

Damachi, U.G., D. Holloh & H.D. Seibel, *Industrial Labour in Africa: Continuity and Change among Nigerian Factory Workers*. Saarbrücken, Breitenbach 1988, S. 6 – 32

Continuity and Change among African Factory Workers: Modernization and Industrial Labour in Theory and Empirical Research

In 1972, PEIL (1972:237) concluded from her study on the Ghanaian factory worker that he „is becoming modern while maintaining many aspects of his traditional culture. In the process a new variety of „industrial man" is developing. Recording this development should be a rewarding task for African industrial sociologists of the next twenty years.

Based on her empirical finding that Ghanaian workers had different norms and values than those characterizing workers in industrialized countries, let was PEIL's theoretical merit that she emphasized both continuity and change as connected elements within African workers' process of adaptation to industrial labour. With that she both rejected and confirmed the „industrial man" hypothesis. This implies on the one hand that industrialization lead to similarities among industrial workers in developing as well as in industrialized countries; on the other hand it explains differences as historical stages of development. On a level of synthesis she argues that industrialization requires adaptation from the workers, hut that

„the cultural background of each country impresses itself on society at all stages of its development, so that the result differs from one country to another. There are some basic similarities associated with urban, industrial society, but each country contributes something unique to its modernity." (PEIL 1972:236)

The crucial argument that the African „industrial man", is a specific combination of so-called modern and traditional elements challenged a long period of theoretical thinking in which traditional elements were regarded as impediments to development. Thus, empirical work was focused „on the extent to which low levels of labour force commitment impede efforts to industrialize newly developing areas" (MOORE 1960:4). Instead of conceptualising modernization and the formation of an industrial labour force as a process external to traditional structures and values, PEIL's research perspective focuses on the question how modern and traditional elements are combined within the formation of a new variety of „industrial man". She, therefore, rejects the assumption that the process of „becoming modern", and development in general, is a universal and external process of dissolving traditional attitudes and values and creating the „modern man", as defined by INKELES/SMITH (1974).

PEIL' s outline makes it necessary to reconsider empirical findings which appeared quite contradictory to one another: E.g., SEIBEL (1967:4) concluded from his 1963/64 study on Nigerian factory workers: „Everywhere in Africa there exists today an advanced and well adapted industrial labour force." In contrast, PEACE's (1979:81) conclusion from his study of Nigerian factory workers was: „West African workers have not as yet been socialized and coerced into accepting a subordinate wage-earning role for the entire duration of their working lives."

Starting from PEIL's argument, the question is not which of these statements is correct or not, but if not both of them are elements within a process of adaptation to industrial labour.

It is the objective of this study to record the emergence of industrial man" in Nigeria with respect to processes of continuity and change. Departure point is the assumption that PEIL' s conclusion can be generalized, at least in the West-African context and that it may be regarded as a summary conclusion of theoretical discussions and empirical research on industrial labour in Africa.

We will first outline some problems of conceptualisation and research on industrial labour in developing countries in general and then in Nigeria in particular. In a first part we will briefly review the major western development approach, which later became known as modernization theory. It is this theory which strongly influenced a decisive period of economic development in Nigeria. In Western theoretical thinking, it has provided the concept of „industrial man", which has played an outstanding role in theory and research on industrial labour in Africa. In a second part we will give a short outline of the modernization process and its problems in Nigeria. The last part of this chapter deals with the development of industrial labour within the modernization process. It provides some empirical findings and theoretical suggestions of studies on industrial labour in Africa, particularly in the West-African and Nigerian context.

1.1 Modernization Theory and the concept of ‚Industrial Man'

The conceptualization of industrial labour is critical to an understanding of social change and attitudinal patterns related to the industrialization process. Industrialization „as a process in which economic relationships disentangle themselves from the wider social relationships of sentiment, traditional power, sacred considerations and personalized bonds" (BROWN/HARRISON 1978:23) is not only a key-development in western history. It is also a concept of development and of industrial labour, which is often approached in terms of western standards. It is an approach that was appropriately called „the consistent tendency of social scientists to think entirely in terms of patterns which have already had a dear historical manifestation" (GEERTZ 1963:81).

Sociologists looking from the peaks of western historical manifestations, such as the „industrial man", tend to start from well-known models of industrialized countries and proceed from these to attitudinal and behavioural prerequisites of industrialization. Since „the complex production tasks of the industrial order" have been viewed as „the basis of modern social systems" (INKELES/SMITH 1974:4), the making of a western-type „industrial man" is of central concern to such sociological and development approaches. The leading assumption of research is then that full commitment, which is defined as the acceptance and performance of behaviours appropriate to new social forms, of an industrial labour force „is both important for continuous economic development and problematic... because of the lack of appreciation of their necessity (cognitive element) and the resistance of values (normative element)" (MOORE/FELDMAN 1960:1,7-8). Thus, empirical work on the background of this theoretical framework has been mainly focused „on the extent to

which low levels of labour force commitment impede efforts to industrialize newly developing areas" (MOORE/FELDMAN 1960:4).

Such external perceptions of social change in developing countries cannot claim much empirical evidence for their support. However, despite their weak empirical foundations, they contain two theoretical tenets which had a decisive influence on post-war development sociology: (a) the tenet of an evolutionary modernization of societies and individuals from a traditional point of departure to a modern point of destination represented by the industrialized countries, and b) the tenet of a segmented, dualistic socio-economic structure of developing countries, strictly divided into modern and traditional sectors and values.

Conceptionalizing social change and structures in evolutionary and dichotomous terms has deep roots in the history of western sociological thinking. It therefore appears difficult to efface them from contemporary approaches to developing countries, as illustrated by the recent discussion on the dichotomy of the „formal" and „informal" sector.

Those theoretical concepts can be traced back to marxist approaches (understanding development as an ascending line from primitive societies to the civil and socialist/classless society) as well as to dichotomous concepts of influential sociologists, like TOENNIES (1912) („Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft"), DUERKHEIM (1912) („mechanic and organic solidarity") and WEBER (1947) („Vergemeinschaftung" - „Vergesellschaftung"). Most influential on development sociology, and in particular on the understanding of industrial labour in developing countries, was PARSONS' (1951) dualistic framework of pattern variables, characterizing social roles by cultural value orientations: universalistic vs. particularistic value orientations; functionally specific vs. diffuse roles; roles based on ascription vs. achievement; and affective vs. affectively neutral roles. This was subsequently taken up by LEVY (1966, 1977) who methodically applied these dichotomous distinctions to „relatively modernized and relatively nonmodernized societies".

The most dominant school in western development theories in the 1950s and 1960s, which later became known as modernization theory, adopted this framework for the analysis of developing countries. HOSELITE (1969), as before him LEVY (1966), used PARSONS' pattern variable approach to develop a model in which roles in developed countries were seen as typically universalistic, based on achievement, and functionally specific; correspondingly, those in underdeveloped countries were seen as particularistic, based on ascription, and functionally diffuse. The problem put into the foreground was the assumed incompatibility of traditional values and attitudes with the requirements of a modernizing society. Thus, the solution to underdevelopment was seen in the diffusion of modern technologies as well as in the modernization of attitudes and values. Similarly, McCLELLAND (1961) argued that what was needed in underdeveloped countries were modern forms of achievement orientation equivalent to the Protestant ethic in Western capitalism. The transfer of modern technology had to be supplemented by the transfer of a functional value-orientation. Development was conceptualized as a unilinear process of adaptation: the dissolution of the traditional society and its transformation into the modern society as a copy of the Western model. ROSTFOW'S stage theory of economic growth

(1960) became the most prominent statement of modernization theory in the special form of a unilinear and universal modernization process.

All variants of modernization theory, whether emphasizing economic, political, social, historical or psychological dimensions, share the common assumption that traditional elements will be and have to be replaced by modern elements. Backwardness, which means traditional social structures and values, is considered a temporary condition and an impediment to development. Positive functions are only attributed to external factors, whereas internal factors are viewed as retarding elements.

Particularly in the form of the diffusionist approach of LERNER (1964), modernization theory was geared at changes of personal characteristics. Modernization, then, means the formation of a modern individuality characterized by personal mobility and the dissolution of psychological ties.

One of the most prominent studies on social-psychological modernization in six developing countries - among them Nigeria - has shown that basic assumptions of the modernization theory, though for a long time empirically disproved, do not seem to be effaceable. In their book „Becoming Modern" (INKELES/SMITH 1974) took the position that development cannot take place without the diffusion of „the qualities of the modern man" (INKELES/SMITH 1974:315-316):

„We are of the opinion that neither rapid economic growth nor effective government can develop, or, if introduced, will be long sustained, without the widespread diffusion in the rank and file of the population of these qualities we have identified as these of the modern man...

Diffusion through the population of the qualities of the modern man is not incidental to the process of social development, it is the essence of national development itself."

INKELES/SMITH defined the process of „becoming modern" somewhat tautologically as „the process whereby people move from being traditional to becoming modern personalities" (INKELES/SMITH 1974:5). The concept of the „modern man", the presumed „mode of individual functioning" that is required, is derived from standards of western societies. These were operationalized as the requirements of a modern factory, as the factory is considered to be „the epitome of the institutional pattern of modern civilization" (INKELES/SMITH 1974:5):

„We proposed, then, to classify as modern those personal qualities which are likely to be inculcated by participation in large-scale modern productive enterprises such as the factory, and, perhaps more critical, which may be required of the workers and the staff if the factory is to operate efficiently and effectively." (INKELES/SMITH 1974:19)

Regarding the social significance of individual modernization INKELES/SMITH considered

„a change in attitudes and values to be one of the most essential preconditions for substantial and effective functioning of these modern institutions which most of the more „practical programs of development hope to establish. Our

experience leads us to agree with many of the intellectual leaders of the third world who argue that, in good part, underdevelopment is a state of mind. It is admittedly difficult with presently available techniques and information to establish the case scientifically, but we are convinced that mental barriers and psychic factors are key obstacles to more effective economic and social development in many countries."

(INKELES/SMITH 1974:313)

In their view it is the characteristics of the „traditional man“, i.e. the passive acceptance of fate and a general lack of efficiency, fear in innovation and distrust of the new, etc., that impedes modernization.

The basic assumptions of modernization theory concerning the „human factor“ and industrial labour, as well as the above generalizations of INKELES/SMITH, have met with harsh criticism. Moreover, they have not been sustained by subsequent empirical research. Scholars of the modernization approach who have brought out some of the most important studies on social and cultural change in developing countries and on industrial workers. On the basis of their findings, they were among the first to challenge, to reject or to modify these assumptions.

The modernization approach is not a purely economic theory. Even in ROSTOW'S theory of economic growth it is emphasized that „economic forces and motives are not unique and overriding determinants of the course of history“. Economic development, in this view, requires not only economic, technological and demographic conditions but also appropriate social institutions and value systems. Just because the cultural factor in general, and labour as a subjective factor in particular, were theoretically considered as retarding factors they became a central topic of empirical research. Though from a functionalist point of view, those approaches aimed at micro-sociological research, emphasizing the role of sociocultural dimensions within which social change is embodied.

In this research perspective empirical studies by modernization theorists often arrived at findings and conclusions which contradicted their basic assumptions. As early as 1960 they rejected the assumption of the dissolution of traditional structures and values as well as the assumption of their fundamental motivational and behavioural deficiency (e.g. ELKAN 1960, ELKAN/FALLERS 1960, SINGER 1960, GOODE 1970, MOORE 1970). Their findings will be outlined in the following section on the development of industrial labour in Africa. In this context, we will only refer to one of the most prominent representatives of the historical approach to social change, W.E. MOORE. In his studies on industrial workers he found persisting traditional structures and he subsequently modified his theoretical assumptions:

„Economic modernization is never ‚complete‘. Its initial discontinuous impact on traditionally organized societies may be followed by partial restoration of structures and forms which were never completely destroyed. For example the weakening of extended kinship systems as a consequence of geographic and social mobility may be followed by partially restored, though discretionary, communication and reciprocities among kinsmen.“

In PARSONS' view, the nuclear family is the appropriate form of industrial society; it is a prerequisite of modern industry. Moore, however, takes into account the

empirical evidence of institutional compromises between family forms and functions and productive organizations. Referring to general sociological theory, MOORE emphasized the structural substitutability, instead of structural suitability of social forms:

„The integration of societies is often more functional than structural... The general functional requirements for the persistence of any society set only very wide limits on the appropriate structural ways of accomplishing these requirements." (MOORE 1970:336)

1.2 The Modernization Process and its Problems in Nigeria

Nigeria presents a prime example for the problems associated with the conventional modernization approach. As an oil exporting country, means for rapid industrialization were available. Yet, Nigeria has not lived to its expectations.

The foundations of the Nigerian economic system were laid after the Second World War: these of a relatively open economy, eternally open for international trade, internally open for social mobility based on achievement.

Somewhat ideal-typically this model was depicted by KILBY (1969:1-2) as follows:

„A similar openness and mobility based on achievement has obtained in the modernized segments of Nigerian society. Whether in politics, commerce, administration or the professions, all careers have been open to talent with few impediments to upward progress."

Using its income from oil exports and other sources, development plans were drawn up

„to transform the country into a modern state, technologically and industrially, and at the same time to promote the achievement and maintenance of the highest possible rate of growth in the living standards of all Nigerians." (Second National Development Plan 1970-74: 135)

The Second Development Plan aimed particularly at the promotion of agricultural processing industry, petrochemical industry, textile industry, iron and steel production and assembly of passenger cars, for the period 1970-74. The attempt, however, to achieve these goals through the use of intensive-intensive production methods was not successful. In practice, the government continued to allow depreciation rates favourable to large-scale, technologically advanced industries, and government investments centered largely around capital-intensive big projects. As a result, the Second Development Plan led to growth in industrial production but not in employment. Its shortcomings were largely attributed to manpower problems:

..... the implementation of the first two development plans was greatly hampered by shortage of skilled manpower - a problem which will be magnified several times by the massive size of the current Plan." (MADUJIBEYA 1976:306)

The Third Development Plan (1975-79) was supposed to be the beginning of Nigeria's Industrial Revolution. The main branches marked for expansion were iron and steel, oil refining and petrochemicals, fertilizers, agricultural production on state farms, agricultural processing, timber and rubber, and building materials. The objective of the industry program was to make Nigeria self-sufficient in a wide range of manufactured products, including petroleum products and petrochemicals.

But planning and implementation differed widely. The planning apparatus was underdeveloped; social and economic conditions for effective development were poorly analysed; a machinery for the implementation of the goals of the plan was largely absent. What aggravated the difficulties were two years of recession following the four oil boom years after 1973. (KOEHLER 1979:148-15 MADUJIBEYA 1976:306; SCHMITT 1979:277-280)

At a first glance, the impact of a long-term and continue largely open industrialization policy and of the sizeable receipts from the oil business upon economic growth seems to suggest that Nigeria may have been a successful, or at least promising, example of modernization. However, this impression is not supported by a more thorough analysis. If one takes into account the favourable conditions under which Nigeria was operating, the country may rather set an example for the problems associated with the modernization approach.

Growth statistics, inflated by the huge revenues from oil exports, prove to be highly misleading. Oil is not integrated in the internal economy and has therefore had little impact Nigeria's economic development. According to a WORLD BANK (1974:70) report,

„At present, petroleum remains a typical enclave industry whose contribution to the economy is limited largely to its contribution to movement revenue and foreign exchange earnings."

And just as CLOWER et al. (1966) had entitled their book on the economic situation in Liberia „Growth without Development MADUJIBEYA (1976:291), in an article written ten years late argued for Nigeria:

„The Nigerian situation clearly underlines the important fact that there can be growth... without effective economic development."

Transfer of highly modern technologies to the oil sector was thus a mixed blessing. On the one hand, these technologies required high qualification, on the other, it was precisely high qualified manpower which was imported rather than locally trained. And due to the high capital intensity of the oil industry, the wage rate has remained low, despite the high labour costs of expatriate personnel. The result was a dual intensive market highly qualified jobs were in the hands of foreign experts and unskilled jobs were left to Nigerians. (MADUJIBEYA 1976:298-299; SCHMITT 1979:279)

Socially, the lopsided economic growth of Nigeria has led to the emergence of a new class structure which is characterized by growing imbalances and by a widening urban-rural gap. Five per cent of the Nigerians claim 40 per cent of the national

income. While some were successful in accumulating huge masses of wealth, large numbers of peasants and urban unemployed became pauperised.

Rapid economic growth was not matched by corresponding increases in inland production, an imbalance leading to high rates of inflation. Particularly the basic food items of lower wage-earners rose very steeply in price. To fight inflation, the government introduced an anti-inflationary policy based on a wage-freeze which made the situation even worse. For the lower wage-earners, real wages have gone down. To quote *The Business Times* (29.3.1977):

„The wage freeze weapon of fighting inflation, instead of bringing desired relief to a vast majority of workers, has brought hardship.“

Economic growth had a severe negative impact on agricultural production. Nigeria has remained a country of peasants, agriculture still employing more than 70 per cent of the intensive force. But Nigerian agriculture had been unable to meet the rising demand for food in the cities. Food importation has been growing at a high rate in Nigeria, around 20 per cent annually during the 1970s, but by 1976 it had reached the critical level of 47.5 per cent. „Operation Feed the Nation“ was proclaimed, and many city dwellers complied with its slogan „Whatever Your Occupation -Farm!“ (though for many, the slogan „Whatever Your Occupation -Trade!“ proved to be immensely more profitable). In June 1976, most university students were conscripted to work for several weeks in farming communities. The trend was interrupted, but the problem remained unsolved. By the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, about 13 per cent of all imports were food items. The production of cash crops such as groundnuts, cocoa, cotton wool, rubber and palm oil has stagnated or even declined. The country which was once the world's largest producer of palm oil and groundnuts now had to import these commodities to satisfy domestic needs. President Shagari proclaimed the necessity of a Green Revolution, but with little success (JOSEPH 1978:231-232; MADUJIBEYA 1976:312; MEYER 1980. Cf. *Nigeria Special*, Africa 110:53). Observers inside and outside Nigeria agreed on this point: The Petro-Naira had not been a blessing.

1.3 Modernization and Industrial Labour

The central assumption of modernization theory that autochthonous motivational dispositions, behaviour patterns, value orientations and social structures are a retarding element, and that these traditional values and structures are subject to dissolution, played also a major role in studies on industrial labour in Africa. In his study on the relationship between attitudes towards work and the degree of efficiency and adaptation among the mine labour force in Sierra Leone, DAWSON (1963) argued that the traditional values militated against work efficiency unless the worker had gone through education and industrial training. IMOAGENE (1975:587-588) deplored the dissolution of traditional values and structures at unprecedented speed:

...one of the most disorganizing aspects of industrialisation and urbanisation as it related to the people of Nigeria - namely, the shift of emphasis from the tradition of mutual co-operation to one of exploitation. Nigerian traditional

society, wether that of the Hausas, Ibos, Yorubas or the smaller groups, centered very much on the extended family in which mutual aid and social co-operation was the rule rather than the exception.

The rich and able in each family helped the less fortunate or more indolent ones to survive and the emphasis was on the group rather than on the individual... industrialisation and urbanisation... brought... individualism and the profit motive. The emphasis has tended to shift away from the extended family, age-sets or suchlike groups, to the individual and his immediate or nuclear family."

Whereas IMOAGENE claimed that the complete decline of traditional culture is imminent, ether authors like IWU (1973) believed in progress based en the heritage of autochthonous cultures.

Wage Labour in Colonial Times

The assumption of labour as a retarding factor can be traced back to colonial times. The colonial officers based their policies en the assumption of a general resistance to change of traditional serial systems, of a motivational inability to regular, regulated and reglemented work, and of limited needs and wants of the individual. It therefore seemed necessary to introduce forced labour in the colonies. Such forced labour was to have beneficial educational effects on the labourers. Resulting high rates of absenteeism and of fluctuations and generally low labour productivity seemed to confirm the assumptions. Subsequently, the theory of the „target worker" was advanced when stays in employment until he has earned the money for a specific target, such as a bicycle or the bride-price. These were the assumptions and observations which provided the basis for a colonial policy of low wages: low labour productivity allows only for low wages; higher wages would abbreviate the length of time in employment. Therefore, employers did not react in the classical economic way of increasing wages in situations of labour shortage (this was the main problem around the turn of the century).

The resistance of African workers against wage labour was real. It did, however, not result from the „nature of the worker" but from the nature of wage and labour policies which turned cut to be self-fulfilling prophecies. Hard work, low status and poor pay made wage labour unattractive compared to traditional agriculture. By resisting wage labour, the African proved only that he too was a homo oeconomicus. When wages were high, there was no shortage of labour. HOPKINS (1973:231), in his West-African economic history, summarized the situation succinctly:

„Instead of migrant labour producing low wages, as expatriates alleged, it was the low level of wages which encouraged the development of migrant labour in non-seasonal occupations, for low wages were only acceptable to Africans providing they did not have to sacrifice their main source of income, which came mostly from farming."

Labour Studies in the 1950s

Scholars of the modernization theory were among the first to challenge basic assumptions of their underlying theories from the results of their own empirical studies. At least for early stages of industrial development these studies indicated

that adaptation to industrial labour does not necessarily imply the dissolution of traditional structures and values, nor of former income sources, social relationships and life-styles into an urban industrial prototype of „modern man

In their study on urban wage labour in Uganda ELKAN/FALLERS (1960) rejected the assumption of a unilinear change of cultural patterns along lines of modernization. They pointed out (ELKAN/FALLERS 1960:246) that

„the Uganda labour force has consisted of persons who have maintained fundamental ties with rural agricultural society, participating only partially and sporadically in urban wage labour. The result, we argue, is a relatively stable compromise."

According to ELKAN and FALLERS the choice of migration is not purely economic. They argued that the migrant's „motivation to enter and remain in urban employment is a function of the total social situation in which he finds himself and by which his personal aspirations are molded" (ELKAN/FALLERS 1960:246). They concluded:

„Wage work in town tends to be a phase rather than a way of life, and ties with the countryside are continuously maintained during this phase."
(ELKAN/FALLERS 1960:249)

In his monograph on migrants and proletarians in Uganda ELKAN (1960) showed that it cannot be taken for granted, as economists and governments tended to do, that short-term migration is a transitional phenomenon. Rejecting the idea of the „target worker" who aims at limited needs, he argues that attitudes and behaviours to industrial labour, i.e. the persistence of migrant labour, are rational consequences of the concrete conditions in the rural sector, i.e. of migrants who treat wages as a supplement and not a substitute of subsistence farming. (ELKAN 1960:5) ELKAN explained the impermanence of urban labour by the fact that men work only long enough to acquire the cash needed and then leave employment for their subsistence farms. However, he emphasized that this is not what usually is understood as „target worker" who works for being able to realize rigidly limited wants:

„Their purpose, or target, in seeking employment is not to enjoy an immediate increase in their standard of life, but rather to save as much money as possible in a mere or less given time with which to increase the productivity of their farms." (ELKAN 1960:131)

SINGER (1960) challenged the theory of a linear sequence of industrial development and the assumption that traditional value patterns are inconsistent with the requirements of industrialization and have to be dissolved. The battle between traditionalism and industrialism, he argued, „is a clash of hypothetical constructs, which does not realistically reflect obstacles to economic development" (SINGER 1960:263). He further argued that the values supposed to be necessary for industrialization are existent in many non-industrial and pre-industrial societies, and put a qualifier to the role of values within the industrialization process:

„What differs is not the abstract values and motives, but the social and cultural contexts from which they have been abstracted. If these values have not

propelled the newly developing countries into an advanced stage of industrialization, perhaps this only shows the limitations of values as motive forces in the absence of capital, skill, favourable movement policy, and other concrete requirements of industrialization, rather than the people of these countries need a different value system and ,character` (SINGER 1960:275)

MOORE (1965:29) pointed to the „great variety of transitional or compromise forms of economic activity". These „mixed forms of economic and social organization", be argued, allow „the coexistence of the traditional social relationships that formed the security-giving context of individual behaviour and some degree of economic modernization" (MOORE 1965:29). Though still conceptualising these mixed serial systems as transitory, on the basis of empirical material be admitted the persistence of traditional social structures:

„Extended kinship relationships may become voluntary rather than compulsory under conditions of industrialization, but they do not necessarily therefore disappear. Indeed, family and kinship structures appear to have greater independent variability with reference to productive organization than conventional analysis has conceded." (MOORE 1970:363)

Many of these early studies on industrial labour in Africa were confronted with the phenomenon of migrant labour in a specific hysterical phase. This labour system, as MOORE (1970:331) pointed out, formed a bridge between the subsistence economy and the emerging industrial labour market:

„Temporary labour migration accounts for a substantial volume of movement of people in various parts of the world. One of its general characteristics is that it provides a mode of bridging otherwise separate systems of production... The migratory labour system in Africa links the typical subsistence agriculture of the native village with the demands for unskilled labour in mines, factories, farms and households."

Similarly, ELKAN (1960:3) rejected the strict separation „peasants" and „wage-earners

...for the likelihood is that any one particular man is both at different times, or even simultaneously. In nest parts of tropical Africa it is the common practice to enter employment only temporarily and, sooner or later to return to peasant farms in the countryside..."

If migrant labour is part of a particular historical phase or of specific production systems, it could be assumed that the findings of earlier labour studies, which MOORE (1965:29) called a „mixed form of economic and social organization" and ELKAN (1960:238) a „relatively stable compromise", were transitory phenomena of an early stage of adaptation to labour. Thus, it is not surprising that MOORE (1965:31) still started from the assumption of a dissolution of these mixed socioeconomic systems within the industrialization process:

„This unique system of compromise, or mixed social systems, showed unmistakable signs of being somewhat less than permanent. The growing

demand for higher degrees of skill and specialization in the larger plants, the growth of a permanent urban proletariat, and the continued impoverishment of the rural areas shifted the balance in favour of the relatively unmixed industrial pattern."

However, the brief review of the modernization process in Nigeria showed clearly that this process neither led to improved living conditions nor to an „unmixed industrial pattern" as MOORE suggested. Therefore, the industrial worker and his household might be subjectively orientated to industrial labour and willing to adapt to it, but they are not objectively integrated into an industrial system the way his Western reinterpreter is.

The fact that the modernization approach had not fulfilled its expectations, economically and socially, is a strong argument for the further persistence of traditional structures and values which are integrated in a mixed social system. Therefore, studies should more concentrate on the question of how traditional and modern elements are combined and which norms and values are and which are not necessary conditions for adaptation to industrial labour.

Labour Studies in the 1960s

Labour studies in the 1960s emphasized that the Nigerian labour force was fully adapted to industrial labour and that the adaptability of workers was not a core problem of industrial development in Nigeria.

In his study on cultural change among Nigerian industrial workers - an interview study of a random sample of 509 blue-collar workers in ten companies in Ibadan and Lagos in 1963/64 - SEIBEL (1968) rejected the assumption of the „target worker". Instead the industrial worker in the urban industrial centers of Lagos and Ibadan was found to be fully adapted:

„In more developed areas like Southern Nigeria, work for taxes or for the bride price belongs to the past; bride price was not mentioned in a single case as a work motive, work for taxes in less than half percent of the responses. The reasons for work given by the factory workers show that wage labour is taken for granted today, it is, sociologically speaking, institutionalised and integrated into the people's life." (SEIBEL 1967:47)

The attitude of the target worker who came only temporarily to the city to earn money for limited wants and then returned to his extended family has been „outdated for a long time" (SEIBEL 1967:48).

Based on data from the 1963/64 study it was shown that within a few decades of adaptation to wage labour, the underlying attitudinal structure had changed considerably. Within this historical process four stages of adaptation have been observed (SEIBEL 1973a:4-6):

The first stage is the phase of forced labour, which had been recruited by the colonial administration, and of indirect „recruitment" by taxes to be paid in British money that had to be obtained by wage labour. As people were fully integrated into their

traditional socioeconomic system, they rejected both systems of labour recruitment. The typical pattern of this stage was involuntary work or work for motives entirely external to the job. Little adaptation took place, and workers returned to their home villages as seen as they could.

The second stage was marked by the emergence of voluntary work motives, as for bride wealth or imported commodities.

The third stage developed gradually through prolonged and intensified contact with the money-economic, modern commodities and the amenities of city life. Tax and bride price were no longer the only motives for wage labour. They were supplemented and eventually replaced by motives that were geared at the purchase of certain goods, such as bicycles, radios and clothing. The first two stages may be called phases of specific target work, the targets being few and well-defined. The third stage was a phase of diffuse target work, the targets being many and variegated in composition. This was the stage of permanent short-term migration to town.

In the fourth stage, in which the majority of Nigerian industrial workers were found in 1963/64, needs and wants developed to a degree where a mere or less permanent stay in town had become a necessity. Wage labour was fully integrated into the normal life of the African worker. Wage labour was regarded as a substitute for life and work in the village, not only among people in town but also among villagers, at least for a foreseeable future.

Using two additional indicators of adaptation to wage labour, labour turnover and occupational prestige, SEIBEL (1973a:9, 19) showed that „labour turnover is no problem for companies in southern Nigeria", and that „occupational prestige has adapted to the changing economic and occupational structure. By no means can it be seen as an impediment to further adaptation to a changing economy in general and to wage labour in particular", claims of employers to the contrary notwithstanding.

The nation of workers fully committed to wage labour was also confirmed by other authors:

„Wage-earners responded positively to monetary incentives; the aggregate supply curve of labour did not become regressive at an early point; and the concept of West Africans as target workers needs to be seriously modified." (BERG 1961)

...have depicted a situation of excessively high rates of absenteeism and turnover, lack of punctuality, and inefficiency and inaptitude in the work place... More important recent field studies have shown the traditional appraisal, whether valid or not in an earlier time (pre-1939), to be totally fallacious today... The Nigerian wage earner... remains fully committed to wage-earning. This is substantiated by the absenteeism and turnover figures." (KILBY 1969:209, 211, 206)

Comparing labour productivity in similar textile companies in Nigeria and England, KILBY (1969:123-124) found that productivity in Kaduna Textiles Ltd and Nigerian Textile Mills (Ikeja) was slightly more than half that of English companies. Further studies showed that labour productivity of Nigerians was usually above that of

Europeans in routine jobs and in physically demanding jobs. Nigerians, particularly female ones, compared also well in activities demanding a high degree of dexterity. In complex activities, however, productivity was much lower. Here, KILBY (1969:222-223) argued, that it is too early for a final verdict as such activities were predominantly found in relatively new companies.

The most important result of KILBY's productivity research in 63 companies, employing some 50,000 workers, was that low labour productivity was usually due to the organizational structure and to labour policies:

„Where conditions were good and wages high, the labour force was efficient, stable and regular in its attendance." (KILBY 1969:223)

Most impressive are KILBY's results of changes from time-wage to piece-rates in industry. These did not lead, as would be suggested by the theory of the „target worker", to increased absenteeism or turnover, but to an extraordinary increase in productivity. In a tile factory in Kano, e.g., there was an increase from 70 to 200 (186 per cent) tiles per worker and day; in a luggage factory in Apapa, there was an increase from 20 to 85 (325 per cent) suit-cases. When production was continuous, increases in output were less spectacular. They were 17 per cent in a plastics factory in Aba when competition between shifts as well as monthly premiums were introduced, and 25 per cent in a rubber factory - in all cases without a loss of quality or additional supervision.

According to these studies, the core problem of industrial development does not lie in the work commitment or adaptability of the worker who is far from having his faculties and capacities exhausted but in organization and management:

„Organization and supervision are the effective limitational factors in labour productivity and not the proficiency of the Nigerian labourer... Stated another way, the bottleneck exerting the primary drag on economic progress is organizational inefficiency." (KILBY 1969:223)

In this context, we should quote IWU (1973:126) who suggested changes in modern organizational structure by transferring traditional ones:

„Modern organizational theory suggests to adapt organization to man. Therefore, we suggest to adapt industrial organization in Ibo country to the democratic system of Ibo society which will pave the road to progress in Ibo country."

That traditional structures do not only not impede but facilitate economic and social change was also shown by SEIBEL (1973b). In his study on „Systems of Status Allocation and Receptivity to Modernization" he rejected the assumption of the modernization theory that traditional societies are „extraordinary conservative and resistant to change" (STEWART 1967), allocating social status on the basis of ascribed criteria.

Based on the 1963/64 study on Nigerian industrial workers SEIBEL showed that the assumption that structural similarities with industrial societies facilitate, and dissimilarities impede the transition to a modern industrial society is not tenable. In-

stead, he argued that relatively open autochthonous societies are characterized by relatively high, whereas relatively closed autochthonous societies are characterized by relatively low receptivity to change. And with regard to the relation of status allocation and achievement orientation he concluded:

„Societies that traditionally allocate social status predominantly on the basis of achieved criteria are receptive to change; societies that traditionally allocate social status predominantly on the basis of ascribed criteria are resistant to change... those theories of social change built on the assumption that achievement orientation characterizes modern societies and ascription orientation characterizes traditional societies have to be revised."
(SEIBEL 1973b:72-74)

Labour Studies in the 1970s

Recent studies on industrial labour in Nigeria and other West African countries did not only discover adaptation to industrial labour but also the maintenance of traditional structures and bonds. They showed that adaptation to industrial labour, understood as the acceptance and performance of behaviours appropriate to the requirements of industrial production, does not necessarily imply the existence of a Western-style industrial labour force being committed to industrial labour and to the urban-industrial environment in a life-perspective.

As an individual, the industrial worker might adapt to industrial labour while still maintaining the perspective of self-employment. The industrial worker as a household head might be fully committed to the requirements of his company while depending on other additional sources of income and labour which is performed either by himself or members of his family.

Furthermore, they emphasized that the socioeconomic situation and living standard of industrial workers in West-Africa do not clearly distinguish the industrial labour force from other lower strata of the labour force, and furthermore, that social ties and security systems outside the industrial sphere play a decisive role in the life of industrial workers.

Industrial workers are usually not markedly better off than self-employed rural and urban counterparts, and they are not in a privileged position. Even in Nigeria, there is very little evidence for the existence of „labour aristocrats“.

WATERMAN (1976:182), in his study on conservatism among Nigerian industrial workers, pointed out that this attitude is „not a modern one springing from the dubious privileges of the wage employment sector but one that they share with the rural and urban poor from whom they spring and among whom they live.“

PEACE (1979:11-12), in his study of southern Nigerian factory workers in 1970, found that their monthly wages were insufficient for any degree of personal security and stability in the Lagos metropolitan area:

„The fifth characteristic of the migrants is that they are relatively poor urban residents. According to my own survey material some two-thirds of the workers

receive from their employers between LN 10 and LN 15 per month with most of these being at the lower end of this income range. Certainly this means that their annual incomes are higher than the average of about LN 50 for the population of western Nigeria as a whole. However, the recurrent costs of living in the Lagos metropolitan area are high: in 1970-1971 the basic requirements of accommodation and food were subject to very considerable price increases. Since the basic wage of LN 10 per month was established in 1964, and even at that time appeared only just adequate for the individual single worker to meet his basic needs, by 1970 many migrants to Agege were finding it difficult to make ends meet."

And PEIL (1981:11) summarized the urban living situations of migrants in Africa as follows:

„The majority of migrants spend 15-25 % of their income for a roof over their heads: usually this rents only one room. The average density for many towns is more than three persons per room. Often there is no household water supply, and sanitary provision is inadequate. Disease therefore flourishes. Nevertheless, housing standards in town are at least as high as these in villages: electricity is common in town houses; they usually have cement floors; and they are less liable than village dwellings to collapse in heavy rains.

The precarious socioeconomic and living situation of industrial workers in urban settings necessitates other systems of security than are provided by the industrial system.

PEACE (1979:24) found that low wages require substantial economies to be made on a regular basis and these are best achieved by workers pooling their slender resources". Low wages and job insecurity, PEACE argued, lead to heavy reliance on small tightly-knit networks of home-townsmen characterized by „continued re-operation, a complex set of reciprocal exchanges, and a high degree of mutual trust" (PEACE 1979:35):

„It is through relationships between urban brothers that major obstacles to individual well-being are met. These are appropriately described as personal networks characterized by the dense and multiplex relationships existing between the members at any one moment in time."
(PEACE 1979:29)

The socioeconomic situation urges workers to security-seeking strategies outside the industrial sector. These can be directed at both their non-industrial urban environment and their rural homes. All empirical studies point out that migrant workers keep direct links to their rural homes. These ties might be cultural ones expressed by marriage, visits of parents, extended family and friends. However, they also have an economic foundation: on the one hand, migrants may still be supported by their rural families, on the other hand, they may support their rural families as well. Studies on rural households from which the migrants originate often come to the conclusion that decisions and processes of migration and proletarianization are not a push out of the rural household but an accommodative strategy of the household in evolving such forms of labour mobility.

The relations of industrial workers to their parents' rural homes and to their extended family did not break down by their migration. The assumption by Nigerian authors like IMGAGENE (1975:588) and others, that industrialization and urbanization imply the shift from extended family relationships based on mutual aid and social cooperation to the individual or his immediate or nuclear family, is not quite correct. The money economy had loosened this solidarity relationship but it had not dissolved it; the traditional law of the extended family had developed a synthesis with modern European forms (VORBICHLER 1975). Reporting on studies in Ghana and Nigeria, CALDWELL (1976:233) found that nearly 70 per cent of village households got some assistance from their children who migrated to town.

Traditional structures and values are not destroyed for they are indispensable parts of the socioeconomic and sociocultural security of industrial workers. As PEIL (1981b:100) put it:

„Traditional norms continue to be highly valued, and these who set them aside may suddenly find themselves in need of the security which only ascriptively based support can give.“

On the basis of primary data from a series of surveys in Ghana, Nigeria and Gambia between 1966 and 1976 PEIL (1981:99) concluded, contrary to INKELES/SMITH, that it is not the factory that determines the workers' attitudes:

„The data from these studies suggest that occupation does make a difference to the social relations of workers in industrializing societies, but that the society probably has much greater effort on the workplace than vice versa and that the factory per se is probably less relevant to these workers than to employees in industrialized countries. Insofar as this is true, there appear to be severe limitations on the spread of class consciousness from large, bureaucratically oriented workplaces to the general population. Not only is the job (and attitudes related to the relations of production) left behind at the gate, but serial relations based on other norms are brought into the workplace.“

There are mainly two factors which determine this situation: on the one hand, „social life is effectively dissociated from his working life“. As a result for the industrial worker who lives together with non-industrial employees in an urban neighbourhood, „early socialization and contacts outside the workplace are more important in shaping attitudes than in work experience“ (PEIL 1972:234, 220); on the other hand, she held the non-permanent job situation and the frequent moves into and out of industrial employment responsible for the close ties with people in non-industrial urban and rural employment. She argued that usually job duration is „not long enough to develop new norms even if the job were effective in doing this“ (PEIL 1972:219).

Nevertheless, the Ghanaian factory worker adapted to industrial labour in a specific instrumental way:

„The repetition and the steady work needed to keep up with the machinery are not valued, but the wages are seen as adequate compensation for these disadvantages. Thus, factory work is considered similar to other urban employment. The vital point is to be in employment, not the level of technology which this employment involves.“ (PEIL 1972:221)

Another relationship between traditional values and attitudes to industrial labour has been reported by PEACE (1979):

„In urban Yorubaland generally, wealth and prestige are the preserve of self-employed men and women... at the apex of most established Yoruba towns the more affluent men are usually traders in consumer goods, transporters, contractors, builders and general storekeepers... Lower down the social scale, yet above the ranks of the urban peer, there exists a stratum of self-employed men and women who, whilst engaged in relatively small-scale craft and trading enterprises, have nevertheless gained some measure of prosperity by the constant reinvestment of small profits, the taking on of apprentices and journeymen, the gradual building up of a regular clientele, and the cultivation of sound reputations for the quality of their work. These men and women reinforce the view that what wealth there is to be realized through independent business enterprise... On a more general plane, the social standing of the self-employed person is always considered to be higher than of an individual who is employed by another." (PEACE 1979:49-51)

On the background of this social valuation of self-employment, wage-employment tends to be seen by young migrants as an instrument for self-employment:

„In contrast with, for example, some Southern African target workers who intend after a short period of wage-earning to return to their places of origin, or some East African workers who anticipate entire careers as wage-earners, these African migrants approach factory employment in a different instrumental fashion. They hope to save sufficient capital to establish themselves as self-employed entrepreneurs in the longer run. They do not have a dear idea as to how long they will remain factory workers nor as to how much capital they will require to establish their urban business. Nonetheless the aspiration to become self-employed is a near-universal one on the shopfloor of the Ikeja factories." (PEACE 1979:13)

Conclusion

The outline of theoretical backgrounds and empirical findings of industrial labour research in Nigeria and some other African countries indicates that the process of adaptation to industrial labour has far progressed. However, it also shows that this process of adaptation does not necessarily imply the dissolution of traditional structures, attitudes and values. To the contrary, it supports the hypothesis that traditional elements can facilitate the transition to a modern urban and industrial environment and, conversely, may be reinforced by specific conditions within the modern sector. The persistence of traditional structures and values should not be interpreted as „resistance to change". As long as industrial wages are insufficient for the workers to feed themselves and their families they are forced to seek security outside the modern sector.

Traditional social relations might be modified but they do not disappear. In our days, the specific type of target worker with „limited wants and needs" has all but disappeared. However, targets in the sense of objectives motivating the individual to

enter the industrial labour force have not altogether disappeared. ELKAN and PEACE found other types of workers whose targets were defined within a life-perspective. By and large, the worker whose target is to save money for the improvement of his farm (ELKAN 1960:131) is now outdated. But interestingly, PEACE (1979:13) found a similar type of target worker who does not save for his perspective as a farmer but as a self-employed entrepreneur.

The result which can be drawn from studies on industrial labour in Africa is exactly what PEIL (1972:237) concluded, namely, that in the African context the factory worker is becoming modern while maintaining many aspects of his traditional culture. Evidently, the formation of an industrial labour force is a process of continuity and change.

In the following chapters we will try to record a part of this process for the Nigerian factory workers within the twenty years period between the 1960s and 1970s.