular, politicians give substantial financial gifts to big Maraboutes in the hope that these Maraboutes will instruct their disciples to vote for them when they are up for re-election' (Interview Notes). Managers also tend to be partly motivated by more tangible and here-and-now expectations. In that respect, workers' perspectives also suggest notions of power and class that are consistent with Weber's conception of status based power (Gidden, 1971). Accordingly: 'Some Maraboutes have national and even international reputations which give them a great deal of influence high up in government. Since all the senior officials here are political appointees, individual managers tend to be very generous to these Maraboutes and regularly give them large sums of money. They expect that in addition to spiritually looking after them and their future, when the need arises, these Maraboutes can also be
depended upon to influence the decisions of the Minister regarding their' (managers) 'future' (Interview Notes: Senior Manager). According one employees:

'Whenever they are in trouble or are looking for promotion, some managers never sit in their offices. Some will apply for “casual leave” to visit their Maraboutes. Sometimes they send vehicles to collect the Maraboute and lodge him in a Hotel. Of course the Maraboute is expected to engage in nightly prayers on their behalf but sometimes, these Maraboutes are also the Seringe of the Minister or Permanent Secretary and once those people are aware of his presence, they will immediately visit him. The manager expects his problem to be the main subject of discussion during such visits. So you see, Maraboutes are not just the leaders of the dinaa, they also have political influence and that is one of the main reasons that people give them money’ (Interview Notes: Gangway man).

All categories of employees express a sense of obligation to mother's children and brethren and have expectations of each other on the basis of these relationships. Although the rhetoric suggests varying degrees of commitment to these obligations, nonetheless, they all express their commitment to their mothers' children and Dairas. Depending on circumstance, they elaborate different attitudinal and behavioural patterns that represent their individual and/or collective obligations to each other and the institutions and authorities that regulate their relationships. 'Bosses have money and they can do more for their relatives and regularly give money to their Sereings. As for the rest of us, we give whatever help we can to relatives and we save so that we can also, at least once a year, demonstrate our obedience to our Sereings and pay our respects to the Caliphas that are in heaven' (Interview Notes: Foreman). Despite the various negative perceptions associated with the influences of the informal dimensions, even manager said 'there is nothing subversive about showing commitment to your relatives and brothers in
Islam' (Interview Notes: Traffic Manager). Almost all the managers and representatives of shipping agents interviewed have vociferously complained about what one Shipping agent described as the 'many inappropriate and illegal behaviours and bad attitudes of dockers' (Interview Notes).

With respect to the practice concerning deceased colleagues, dockers reactions to Management's claims of 'inappropriate and illegal practices that must cease' (Interview Notes Traffic Manager), suggested that on this issue also, both managers and shipping agencies have adopted 'indulgency' policy (Watson, 1995). They dismissed the notion that the death of colleagues are 'hidden form managers' or that managers are ignorant of this particular practice. On the issue, one gang foreman had this to say:

"This is a very small place and as a result, when someone dies the news of his death will reach Fatoto' (the furthest major town in The Gambia), 'within an hour. Sometimes, it takes us a month before the gang works another vessel, so how can anybody here claim we can suppress news of a colleague's death for three months. That is ridiculous. Managers and Shippers know exactly what we do. For us, it is our way of doing the right thing just like we would do for the family of a deceased neighbour in the village. If any manger or Agent told you such a story again, bring him over here and see if he can look us in the face and repeat such a disgraceful story. They are only being hypocritical. They know what we do and they tolerate it because they do not provide any insurance or help for us in the event that someone is badly injured or dies (Interview Notes)

Those who have direct responsibility for the administration of dock labour denied the accusation of hypocrisy. However, a subsequent interview with a
stevedoring supervisors and a port labour clerk, revealed that the policy of ‘indulgency’ is based on management’s concern that any attempts to confront dockers on this issue ‘will backfire as it will not be deemed proper in the eyes of society’ (Interview Notes: Stevedoring Clerk). More than that, some senior managers admit knowledge of the practice. A senior Stevedoring Supervisors, for example, told me: ‘helping the families of deceased colleagues or neighbours is a common practice that every one connected with dock work including, Shipping Agencies and the bosses up there are aware of. If we tolerate it’ he said, ‘that does not make it right. You see everyone turns a blind because everywhere you go in this country, the tradition is to look after the family of deceased relatives and neighbours and I suppose this is the dockers’ way of doing that. Here people admire them for that and respect their gesture towards their deceased colleagues. You must also remember that as Muslims, we are required to show that kind of generosity and for these reasons, I don’t think any of us will be part of any attempts to stop them from doing that’ (Interview Notes). This kind of managerial ‘indulgency’ is not just confined to certain inappropriate activities of dockworkers. Many managers share the traffic manager’s view that ‘we (meaning management), just have to do what we can to cope’ with the adverse effects of the traditions of society on our operations’ (Interview Notes).

8. VII: Coping Strategies: ‘We turn blinds eyes and play our part’

The data suggests that individuals have a great sense of awareness and commitment to their mothers’ children and brethren. The sense of obligation and expectation that are the result these ‘informal relationships’ and the attitudes and actions that represent their elaboration are quite strong and pervasive among all categories of Gambians. The values and norms that represent the informal dimensions of the social system pervaded all authority
relationship forms including, the subordinate work related relationships and interactions between employers/managers and employees. Like everywhere else, formal organisations in The Gambia have written rules and regulations that are intended to define both the substantive and procedural aspects of their relationship (see chapter 5). The accounts of actors’ perspectives that are presented in this chapter, however, also suggest that both ordinary employees and managers tend to make reference to the alternative values and normative standards of the wider community to make sense of their work and workplace relationships. The informal system, therefore, is an important aspect in the real conduct of the employment relationship and, as one senior manager put it, ‘you would think that organisations would develop strategies for dealing with its adverse effects and harness its potential. Instead, all we do is turn a blind eye and play along if and when we think it is good for pr’ (Public relations) (Interview Notes: Director of M&SS). Managers, however, also ‘belong to the same social system’ and have a tendency to operate within the informal system. As a result, a Labour Inspector observed:

“They find it extremely difficult to always play by the formal rules and regulations that they have formulated and expect their subordinate to comply with. Only those who do not care about how society sees them would insist on always applying the letter of law. Besides, senior officials and managers are concerned that when they have social events, many people attend particularly their subordinates and relatives. If many people don’t attend your events, you are not considered to be a good person and if your family members do not to play a prominent part in your affairs, then people would assume that there is conflict within your family. Most managers therefore appreciate, even if they are not prepared to condone, the pressure on their staff to
fulfil their own family obligation and the impacts that might have on their performance on the job’ (Interview: Notes).

Privately, managers talked of their determination to ‘put an end to the inappropriate activities of dockers’. However, comments by managers and dockers suggest that generally, managerial attitude towards some of the informal practices of dock labour gangs is either in the form of ‘informal’ ‘indulgency’ policies and practices and/or ‘to simply turn a blind eye’. It is common knowledge within the ports community that dockworkers have alternative approaches to disciplining their own members and providing for their own welfare. As the Senior Dock Labour Inspector observed, ‘it is not as if the dockers keep their actions secret. Everybody knows what they do, but hardly anyone publicly questions their actions. Shipping agencies and GPA managers may not like some of the things they do, but they know about them. They just pretend they don’t’. Neither, are these alternative forms of self-organisation and management confined to particular gangs or groups of dockworkers. To make that point, a gang headman noted that ‘all the gangs do the same things. We have our own ways of ensuring that our members do the job and do it properly, and since the days when white people were in charged, we always look after each other this way. All the gang headmen make sure that new members know about these things and follow them’ (Interview Notes). With respect, for example, to the practice of paying the wages of deceased dockworkers, almost all the managers and Agents with whom the issue was raised, admit not only to be aware, but also to have ‘condoned it’. Managers, though, tend to have different reasons for ‘turning a blind eyes’ on the ‘inappropriate’ and ‘illegal’ activities and behaviours of subordinates. Related managerial rhetoric, however, also suggests that the tendency to overlook is also, sometimes based on highly moral and altruistic view of the informal value systems of the wider society. The stevedoring
supervisor, for example, justified his attitude towards dockers 'policy' and practice regarding deceased colleagues with the following argument:

'It is not as if the gang members are going to keep the money for themselves. It is their way of helping families of colleagues who would have done the same thing for any of them. In this society, people look after the families of deceased relatives and neighbours. Even when a regular member of staff dies, even though her/his families will receive social security payments, it is a common practice for colleagues to make a collections and give the money to the deceased's family. It is our tradition to help the family of the dead and I strongly believe that it is a very humane tradition. Therefore, I may not overtly encourage them to do it because if I do, that will be breaking the law but I certainly will not take disciplinary action against anyone who carries out such traditionally humanitarian gestures' (Interview Notes).

But managers also have a tendency to overlook some of the not so benign informal behaviours and attitudes of employees. Arguably, the most important traditional festival among certain ethnic groups in The Gambia is the initiation for young men into adulthood. For members of the Jola ethnic group, the annual futamph (the name given to their tribal initiation ceremony) is so important that 'every year, those who have the opportunity must celebrate it as if that particular year may be their last opportunity to do so' (Interview Notes: Driver, GPA). Futamph could last for up to 'three months and involves the initiation of men in their late teens to late twenties and sometimes, these may include employees' (Interview Notes: Director of HR, GPA). Even some ordinary employees believed 'the organisation's operations do suffer during the initiation period because many of people are absent for considerable periods of time' (Interview Notes: Forklift Operator). Even so, employees, especially those of Jola extractions,
expect to be given time off to observe and participate in their tribal ceremonies. Those I interviewed and/or chatted with said they ‘do not expect the boss to deny permission at all’ (Interview Notes). One employee who claims to be ‘a Jola who had experienced the spirit of futamph’ pointed out that ‘most people do not expect to be refused permission because everybody, including the Managing Director, knows how important futamph is to us’ (Interview). Most senior officials, ‘even those of Jola extraction’ believe futamph to be ‘one of the most extravagant traditional ceremonies in the country’ (Interview Notes: Senior Labour Inspector). Importantly, the majority of the managers interviewed lament the fact that ‘sometimes several employees may be due for initiations and even those who have already being initiated would take time off – sometimes for weeks - to be part of the celebration’ (Interview notes: HR Officer). With regards to management’s attitude in such circumstances, a senior Manager’s insisted: ‘you have no choice, you know the absence of a fair number of staff for such long periods will have adverse effects on the work, but you have to let them go and pretend that everything is ok when in fact it is not’. But the GPA, as I indicated elsewhere in this chapter, is not a homogenous workplace. As a result, as could be discerned from the following comment by an on-shore cargo-handling supervisor, issues such as Futamph also have the potential to expose tensions between groups. He said:

‘In Spring, when most villages in Foni (an area predominantly populated by the Jola tribe) stage futamph, three out of the 12 people who work under me were up for initiation and were therefore away for almost three months. Another four in the team were sometimes away for a week or even more during the futamph. But we had to get on with the work. I did not bring the matter up with the boss because there was no point doing so. These things happen every year and that is that – we just let things take care of themselves’ (Interview notes).
Interview data and observed behaviour suggested, however, that managerial attitude is not just one of 'turning a blind'. In that respect, management's tolerance and even sanctioning of certain 'informal' organisational practices, suggest that the formal organisation does recognise the potential of elements of the 'informal' dimensions for organisational well-being. Central government officials 'expect Public Enterprises to play their part in the social development effort' (Interview Notes: DPS, DoSTIE) and accordingly, 'as a gesture of support and appreciation for the community, the GPA directly or indirectly provides assistance for community projects and finances all sorts of community social events and activities throughout the country' (Interview notes, PRO, GPA). These efforts, according to the Corporate Services Manager, 'are however, not just about lending support to government's national development efforts through, for example, adopting and financing hospital wards and assisting in the provision of basic amenities in rural areas, the GPA', she said, 'also gives assistance for grassroots economic and social activities, including, the construction of village mosques and community centres and the organisation of traditional village festivals throughout the country' (Interview Notes). In terms of organisational and managerial strategies directed at relationship and interactions with staff, 'management is aware that the organisation has a responsibility to help its staff and that includes helping them to meet their responsibilities to their families and communities' (Interview Notes: Social Secretary, Staff Association). In that regard, 'in addition to providing soft personal loans for staff to help pay for the costs of naming ceremonies, funerals etc, we regularly give financial and material donations for members of staff to organise social activities and religious events such as "Gammos" (Muslim New Year), 'in their respective communities'. Another common, but more informal organisational practice that 'indicates that managers here care about the external obligations of their staff is that when a member of staff has a naming ceremony or is bereaved, heads of department encourage the rest of their staff to donate money which is
given to the affected staff as a token of the department’s appreciation and concern for the individual’s welfare’ (Personnel Assistant to Director of HR, GPA).

Many employees believed that management’s efforts in this regard, might be altruistic. As one put it, ‘to some extent, management has good intentions’. Some ordinary employees, however, are concerned about the lack of consistence in managerial attitude and behaviour towards employees and communities. The view of one driver was that ‘the extent to which your head of department will demonstrate any concerns for you and be willingness to help depends on who you are, where you come from and whether you have any relatives in high places’ (Interview). The issue here, then, is favouritism. When one of his colleagues who was present during the interview put to him that the organisation ‘has given assistance to many villages and groups throughout the country and many colleagues had also received financial assistance at times of need’, he retorted that ‘the amount of donation a village or any group receives depends on whether any of their members is a powerful person in government or a top manager here. Inferring, perhaps, that because the head of State belongs to the Jola tribe, he noted that ‘recently, the GPA did not only make unusually large donations to some villages during their futamph, some senior staff were sent to some the bigger villages as representatives of the ports’. That he insists ‘was a very unique gesture that has never happened during the 22 years I spent here’. On the subject of the assistance that individual gets through ‘informal’ organisational channels and interventions, another colleague made the following observation:

‘As for the miscellaneous loans that we could apply for from the Association’ (meaning Staff Association), ‘the Association is suppose to be independent and treat members equally and consider loan applications purely on merit. But we all know that the people at the top always interfere and whether your application is
approved and for how much, depends very much on whether you have someone up there to intervene on your behalf. As for the departmental collections that you talked about, again, managers don't treat everybody the same. I recalled when one member of staff had a baby -- I think it was last November or December; the boss himself was going around collecting donations. Almost all of us found this to very strange because it has never happened before. Even though he gets involved in such matters especially if and when the collection is being made for one of the senior staff but even in such instances, he does not go around with the list insisting that we make generous donations. Any way, we all figured that his unusual action might have something to do with the fact that the staff in question has some very close relations in high places in the central government (Interview Notes: Shed Labourer).

As the data indicates, managers are not just aware of the existence of 'informal organisations' within the formal organisation. They also legitimise these informal organisations through indulgency and use them when it serves their individual and corporate purposes. The management of the GPA is particularly aware of prevailing alternative forms of interaction and relationships amongst its categories of workers. Despite the talk of 'inappropriate attitudes and illegal practices', managers also operate within the informal system because 'we are all part and parcel of the same social system'. That social system has a formal and an informal dimension and these accounts of perspectives suggest that despite its apparent dominance, the formal system lacks social hegemony. The formal rules of the organisations, therefore, are not the sole regulators of attitudes and behaviours of members. Yet, the data also suggests, quite strongly, that managers in particular, have tended to pretend otherwise. That attitude, and the false sense of 'formality' it genders, to some extent, accounts for patterns of indulgence and indifference.
Accordingly, all management 'can do is turn a blind eye' on what are considered to be 'inappropriate' attitudes and practices of subordinates. Alternatively, managers encourage officially unsanctioned and incoherent policies and practices in the belief that they are 'playing their part in the social development of the country and helping employees meet their obligations to family and community'. There is plenty of evidence to suggest the significant influence that the informal system has on workplace relationships and interactions, as well as the potential of some its elements for organisational well-being. Even so, there appears to be no coherent and consistent organisational policies to manager those influences and 'harness their potentials for the good of the organisation'.

8. VIII: Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the influences of the informal system on how it influences managers and employee perceptions of formal organisational policies and conduct their workplace relationships and interactions. In order to identify attitudes and behaviour that represents the values and norms of the informal system, the chapter began with a brief explanation of the social system and the major dimensions that together constitute it. In that regard, it recounted some of the issues relating to the formal dimension if only, to make the point that the nation state may dominate but it lacks social hegemony. The chapter then proceeded to give detailed descriptions of the two major 'informal' dimensions of the social system. With regards to the extended family clan, it advanced a model of a hierarchical structure of relationships. The principal purpose of this framework is to make the argument that the degree of influence that clan relationships exert on individuals is contingent
upon the level, within extended family clan structure, at which a particular relationship is constructed. Accordingly, it is suggested that relationships that are formed at the level of the family compound between ‘mother’s children’ has greater moral legitimacy and is therefore, a greater source influence. This however, does not suggest that relationships formed at other levels have no relevance for individual attitudes and behaviours. And as a result, the framework represents a complex patchwork of relationships based on moral and instrumental obligations and expectations.

Regarding the second informal dimension of the social system – Islamic Brotherhoods, the chapter gave a brief history and description of the three major Islamic Orders that dominate the lives of the majority of Gambian Muslims. Although these Orders share a common origin from North African Sufism, they have their peculiar and distinct rituals and forms of worship. Whatever their differences may be, however, there is a common pattern that suggests a symbiotic relationship of spiritual and material obligations and expectations between Saints and disciples.

The chapter then set out to describe two distinct dimensions. It accepts, however, that although the peculiar values and norms of the respective informal dimensions could be discerned from employees and managerial perspectives and actions, in reality, it is not so simple to draw a dichotomy between indigenous traditional and Islamic values and practices. This is particularly true because individuals tend to associate aarda (tradition) with dinaa (religion). Accordingly, hadamayaa (the human/Adam’s way) is also ‘our aarda’. Whether they are invoking perceptions based on the influences of
the data suggested that the values and norms of the informal system do play a part in shaping individual attitudes and behaviours even in a formal organisational context. Although, predominantly, the rhetoric conveyed perspectives that invoke relationships based purely on moral obligations and expectations, it also betrayed a serious material aspect to relationships that are based on the informal value systems of the extended family clan and Muslim Orders. The pervasive nature of the informal value system and its normative regulations ensures that the parties in employment relationship are inclined to engage in processes and actions that are not sanctioned by the formal rules and regulations. In terms of perceptions regarding the informal practices and actions of managers and employees, the data also indicated a ambiguities coughed in a consistent pattern of 'indulgency' policies. The account regarding views on the implications of the informal system, suggested that respondents entertain positive as well as negative opinions of these influences. Views of nepotism run alongside nostalgia for the paternalism of old that is also consistent with 'traditional ways of doing things'.

The exact impact of these 'informal' influences' on formal paradigms of IR and their implications for good practice, most probably, will remain subjects of debate for years. What these accounts of actors' perspective has done, I hope, is to demonstrate that in the pursuit of the rational economic objectives of the business organisation, how ever hard we try, we are not simply going to be able to wish away the 'informal' value system and normative orders that represent SSA reality. Both parties in this theatre of employment relations have indicated the reality and relevance of the informal system to the actual

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conduct of their workplace relationships and interactions. Yet, the accounts also indicated that in this particular case, management has yet to imagine, let alone fashion consistent and coherent policies to deal with the adverse implications and exploit the more useful elements of these influences.

The next chapter is intended to pick on that issue by engaging with the literature and debate on Industrial Relations pluralism and African realities. As well as seeking to tie down the major findings with existing theoretical debates, it will revisit some the major theoretical issues and themes that emerged from the data and suggest a model of IR and HRM that has a wider SSA implication.
Chapter Nine

Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

Three main conclusions emerged from the study with theoretical, methodological and practical implications for IR in The Gambia in particular and SSA in general. In terms of IR theory, the findings presented in the empirical chapters suggest that SSA IR is characterised by a pattern of tensions and contradictions between formal Western systems and African values and interests. The constant conflict between formal Western and ‘informal’ African values and interests, inevitably gives rise to issues that are central to the management problems of SSA. That problem, fundamentally, concerns the lack of an adequate IR paradigm for SSA. My key theoretical argument, however, is that these problems could be managed by imaginatively adopting and developing British pluralist Industrial theory (Fox, 1966; Donovan, 1968; Flanders and Fox, 1970 and Ackers, 2002), to SSA realities.

Regarding methodology, it emerged that only a qualitative method based on actors’ social meaning (Weber, 1968), is able to fully probe these tensions and contradictions, which are found to be more complex and ambivalent than I had originally envisaged. With respect to practical issues of dock employment relations, the finding revealed no peculiarities regarding the basic issues of dispute. They, however, also uncovered imaginative forms of resistance and protest, which fit in with Bhabha’s (1994) concept of ‘mimicry’. In this instance, dockworkers have used the formal dock gang structure to re-
constitute social units of wider society to make sense of the inherent ambiguities in their relationship with their 'employer'. Using African communal principles and practices, dockers have developed alternative welfare schemes that are centred round individual work gangs. This finding fits in with the general hybridity and flexible nature of traditional African institutions such as clan and extended family structures. This to say contemporary SSA society can (and has), adapted to of Western theoretical frameworks and practices.

These conclusions emerged from an exploratory study of contemporary issues in the employment relationship in The Gambia and by extension, SSA. The exploration, however, also necessitated a revisiting of old waged employment related problems that have beset formal business organisations since capitalist industry was introduced into traditional African societies. The aim, in that regard, is to place contemporary problems in their proper historical contexts. That way, a more holistic view can be formed as to the suitability and relevance of the alternative perspectives to explaining and resolving the research problem as outlined in the introduction chapter. In very broad terms, therefore, the thesis engaged with the debate surrounding the suitability of dominant perspectives for explaining and resolving the management problems of SSA. But the research is also concerned about how to carryout organisational research in developing country settings. Essentially, using The Gambia as a developing country setting, the study investigated the conjunction of rational Western systems and informal African values, norms and interests in a formal business setting. The issues and themes that emerged from the empirical findings, however, touch on a number of wider theoretical
and policy debates concerning organisational research, IR and the organisation and management of dock employment in SSA.

This chapter begins with a summary of the thesis, followed by discussions of the main findings and conclusions of the research. Because my research is fundamentally about the IR and PM problems of SSA, the thesis ends with a final summary, which also discusses the main arguments as they relate to the main findings and conclusions regarding SSA IR and PM. It goes on to address the limitations of this study, makes some suggestions for future research and, discusses the conclusions on IR and PM in terms of how they engage with wider contemporary academic and policy debates.

9. I: Summary of Thesis and Conclusions

The Thesis began with the definition of the research problem using a story that is based on my personal experience in Gambian management. Without any intention to neglect their economic and political dimensions, it argued that as in the colonial context, contemporary management and employment relations (ER) problems of SSA are, fundamentally, socio-economic in origins and character. Consequently, their holistic comprehension and resolution will require a predominantly sociological analysis and remedies that address the management of African norms and values.

Chapter two reviewed the literature on three dominant perspectives – C-CMS, Marxist/Postcolonial, and IR Pluralism, on the problem. The chapter began with the review of the stream of C-CMS literature that seeks to establish links
between organisational outcomes and cultural differences between societies/countries. Although it cited other predominant typologies of culture (for example, Hamden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1994, 1997), it particularly focused on Hofstede’s *Universal dimension* framework of culture (1980, 1994). This focus is dictated by the belief that more than any other conceptual frameworks of culture, Hofstede’s has influenced many empirical studies that sought to establish linkages between organisational outcomes in SSA and indigenous African values and norms (Jackson, 2002; Beugre & Offidile, 2001; Bendinex and Thomas, 2000; Dia, 1996; Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989).

The review, however, critiqued the genre of Cross-cultural management research that Hofstede represents, on both theoretical and methodological grounds. The conceptual critique was based on the argument that as in most C-CMR, Hofstede’s concept of cultural differences is based almost exclusively on differences in the *etic* (common) variables between the contexts involved in his study. Consequently, variables that are *emic* (unique), but perhaps, very important in terms of the meanings and the actions they sanction in specific context, are marginalized or even completely ignored (Dowling, 1999; Sackmann et al, 1997; and Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982). By failing to take account, also, of ‘unique’ variables, these critiques argued that Hofstede’s framework is limited in terms of explaining how the two sets of variables interact to shape and influence collective conceptions and responses in a given context (e.g. Triandis and Dragun, 1980; Erez and Early, 1993; Baldachhino, 1997; & Dowling, 1999). Consequently, what are presented as cultural differences are in fact differences in common variables between nations. In
order words, culture becomes synonymous with the nation state without any further conceptual grounding (Sackmann et al. 1997; Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982; and Child, 1981). Another issue of the 'national culture' concept that has been the focus of this critique is the view that it ignores the tendency for 'subtractive cultural categorisation' (Ros et al., 1988) whereby individuals identify, first and foremost, with their respective ethnic groupings. In relation to this study, a more fundamental question concerns whether 'culture' is the best way of explaining and addressing the research problem. On that question, the thesis argued, not for a return to exclusive materialistic and economic explanations, but rather, for analysis to look at the socio-economic dynamics of the entire SSA social system.

These critiques are relevant not simply because they touch on the issue of multi-ethnicity — a major SSA phenomenon, but they also relate to a key assumption and themes of the present study. The notion of the 'formal' aspects of the social system, for example, suggests the existence of institutional and regulatory frameworks, in The Gambia, that are also 'common' to other contexts (for example, most Commonwealth countries). Themes of 'informality', on the other hand, imply the existence of value systems and norms that are 'unique' to The Gambian (or at least SSA) context. The importance of these 'emic' (unique) variables is that they have the social legitimacy to impact on the 'formal' system and generate patterns of IR that are 'unique' to The Gambian (SSA) context.

In methodological terms, the critique of the C-CM perspective concentrated on C-CMS's disproportionate quantitative research orientation. In that
respect, the review was also intended to lay the groundwork for the Methodology chapter and to announce the intention to engage with the wider methodological debate regarding 'microscopic' level analysis in developing country contexts (Greene, 2001; and Sathyamurthy, 1999). With respect to methodological critiques of the dominant C-CMR, the review focused on the general debate about quantitative and qualitative approaches to social science research; and the specific issue regarding the propriety or otherwise, of using a Multinational Corporation as a setting for the study of cultural differences between societies. The general methodological critique found more ground with the stream of literature that argues for more semiotic approaches to cultural analysis (Geertz, 1993, 1973; Gregory, 1983; Goodenough, 1974, 1971).

The gist of that critique centred on two arguments. First that the principal instrument of quantitative approach (i.e. survey questionnaire), generally tend to involve questions that reflect the value assumptions of the researcher rather than those whose responses they are intended to measure. Secondly, as a result of the excessive concern for control and precision, quantitative approaches cannot explain important antecedence that informed respondents' views. As a result, they cannot help researchers access the subjective social meanings that respondents attach to what they say and/or do. Importantly, the obsession with precision and control also leads to the tendency for quantitative positivism to marginalize or ignore the central role of the researcher in the research process – leaving the impression that social science research is carried by none-persons (Bell and Newby, 1977). The review also strayed into the sometimes, acrimonious debate within the broad semiotic school in order to show, that the ‘ethnographic’ school of cultural anthropology is not, by any means, a unified church. On the choice of a
Multinational Corporate setting, Hofstede has argued that because they are uncharacteristic 'in the same way from country to country, equivalence of the sample is clear' (Hofstede, 1980: 30). This thesis supports critiques of this argument that centred on the counter argument that the relative power that Multinationals wield depend on the economic context in which they exist and operate (Jaeger, 1986; and Hansell and Ajirotutu 1982). However, while this argument is generally true, it is faulty to the extent that it also gives the impression only the economic context counts for the logic and distribution of power. This observation was the assumption that shaped the discussion on the concept of Gambian society that was developed for this study.

The final subsection on the review of C-CMS perspective was devoted to the literature on the social history and the nature of contemporary Gambian society. On the rationale that one needs to understand all aspects of the social system, (not just culture), as they are developed historically, it began with a brief review of the history of contacts between the three main culture bearers that helped to shape contemporary Gambian society, in the late 19th century. In that respect, it identified the 50-year conflict between the Muslim and indigenous animist elements (so-called Soninke-Maraboute Wars/Jihads), which ended with the imposition of the colonial solution in late 1889, as the defining event that helped to shape contemporary Gambia society. In relation to the core arguments of the current study, however, the colonial solution only represented a shift in the political balance of power. This is evident even in the contemporary context, where the nation state, which represents the physical manifestation the colonial solution, has dominance, but lacks hegemony. Pre-colonial and indeed, pre-Islamic social values and institution continue to exist
(albeit in modified versions), and remain as enduring influences on communal as well as individual conceptions and actions.

This argument, which has been supported by the empirical data, provided the basis for conceptualising contemporary Gambian society in terms of Durkheim's 'social system' (Giddens, 1971) and the British Social Anthropological notion of the 'social whole' (Radcliff-Brown, 1949). Contemporary Gambian society, then, is viewed as a complex mixture of formal and 'informal' social dimensions. The formal dimension is described as comprising of the modern nation state and its formal institutional and regulatory arrangements. The 'informal' dimension is divided into two aspects. Traditional extended family clans comprising of matriarchs, patriarchs and 'mothers' children' dominate the indigenous aspect of the informal dimension. The religious aspect comprises of three dominant Surf Islamic Brotherhoods of Saints (Caliphas) and their disciples (Talibes). Together, these three broad social dimensions constitute the 'social system' of integrated institutions, value systems and peculiar economic features that shape collective, as well as individual attitudes and behaviours. The empirical data indicates this complex social system is replicated at the organisational level with implications for the employment relationship simply as the relationship between 'mothers' children' and 'brethren'. Having questioned the viability of the C-CM perspective as an explanation, the second part of the chapter looked at the relatively radical Marxist and postcolonial perspectives on the problem.
The Marxist perspective is critiqued for having a universal and linear view of the problem. I argued that African workers are not true proletarians in the sense that they are not totally dependent on waged employment and their employment relationship cannot be simply conceptualised in terms of relative positions to the means of production. As a result, the Marxist perspective is not useful because it focuses on the broader class conflict between capital and labour. Postcolonial theory was discussed as an extension of Marxism. Although some postcolonial concepts are used to describe certain phenomena, the thesis critiqued postcolonial orientation as suggesting false purity and ignoring the fact that all contexts, are to some extent hybrid. In particular, I took issue with the notions of ‘de-paradoxification’ (Styhre, 2002) and ‘unconscious resistance’ (Prasad and Prasad, 2003). I argued that the former could involve appropriating and giving tags, which do not represent the essence of the other’s culture. For its part, the idea of ‘unconscious resistance’ is criticised for lacking empirical validity. On the basis of these critiques, the final part of the chapter focused on British IR Pluralist theory. The point for IR Pluralism, therefore, is that if you simply copy the British IR system, it will fail to gel with SSA realities. If, however, you go back to the underlying sociology of IR Pluralism (e.g. Fox, 1966, 1974, 1985; Flanders, 1968; Fox and Flanders, 1970; Provis, 1996; and Ackers, 2002), one can devise an IR Pluralism paradigm that works for SSA.

The final part of chapter two, therefore, discussed Fox’s (1966) employment frames of reference. On the rationale that formal SSA IR systems were colonial inventions, the review aimed look at British IR theory and concepts for alternative explanations and possible remedies to the problem. In terms of
contrast, the discussion focused entirely on **Unitarist** and **Pluralist** employment frames of reference. Especially in the light of the argument that characteristics of the wider Gambian community are replicated at the level of the organisation, the IR **Unitarism** was dismissed as an implausible view of SSA organisational reality. On the Pluralist frame of reference, the thesis agreed with Provis (1966) and Ackers (2002) that even for the West, the idea that the employment relationship should involve the management of divergent interests, as well as values and cultures, poses serious problems for traditional formulations of pluralism. It argued, nevertheless, that the issues at the core of Fox's argument in *Man-mismanagement* (1985) and Provis and Ackers' debates and theoretical developments, are, albeit unwittingly, very similar to those that are central to the SSA problem. In particular, Ackers' framework, which argues for analysis to go beyond the formal organisation and take on the views and interests of the wider community, seemed an appealing basis for an IR model for SSA reality. The question, then, is that if the colonial IR system still counts; do the contemporary management problems and issues mirror those of the colonial context? To answer that question, chapter three reviewed the problem in terms of its context and history.

Chapter three began with the basic assumption that history is an important midwife of context. It then went on trace the problem to its colonial roots and the various intervention strategies that have been employed to resolve it. I argued that like her management theories and practices, the management problems of SSA have also been shaped and influenced by colonial ideology and capitalist modes of production. The chapter then looked colonial IR
strategies and the problems they were intended to resolve. It argued that while some colonial officials might have been motivated by the altruistic desire to address problems that arose from undefined authority/subordinate relationship that characterised colonial employment relations, on the whole, colonial IR systems were intended as a control mechanism. The thesis noted the paradox that colonial Trade unions, for example, became very instrumental in the overthrow of the colonial state. With respect to the post-colonial context, the chapter observed that despite changes in the political and economic policy context, colonial management and IR systems remained fundamentally intact. PM remained to be a largely administrative function and IR systems continued to be underpinned by pluralist ideology. I cynically noted that this might have to do with the fact that post-colonial managers were concerned about perpetuating their positions of powers or that perhaps, this was the only way they knew how to manage.

The discussion then focused on recent neo-liberal perspectives and solutions to the problem. In that regard, the thesis argued that as in the colonial context, these new neo-liberal perspectives and solutions are based on the rational economic variables and objectives of global capitalism. Drawing largely from African labour history (Cohen et al., 1978; Cooper, 1983, 1987, 2000; Atkins, 1993; and Brown, 2003), the chapter contrasted the contemporary sociological issues with those of the colonial period and concluded that in many respects they are very similar. For even now, capitalist development in SSA has not been able to totally change the internal logic of pre-capitalist forms of social and economic organisation. The continuing focus on rational economic concerns is attributed to two major factors. The first is
the predominance of a characteristically unitarist, American approach to organisational analysis. Secondly, relates to the fundamental problem of the lack of suitable a management paradigm for SSA. That problem, I argue, also emanates from the lack of suitable alternative theoretical frameworks that can allow for the analysis to go beyond the workplace, to incorporate a wider range of ‘stakeholders’ and emerging tensions over values as well as interests. The introduction of uniform neo-liberal economic recovery and Structural adjustment programmes throughout the ‘Third’ World suggest that the most recent perspectives are based on universal conceptions of the problem. In this chapter, however, I argued that the broader social and moral context of SSA, rather than the economic and ‘rational’ concerns of business organisations, should be the basis from which the employment management problem in SSA must be analysed, understood and resolved. The argument against a universal approach to the problem was further developed in chapter four by way of a review of the literature on docks and dock employment in SSA.

As I argued in chapter one, the cosmopolitan character of ports make them ideal settings for observing the collision between rational Western systems and ‘irrational’ African values and norms. Also, their diverse workforces allow for comparisons of actors’ views regarding the implications of the ‘informal’ influences on the employment relationship. In chapter four, the dock literature is reviewed in terms of how a comparative analysis could expose the limitations of universal theories of reality. On that score, the review was also an attempt to look at African working class cultures (Brown, 2003; Cooper, 2000; 1987; Kigaji, 2000; and Atkins, 1993), in terms of how they contrasts with and challenge universal notions of working class subcultures that are
based on 'interindustry variables' (Turnbull & Sapford, 2001; Miller, 1969; & Kerr; ILO, 1956 and Siegal 1954).

By doing that, the review revisited the core issues of the study by focusing on employment related social processes and associations that are peculiar to SSA. Because of paucity of literature on dock labour in The Gambia at this stage, the review focused on literature from elsewhere in SSA, for example, Mombassa (Cooper, 2000; 1987 & 1983); Tanga (Kiajage, 2000; Said, 1998); Enugu (Brown, 2003), and Natal (Atkins, 1993). These, in conjunction with my tacit knowledge of the Gambian docks, helped to sketch a suggestive profile of Gambian dock subculture. That profile, although only suggestive, indicated that aspects of African dock subculture reflect the elaboration of values and norms that buck the universal profile particularly, in terms of others' and the dockworker's self perception. Besides, the literature questioned the plausibility of notions of 'universal dock subculture' especially on the grounds that the ports and dock subcultures whose analyses are the basis of such conceptions are, mostly, unrepresentative (Weinhauer, 1997; Cooper, 2000; & De Vries, 2000). Accordingly, the 'universal' stereotype is viewed as problematic because the exclusive focus on common ('etic') variables between ports ignores the significant 'emic' or unique differences in the wider social contexts in which different docks exist and operate. One implication of the literature is that for a more holistic understanding of working class subcultures, researchers also need to look elsewhere, outside the formal work environment. Again, for the SSA context, the wider social system is crucial.
The literature review and my own personal experience of the context helped to generated broad theoretical ideas, in chapter 5, about the problems. These ideas in turn, helped to develop the key research questions that formed the basis for the empirical research. As well as highlighting major theoretical ideas and key research questions, chapter five described the research method and the reasoning behind the choice of methodology. The chapter involved a more in depth discussion of the wider methodological issues and debates of social science research. In doing so, it set out the arguments for choice of method and strategies for data collection and analysis. It argued for ‘methodological pluralism’ based on broad qualitative ethnographic paradigm. In terms of the broad methodology debate in social science research, the chapter took the position that methods should not be dictated by a dogmatic devotion to any particular epistemology. Instead, they should be determined by a pragmatic assessment of the theoretical objectives and practical issues involved in the research. The argument, therefore, was fundamentally about what constitutes a more useful approach to ‘microscopic level research’ in developing country contexts (Greene 2001; Sathyamurthy, 1999) and why this type of research is essential. The chapter emphasised the need for methodology to enable access to the antecedents that shape actors’ attitudes, actions and ‘indigenous frameworks of meaning’ (Redding, 1994: 334; & Greene, 2001). The thesis, accordingly, was also concerned that actors’ perceptions do not always match their actions (Hammersley, 1992).

The practical circumstances that informed the choice of methodology are also highlighted. These concerned the multiethnic, multi-social and multi-lingual character of the actors in this particular IR drama. In particular, it highlighted
the practical implications that were posed by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the most important sample cohort - ordinary dockworkers - is illiterate in English. In that respect, the chapter aimed to show that the relationship between languages and the value orientations of individuals as Hoijer, (1964), observes 'cannot be taken for granted, but it is a problem which must be ethnographically investigated' (p. 10). The theoretical assumptions and objectives of the study, and the ethnic, social and linguistic complexity of the actors had a bearing on the research and sampling designs. Both frameworks indicated a requirement for external and internal contrast. External contrasts involved the two levels of analysis - national and organisational, and internal contrast involved different level and categories of actors within the organisation.

The chapter also discussed empirical aspects of the study. It highlighted issues relating to pre-field preparations as well as those that emerged during the fieldwork. With respect to pre-field preparations, discussions centred on the formulation of the semi-structured interview schedule, negotiation for access and the development of a 'wish list' of potential interviewees. Regarding the fieldwork, discussions focused on two main issues: the on-going dispute between the GPA and the GMDWU concerning the reform of the NDLS and, my role as a researcher. Although the former provided a context for actors' views, it was also a cause for a great degree of reflexivity on my part throughout the field period. The chapter also discussed issues concerning conducting interviews as the main approach to collecting primary data. It noted, for example, most interviewees declined to go on-tape citing political and security reasons. The implication of that in terms of the burden it put on
me as the sole researcher was also discussed. Here, I also highlighted my concern that social science research texts do not appear as if researched by 'non-persons' (Bell and Newby 1977). Accordingly, I discussed my role as the researcher. I highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of having tacit knowledge of the wider social and organisational contexts, and the status of the researcher as 'intimate outsider'. Although I did not personally know most of the key actors, my knowledge of the context and the network of relationships I had built while I was an employee at GPA, helped to gain their trust. The chapter, however, also expressed my concern that I might not have completely succeeded in rescuing myself from the subjectivity that might have arisen as a result of my status as a researcher who is also, the 'intimate outsider'.

Chapters six, seven and eight described the empirical findings of the study. All the three chapters are based on actors' perspectives on dock employment relations and PM/HRM in The Gambia. These perspectives are mainly based on critical interpretations and explanations of interview data supported, where necessary, by analysis of official publications and documents. Chapter six described the formal national policy framework for employment and IR. In order to further develop the argument that contemporary national level institutional and policy frameworks still retain elements of their colonial roots, actors' views were cast in a historical perspective. The aim of the historical perspective was to use official publications and documents, in conjunction with 'native accounts', to point to evidence of continuity in colonial patterns of labour administration and IR, and locate moments that represent disruptions to that pattern. In terms of the attitudes and behaviours
of the respective categories of actors in the national level IR drama, the account focused on views on The Gambia’s versions of the ‘social partnership’ model of IR. Although these perspectives pointed to the continuing relevance of the colonial influence, they also indicated that there are increasing influences of American and European Union innovations, particularly in the form of the rhetoric of HRM and Social Partnership.

Chapter seven described formal employment relations and Personnel Management policies and practices of the GPA and gave accounts of the views of different categories of organisational level actors on those policies and practices. The chapter described the two policy frameworks that are intended to regulate the employment relationship between the organisation and its two categories of workers. The NDLS (the IR framework that governs the organisation of dock labour) is, at least in principle, a national level framework. As a result, the chapter concentrated on the GPA’s Service Rules and Regulations (2003) and other formal organisational structures (e.g. Staff Association). Because the GPA is a public enterprise, the chapter also discussed the linkage between formal organisational policies and practices, and the national level macroeconomic management agenda. In that case, it focused on the PM aspects of the ERP/SAP and the Long-term Development Framework (LTDFW) – so-called Vision 2020. In terms of IR and PM, the discussion centred on the explicit and implicit IR/PM issues in the policy documents (P/C and MOU) that defined the relationship between GPA and the government under the ERP/SAP and LTDFW.
In terms of the continuity/disruption theme, these policy frameworks represent disruptions to ‘traditional’ patterns of IR and PM, but only in terms of rhetoric and image. Despite the changes in departmental and individual titles and increased evidence of the rhetoric of HRM in the dialogue concerning people management, there is very little substantive change in terms of what key actors do and how they do it. In addition to formal Rules and Regulations of Service, the chapter also looked at organisation’s Staff Association (SA) in order to discern what IR roles (if any) it has. On that it concluded that the main function of the SA is to manage the social activities of the Authority. In that regard, it is likened to ‘the French comite d'entreprise’ model for managing staff welfare (Ackers, 2003). As far as the employment relationship between the organisation and its employees is concerned, the SA appears to facilitate limited forms EI that are associated with 1980s neoliberal notions of HRM (Ackers and Wilkinson, 2003; Terry, 2003; Brown, 2000; Ackers & Payne, 1998; and Marchington, et al, 1992).

In chapter eight, the thesis focused on the key issues regarding the influences of the ‘informal’ dimensions of social system on actors’ conceptions and views regarding the formal IR and PM policies and practices of the organisation. It gave more detailed descriptions of the structures and workings of the extended family clan system and the Muslim Orders. Crucially, it also presented accounts of actors’ perspectives (predominantly those of ordinary workers), on the informal system. In doing so, it sought to highlight how the informal values and norms influence the workplace relationships and interactions of both ordinary workers and managers. The chapter began with detailed descriptions of the two major informal dimensions of the social
system. It described the extended family clan system as a framework of hierarchical relationships. Although the term invokes the notion of a family structure that includes all those who claim a common ancestry based on bilateral descent, in reality, it involves hierarchies of relationships and therefore, commitments, obligations and expectations. The model of the extended family structure that is presented was also intended to make the argument that the level, within the extended family structure, at which a particular relationship is constructed and given meaning, determines the degree of commitment, obligation and expectation between members. In its most intimate and benevolent forms, the relationship between members is expressed in matrilineal terms as 'mother’s children'. The opposite, faadingo (meaning children of the same father but different mothers), connotes the traditional hostility that often characterises such relationships. In terms of organisational level relationships and interactions, one is obligated first and foremost to those employees they consider being their mothers’ children. With respect to the influences of the ‘informal’ system on managerial attitude and behaviour, relationships with employees who fall within this category are often the focus of accusations of nepotism and unfairness. These categories of employees are expected to demonstrate greater commitment to the organisation’s objectives, which they tend to perceive of as the objectives of their mothers’ children who are in managerial positions.

Chapter eight also discussed the Islamic dimension of the ‘informal’ system. It described the relationships between the Saints and disciples of the Islamic Brotherhods, as a symbiotic relationship with spiritual and material dimensions. Although some Gambians (like me) do not associate themselves
with any particular sect of Islam, most of those interviewed for the present study claimed membership of one of the three major Islamic brotherhoods. These brotherhoods or Orders are all based on the teachings and practices of mystical Islamic Order of Sufism (Cruise-O'Brein, 1975; Quinn, 1972; Klein, 1968; & Abu Nasr, 1965). However, each Order has its peculiar beliefs and forms of worship. These are mainly in the form of litanies, prayers and induction rituals. Although individuals can claim membership of a brotherhood by birth, most devotees are initiated during special ceremonies where disciples declare 'complete submission of body and soul' to the Saint in return for his prayers, material endowments and protection. Although devotees tend to emphasise the spiritual dimensions of their relationship, the chapter provided compelling evidence that suggested there is a very material side to this relationship. In that regard, the 'total submission' of self, on the part of the disciple, also includes the provision of unpaid labour and giving gifts and presents to the Saint. For the Saint, the protection that he vows to provide includes, defence against malevolent spirits and the use of what are considered by disciples as his 'mythical powers' to award devoted disciples with wealth and power. At the level of the organisation, membership of a prominent Muslim family and shared brotherhood with those in positions of authority and power, can be an invaluable asset in terms of job security and career progression.

The chapter also presented accounts of employee and managerial perspectives that suggested that the values and normative standards that are sanctioned by the 'informal' system also help to shape workers conceptions of the formal rules and routines of the Organisation. In presenting those accounts, the
chapter identified two different dimensions of dock employment relationship. The first concerned the indirect relationship between the GPA and the 740 registered dockworkers, which is mediated through a national level IR framework - NDLS. It highlighted the fact that the NDLS has failed to define an identifiable employer for this category of workers. For neither the GPA (which is the sole user of dock labour in The Gambia), nor the central government (the de facto administrator of the NDLS), is willing to take up that responsibility. The other dimension of dock employment relationship involves the GPA and the category of workers who are directly hired and managed by the authority. The organisation's Rules and Regulations of Service govern the employment relationship between the Authority and this category of workers.

The influences of the informal system on the employment relationship attitudes and behaviours of all categories are quite significant. In relative terms, however, the findings indicated that they are less important in the relationship between managers/shipping agents and Dockworkers. This may have to do with the indirect nature of that relationship, the casual nature of dock labour, and the informal controls that dockers exert through the gang structure. Yet, the chapter also indicated that this dimension of the dock employment relationship also involves issues that are rooted in 'informal' values, norms and forms of social organisation. As a result, for example, while managers and shipping agents view the issue of the deployment of non-registered relatives in terms of its implications for their formal relationship with Insurance companies, dockworkers discussed it in terms of the obligations and expectations between 'mothers' children' and Brethren.
On the dimension of dock employment relationship involving the GPA and its 'regular' employees, informal influences were discussed in relation to their impact on the application of the formal Rules and regulations of the organisation. The constitution and role of the SA was subjected to further discussion if only, to establish that in IR terms, the Association is not considered to be very relevant. Although, actors tended to have different views of the impact of the informal system on rule application (depending on their circumstances), they all agreed that the 'informal' dimension matters. The persistence of 'indulgency patterns' (Watson, 1995) on the part of managers, suggested, among other things, that the pressures from 'mothers' children' and the brethren do have impacts on employment relationship behaviours and attitudes. The findings also showed that employees who lacked family and religious connections saw these informal influences as sources of inequity directed, mainly at individuals.

The pressure from Patriarchs/Matriarchs and Saints, have also engendered a pattern of inconsistency in the application of rules and use of managerial prerogatives. Thus, those employees who do not have the necessary connections point to instances of nepotism, unfairness and, even corruption, on the part of management or individual managers. However, even those who entertain such critical views are inclined to play by the 'informal' rules if and when it suits their purposes. One major outcome of the study, therefore, is an unanticipated finding regarding a perverse tendency for ambivalence between two sets of value systems and norms. Managers and ordinary dockers have different views on many aspects of their employment relationship. Notwithstanding these differences, on balance, both categories of actors
entertain ambiguities in their perspectives regarding the influences of the ‘informal’ value system on the formal policies and practices of the organisation. In that respect, the informal system has a bad, but inevitability influence on their relationship as managers and employees who, also, happen to be ‘mothers’ children’ and ‘brethren’. But ordinary employees in particular, were keen to extol the virtues of informal values and norms as *aarda* (tradition) and *dinaa* (Faith). This suggests, therefore, that when we imagine and formulate formal organisation policies and practices, we also need to give some consideration to elements of those values and norms.

In the process of investigating the presence of indigenous SSA and Muslim values and norms in formal business organisation and their implications for rational objectives and processes, a number themes and issues have emerged. Although the study was a single-case study of a Public enterprise in a rather small country, some of the issues touch on wider theoretical and contemporary policy debates concerning SSA as well as other contexts. The following section will look at some of these themes and issues and discuss them in the context of recent development in IR theory and practice, with an eye on the debate regarding the management and management problems of SSA.

9. II: Discussions

This study is, in many ways, another examination of issues of waged employment and organisational management problems of SSA. It is about issues that also concern African Labour history, development studies and
organisational research. It represents another attempt to look at the interface between indigenous value systems and the theories that underpin the management of formal organisations in SSA. Like most enquiries of that type, it is based on a priori assumption that in the SSA context, the hegemony, if not dominance, of Western management theories and practices is contested (Brown, 2003; Jackson, 2002; Cooper, 2000; Kamoche, 2000, 1997; Mbiti, 1997; & Dia, 1996, 1991). In that respect, it is another critique of the stream of analysis that approaches the study of SSA organisational phenomena from a Western mindset based, predominantly, on rational economic variables. In that respect, it has a similar agenda with those who critique managerial models for SSA for failing to take account of the 'African thought system' (Beugre and Offidile, 2001; Kemoche, 2000, 1993; Ahiauzu, 1986; & Nzebeli, 1986); her [Africa's] peculiar cultural values (Jackson, 2002, 1999; Dia, 1996, 1991; and Ankomah, 1985), and indigenous forms of social organisation and practices (Brown, 2003; Jackson, 2002, 1999; Cooper, 2000, 1987, 1983; Takyi-Asiedu, 1993).

Themes and issues relating to social values, obligations and expectations dominate the empirical findings. The objective of this study, however, is to discuss these themes and issues in the specific context of the theoretical and policy debates concerning IR and HRM/PM in SSA. Because the intention is to approach these debates from a broadly sociological perspective, the discussion will also engage with some broad theoretical constructs and discourses including; culture as an explanation for the variable performance of management theories and practices and certain notions of workplace 'resistance'. In very broad terms, the study is about the variations in social
contexts and its implications for the economic and commercial outcomes of business organisations. It also concerns how we go about investigating the factors that account for variations in philosophy, practices and outcomes, and how they impact on the relationships of those who work in formal business organisations in Africa.

Discussions of the findings centre on contrasting themes of culture and social system, values and interests, and ambivalence and resistance. As indicated early, these themes emerged partly from the literature review, but also from the empirical chapters. The following sections discuss these themes and concepts in relation to the findings and conclusion of the study and their implications for methodology in 'microscopic level research in SSA; for understanding the workplace attitudes and behaviours of ordinary African workers (i.e. dockworkers) and; also, for understanding the problems of SSA IR and PM with a view to resolving them.

9. II.1: Methodology and Organisational Research in SSA

Chapter five made the case for 'methodological pluralism' based on a broad qualitative ethnographic paradigm. The defining criteria for this choice of methodology and strategy were the theoretical objectives of enquiry, and my tacit knowledge and 'preunderstanding' (Gummesson, 2000: 60) of the context and phenomena of study. The former were helpful in identifying the 'foreshadowed problems' and developing broad theoretical assumptions. The latter, enabled me to anticipate practical circumstances and issues that could have adversely affected the empirical study. The choice of a predominantly
qualitative approach was particularly dictated by the fact that the investigation of the core issue of the research (i.e. the effects of the ‘informal’ African values and customs on the work related attitudes and behaviours of ordinary African workers), cannot be fully accomplished with quantitative measurements and deductive analysis (see Greene, 2001). They also require focus on specific context. In that regard, the study also concerns issues of emic/etic approaches to understanding variable outcome of management theories and practices in different social contexts. In that respect, the empirical findings exposed the limits of the etic approach to cultural analysis that dominates the field of C-CMS. The conclusions of study suggests that understanding the complex synthesis between the indigenous, religious and ‘formal’ dimensions of the social system and how they impact on how people think and act, requires an emic (insiders) approach.

In presenting the empirical findings, I have tried, as much as possible to establish a true picture of the phenomena I set out to investigate. The accounts that are presented in the empirical chapters have been guided by an overriding principle for critical realism. They are ethnographic accounts because they are based a critical interpretation of ‘local knowledge’ (Geertz, 1993). They are also sociological accounts and I make no claim that they are value-free. I have, however, tried as much as possible, to limit bias and represent fair and accurate interpretations that reflect the views of actors and the ‘indigenous frames of meanings’ (Redding, 1994: 344) they attach to their views and actions.

On the matter of methodology in organisational analysis in SSA, this study is represents a sociological contribution to the study of ‘microscopic level’ issues.
And, it has potential to contribute to the development of approaches to comparative analysis of 'organisational level behaviour across countries' (Greene, 2001: 10). It represents a viable alternative to the dominant positivist deductive epistemologies of Cross-cultural analysis, which tend to focus on etic variables between the formal dimensions of nation states. Consequently, even where there are stated intentions to give consideration to the 'African thought system' (Beugre and Offodile, 2001; Kamoche, 2000) and peculiar cultural and social values and norms (Dia, 1996; Takyi-Asiedu, 1993), analysis tend to focus on rational national and organisational level variables. No one, for example, has talked to ordinary African workers in their own languages. More than anything else, the pre-eminence of this characteristically unitarist, American approach to organisational analysis has contributed to the lack of suitable theoretical framework for understanding the predominant social problems of SSA IR and PM. This study, therefore, envisaged a framework that could enable organisational analysis to address phenomena beyond the workplace, and incorporate a wider range of 'stakeholders' and rising tensions over principles as well as interests. That requires a holistic understanding of African workers. And, I would argue, that if you don't understand 'actors' social meaning' (Weber, 1968) and the context in which they exist, then you don't understand SSA workers.

The issue, therefore, also concerns empathy and the ability for reflexivity. As I have indicated in Chapter five, throughout the field study, there was persistent and extreme need for reflexivity that arose from developments in the on-going dispute between the GPA and GMDWU. And, my personal experience and tacit knowledge of the context was absolutely crucial to dealing with these
emerging developments. I have admitted that there was a downside to my status as the 'intimate outsider' in terms of whether I could avoid the potential biases that such status may engender. The crucial point, however, is that anybody with even a fairly decent knowledge of the African social context, knows that aloofness and indifference are not options when you engage in this type of research.

Specifically, the findings of the current study paint a picture of an IR and PM system and machinery cast in consistent patterns of ambivalence. These ambiguities, fundamentally, are the result of the complexity of the 'social system' of moral values and economic interests that shape actors conceptions, perspectives and actions. Even for an 'insider', I found this to be far more complex than I had originally envisaged. In methodological terms, therefore, this study makes a specific contribution by showing how complex African social systems and phenomena might be probed and understood. But the findings also suggest that some theories that are based on critiques of dominant Western management theories and conceptions are also suspect. For example, they challenge the viability (Prasad and Prasad, 2003) Postcolonial theorisation of 'unconscious resistance' for presenting a methodological dilemma. In that respect, their conception also has implications of appropriating the other, solely on the basis of the researcher's ignorance of the mind of the subject of her/his research. The issue therefore, is not the awareness or the lack of it on the part of the worker, of the oppositional nature of her/his action, but rather, how can we best access and interpret the meanings that 'others' appropriate to their actions. The mere fact that we cannot fully apprehend the ambivalence that characterise the
employment relationship, does not constitute a basis for categorising the actions of ordinary workers as 'unconscious actions'. Those whose views and actions the study aimed to examine and explain are not incoherent 'noble savages' and the findings indicate that through qualitative method that is based on actors' 'social meanings', one can wade through the ambivalence to establish constant pattern in the meanings they attach to their rhetoric and actions.

But the ambiguities in actors' perspectives regarding their workplace relationships and interactions also reflect the complexity of the wider social context that helps to shape their perspectives. The complex synthesis of moral values and economic interests that shape actors' conceptions and behaviour require a framework of analysis that reflects contemporary reality. And, in many respects, that reality challenges the propriety of exclusive cultural frameworks as explanations and basis for developing models that are intended to address the IR and PM problems of SSA. That reality points to the fact the contemporary African context is a melange of value systems, norms and interests that supports the notion of a 'social system'.

9. II: 2: The Social System: explaining the limits of the Culture Concept

An enquiry regarding the contextual suitability of particular theories, and practices also raises questions concerning cultural differences between contexts. The unprecedented increase, especially in the past twenty five years, in comparative 'inter-continental level' cultural analysis that try to explain the
failures of Western management theories and practices in developing
countries (for example, Hansen, 2002; Marie, 2000; Beugre and Offile, 2001;
Dia, 1993; Blunt & Jones, 1992; Kiggundu, 1989; & Berg, 1980), suggest, as
Kuper (2000: x) observes, that: ‘culture was’, and I would suggest, is still
perceived of as, ‘a concept of enormous, almost limitless’, possibilities. It
provides all the answers and fills all the gaps in our knowledge.

This pattern of analysis has been greatly influenced by developments in
cultural typologies – especially the works of Hofstede and related theoretical
developments. My findings support the existence of values and norms that are
‘etic’ – common – to many Gambians, irrespective of tribal or social affiliation
or categorisation. A shared membership of a nation state is certainly one
explanation. There was, however, no evidence to suggest, for example, that
there are ethnic or tribal variations regarding actors’ perspectives on the roles
of alfaa or kelipha (elders) in the maintenance of social harmony within the
group. But the findings also suggested that on some issues and in certain
contexts, actors’ demonstrate a tendency for ethnic and social ‘subtraction’.
This is sometimes reflected in their perceptions regarding collective social
institutions, activities and loyalties in the work environment. Employees from
the port neighbourhood of Half-die, for example, define their commitment to
the organisation in terms of shared communal origins with many of the senior
managers. The influence of the ethnic or tribal element is also very evident
when respondents talk about activities that cause them to be absent from
work. In that respect, the apparent tension between non-Jola and Jola
respondents concerning the effects of futamph on the operations of the
organisation reflect variations on the basis of ethnicity.
Nevertheless, quite significantly, the findings also point to the fact that culture alone cannot explain 'why people think and behave as they do' (Kuper, 2000: x). On balance, empirical evidence challenge views that tend to excessively privilege culture as the root cause and therefore, solution to all the management problems in SSA (Beugre & Offidile, 2001; Dia, 1996; Blunt and Jones, 1992; & Kiggundu, 1989). Culture, no doubt, is essential as a social form in a relatively traditional society. But evidence from the study suggests that it is not a sufficient explanation for people's perceptions and behaviour in relation to organisational phenomena. In his account of how 'boys were brought to work at Marine by their fathers' and how he went about getting a job for his daughter, the old sailor was not simply engaging in a nostalgic recall of 'a relatively indeterminate normative order' (Ackers, 2001: 377). He was also, clearly signalling a willingness to invoke that order should the need arise. The motivations for invoking that 'suitable form of paternalism', however, are instrumental. The material dimension of his comment concerns the need to get a job for his daughter.

Having said that, the findings do not also support a purely materialist view (as in Marxism) of the relationships between 'mothers' children' and brethren. Rather, they point to a pattern of relationships and interactions that are based on, and sustained by a complex synthesis of moral obligations and material expectations between relatives and members of common Islamic orientations. This evidence also challenged the impression, which in a global sense has been part of it for generations, that Africans are resistant to the material temptations of contemporary capitalism. The implications of these conclusions are that a sociological conception that views the contemporary
context in terms of functionally integrated framework of 'African social systems' is more useful as a theoretical framework of analysis. The framework does not assume SSA society as comprising of isolated tribes with pre-historic 'thought-systems', but rather, as a complex hybrid social system with modern and traditional elements. Such a framework can embrace and take on the wide range of values, norms, social institutions and forms of social organisation of all the dimensions that together, constitute the social system. For that purpose, a framework of a 'social system' of formal and informal social and economic dimensions represents the most realistic conception of SSA society. The complexity of this system largely accounts for the consistent patterns of ambivalence that is evident in actors' conception of the IR system and how they go about conducting their employment relationships and interactions. The following section discusses the nature of the ambivalence that characterises actors' perspectives regarding the influences of the informal system.

9. II. 3: Informal Influences: Managerial and Worker ambivalence

It is not, however, just the complexity of the social system that engendered ambivalence. In that regard, findings also indicated that the perspectives of certain category of actors are also influenced by the literature, which links poor organisational outcomes in SSA to African cultures and customs. Western educated bureaucrats and managers, for example, view 'informal influences', with a blend of dismissive irrelevance and serious concern. Consequently, they thought it was 'essential to elicit the views of grassroots agents and leaders' including 'traditional District Head Chiefs' on matters of
National employment policy, (GG, 2001: 1). But, they also argued that 'traditional values and norms are not relevant at the level of national policy formulation' (Interview notes: Senior official, DoSTIE). At the organisational level, 'informal influences' are at once viewed as sources of 'nepotism', unequal treatment and inconsistency, and the focus of the moral obligations, social cohesion and expectations that require 'mother's children to look after one and other'.

The pattern of managerial ambivalence discerned from the interview data and observations can be attributed to two major factors. The first concerns the unprecedented managerial discretion and the inconsistency it has engendered in terms of rule application. One of the most conspicuous things about the GPA's Service Rules and Regulations (2003) is the almost unlimited discretionary power of the Managing Director, exercised through departmental heads and line managers. One consequence of this undefined discretionary powers, is that in the process of 'looking after their mothers' children' within the workforce, managers have tended to be very inconsistent in the way they apply the formal rules and regulations. This inconsistency has helped to sustain the notion of some association between unfair and nepotistic managerial behaviour, and the informal aspects of the social system. This is not to imply that allegations of nepotism and unfairness arising from family relationships are mere illusions that exist in the minds of those who entertain such perceptions. Observable evidence gave some credibility to the view that 'the organisation is being turned into a family enterprise', and claims that certain employees 'are always getting away with persistent violations of the rules because they have the necessary family and religious connections' are, not entirely without basis.

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The second major factor for the pattern of ambivalence concerns the moral dimension of indigenous and Islamic values and normative paradigms. Even those who entertain very negative views on 'informal influences', admit that the relationships they sanction and help to sustain, have moral spiritual values. The fact that many perceive of these relationships in terms of aarda (tradition) and dinaa (spirituality), reinforces individual and collective commitments to their maintenance. The sense of tradition and spirituality are, perhaps, the major forces that drive the collective sense of commitment and obligation to these forms of relationships and interactions. Even so, there are, also, very potent instrumental dimensions to these relationships. Empirical evidence indicated, and quite strongly, that the anticipation and reality of material aspects also help to sustain the relationships and interactions between mothers' children and brethren. People give gifts and presence to their relatives because they 'expect similar gestures when they have naming ceremonies or funerals'. Consequently, an exclusively moral explanation does not suffice. In a way, these economic aspects represent alternatives in the absence of any welfare state safety net.

As well as being a source ambivalence and inconsistency in rule application, the undefined and unlimited discretionary powers of managers also points to a significant gap in existing IR and PM policies and practices. The moral force that underpins informal workplace relationships and interactions and the inconsistency arising from undefined managerial discretion, have, together, helped to provide an ideal ground for the emergence of what are defined as 'corruption', 'nepotism' and 'negative organisational cultures (Blunt & Jones, 1992; Kiggundu, 1989). Yet, most analysis, tend to negate the moral side of the
equation and instead, focus on the economic nature of these problems.

Overwhelmingly, however, actors tended to define their 'informal' relationships more in terms of their social than economic significance. The strength of the moral argument challenges suggestions that the solution to Africa's management problems should involve the planning of the future independent of historic and cultural contexts that shaped the present (Kiggundu, 1989: 63). Instead, it supports the argument that social and moral considerations constitute the best means of motivation and persuasion (Fox, 1974; Korczynski, 2000). The moral argument is important because it provides the basis for the alternative paradigms of certain category of workers. As the next section will indicate, one group of actors – Dockers, for example, have fashioned their own informal alternative mechanisms, to help make sense of these ambiguous and inconsistent policies and practices and, at the same time, look after their common interests as dockworkers.

9. II. 4: Dockers' alternative response to 'ambivalence'

As indicated earlier, Gambia dockers also seemed to ascribe titles to certain ranks of dockers that parallel native authority titles (for example, Gang Headman). Beyond the mere ascriptions of native titles, however, dockworkers have used the work gang structure in ways that fit in with Bhabha's (1994) concept of 'mimicry'. Findings indicated that dockers have use the 'Gang' – a structure that has been sanctioned by the 'formal' system, to reconstitute what may be defined as social units of the wider traditional society. In ways that a postcolonial critique would applaud, dockers have used work gangs to develop mechanism and processes, which in the views of
managers and Shipping agents, represent a menace to the formal dock IR machinery.

As well as using the gang to develop and administer their own informal insurance and welfare schemes, they have also used the Gang to introduce alternative forms of work organisation and disciplinary procedures. These alternative schemes and processes are largely based on indigenous principles and paradigms of communal security, dispute resolution and grievance settlement procedures. In response to the highly inadequate formal social security safety net, for example, gangs members have devised alternative ways income security schemes to look after the welfare of sick or deceased colleagues. Similarly, for disciplinary purposes, ordinary dockers have tended to be suspicious of the impersonal nature of the formal disciplinary procedures of the PLB. They have responded to that suspicion by developing their own alternative informal disciplinary procedures. In that case, as in the traditional set up, the oldest members of the gang are the focus of authority and issues are resolved by way of consensus, hadamaya (the human way) and maslaha (tolerance). Although managers consider some of these alternative processes and arrangements to be 'improper' and even 'illegal', they also recognised that within the context of the normative orders of the wider society, such actions and processes represent the norm and are thus, praise worthy. As a result they tolerate them if only because they believe that any attempt to subvert them would be met with the disapproval of the wider community. Dockers, naturally, have a different view of their alternative arrangements. They consider them to be proper and legitimate behaviour that are consistent with the aarda (traditional) and dīna (religion). They, for
example, allow non-registered relatives to work on behalf of their sick colleagues, because in their view, the alternative would amount to denying needy relatives or brethrens money they need to 'look after their families'. They [Dockers] consider the formal disciplinary procedures of the PLB alien and impersonal. They therefore ignore it and, instead opt for the informal processes they have fashioned because, they claimed, these are consistent with the 'way we do things in the village'.

In terms of the way forward, therefore, the present study draws significantly on Fox (1966, 1974, and 1985). A major implication of the findings and conclusions is that Fox's (1985) warning, that focusing attention 'on the organisation alone, to the exclusion of the wider society in which it is embedded is fatal for a full understanding of the issues involved' (p. 1), also holds for SSA. Although Fox was writing in terms of individuals' 'conceptions of how they ought, or would be best advised in their own interests' his argument that 'pluralist perspectives on society and the enterprise must be seen not as socially neutral but as having great ideological significance' (Fox, 1985: 25), is very relevant to this study. As I have tried to indicate throughout this thesis, the economic dimension does matter, and that view is supported by the data. Fundamentally, however, the forms of social organisations and relationships that are described in chapter eight, also suggest that the moral criteria that define the relationships between 'mothers' children' and 'brethren' is also consistent with the values of what Fox (1974) calls 'pre-contractual society'. In that regard, the economic motivations for sustaining those form of relationships and interactions, are themselves 'social'. The economic incentive for work and for maintaining informal relationships is that
you need money to safeguard your 'social assets' (Fox, 1974: 158).

These references to Fox suggest that his sociological frameworks and arguments and related theoretical developments are central to the case that this study is aiming to make. In that regard, his 'employment relations frames of reference' (Fox, 1966), and subsequent related theoretical developments (Ackers, 2002; Provis, 1996), constitute very useful starting point for fashioning IR pluralism for SSA realities. My argument, then, for using Western theoretical conceptions as the basis for a framework for African reality, is that if and when critically used, some Western theoretical conceptions transcend specific social context and systems.

9. II: 5: Frames of Reference and the SSA context

Employment relations 'frames of reference' are important in organisational analysis because they determine judgement, which in turn determines subsequent behaviour' (Fox, 1966: 390). With respect to IR and PM, they comprise the 'main selective influences' on managerial attitudes and behaviour in terms of policies and their execution, as well as employees' attitudes and behaviours towards those policies and practices (Newcomb, 1950, in Fox 1966: 390). With the apparent comeback of Unitarism in 1980s, in the form HRM (see chapter 3), the traditional debate about what constitutes organisational reality has reassumed centre stage in the IR literature (for example, Terry, 2003; Ackers, 2002; Ackers and Payne, 1998; Kelly, 1998; Provis, 1996; Marchington et al, 1992; and Coopey & Hartley, 1991). In terms of the dichotomy between the two major employment frames
reference in their traditional formulations, this study supports the 'pluralist' notion as a more credible conception of organisational reality in relation to SSA.

In response to significant developments concerning the conjunction between work and society, however, new theoretical developments (Ackers, 2002; and Provis, 1996), that question the suitability of traditional formulations of pluralism for the contemporary context (Fox, 1966; Clegg, 1979), have emerged. These developments concern the suitability of the pluralist framework, in its traditional formulations, when issues in the employment relationships are not being defined simply in terms of the diversity in 'interests', but also, in values and cultures (Provis, 1996). Provis describes the situation as a 'new orientation' whereby issues in the employment relationship are discussed as much in terms of conflicts of values as interests (p. 477). Ackers (2002), on the other hand, points to a 'shift in the problem of order' in the employment relationship (p. 3). As a result, both Ackers and Provis argued a strong case, for a rethink of the conceptions of the processes and structures 'by which differences' in the employment relationship 'are reconciled' (Provis, 1996: 473).

In that respect, Ackers (2002) went further to suggest a 'Neo-pluralist' framework – a theoretical development on Flanders and Fox's (1970) famous interpretation of the Donovan analysis, which will enable organisational analysis to go beyond the workplace to take-in a wider range of stakeholders and tensions over values as well as interests. This framework (see fig. 7.1 below) has a 'stakeholder' perspective not simply in terms of the
capital/labour relationship in a business organisation context, but also in terms of stakeholders in the wider community whose influences may pervade workplace relationships. Acker's observations and framework emerged out of concern for contemporary Western issues relating work and society and the related policy debate on 'work-life balance'. However, the focus of the Neo-pluralist framework on wider community issues and their implications for workplace relationships resonates very much with the central sociological problems of IR and PM/HRM that are raised in this study.

9. III: Neo-pluralism: Institutionalising of Values and Interests

It would be misleading to describe the influence of the 'informal' dimensions of the social system on workplace relationships and interactions anywhere in SSA as 'a new orientation'. There is contradiction in the literature on organisational analysis in SSA that is supported by empirical evidence from this study. It concerns the simultaneous dismissal of traditional African cultures and values as 'irrelevant' but archaic sources of corruption and inefficiency and bad practice (see chapter 2 and 3). Because they are considered 'irrelevant' they are ignored and instead, organisational phenomena in SSA are assessed on the basis of the economic expectations of corporate America and their rationally determined management objectives. Consequently, the socio-cultural issues that are at the heart of the problem are being misconceptualised and as a result, misunderstood. When the employment relationship is discussed in terms of culture, values and interests, what is required is the sociological analysis of workplace relationships (Watson, 1995) involving the critical analysis of workers' behaviour and
attitudes, and more importantly, the influences and values that are the antecedents for those attitudes and behaviour. That way, to paraphrase Fox (1985: 5), we can examine and understand the issues involve, in the context of the wider social setting within which this mutual relationship is conducted, rather than merely focusing on the institutional relationship between employers and trade unions (Ackers, 2002). Analysis, then, becomes more holistic as it also focuses on the cultural values and social organisations of the wider community and how they influence and shape individual perceptions and behaviour towards formal organisational objectives, policies and practices. This is particularly pertinent for the SSA context where formal organisations tend to lack the economic wherewithal and social legitimacy to create their own 'homogeneous value systems' (Tayeb, 1996: 189).

A key argument is that an assessment of the appropriateness of managerial theories and practices must, of necessity, consider the cultural and social considerations that question the assumed universal applicability of existing theories and practices. The issue of 'suitability' (or unsuitability) is a recurring theme in the literature on organisational management in SSA (Abudu, 1986; Nzelibe, 1986; Leonard, 1987; Ahiauzu, 1986; Kanungo, 1990; Kamoche, 1993 & 2000; & Thairu, 1999). According to Nzelibe (1986), 'whereas Western management thought advocates Eurocentrism, individualism, and modernity, African management thought emphasizes ethnocentrism, traditionalism, communalism, and cooperative team work' (p. 11). Although the structures and processes of formal organisations in SSA are based on Western models and value systems, evidence from this study supports the position, generally advanced by the literature on African Labour history (Brown, 2003; Cooper,
2000, 1996; 1992, 1987, 1983; Kaijage, 2000; Atkins, 1993, 1988; Cohen, 1980; Cohen et al, 1978; & Iliffe, 1971), that the Africans who work in them bring to the workplace attitudes and behaviour that are largely shaped and sustained by Africa's peculiar social-system. The argument here is that significantly, the values and norms that represent the 'informal' dimensions of that social system, inform the attitudes and behaviour of African workers (including managers) as they attempt to interpret, construct, and give 'meanings to things, structures, and processes at the industrial work place' (Ahiauzu, 1986: 47). Consequently, the debate about organisational management in SSA must also be a debate about the compatibility of elements of the 'informal' dimensions of 'African social-system' with the transplanted management paradigms used to manage African workers.

This research showed that both formal and informal Western and African aspects of the employment relationship collide to create a hybrid pattern of IR and PM. In that respect, a strong case can be made for a modified version of Ackers' neo-pluralist construct as the basis for an interest as well as values institutionalisation model of IR and HRM for SSA. What is suggested here is neither an unthinking adoption of Western theoretical concepts, nor the view that SSA is a homogeneous society with a uniform culture and social system. Indeed, it is important to emphasise that 'in spite of the relative uniformity in the essence of the "African thought-system", African culture is in reality a melange of ... "sub-cultures"/linguistic groups' (Kamoche, 2000: 55). There is hardly a SSA country with a homogenous population. In addition to the diversity within countries, there is also significant cultural diversity between countries. As a result, there are differences in educational systems, social
stratification, and legal and institutional arrangements between countries (Tayeb, 1995). These formal differences, however, can be largely attributed to differences in colonial experiences. Consequently, what are often described as 'national cultures' are in fact neither indigenous nor foreign (Ankomah, 1985; & Abudu, 1986) but what Abudu, (in what may be construed as a swipe at African bureaucracies), calls 'hybrid monstrosities' that are the consequent of colonialism and ill-considered post-independent political, economic and social strategies (p. 18).

This cultural diversity suggests that conceptualising a specific African culture, values and contexts requires a high degree of vigilance, posing practical and theoretical difficulties for the adaptation of foreign models to the SSA context (Kamoche, 2000). That, however, does not mean that we should seek an outright rejection of foreign theoretical conceptions and managerial practices. The utility of Western concepts for understanding peculiar SSA phenomena, as I have already tried to argue, should be defined by the extent to which they are abstract enough to 'offer insights about the range of options available for crafting organizations and enhancing their effectiveness' (Kamoche, 2000: 56). We do have social differences that are, perhaps, more important than any similarities we may have. Yet, the fact remains we all live in the same world and dockers, especially, operate in similar industrial organisational contexts. Neo-pluralism can be a useful framework for three reasons. Firstly, the suggestion that a wide-range of 'stakeholders', values and interests be involved in the study of employment relations, resonates with the argument for organisational analysis in SSA to shift from exclusive organisational and managerial concerns and take on the other broad social dimension of the
wider society. Secondly, by bringing 'the concept of civil society' into the employment relationship debate (Ackers, 2002: 10) it represents a framework for formal organisations to tap into sources of 'communal energy' in the form of traditional Clan networks and Religious brotherhoods. In that respect, African paradigms regarding motivation, work organisation, dispute resolution and public relations could be useful.

Finally, the notion that 'long-term trust relationships in both economic and social spheres depend on strong normative institutions' (Ackers, 2002: 17), suggests a framework that could bring into the analysis, the external cultural and social variables that also help to shape the employment relationship. This is particularly relevant in a context where the key issues in the relationship are socio-culturally expressed. Organisational analysis that genuinely takes all these issues into consideration, can, also, form the basis for a values and interests-institutionalisation model of IR and PM for SSA. This paradigm is not dismissive of all aspects of mainstream IR and PM. Instead it draws on and extends existing IR theory and concepts of industrial sociology (Donovan, 1968; Flanders and Fox, 1969; Fox, 1974; Blyton and Turnbull, 1994; Provis, 1996; Edwards, 2003) to the SSA context. More immediately, it is motivated by Ackers' (2002) neo-pluralist framework. Consequently, it draws on the broader sociological analysis of Durkheim and Radcliff-Brown, to examine and explain an employment relationship paradigm that is governed by formal (familiar) institutional and regulatory frameworks, but that is also, defined in terms of its informality as the relationship between 'mothers' children and brethren'. It suggests, however, that viable PM models and IR frameworks for SSA must go beyond the crude consideration and incorporation of elements of
the 'African thought-system'. Instead, it proposes negotiation between formal organisations and the 'African culture' as the basis for institutionalising the more compatible elements of the 'African social-system' into formal IR and PM policies, strategies and routines.

This model rejects the notion that significant changes in individual attitudes and behaviours can be brought about by managerial strategies based exclusively on the 'integration of positivist, scientific, and objective ways of regarding human interrelations instead of passive acceptance of the values and institutional arrangements of society' (Nzelibe, 1986: 9). In the absence of a clear distinction between specific values of traditional 'normative' institutions and the common values that emanate from a common association in a nation state, policies and strategies are adopted on the basis of 'national cultural' considerations. Quite often, such policies bring into sharper focus, the incompatibility of imported and indigenous cultures and values. The re-emergence of unitarism, in the guise of HRM and in the context of a neoliberal agenda merely reflects the extent of conceptual discord between values that represent the informal dimensions and the economic objectives of global capitalism. In this context, the rationally determined needs of the nation-state are confused with the specific socio-cultural concerns of African society. The end product, if you will, is a pattern of ambivalence and ambiguity that suggests a huge gap between formal policies and practices on the hand, and the actual underlying assumptions that largely shape collective attitudes and realities. The findings indicated that actors' live, and 'try to cope' with these ambiguities unofficially and in a tentative manner. If they are concerned about their implications for good practice, they are also resigned to the inevitability
of the informal factors that are also the causes. Rather than adopting coherent strategies, instead, managers are given unlimited discretionary power that are applied either in the form of 'indulgency patterns' or otherwise, to abuse the system. In that regard, managerial attitudes and behaviour are characterised by high levels of inconsistence in the application of rules and treatment of subordinates. Managerial inconsistency, has, in turned led to allegations (sometimes justifiably), of corruption, nepotism and unfairness.

Fig. 4: Neo-Pluralism: A Values and Interests Institutionalisation Model of HRM

Although this model is not necessarily based on any 'traditional' notions of the organisation, the rationale behind it echoes some of the central ideas of some recent models that have been proposed for the SSA context. The view that some elements of the 'African thought-system' should be considered for
inclusion into formal organisational policies and practices is the key argument of the reconciliation paradigm (Dia, 1996), the processual, strategic model (Kamoche 2000), and the culture-fit model (Beugre & Offodile's 2001). However, conceptualisations and solutions are theoretically suspect and have little practical value if they do not evolve from a holistic and realistic analysis of the problems they are intended to redress. The reconciliation paradigm was the outcome of a World Bank sponsored study and conceived of in the context of the institutional arrangements for national reform policy delivery. Data was collected mainly through 'institutional environment assessment exercises' involving senior government official engaged in the implementation of public policy reforms and development administration. Even in the context of policy delivery, the assumption that the reconciliation of cultures and values can be based on the exclusive imagination of senior government bureaucrats who run policy delivery institutions is, to say the least, rather absurd and self-fulfilling.

Beugre & Offodile's (2001) culture-fit model emerged from a comprehensive review of the literature on cultural patterns and management practices in SSA. Therefore, they highlighted the African propensity for autocratic styles of leadership (Kiggundu, 1988; Jones et al 1996; & Blunt & Jones, 1997), large 'power distance' and collectivism (Blunt & Jones, 1992; Dia, 1991; & Hofstede, 1980) and ascribed great importance to social relationships (Takyi-Asiedu, 1993). They argued for the integration of 'modern management techniques into African systems of management' and the eradication of aspects of African culture that are not 'conducive to better management practices' (Beugre & Offodile, 2001: 543). There are, however, three problems that could be
discerned from this framework. To begin with, it should be obvious, by now, that it will take more than the mere 'integration of modern management techniques' to eradicate aspects of a people's culture. Secondly, the 'autocratic' style of leadership they associate with Africa may, as Jackson (2002) noted, have little to do with 'African culture'. Thirdly, the 'Organisational change-oriented attitudes' strategy they proposed reflected a unitarist position, which is very much at odds with organisational reality in SSA. The suggestion of a 'transformational' style of leadership, as the approach to changing attitudes without providing any empirical evidence that this style of leadership will be more effective (Hendry & Pettigrew 1992: 155) is not very helpful. What it reflects, instead, is an appreciation for 'the aspect of the American Dream that highlights the value of strong leadership, backed-up by a strong organisational culture, both reflecting the spirit of 'rugged, entrepreneurial individualism' (Legge 1995: 87).

With respect to the 'modern management techniques that African managers are urged to adopt, the culture-fit model argues for neo-liberal unitarist managerial practices. Other than the fact that such practices are informed by unitarist ideology, their successful adaptation also depends on infrastructural and social contingencies that tend to be lacking in most SSA countries. 'Business process re-engineering', 'just-in-time (JIT)', 'total quality management (TQM)' and collaborative forms of management (Beugre & Offodile, 2001:545-547) all represent practical techniques directed exclusively at managerial concerns and the rational economic objectives of business. JIT is a strategy for 'securing time economies in the circuit of capital' and eliminating 'any non-value adding operation from the' production 'process'
(Legge, 1995: 221). 'Business process re-engineering' on the other hand, is simply a more fashionable term for what Legge (1995: 139) calls 'various forms of relational contracting'. In terms of contingencies, the success of these techniques depends to a great extent on a certain level of customer sophistication and communication infrastructure, both of which are lacking in the SSA context.

Kamoche's (2000) processual, strategic model of HRM for Africa is an 'internal resource' perspective of HRM based on argument 'that the uniqueness of firms arises from the heterogeneity available or potentially available from their internally held resources' (Kamoche, 2000: 57). Although it questions the propriety of conceptualising organisational commitment from a unitarist perspective, it discusses the firm's internal resources in terms of the 'behavioural capabilities', available to management and 'the worker's frame of reference' purely in terms of its utility to the organisation. 'The interface between strategic management and HRM' according to Kamoche, 'should ... be understood in terms of what the firm can do with the skills, abilities and talents (resources) of its employees' (p.57). Therefore, he argues for organisational analysis to shift 'away from the dominant external environment paradigm, to the level of the firm (p. 57).

This suggests some major differences between Kamoche's model and the one that emerges from this study. In terms of level of analysis, the exclusive focus on the organisational level leaves the impression that it is possible to gain a holistic understanding of 'informal' external traditional/religious African values that shape the attitudes and behaviours of workers by simply observing
actions that represent the elaboration of those values within the organisation. This argument presupposes that the researcher has some prior tacit knowledge of those values and norms. While prior knowledge of the African context can, indeed be helpful, my experience tells me that it is not a sufficient condition for ignoring variables and knowledge that is located outside the organisation. By focusing exclusively on the organisational level, one leaves the feeling that relevant elements of the 'African thought-system', as they are played out in employment relationships, should be understood on management's terms and utilised for managerial purposes. The values and interests Institutionalisation model on the other hand, advocates negotiations between the formal organisation and the informal dimensions of the social system. In that case, the evaluative criteria for understanding 'workers' frame of reference' and their utility to the organisation are not the exclusive discretion of management. The issue then, is not just the utility of elements of the 'African thought-system' to rationally determined organisational objectives and goals. It is also about the organisation recognising the significance that employees attach to those elements in terms of the values and paradigms of the alternative 'social-system' they represent, and their perceptions of the collective obligations and expectations defined by that social system.

It is my contention that in terms of both analytical approaches and prescriptions, these three HRM models project largely unitarist views of organisational reality in SSA. Their underlying perception of organisational reality is a fundamental difference they have with the value and interests-institutionalisation model. I would suggest that one cannot, with any
reasonable degree of certainty, determine the compatibility of elements of traditional African cultures with foreign managerial theories and practices solely on the basis of managerial imagination and the evaluative criteria of formal organisations. Similarly, in the SSA context, the employment relationship cannot be conceived of simply in terms of the internal conflicts of (economic) interests between management and labour unions. Although the proposed model is also, to some extent, about the role of African cultural values and norms in the management of people in organisations in Africa, it expresses these values in terms of the 'African social-system' rather than the 'African thought-system'. The latter connotes that elements of 'African culture' can be simply eradicated through indoctrination and management training. I believe, however, that the notion of 'African thought system' can also invoke a radical, perhaps utopian, conviction that contemplates the possibility of reclaiming Africa's pre-colonial cultures and values. The notion of an 'African social-system', therefore, is more representative of the complex mixture of indigenous, Islamic and Western values, norms and social organisation that are at the heart of the organisational management problem in SSA.

More importantly, however, the value and interests-institutionalisation model is about the terms and conditions on which elements of the 'African social-system' are defined and evaluated for inclusion into formal organisational policies and practices. In that respect, workers' values and interests and the informal attitudes and behaviours they manifest in the formal working environment that represent them, should not be taken for granted. The manner in which these 'informal' values and norms are considered for inclusion into formal organisational policies and routines
should, to some extent, reflect evaluative criteria that is consistent with the 'African social-system'. A clear distinction must be made between the cultural values of the wider SSA society, and cultural behaviour that is often referred to in terms of systemic corruption, alienation, inefficiency and bad practice. These negative attributions do not constitute traditional African values (Jackson, 2002; Abudu, 1986). Evidence from this study indicates that they are the consequence of failures on the part of the formal system. Rather than developing imaginative strategies to deal with inevitable external pressures from 'mothers' children' and brethren, managers are given unlimited discretion. The inconsistency in the application of managerial discretion, in the face of consistent vociferous and emotional pressures from external role sets, is largely responsible for the culture of corruption, nepotism, and other forms of bad practice. In that respect, this study supports Henderson (1993) argument that these are behaviours that are the consequence of the 'circumstance' and 'contingencies' relating to post-colonial patterns of public and corporate governance. It is not my objective to justify corruption and inefficiency. Rather, I wish to make the point, that the corruption and inefficiency that is associated with public and corporate governance in SSA should not be attributed to the culture and social values of traditional SSA society because even in those societies, 'no one thinks it' [corruption] 'is morally right' (Henderson 1993: 81).

This study is mindful of the multiplicity and diversity of SSA cultural and social characteristics. Nevertheless, there are salient cultural patterns and values that are common enough to allow for cautious generalisation of an 'African social-system'. This study also supports the literature that suggests
African cultural tendencies of communalism, conscious approaches to decision-making, and the respect for age. It also indicates that an awareness and consideration of work related paradigms of the 'informal' dimensions of the social system could be very useful to the operation of the formal organisation. Besides, this study does not only give some indications as to the significance of the underlying value systems of these dimensions, it also points to the fact that in any case, employees will engage in actions and manifest attitudes that are sanctioned by them. The internal workings of the dock gangs, management's tendency to rely on community leaders for purposes of dispute resolution, the dependence of workers on the 'informal' social welfare system at the village level, and collective approaches to work and determining success and the rhetoric of paternalism, all indicate that the formal organisation can benefit from 'informal' approaches to work organisation, motivation, conflict resolution, decision-making and employment relations. In terms of employment relations and public relations, for example, in addition to trade unions, formal organisations can harness the potential of the dock gang and gang leaders whose leadership may be solely based on their empathy with the values and norms of these external normative institutions and 'stakeholders'.

Bearing in mind that we are discussing a social context that is largely 'pre-contractual', in the sense that contracts are largely unwritten and obligations are mainly enforced through complex webs of social relationships and routines, it is important that motivational patterns include elements that will enable individuals to 'safeguard' their 'social assets' (Fox, 1974: 158). Therefore, there must be a balance in the underlying assumptions for patterns
of motivation so that organisational policies regarding motivation can also include elements that are socially gratifying. In that regard, events such as 'the village funeral' should not be seen in terms of wastefulness and absenteeism (Hansen, 2002), but rather, as an event that helps to reinforce the social bonds which are the foundation of society and as having benefits that are more social than economic (Dia 1991: 12).

African culture is by nature collectivist (Hofstede, 1980; & Dia, 1991), but not in terms of the simple aggregation of people but in terms of 'communalism' and 'kinship' (O'Brien, 1975; Senghore, 1963). As a result, the average African values and tends to be more comfortable as part of a group (Beugre & Offidile, 2001). This communal orientation is potentially useful for work organisation and decision-making. Although African political leaders and managers are described as generally autocratic (Kiggundu, 1989; & Blunt & Jones, 1992), 'the pre-eminence of the group', requires that decision-making in traditional Africa society is often based on consensus (Beugre & Offodile, 2001: 538; Weil, 1971; & Dia, 1991) – that is to say 'voices must meet'. In terms of work organisation, there is potential for team building and teamwork as long as these work designs are consistent with the values of “groupism, familysm and communalism” (Kamoche, 200: 60).

The preceding discussions centred on the three major conclusions that emerged from the literature and the empirical findings of the research. These conclusions concern methodology in organisational level research in SSA; the problems of IR in SSA and how they might be resolved; and the implications of African values and interest for dock employment relations. Fundamentally,
however, this study is about the influence of the informal dimensions of the African social system on SSA IR. The final section of the thesis focuses on the conclusions and how they relate to IR policies and strategies directed at SSA. Accordingly, some of what has already been discussed is repeated. Such repetitions, however, are intended only to cast the major arguments in terms of how they relate to the wider academic and policy debate regarding IR in SSA.

9. IV: Final Summary: Policy implications, Limitations and Direction for Future Research

The aim of this final section is present a final summary of the main conclusions in terms of how they related to the main research agenda (i.e. problems of SSA IR and PM in terms of lack of adequate IR paradigm). It also aims to look at the main conclusions and arguments in relation to the wider academic and policy debates regarding IR and PM in general and, and in relation to the SSA context. In that regard, I am not just concerned about the academic debates as to what are the key issues of IR and PM. I also aim to engage with relevant international policy intervention aimed at resolving the IR and PM problems of SSA. The section also highlights the limitations of the current study and makes suggestions regarding the direction of future research.

Regarding IR theory and practice, the conclusions defined the problem in terms of a consistent pattern of tensions and contradictions between the formal Western system and machinery and the informal values and interest of
the wider African community. These tensions and contradictions are attributed to the influences of a complex social system of economic interest and moral obligations and expectations. The methodological argument, therefore, was about how to conceptualise that system, as well as access and explain actors’ views regarding the employment relationship. The discussion in that respect, concentrated on issues of suitable conceptual frameworks for understanding the character of contemporary African society and the debate about ‘microscopic level research’ in developing country contexts. With respect to conclusions and discussions on dock IR, the preceding sections drew on the main interview data and African labour history in general and in particular, African dock labour history (e.g. Brown, 2003; Cooper, 2000, 1987, 1983; Kiajage, 2000; Atkins, 1993; and Roper, 1958) to highlight the situation of dockworkers in a contemporary context. The discussion on dock IR, in relation to the main conclusion on general SSA IR theory and practice, helped to highlight the lack of suitable paradigms for IR in SSA. In that regard, the focused on dock work gangs and dockers alternative mechanisms puts the shortcomings of the formal IR systems into sharper focus.

Yet, it seems to me that understanding the ambiguities that characterise peoples’ explanations of the underlying factors that shape their expectations of society and their economic relationships with the formal organisation, is the key to understanding the character of IR pluralism in SSA. The pattern of contradictions is also indicative of the sociological nature of the major problems in the employment relationship in SSA. In that regard, the conclusion supports the argument that the dominant formal system lacks social hegemony and thus, the legitimacy needed to exclusively shape
collective behaviour and actions. Consequently, even at the managerial level, the rhetoric is predominantly ambiguous. While they insist 'we must not neglect our aarda', managers also lament the implications of the pressures and expectations arising from the social relationships and interaction that are sanctioned by the aarda. This conclusion, in particular, fits in with and widens Edwards' (2003) point that IR is about managing contradictions.

The ambivalence also points to a gap between formal policy and practice, and the realities of the employment relationships. My research indicated that as of now, the organisation has not figured out ways of effectively managing that gap. What pertain, as 'formal' policy frameworks are, in some respects, illusions in the heads of those whose purposes they are intended to serve. These are not necessarily just managers, for there is some indication that ordinary employees will also play by the formal rhetoric when it suits them. The lack of imaginative strategies is made up for with unlimited political and managerial discretion resulting in inconsistencies in the application of rules and 'indulgency patterns' (Watson, 1995) on the part of managers. This, rather than the influences of the 'external role sets' (Blunt & Jones, 1992) and/or a backward looking social environment (Kiggundu, 1989), provides a more plausible explanation for the 'bad practices' that are associated with management in SSA.

The studies that have just being cited belong to the stream of literature that also draws ambivalent conclusions regarding the implications of indigenous African values and norms for organisational outcomes (see chapter 2 and 3). I have argued that such conclusions arise from analyses that are based on faulty
conceptual frameworks. The issue here is a methodological problem resulting from exclusive dependence on culture on explanations and for remedies. I have said that culture, alone does not suffice. But more than that, it implicitly gives the impression that it is conceivable to reclaim Africa's pre-colonial and pre-Islamic cultures in their 'undiluted' forms. The conclusions of my research support the argument that culture does not suffice even as explanation for the nature and character of contemporary SSA context. They indicated that the nature of indigenous influences, particularly in a formal organisational context, is shaped by a complex synthesis of traditional social values and rational economic considerations. The study, therefore, strikes a position between Marxist materialist interests and the purely cultural explanations that focus exclusively on issues of values, morality and interests. The moral and material aspects reflect the influences of indigenous and Islamic social values while the rational economic aspects are embodied in the modern nation state. Neither dimension can claim hegemony but each 'legitimises and regulates the action of indefinite numbers of collectivities and roles' (Lemert, 1991: 321). The degree of influence depends on circumstance and context and even the physical place. There is compelling evidence from the data indicating the relationships between 'mothers' children' and 'brethren' are not always on the basis of common ancestral or divinely ascribed values and obligations. In the work related context, commitment can be on the basis of clan or religious relationships between workers and managers. However, even in circumstances where workers' define their commitment to the organisation in terms of commitment to the success of 'mothers' children' in managerial positions, they tend, also, to do so in expectation of more favourable treatment.
To fill the gap that these ambivalences, ambiguities and contradictions represent the current study argues the case for reframing organisational reality in SSA as the basis for developing IR theory for SSA realities. The \textit{values and interests institutionalisation model} rejects aspects of the conclusions and suggestions of some recent studies regarding the future direction of IR and PM/HRM in SSA (Beugres and Offidile, 2001; Kemocha, 2000, 1997; and Dia, 1996, Blunt and Jones, 1992; and Kiggundu, 1989). It also questions the suitability of predominantly quantitative methods used in most organisational analysis in SSA. It argues, therefore, that the negative stereotypes of the African worker and some of the models that are advanced as possible solutions to management problems of SSA are based on analyses of the problems in terms of unitarist notions of organisational reality, the technical demands of modern production and rationally determined management objectives (Cooper, 1987). In arguing the case for more holistic sociological analysis, however, it makes no claims of having broken new grounds. The contest between indigenous African values and forms of social organisation, and the formal rational objectives of the modern business organisation, is the stuff of African Labour History. From the collieries of Enugu (Brown, 2003), to the water fronts of East Africa (Cooper, 2000; Kijage, 2000; Iliffe, 1971), to the gold mines of Natal (Atkins, 1988), African Labour History is a catalogue of resistance resulting from, and based on alternative indigenous forms of social construction and organisation.

Although IR and PM in SSA in general and The Gambia in particular, have also been discussed from a historical perspective, this study, as I have stated
elsewhere, is not intended as Africa labour history. The issues that emerged from the empirical study are of contemporary relevance and significance. But even in that context, on purely theory terms, the study cannot claim to be delving into the absolute unknown. In many respects, the issues it sought to examine and explain are very similar to those that dominate some of the employment related debates in Europe. The emergence of HRM, and theoretical developments that seek to examine and explain issues relating to the management of diverse cultures and values (Ackers, 2002; Provis, 1996), and some of the employment related policy debates arising from the European social agenda, come to mind. Although there are significant differences in terms of context and as a result, priorities, in many respects, the fundamental issues of this study are not conceptually very dissimilar from the issues involved in 'the work-life balance' debate (Ackers, 2003; 2002; Robert, 2003; and Dex et al, 1997). As a result, in developing an IR theory for African realities, I chose to adapt Western theoretical frameworks.

I have argued that when we engage in the study contemporary organisational phenomena in developing countries, we should not expect to unravel exclusively pre-historic phenomena. Rather, what we can expect, at the most, are values and, as a result, priorities that vary from those of context that we may be relatively familiar with. For that reason, it is quite conceivable that Western theoretical conceptions can be useful frameworks for examining and explaining the integrated system of social dimensions that shape collective attitudes and behaviour in a SSA context. By adapting theoretical conceptions that were intended to address concerns of Western society and its world of work, I anticipated some epistemological as well as ideological criticisms. In
ideological terms, I have considered both Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives and concluded they are limited as explanations for the problems that concern this study. My position is to take the middle ground. I am concerned and therefore, sought to take issues with the managerial excesses of Capitalism and HRM. I am equally mindful, however, that taking the course of the kind of 'workplace economic militancy' that does not take account of the economic context of SSA, may not only cause irreparable damage to the fragile economies of SSA countries, but could prove fatal to both parties in the employment relationship.

9. IV: 1: Direction of future research

With respect to potential areas of future research, the question of whether what pertains in SSA constitutes HRM as management orthodoxy could be an interesting subject of inquiry. The empirical basis for this suggestion is the view of a senior HR personnel that: 'despite my title, what I do here can be done by anybody with a decent high school education'. This comment indicates that as elsewhere, in The Gambia, other than changes in the titles of departments and personnel, there has been 'little attempt to review the nature of the work' that those department and official do (Boxall & Purcell, 2003: 30). Also, if we accept Leonard's (1986: 58) argument that in strategic terms, 'the largest part of a leader's efforts are ... directed at factors external to the organization', then, we may conclude that some of the managerial rhetoric and behaviour, also indicated that their tasks also involve some strategic functions. These however, does not get us any closer to identifying who, in reality, has responsibility for the strategic functions of public enterprises in developing
countries (Kiggundu 1989). As a result, like Kiggundu, I believe it would make an interesting future research agenda to find out who, actually, has responsible for the strategic functions of public enterprises of developing countries. The state of Trade unionism in SSA is also another interesting proposition for future research. Empirical evidence from this study pointed to a pattern of progressive decline in trade union influence since independence. The data tends to attributed this to a 'hostile' post-colonial ideological and policy environment and the recent neo-liberal management policies that have been adopted in the guise of ERP/SAP. However, there were variations in the cold war ideological orientations and thus, attitudes of different post-colonial African governments towards working class organisations. An interesting research agenda could involve a comparative study of the attitudes of post-independent states towards organised labour and the implications of their policies for the progressive development of post-colonial Trade Unionism in SSA.

The framework of IR pluralism for SSA realities that is proposed is based on a modified version of Ackers’s (2002) adaptation of Fox’s (1966) IR pluralism, and Flanders and Fox’s (1970) analysis of Donovan. The essence of the argument for the adaptation of neo-pluralist framework is that even though it is intended to redefine the pluralist perspective in the wake of 'new orientations' (Provis, 1996) in employment relations in Western society, it is abstract enough to help us understand and resolve the IR problems of SSA. This is because, the framework suggests 'a functionalist emphasis on institutions...and is based on a more expansive and flexible sociology of normative regulation' (Ackers, 2002: 6). In the SSA context, where the
influences of traditional normative institutions and organisations pervade authority relations even within formal organisations, the framework can be adapted for a more holistic examination and comprehension of the problems in the employment relationship.

The values and Interests-institutionalisation model that is proposed as a paradigm that is capable of remedying the gap that the consistent pattern of ambivalence represents, is a sociological development from a neo-pluralist perspective of organisational reality based on the traditional and communal ethos of the 'African social-system'. It represents a suggestion as to how to facilitate the institutionalisation of the values and interests of the wider African community into formal IR and PM policies and practices. In that respect, it also has implications for the realisation of some internationally expressed ideals and intentions, at both national and organisational levels. With respect to World Bank global port labour reform agenda, for example, this study exposes the limitations of the 'World Bank Port Reform Tool Kit' (WB, 2001). In terms of what constitutes 'community pressure', the Bank's 'tool kit' ignores the influence of wider community. Instead, it defines 'community pressures' as the 'competitive challenges' that require 'the port and trade community' to 'object to restrictive labor work practices' (p. 5). In broad IR terms, the model could also be useful basis for developing national as well as organisational level policies and practices that reflect the intentions of the ILO Convention regarding the protection of the traditional institutions and values of 'Indigenous and tribal peoples'. That Convention defines such people as those:
'Who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions', and calls on governments to ensure the promotion of 'the full realisation of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions' (ILO, Convention 166, 1989).

9. IV. 2: The limitations of this Study

The model has limitations that are themselves consequences of the limitations of the current study. As I have indicated elsewhere, this is a single-case study of a Public sector enterprise of a very small SSA country. In that respect, in terms of the applicability of the findings and conclusion to the wider SSA context, it may suffer from some limitations. On the basis of the rigor and vigilance that guided the theoretical frameworks of analysis and critical representations of actors' social meaning, however, I would argue that the conclusions could be extrapolated to similar social context (for example, Sahelian countries), with reasonable credibility. I must emphasise, however, that the model does not assume the existence of homogenous African social, cultural and economic characteristics. Instead, it conceptualises an 'African social-system' based on salient and common cultural, social and economic types that emerged from the empirical data and the literature on SSA societies. Although references to the wider SSA context may be termed to be suggestive, it is hoped that this study would provoke similar studies involving other SSA contexts. That way a basis can be established for intra-African
comparative study regarding the interface between formal Western system and indigenous African values and interests.

In terms of the core IR/PM objectives, the suggestions that are made in this theoretical model are based on the belief that 'high trust-relations' (Fox, 1974; Korczynski, 2000) between the 'formal' organisation and the 'informal' social systems, are fundamental to resolving the management problems of SSA. The gist of the argument that underpins the model is that IR and PM systems and policies for SSA would have greater relevance to all the parties, if they include the more compatible elements of all major dimensions of the African social system. The model that is suggested here proposes the creation of structures that will serve as linkages between organisations and the wider community and seek a voice for a wider-range of stakeholder. Here, voice is not just in terms of Tyler's (1994) value-expressive model of justice, which argues for the opportunity to speak as a value in itself. Rather, what is envisaged is voice in terms of determining evaluative criteria for what counts as proper or improper conduct (see Marchington et al, 2001; Folger & Cropanzana, 1998). In that regard, the model advocates negotiation and co-operation between formal organisations and the wider African communities in which they are located. By co-operation, I do not mean the superficial and duplicitous faking of co-operation and pretence of the existence of shared interests (Ackers, 2002: 8), but one that values the group solidarity and real social bonds that are cornerstones of communal existence in SSA.
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