

**A SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF WORKERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKPLACE FORUM IN SOUTH AFRICAN
INDUSTRY: A STUDY OF FELIXTON SUGAR MILL INDUSTRY
IN KWA-ZULU NATAL PROVINCE.**

BY

PRUDENCE THOBILE SAKHEPHI ZIKHALI

**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of
Sociology at the University of Zululand.**

SUPERVISOR : DR. A.A. OKHAREDA

DATE SUBMITTED : AUGUST 2000

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mirriam and Alson, my sisters: Sizakele, Thandeka, Zanele and to my late sister, Qhamukile. It is also dedicated to my brothers, Sibusiso, Bongani and to my only son Siphesihle in gratitude for their loving support and constant source of joy.

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude goes to the following persons for their assistance towards the completion of this research:

- 1. The Lord Almighty for giving me strength and support throughout the research undertakings.*
- 2. Dr. A.A. Okharedia, my supervisor, for his expert guidance and encouragement throughout this study.*
- 3. The management and employees at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry for their valuable information and time spent in completing the questionnaire schedules.*
- 4. The social science lecturers at the University of Zululand for their expert knowledge and advice.*
- 5. My friends and colleagues, especially Mr N.J. Sibeko whose expert knowledge in utilising a computer facilitated the analysis of data.*
- 6. Mrs J.E. Ntsele for typing the research project.*
- 7. Last but not least, my mother Mirriam, for her unfailing support throughout all the academic undertakings. I cannot find enough words to thank her.*

Declaration

I Prudence Thobile Sakhephi Zikhali, do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work in conception and execution, and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of direct and indirect references.



P.J.S. Zikhali

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of workers towards the establishment of workplace forum at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry in South Africa. In this study both management and employees were selected to participate. This involves visiting participants in the workplace for the purposes of privacy and concentration. This helped the researcher to have an access of meeting all the respondents.

In this research 30 respondents were selected from 230 employees using a simple random technique. The cluster system was also used to divide the industry into departments from which the final respondents were selected. Although 30 respondents may not be sufficient for a research of this capacity, the observation method was also used to collect and solicit the necessary information for this research. In addition to this, the researcher made use of most of the official records and statistics that were made available to her.

The central view held by this study was that, workplace forums are very useful in achieving efficiency in the workplace and that they help in improving trade union activities. The critical view of the study was that there are few workplace forums established in South African industries. This has earlier been confirmed by the HRSC surveys conducted in 1997. This showed that, the industries should provide some possible measures for the establishment of the workplace forums in order to reduce industrial unrest. But the problem is that trade unions did not encourage this because they see workplace forum as a threat to them. Special attention was on workplace forum because it was taken as a second channel of representation which intended to be one of the primary instruments of the Act to democratise the workplace.

The following recommendations were made: Workplace forums should be established in all industries. Trade unions should be involved in the workplace forums. There should be the prevention of the establishment of other forums within one organisation. Management and workers should work together in order to prevent impending conflict.

The researcher was able to propose the following solutions for the purpose of reducing conflict in the workplace: Companies should train managers so that they can handle conflicts and maintain harmony in the workplace. The plan should be communicated and every worker should be involved. A supervisor should be concerned when an employee shows signs of serious personal stress. Companies should have a strong policy that prohibits any form of harassment or threatening behaviour. Companies should develop a crisis management team to handle violent incidents before, during and

after they occur.

It is hoped that the above recommendations and solutions if implemented, will bring some changes in the workplace. When that happens, the rate of conflict will show a significant decline. This will contribute towards the general enhancement of the quality of working life in industries.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

1. WPF	Workplace forum
2. LRA	Labour Relation Act
3. CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
4. LRRRA	Labour Relations Regulation Act
5. BWU	Black Workers Union
6. BLA	Bantu Labour Act
7. WPFC	Workplace Forum Constitution
8. NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
9. IR	Industrial Relations
10. IMSS	Independent Mediation Service of South Africa
11. LAC	Labour Appeal Court
12. WPWAB	Western Province Worker's Advice Bureau
13. ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
14. METALL	Metal Workers' Union
15. SIF	Swedish Industrial Salaried Employees' Association
16. HR	Human Resources
17. NLRA	National Labour Relations Act
18. Co.	Company
19. NLRB	National Labour Relations Board
20. AU	Working Committee

21. MBL	Co-determination Act
22. AD	Labour Court
23. NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union
24. SA	South Africa
25. Ltd	Limited
26. SABC	South African Broadcasting Co-operation
27. MWASA	Media Workers' Association of South Africa
28. BEMAWU	Broadcasting, Electronic Media and Allied Workers' Union
29. ANC	African National Congress
30. COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Union
31. SEIFSA	Steel Engineering Industry Federation of South Africa
32. CWU	Communications Workers Union
33. AD	Labour Court

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	(i)
Acknowledgements	(ii)
Declaration	(iii)
Abstract	(iv)
List of Abbreviations	(vi)

CHAPTER ONE

1. Orientation to the problem	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	2
1.3 Aims and Objectives	4
1.4 A historical background on the development	5
of workplace forum in South Africa.	
1.4.1 What is a workplace forum?	6
1.4.2 Origins of the workplace forum system	7
1.4.3 Establishment of a workplace forum	9

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER TWO

2.	Theoretical framework and Literature review -----	10
2.1	Introduction -----	10
2.2	Trends and Counter trends -----	11
2.3	Neo-marxist theory -----	21
2.4	Marx's theory of Alienation -----	22
2.5	What constitutes the alienation of labour -----	25
2.6	Aspects of Alienation -----	27
2.7	Class Consciousness -----	28
2.8	Stages of implementing a workplace forum -----	32
2.8.1	The Empowerment Phase-----	33
2.8.2	The Functional Phase-----	34
2.9	Considerations for effective workplace forum -----	35
2.10	Designation of the workplace forum-----	36
2.11	Purposes of the workplace forum-----	37
2.12	Functions of the workplace forum-----	38
2.13	Costs of running the workplace forum-----	40
2.14	Forums meaning for unions-----	41
2.15	Problems in location of the forum-----	42

CONTENTS

PAGE

2.16	Forums and Transformation-----	43
2.17	Empirical Studies -----	46
2.17.1	Findings of Ruan study on workplace forum-----	47
2.17.2	Conclusions of Ruan van der Walt study -----	50
2.18	Methods of conflict resolution in other countries -----	78
2.18.1	The Canadian system of conflict resolution -----	78
2.18.2	Industrial conflict resolution in Great Britain -----	85
2.18.2.1	The legal framework -----	86
2.18.2.2	The nature of collective bargaining -----	87
2.18.3	Industrial conflict resolution in Sweden -----	91
2.19	Evaluation of Collective Bargaining and Conflict Resolution-----	97
	Processes in Canada, Great Britain and Sweden	
2.20	Hypotheses for this Research-----	106
2.21	Concepts used in this Research-Operational Definition-----	106
2.21.1	Workplace forum -----	107
2.21.2	Majority union -----	107
2.21.3	Conflict -----	107
2.21.4	Industrial Action -----	108
2.21.5	Strikes -----	108
2.21.6	Grievances -----	108

CONTENTS	PAGE
2.21.7 Negotiation -----	108
2.21.8 Collective Bargaining -----	109
2.21.9 Bargaining -----	109
2.21.10 Conciliation -----	110
2.21.11 Industrial Sabotage -----	110
2.21.12 Arbitration -----	110
2.21.13 Mediation -----	111

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology -----	112
3.1 Introduction -----	112
3.2 Research Design -----	112
3.3 A Historical Background of Felixton Sugar Mill Industry-----	113
3.3.1 Locality-----	114
3.4 The organizational structure -----	117
3.5 Innovative Design -----	119
3.5.1 Cane handling and preparation -----	119
3.5.2 Cane diffusion and bagasse dewatering -----	119
3.5.3 Clarification -----	120

CONTENTS	PAGE
3.5.4 Evaporation -----	120
3.5.5 Pan boiling and Crystallisation -----	121
3.5.6 Energy Balance -----	122
3.5.7 Steam Supply -----	122
3.5.8 Control and Instrumentation -----	123
3.6 Plant Operation -----	123
3.6.1 Cane preparation and extraction -----	123
3.6.2 Power Generation -----	124
3.6.3 Juice Clarification -----	124
3.6.4 Evaporation -----	125
3.6.5 Crystallisation -----	125
3.6.6 Curing -----	126
3.7 Research Technique -----	128
3.8 Target Population -----	130
3.9 Ethics of the study -----	130
3.10 Methods of data collection -----	131
3.10.1 Questionnaire Survey -----	131

CONTENTS	PAGE
3.10.2 Pre-testing the questionnaire -----	132
3.10.3 Wording of certain items -----	133
3.10.4 Elimination of certain items -----	133
3.10.5 The final draft of the questionnaire ----- and its administration	133
3.11 Statistical analysis -----	134
3.12 Limitations of the study -----	136

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Analysis-----	137
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and Recommendations -----	161
---	-----

CONTENTS	PAGE
BIBLIOGRAPHY -----	175
APPENDIX A	
Questionnaires -----	185
APPENDIX B	
Map of the study area -----	191
APPENDIX C	
Map of the plant operation -----	192
APPENDIX D	
List of figures	
Figure:1 Respondents Level of Education	
Figure:2 Respondents Work Experience	
APPENDIX E	
List of tables	
Table 4.2 : Age distribution of the respondents and their interest to participate in workplace forum.	
Table 4.3 : Distribution of the respondents according to their sex.	
Table 4.4 : Distribution of the respondents according to race.	
Table 4.5 : Distribution of the respondents across different educational levels	
Table 4.6 : <i>Distribution of the respondents according to work experience.</i>	

Table 4.7 : The improvement of trade union activities through workplace forum.

Table 4.8 : The role of the workplace forum in achieving efficiency in the production system.

Table 4.9 : The role of the workplace forum in resolving conflict.

Table 4.10 : *Consultation of the workplace forum with the employer.*

Table 4.11 : Respondents views on the problems that hinders the establishment of the workplace forum.

CHAPTER ONE

1. ORIENTATION TO THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 1970's a complete new labour relations dispensation was introduced in South Africa, but unexpected challenges emerged. From that time legal rights in the field of employment were accorded to everyone irrespective of race, colour, gender or creed. It was expected that all problems that had been experienced before would be a thing of the past. However, from then, new challenges emerged.

The focus in the 1980's was on the policies and strategies of introducing the new order. During that time all the activities in industrial relations centered around power and influence, namely the politics of industry and labour economics. This period was marked by strife and conflict between management and the workers.

The challenges of the late 1990's seem to be of a different nature. The main focus has shifted from the political arena to the workplace. It could still be recalled that workplace forums were not implemented during the apartheid era. In view of this research an attempt will be made to analyse the functions or roles which workplace forums and management could play

in the new democratic South Africa. In addition to that, this research attempt to look at the various ways in which workplace forums could improve the elements of co-operation in the workplace.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After strife and antagonism of the eighties and early nineties, the focus has shifted towards co-operation in the industrial relations arena. Both management and employees have realised that they need each other in order to achieve their goals. But the two parties required practical ways of showing willingness to co-operate.

The shift from conflict to co-operation in industrial relations does not *comprise management and workplace forum relations only*, but also includes human resources priorities. These can be categorised into : (1) individual development including training, literacy skills, technical, managerial and professional development. (2) Social development which includes education, housing and health care. However, individual and collective relationships are not mutually exclusive. More debates is needed on the role of workplace forum involvement in corporate social responsibility programmes which involve redistribution of wealth to employee and their communities.

The new agenda will focus more attention on social and development issues. Employers should be receptive to this, as enhanced quality of life may have economic benefit for both employer and employees. Identifying and enhancing common goals and interdependent interest is a vital challenge in moving away from adversarialism to a co-operative relationship necessary for economic growth. Although there are several causes of violence, employers must take the initiative in finding solutions, as stability is essential for wealth creation. A political constitutional settlement and the removal of apartheid will not necessarily eliminate conflict in various sectors of society. Conflict resolution processes will become even more important in dealing with the tensions of apartheid's aftermath.

This study is concerned with the strategies used by management and workplace forum in bringing co-operation in the workplace. It is thus essential to give an exposition of the principles of industrial conflict in order to explain the conceptual framework in which the study is based. In recent times, industrial conflict is deemed to be a serious social problem. In most cases/studies, conflict receives prominence, as it is the only feature of industrial relations. Such tendencies draw attention to negative aspects of industrial relations. They give impression that co-operation is a foreign concept in industrial relations.

The researcher realises the need for conducting research that focuses on workplace forum in industrial relations. It is hoped that emphasising workplace forum and co-operation can develop a different perspective. This will enable the stakeholders in industrial relations to devise ways of creating joint strategies for resolving conflict in the workplace.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to undertake a critique of past theories and past discussions on workplace forum and see how relevant the theories are in our present time. This entails radical theories on industrial conflict since they do not make co-operation possible between management and workplace forum. The second aim is to devise strategies for co-operation in industrial relations. The objective is to evaluate the success of both workplace forum and management strategies in resolving the work related conflict.

1.4 A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORKPLACE FORUM IN SOUTH AFRICA.

It is generally acknowledge that industrial or labour relations in South African organisations have been characterised by antagonism, conflict and confrontation between management and employees. There are many reasons

for this situation, of which the main causes are the political struggle and the adversarial nature of the past labour relations system. It is also evident that in most organisations employees had little or no say in the running of the organisation.

Unfortunately management in most organisations were found to be hostile to trade unions and do not see trade unions contributing to the development, growth and co-operation of the organisation. This view has been held for many years. Black workers have been wary of workplace representation, seeing it as a play by management and the Apartheid State to undermine the unions. Now the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 marks a historic break through with the past by providing for "a second channel of representation", the workplace forum (Mtayi, 1997:98).

Workplace forums are intended to be one of the primary instruments of the Act to democratise the workplace. The Act proclaims that the functions of workplace forum are to promote the interests of all employees (whether or not they are union members), enhance efficiency in the workplace, provide for consultation between management and labour on specified issues, and, on others, require joint decision-making. Such decision-making envisages that management may not take certain decisions without the consensus of the workplace (Mtayi, 1997:98).

1.4.1 What is a workplace forum?

The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 describes the workplace forum as a forum for a majority union. Such a union is defined as one or more registered unions with a membership of 50 percent plus one of all the employees in a specific workplace. Even if there is an agreement between an employer and its employees, it will not be enforceable under the Act if the employees do not belong to a trade union registered in terms of the Act. Where the employer conducts its business from more than one workplace, those workplaces will be independent of one another if their independence can be established by reason of size, function, or organisation. Each independent workplace must have more than 100 employees before a forum can be requested there, and the trade union(s) will have to qualify separately in respect of each workplace (Mtayi, 1997:98).

A majority trade union or a group of trade unions that together represent more than half the workers in a workplace can only initiate a workplace forum. This is important as it means that a workplace forum cannot be imposed upon unions against their will and they cannot be used at non-unionised workplaces as a way of avoiding unionisation. Representatives on the workplace forum will be elected by the whole workforce and not merely by trade union members. Negotiations over wages and conditions of

employment will not take place in the workplace forum. Workplace forums will have rights of consultation on some issues and joint decision-making over others. Which issues fall into which category is not spelt out. If an agreement cannot be reached on a joint decision-making issue, it will be resolved by arbitration and no striking will be permitted (Van Holdt, 1995:18-19).

1.4.2 Origins of the workplace forum system

The concept behind workplace forums can be found in similar systems in developed countries such as Britain, Germany and Sweden as well as previous experience with workers' committee and later with liaison committees at plant level in South Africa.

The South African roots of the idea can be traced back to the establishment of workers' committees for black workers in terms of the Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953. These structures were to be established on the initiative of the workers themselves. This provision was similar to what we have with workplace forums today except that the workers then did not need to belong to a union. It was the intention of the Government to create a system that would assume the role of unions and hopefully result in the demise of trade unions. This system was not a

success and only 24 workers' committee registered by 1973 with possibly another 110 in existence (Bendix, 1996:86).

Another problem was that workers' committee was allowed only five members per plant irrespective of the number of workers employed. This system, which dealt mainly with grievances, had no negotiating authority and very infrequently met with management, making the establishment of a working relationship impossible. In spite of these obvious flaws this system, with adaptations, continued until 1979 as the only legitimate system for black worker representation. The 1973 strikes throughout South Africa resulted in the passing of the Black Labour Relations Regulation Act of 1973, which provided for the establishment of liaison committees at plant level as an alternative to worker's committees. These committees were to consist of an equal number of worker and management representatives. The main aim was to improve communication between the employer and his black workers (Van der Walt, 1998:36).

There were however some organisations which supported trade unions (such as the Urban Training Project) which used the system to establish plant-level organisation and the formation of unions. The Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau (WPWAB) believed that committee members should be trained to negotiate on their own behalf, eventually doing away with the need for

union officials (Bendix, 1996:93-96).

1.4.3 Establishment of a workplace forum

Once the establishment of the forum has been requested by the relevant trade union(s) and the requirements for its creation have been met, a commissioner will be appointed by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

The commissioner will try to facilitate agreement between the trade union(s) and the employer on the subject. If no agreement is reached, he will determine the provisions of the constitution of the workplace forum according to the Act. In doing so, he will consider the guidelines in the schedule to the Act. He will then set a date for the election of the members to the forum. An election officer will be appointed to conduct the election (Mtayi, 1997:99).

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict between employers and employees has been institutionalised in terms of an agreed upon set of rules and procedures. The net result is increasing stability in industrial society. No longer is the working class seen as a threat to social order as Marx believed. There is less and less chance of the kind of class conflict which Marx and Neo-Marxist predicted.

The German sociologist Ralph Dahrendorf believes that the voice of the working class is growing louder through its formal associations. He sees a trend towards a more equal balance of power between employers and employees and the development of what he terms, "industrial democracy". He said democracy in industry begins with the formation of workers' interest groups. In particular, interest groups are necessary to represent workers since employers cannot negotiate with a disorganised collection of employees. For workers' interest groups to be effective, they must be recognised as legitimate by employers and the state. This has been an uphill struggle in capitalist societies.

In nineteenth century, Britain employers strongly resisted the formation of trade unions often. They insisted that their workers sign a document declaring that they were not union members. In America, particularly during the 1930s, organised crime syndicates were sometimes employed by companies to prevent their workforce forming trade unions. However, by the latter half of this century, trade unions were generally accepted as legitimate by employers and the State. Dahrendorf regards this as the major step towards industrial democracy and the institutionalisation of industrial conflict (Haralambos, 1980:263).

With the formation of workers' interest groups, a number of processes occurred. They furthered the integration of the working class into the structure of capitalist society. Firstly, negotiating bodies were set up for formal negotiation between representatives of employers and workers. Such negotiations take place within a framework of agreed upon rules and procedures. Conflict is largely contained and resolved within this framework.

2.2 Trends and counter trends

The history of industrial conflict provides illustrations and examples for most of the patterns and types suggested by the theory of group conflict in imperatively coordinated associations. These illustrations and examples are

all interesting, since the protagonists of industrial conflict have in many ways remained the same throughout industrial development. The violence of industrial conflict has diminished considerably. This is due, in the first place, to the very fact of organisation of the conflicting parties. Secondly, trade unions and employers' associations have established an often intricate system of routines of conflict regulation. Before they have recourse to evident manifestations of conflict, they meet to discuss their claims, they call in a mediator and, perhaps, an arbitrator, in short, they try to settle their disagreements by talking rather than fighting.

This reduction of violence has been greatly helped by improvements in the standard of living of the workers. In most of the countries that might today be described as post-capitalist societies, absolute deprivation on the part of industrial labour gave way, early in this century, to relative deprivation, so that the "cost" of victory or defeat in conflict decreased. There is a peculiar dialectics in the fact that this reduction of violence is both cause and effect of the institutionalisation of industrial conflict: by forming organisations and defending their claims, management and labor have been able to introduce changes which in turn helped their chances of peacefully settling disputes (Dahrendorf, 1959:277).

According to Dahrendorf (1959:225), effective conflict regulation

presupposes the presence of at least three factors, each of which itself influences the violence of conflict manifestations. Firstly, for effective conflict regulation to be possible, both parties to a conflict have to recognise the necessity and reality of the conflict situation and, in this sense, the fundamental justice of the cause of the opponent.

A second prerequisite of effective conflict regulation is the organisation of interests groups. Dubin (1977:287) believes that it is feasible to make a general proposition to the effect that "conflict between groups becomes institutionalised". From the point of view of effective conflict regulation, these conditions of organisation may be said to be one of its prerequisites, since the organisation of conflict groups itself is one of its prerequisites.

Thirdly, in order for effective regulation to be possible, the opposing parties in social conflicts have to agree on certain formal rules of the game that provide the framework of their relations. Continuous conflict between groups leads to routinised interactions (Dubin, 1977:190).

There are three forms of conflict regulation indicated, i.e. conciliation, mediation and arbitration that may operate as successive stages of conflict regulation or be applied individually in given situations. Conciliation, mediation and arbitration and their normative and structural prerequisites, are

the outstanding mechanisms for reducing the violence of class conflict. Where these routines of relationship are established, group conflict loses its sting and becomes an institutionalised pattern of social life (Dahrendorf, 1959:230).

Where Marx was pessimistic about the division of labour in society, Emile Durkheim was cautiously optimistic. Marx saw the specialised division of labour trapping the worker in his occupational role and dividing society into antagonistic social classes. Durkheim saw a number of problems arising from specialisation in industrial society but believed the promise of the division of labour outweighed the problems. He outlined his views in "The Division of Labour in society", first published in 1893. Durkheim saw a fundamental difference between pre-industrial and industrial societies. In the former the division of labour is comparatively unspecialised. Social solidarity in pre-industrial societies is based on similarity between individual members.

They share the same beliefs and values and to a large degree, the same roles. This uniformity binds members of society together in a close-knit communal life. Durkheim refers to unity based on resemblance as 'mechanical solidarity'. He describes the extreme of mechanical solidarity as "solidarity which comes from likeness is at its maximum when the collective conscience completely envelope our whole conscience and co-

insides with all points in it. In a society based on mechanical solidarity, members are, as it were, produced from the same mould. Solidarity in society is based not on uniformity but on difference. Durkheim referred to this form of unity as 'organic solidarity'. Just as in physical organism, the various parts are different yet work together to maintain the organism (e.g. heart, liver, brain and so on in the human body), so in industrial society occupational roles are specialised yet function together to maintain the social unit (Haralambos, 1980:237).

Where Marx saw the division of labour as divisive, Durkheim believed it could increase the interdependence of members of society and so reinforce social solidarity. In order to produce goods and services more efficiently, members of industrial society specialise in particular roles. Specialisation requires co-operation. For example, a large range of specialists are required to design, manufacture and market a particular product. Members of society are dependent on each other's specialised skills and this interdependence forms the basis of organic solidarity. Durkheim believed that specialised division of labour and the rapid expansion of industrial society contained threats to social solidarity. They tended to produce a situation of 'anomie' which, literally translated, means normlessness. Anomie is present when social controls are weak, when the moral obligations which constrain individuals and regulate their behaviour are not strong enough to function effectively.

Durkheim saw a number of indications of anomie in late-nineteenth-century industrial society, in particular high rates of suicide, marital break-up and industrial conflict (Haralambos, 1980:238).

In *labour and monopoly capital*, the American Marxist Harry Braveman examines the changing nature of class in the United State of America (USA) over the past hundred years. He argues that classes are not fixed entities but rather ongoing processes, rich in change, transition, variation. Braveman argues that this process is largely directed by changes in the nature of work in capitalist society. Capitalism involves the maximisation of profit which results in the accumulation of capital. In pursuit of this end, the labour process has been transformed over the past hundred years. This transformation has important consequences for the formation of classes (Haralambos, 1980:80).

The relations of production in capitalist society are those of dominance and subordinates. Workers are subject to the authority of employers and their work is controlled from above. Braveman sees this as the hallmark of the proletarian condition and from this viewpoint claims that there has been a progressive proletarianisation of the workforce. He maintains that bourgeoisie, in which he includes top management, has steadily tightened its control over the workers. As a result, the gulf between the bourgeoisie and

proletariat is widening rather than narrowing. The worker must sell his labour power in order to subsist and therefore becomes increasingly dependent upon capital and forced to submit to its control (Haralambos, 1980:80-81).

However, Braverman notes that in certain respects, the intermediate group does not conform to the proletarian condition. Firstly, the economic returns of it are significantly greater than those of the working class. Secondly, although they are subject to the authority, albeit delegated from above, over lower ranks of workers. As a result the intermediate stratum shares characteristics of both proletariat and bourgeoisie. It receives its petty share in the prerogative and rewards of capital, but it also bears the mark of the proletarian condition. Braverman regards this as a distinct possibility, arguing that the same processes which resulted in the proletarianisation of clerks may eventually lead to the proletarianisation of the intermediate stratum. Braverman has argued that the principal driving force of capitalism, the accumulation of capital, has shaped the class system in the USA. The labour process has been transformed by the drive for greater productivity, greater control, cheaper labour power and therefore higher profit. These developments have largely shaped the process of class formation. Yet it could be argued that similar processes are occurring in socialist societies (Haralambos, 1980:82).

Braverman admits that the nature and organisation of work in the Soviet bloc countries share many similarities with work in capitalist society. However, he argues that this is simply because these countries have imitated the capitalist model in their drive to increase productivity. This model is a product of capitalism not of socialism. Braverman hopes that it represents a transitional stage in the development of communist societies and that socialist principles will eventually lead to a change in the nature of the labour process (Haralambos, 1980:82).

According to Max Weber, as cited by Haralambos (1980:286), bureaucracy is a response to the administrative requirements of all industrial societies, whether capitalist or communist. Weber believed that responsible government could be achieved by strong parliamentary control of the state bureaucracy. This would prevent the interests of capital from predominating. In this view, the State is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another (Haralambos, 1980:286).

Max Weber believed that bureaucratic organisations are the dominant institutions of industrial society. He saw bureaucracy as an organisation with a hierarchy of paid, full-time officials who formed a chain of command. Marxists see fundamental differences between capitalist and socialist industrial societies. To Weber their differences are minimal compared to the

essential similarity of bureaucratic organisation. Thus is the defining characteristic of modern industrial society. Weber's view of bureaucracy must be seen in the context of his general theory of social action. He argued that all human action is directed by meanings. Thus, in order to understand and explain action, the meanings and motives which lies behind it must be appreciated (Hralambos, 1980:279-280).

Weber identified various types of actions which are distinguished by the meanings on which they are based. These include 'affective' or 'emotional action', traditional action and rational action. Affective action stems from an individual's emotional state at a particular time. Loss of temper which results in verbal abuse or physical violence is an example of affective action. Traditional action is based on established custom. An individual acts in certain way because of ingrained habit, because things have always been done that way. He has no real awareness of why he does something, his actions are simply second nature. By comparison, rational action involves a clear awareness of a goal. It also involves a systematic assessment of the various means of attaining a goal and the selection of the most appropriate means (Haralambos, 1980:280).

Weber believed that rational action had become the dominant mode of action in modern industrial society. He saw it expressed in a wide variety of areas

in state administration, business, education, science and even in Western classical music. Weber also identified three forms of legitimacy which derive from three types of social action i.e. affective, traditional, and rational authority (Haralambos, 1980:280-281).

Weber argued that, bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge. He saw the combination of authority and expertise as the feature of bureaucracies which made them specifically rational. His model implies that there is a match between an individual's position in the hierarchy and his level of technical expertise. He saw this aspect of bureaucratic authority as increasingly important. In many organisations the most highly qualified members are found in the middle rather than the highest levels of the hierarchy. As Burns and Stalker's research indicates, the ranking of experts below non-experts can lead to conflict. The increasing pace of technical innovation in electronics means that experts have a growing part to play in industry (Haralambos, 1980:308)

Thus, Amital Etzioni argues that the ultimate justification for professional act is that it is, to the best of the professional's knowledge, the right act. Administrative justification has a different basis. In Etzioni's words, the ultimate justification for an administrative act is that it is in line with the organisation's rules and regulations, and that it has been approved, directly

or by implication, by a superior ranking official. Etzioni argues that professional and administrative actions are in principle, fundamentally opposed. The employment of professionals in organisations may produce role conflict. The professional may experience conflict between his role as an employee and his role as a professional. As an employee, he must follow the rules and obey his superior, as a professional he must follow his professional judgement which might result in his disregarding official regulations and disobeying higher authority (Haralambos, 1980:306).

2.3 Neo-marxist theory

Hyman (1975) states that while the rules, and the institutions which devise and implement them, are of central importance to the study of industrial relations, Dunlop's perspective is too restrictive and value laden. He argues that Dunlop's systems theory implies that industrial relations is about the maintenance of stability and regularity in industry. The focus is on how disputes are contained and controlled rather than on the process through which conflict is generated.

Further, Hyman criticises the belief that trade unions and employers are involved in a process of seeking 'order' in industrial relations. He espouses the Marxist perspective that workers do not share a common ideology with

employers in maintaining the prevailing social structure of capitalism. Thus, industrial relations involve actors whose aims are largely contradictory. He argues that the obligations undertaken by the employer in the employment contract are relatively precise, e.g. wages, leave and fringe benefits are fixed. The orderliness of the Dunlop system of industrial relations is thus rejected. Hyman consequently defines industrial relations as "the study of process of control over work relations"(Finnermore, 1992:5).

2.4 Marx's Theory of Alienation/Estranged labour

The worker becomes all the poorer and alienated as his production increases. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of things (material) proceeds in direct proportion with the devaluation world of men (human life). Labour produces not only commodities, it produces itself and the worker as a commodity and does so in the proportion in which it produces commodities generally.

In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The newfangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of

art seem bought by the loss of character. At the same pace that mankind master nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy (evil). Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force (Tucker, 19:577-578).

There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. Marx calls this Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. This Fetishism of commodities has its origin, as the foregoing analysis has already shown in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them (Tucker, 1978:321).

All these consequences are contained in the definition that the worker is related to the product of his labour as to an alien abject. Indeed, labour itself

becomes an object which he can get hold of only with the greatest effort and with the most irregular interruptions. So much does the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the more objects the worker produces the fewer can he possess and the more he falls under the dominion of his product, capital.

For on this premise it is clear that the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful the alien objective world becomes which he creates over-against himself, the poorer he himself, his inner-world becomes, the less belongs to him as his own. It is the same in religion. The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object, but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object. Therefore the greater this product, the less is he himself. The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently, as something alien to him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien (Tucker, 1978:72).

The laws of political economy express the estrangement of the worker in his object thus, the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume, the more values he creates, the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes, the better formed his product, the more deformed becomes the worker, the

more civilised his object, the more barbarous becomes the worker, the mightier labour becomes, the more powerless the worker becomes, the ingenious labour becomes, the duller becomes the worker and the more he becomes nature's bondsman (Tucker, 1978:73).

Political economy conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labour by not considering the direct relationship between the worker (labour) and production. It is true that labour produces for the rich wonderful things but for the worker it produces privation. It produces palaces-but for the worker it produces hovels. It produces beauty but for the worker, deformity. It replaces labour by machines, but some of the workers it throws back to a barbarous type of labour, and the other worker it turns into machines. It produces intelligence but for the worker idiocy, cretinism. The direct relationship of labour to its produce is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production (Tucker, 1978:73).

2.5 What Constitutes the Alienation of Labour

First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to the his essential being, that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his

mind. The worker, therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced, it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need, it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Lastly, the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs not to himself, but to another. As a result, therefore, man (the worker) no longer feels himself to be freely active in any (labour process) but his animal function—eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and dressing-up, etc, and his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal (Tucker, 1978:74).

Everything which the political economist takes from you in life and in humanity, he replaces for you in money and in wealth, all the things which you cannot do, your money can do. It can eat and drink, it can travel atc, all that it can appropriate for you. It can buy all this for you, it is the true endowment (Tucker, 1975:96).

2.6 Aspects of Alienation

Firstly, the object which labour (worker) produces (labour's product) confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object, which has become material. It is the objectification of labour. Labour's realisation is its objectification.

Secondly, till now we have been considering estrangement, the alienation of the worker only in one of its aspects, that is, the worker's relationship to the products of his labour. But estrangement is manifested not only in the result but in the act of production-within the producing activity itself.

Thirdly, man is a species being, not only because in practice and in theory he adopts the species as his object, but also because he treats himself as the actual, living species, because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being.

Lastly, an immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life-activity, from his species being is the estrangement of man from man. What applies to a man's relation to his work, to the product of his labour and to himself, also holds of a man's

relation to the other man and to the other man's labour and object of labour. In fact, the proposition that man's species nature is estranged from him means that on man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from man's essential nature. The alien being, to whom labour and the produce of labour belongs, in whose service labour is done and for whose benefit the produce of labour is provided, can only be man himself (Tucker, 1978:71-78).

2.7 Class Consciousness

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process, we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also necessarily, sublimates of their material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises.

Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the resemblance

of independence. They have no history, no development, but men developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter along with their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting point is consciousness taken as the living individual, in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as their consciousness (Tucker, 1978:154-155).

According to Marx (1978), in the social production of their life, man enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions, the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness (Tucker, 1978:4).

With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense

superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations as distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness (Tucker, 1978:5).

This contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse, which, as we saw, has occurred several times in past history, without however, endangering the basics, necessarily on each occasion burst out in a revolution, taking on at the same time various subsidiary forms, such as all-embracing collisions of various classes, contradiction of consciousness, battle of ideas, political conflict etc. From a narrow point of view one may isolate one of these subsidiary forms and consider it as the basis of these revolutions, and this is all the more easy as the individuals who started the revolutions had illusions about their own activity according to their degree of culture and the stage of historical development (Tucker, 1978:197).

For Hegel as cited by Tucker (1978), the essence of man equals self-consciousness. All estrangement of the human essence is therefore nothing

but estrangement of self-consciousness. The estrangement of self-consciousness is not regarded as an expression of the real estrangement of the human being, its extension reflected in the realm of knowledge and thought. Instead, the real estrangement is from its innermost, hidden nature (a nature only brought to light by philosophy) nothing but the manifestation of the estrangement of the real essence of man, of self-consciousness. The man who takes hold of his essential being is merely the self-consciousness which takes hold of objective essences. The surmounting of the object of consciousness, comprehensively expressed (1) means that the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something vanishing. (2) That it is the alienation of self-consciousness that establishes thing hood. Because man equals self-consciousness, his alienated, objective essence, or thing hood, equals alienated consciousness, and thing hood is thus established through this alienation. (3) That this externalisation of self-consciousness has not merely a negative but a positive significance. (4) That it has this meaning not merely for us or intrinsically, but for self-consciousness.

For self-consciousness, the negative of the object, its annulling of itself, has positive significance, self-consciousness knows this nullity of the object, because self-consciousness alienates itself, for in this alienation it establishes itself as object, or, for the sake of the indivisible unity of being-for-self, establishes the object as itself. (6) On the other hand, there is also this

other moment in the process, that self-consciousness has also just as much annulled and superseded this alienation and objectivity and resumed them into itself, being thus at home with itself in its other being as such. (7) This is the movement of consciousness and this movement consciousness is the totality of its moments. (8) Consciousness must similarly have taken up a relation to the object in all its aspects and phases, and have comprehended it from the point of view of each of them. This totality of its determinate characteristics makes the object intrinsically a spiritual being, and it becomes so in truth for consciousness through the apprehending of each single one of them as self or through what was called above the spiritual attitude to them. (Tucker, 1978:114).

2.8 Stages of implementing a workplace forum

It was stressed that a workplace forum, like any "new-born child, needs to go through an Empowerment (developmental) phase. There were three reasons for this: Firstly, representatives elected to the forum may not be the same individuals as those who were involved in its preparation. Secondly, even those workplace forum members who did have previous exposure to participative management principles would need to build on that exposure as an ongoing process. Thirdly, forum members require a long acclimatisation period during which to come to grips with the other members' interactional

styles, with their respective responsibilities, with the issues to be put on the table and the manner in which some should be dealt with (Marais, and Israelstam 1997 : 38).

2.8.1 The Empowerment Phase

The workplace forum members hold their first meeting at this stage. They will elect their chairperson and vice-chairperson. They will confirm and adopt the Workplace Forum Constitution, making sure that every member understands and is fully committed to the constitution's values, principles, requirements and spirit. They will also agree on channels and systems of joint communication with the organisation's employees. They will dissolve the Steering Committee and begin discussions on how the forum will go about empowering itself, that is developing the necessary know-how to function optimally.

The workplace forum will need to hold follow-up meetings, where:

- empowerment methods should be identified;
- responsibilities for researching and developing empowerment methods should be divided between forum members,
- meetings should be set up with the employer to obtain its assistance with

such empowerment projects;

- methods of achieving common goals with the employer should be examined; and
- the members investigate the manner in which matters for consultation and joint decision-making are to be dealt with.

With regard to setting up employee communication systems and identifying members' training requirements, newly established forums will require the assistance of experts in these fields.

Once an agreement is reached, task teams will put the strategy into practice. The forum members will also need training in understanding financial reports and the factors affecting wealth creation and losses. Otherwise sharing this information with them will achieve nothing but confusion, discomfort and suspicion. (Marais and Israelstam: 38:40).

2.8.2 The Functional Phase

Up to this point the implementation strategy has included no provision for the workplace forum to engage in its standard task of consulting and making decisions with the employer. This is because the forum will have been busy empowering itself to carry out its functions effectively. It may take some

years before the forum is ready. This is acceptable because it must not try to run before it can walk.

Once the forum is confident that it has successfully completed its Empowerment Phase, it should inform the employer thereof and the parties should begin prioritising the issues to be put on the table. The functional phase will then have begun. This phase includes:

- joint prioritisation of issues to be dealt with;
- joint problem-solving on these issues;
- monitoring or progress in terms of the workplace forum constitutional goals and objectives; and
- an ongoing process of ensuring communication with and commitment of all organisational members. (Marais, and Israelstam, 1997:40-41).

2.9 Considerations for effective workplace forum implementation

It is recommended that at the beginning of each meeting held between the parties a summarised version of the common goals, values, agreed interactional styles and co-operative approach be read out. There is a great deal of concern that the meetings between the workplace forum and the employer could generate into negative confrontations, much the same as

employer-union meetings have done in the past and are still doing today. It is clearly not in anyone's interest (except that of your competitors) for yet another internal battlefield to be created. It is therefore strongly suggested that the workplace forum's meetings with the employer not simply be seen as a routine step in the process. Instead, the forum and the employer could set up a joint sub-structure taking the form of an employee-employer co-leadership team made up of employer representatives and the forum members.

In this way, all matters, contentious or not, will be discussed not in an "us-them" context, but in a team context. This may not reduce disagreement, but it will provide a powerful platform for all parties to resolve differences constructively. New co-operative skills, attitudes and actions, applied within the structured format of the workplace forum system, will hopefully lead to less adversarialism within a company and permit more energy for all the stakeholders to add value and share in the creation of wealth (Marais and Israelstam, 1997:41).

2.10 Designation of the workplace forum

Workplace forums are designed to facilitate a shift at the workplace, from adversarial collective bargaining on all matters to joint problem solving and

participation on certain subjects. Statutory recognition is given to the realisation that unless workers and managers work together more effectively. They will fail adequately to improve productivity and living standards. Workplace forums are designed to perform functions that collective bargaining cannot easily achieve like the joint solution of problems and the resolution of conflicts over production. (The Ministerial Legal Task Team, 1997:137).

2.11 Purposes of the workplace forum

Their purpose is not to undermine collective bargaining but to supplement it. They achieve this purpose by relieving collective bargaining of functions to which it is not well suited. The forum's focus on non-wage matters such as restructuring, the introduction of new technologies and work methods, changes in the organisation of work, physical conditions of work, health and safety, all issues best resolved at the level of the workplace. Workplace forums expand worker representation beyond the limits of collective bargaining by providing workers with an institutionalised voice in managerial decisions. Employers receive different benefit from the workplace forum: increased efficiency and performance. {(Explanatory Memorandum prepared by Ministerial Legal Task Team, January 1995, in Government Gazette No. 16259 (10 February, 1995).

2.12 Functions of the Workplace Forum

According to the Labour Relations Act of 1995, the function of the forum is to consult with the employer on a range of workplace and production issues with a view of reaching consensus, to provide for worker participation in the workplace, and seek to enhance efficiency. To ensure that this is possible, the Act provides the forums with considerable powers in the form of co-determination rights. Employers are obliged to disclose information to the forums, to consult with the forums on some issues and enter into joint decision-making on other issues. The Act leaves it to NEDLAC to negotiate which matters should be subject to information disclosure, which to consultation and which to joint decision-making. If no agreement is reached on matters, which are subject to consultation, the union retains the right to strike after mediation. On matters for joint decision-making there is no right to strike, and the Act provides for arbitration. (Van Holdt, 1995:31-32).

The Labour Relations Act describes the general functions of a workplace forum (including the promotion of the interests of all employees in the workplace, regardless of union membership and enhancing efficiency) and the establishment of the forum (by means of collective agreement). A workplace forum must have a constitution, and the contents of the forum constitution are set out in the Act. The workplace forum must be given an

opportunity to make representations and to advance alternative proposals, after which the employer must consider and respond to the representations or proposals, stating, where necessary, the reasons why the employer must invoke any agreed dispute resolution procedure before proceeding to implement his or her decision. If no agreement between the employer and the workplace forum is possible, the dispute must be referred to either arbitration or to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) (The Ministerial Legal Task Team, 1997:138).

A workplace forum must seek to promote the interests of all employees in the workplace, whether or not they are trade union members. It must seek to enhance efficiency in the workplace. It is entitled to be consulted by the employer with a view of reaching consensus about the matters referred to in section 84. It is also entitled to participate in joint decision-making about the matters referred to in section 86 (Government Gazette, No. 16861, Dec 1995). It is an economic imperative for South Africa that every effort should be made to create employment opportunities and prosperity through greater efficiencies and rising productivity. These efforts should be made at every level in every organisation and effective workplace forums could play an important role in this (Van der Walt, 1998:36).

2.13 Costs of running the workplace forum

Once a workplace forum has been established, it must meet regularly. Under the guidelines in schedule 2 to the Act, regular meetings are held when necessary, but at least once a month. Besides meeting the employer regularly, the forum must at least four times a year meet all the employees involved in the forum. For attending to workplace forum matters, a member of a workplace forum is also entitled to reasonable time off during working hours, without loss of pay. If he or she requires training to be an efficient workplace forum member, then the employer must pay for that training. The employer must also provide facilities for a workplace forum to operate, such as access to a telephone. If the forum needs the services of an expert, it is entitled to make use of those services. Although the Act does not state who will pay the expert, section 82(3) provides that the constitution of a workplace forum binds the employer. So, if the constitution provides that the employer will pay the costs of the experts, those costs will then be carried by the employer. And if the employer has more than 1000 employees, the forum may request full-time representatives who must be funded by the employer (Marais, and Israelstam, 1997:97-100).

2.14 Forums meaning for unions

Workplace forums could be a break-through in the struggle for democracy at work. They could provide unions with the tools to improve the quality of working life and prevent management from unilaterally restructuring the workplace. They also offer the unions an opportunity to intervene in management decision-making and shape decisions to meet workers' interests. The workplace forums could provide the focus, the powers and the resources to revitalise union organisation in the workplace. The forums also provide unions with a firm and stable base to engage in issues of production, efficiency and quality without always submitting to management's agenda. However, the forums will undoubtedly raise a number of concerns for unions, some practical and some principled. (Van Holdt, 1995:31 & 33).

The forums provide unions with the opportunity to increase capacity through rights to training, paid time off, full-time representatives, administrative facilities and hopefully finances to commission expects. Unions are likely to develop this capacity on their own without forums. Also, unions need not negotiate every issue that comes to the forum, but could choose those issues of most concern to members. Unions have been built around strategies of militant resistance. Forums will entail a greater emphasis on

co-operation. But it must be stressed that this co-operation does not mean the end of conflict and struggle. Unions will be co-opted if they fail to maintain their independence and clear ideas about their goals and interests.

Involvement in workplace forums could increase workers' identification with the interest of the enterprise and its productivity and competitive position, and so undermine class solidarity. However, unions which organise in capitalist society always experience such pressures and already do so in South Africa. Unions can limit these pressures to the extent that they maintain independent democratic goals in the workplace, and continue to campaign around national collective bargaining, industrial and restructuring issues (Van Holdt, 1995:34).

2.15 Problems in location of the Forum

The problem in the location of the forum is that many big companies have more than one plant, and a number of the restructuring decisions to be discussed in the forums are made at company or divisional level. This problem is worse in the retail and other service sectors where a major company employs thousands of workers, but where very few workplaces have more than one hundred employees. It makes no sense to exclude such companies from co-determination. The parties should consider mechanisms

for establishing co-determination in company forum, and their relation to workplace forums. Another problem is that a single workplace forum makes it impossible to separate co-determination and collective bargaining. But it can be argued that they can only be separated if there is a strict centralised bargaining system. Even with centralised bargaining there is an increasing trend towards negotiating performance or productivity linked wage supplements at plant or company level (Van Holdt, 1995:33).

2.16 Forums and Transformation

One of the fears of trade unionists is that by lacking themselves into co-determination the trade unions will lose their potential for radical change in society. Co-determination is a major break-through in the struggle for democracy at work, and for workers' influence in production. By building unions' institutional power in the workplace, and developing workers' experience in production issues, co-determination provides the possibility for ongoing efforts to expand workers' control. This would be along-term, gradual and continuous process, involving elements of co-operation with management, and elements of struggle.

Co-determination in other words provides a vehicle for gradual transformation, for continually expanding the realm of democracy at work

and in production.

If however, at some future time South Africa should experience a general social crisis, with attacks on the working class and popular uprisings against the state and capital, there would be nothing to prevent trade unions and workplace forums playing an active role in the struggle for popular democracy and public control of production. Indeed, the powers, experiences and skills joined through co-determination would be a crucial resource for the working class. If such social crisis arrive, the working class would find itself considerably weaker with a trade union movement lacking in experience and capacities for managing production. In this draft legislation, the African National Congress (ANC) government has provided an opportunity for the labour movement to considerably expand its democratic capabilities. It should seize the opportunity and campaign vigorously to realise its potential (Van Holdt, 1995:34).

Having analysed the features of workplace forum, we now intend to summarise the general functions of the forum in terms of the New Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995.

The Act clearly stipulates that a workplace forum must seek:

- (a) to promote the interests of all employees in the work place, whether or not they are trade union members; and
- (b) to enhance efficiency in the workplace;
- (c) to be consulted on certain matters by the employer with a view of reaching consensus;
- (d) to participate in joint decision-making about specified matters.

Section 86 of the Act shows that the matter for joint-decision-making, unless they have been regulated by a collective agreement with the trade unions, are the following:

- (i) Disciplinary codes and procedures.
- (ii) Rules relating to the proper regulation of the workplace in so far as they apply to conduct not related to the work performance of employees.
- (iii) Measures designated to protect and advance persons disadvantages by unfair discrimination.

- (iv) Changes by the employer or by employee appointed representatives on trusts or boards of employer-controlled schemes, to the rules regulating social benefit schemes.

However, in this research we are interested in the functional aspect of the workplace forum with particular reference to disciplinary codes and procedures in conflict resolution. It is in view of this we intend to review conflict issues in our theoretical considerations in chapter II of this research.

2.17 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON WORKPLACE FORUM

In research work conducted by Ruan van der Walt (1998), he shows that a number of organisations, like manufacturing organisation, food processing organisation which employ a hundred or more employees and therefore qualify for the establishment of workplace forums in terms of the Labour Relations Act (LRA). This was identified in the greater East London area of South Africa. Having to meet this requirement excluded many organisations in the area from the study and limited its scope.

Once a meeting was arranged, the interviewer used a structured interview format to gather information on the particular organisation's experience and/or views of the WPF system. At the start of the meeting the interviewer

explained to the interviewee the reasons for and aims of the study. Respondents were also informed that the findings of the study would be made available to them on request.

Due to the constraints mentioned above, information could be gathered from only a limited number of organisations. An analysis of the findings is nevertheless of interest.

2.17.1 Findings of Ruan study on workplace forum

It was found that workplace forums had not been established in any of the organisations included in the study. The most common reason given for this was that the relevant trade union had made no attempt to initiate the process. One union expressed the fear that a shift in power could result if a workplace forum was formed. This finding is significant because of the stipulation in the Labour Relations Act (LRA) that a workplace forum can only be established on the initiative of a representative trade union. This raises the question of how many workplace forums will ever be established if unions have to initiate the process. In this regard Industrial Relations (IR) consultants Marairs and Israelstam (1997) have suggested a seven-phase process beginning with management having to make the first move by creating an organisational climate conducive to the establishment of

workplace forum.

None of the parties in the organisations studied by Ruan were found to be taking active steps to establish a workplace forum. In one organisation discussions were taking place to emphasise the importance of a workplace forum and in another the monthly-paid (non-union) staff had approached management to form a workplace forum. An approach such as suggested by Marais and Israelstram maybe worthwhile to get things moving. Most respondents saw opposition by the unions as the major stumbling block in the establishment of workplace forums. They reported statements like: difficulty in convincing the unions, the union is sceptical of workplace forums because they might undermine or contradict the policies of the union, unions believe the workplace forum will take some of their bargaining power away. Lack of the effective communication and genuine trust between management and labour are still major problems. They do not understand each other's frames of references. The system will not work until management and labour truly understand each other's problems and are committed to working towards common goals.

Most respondents believed that the introduction of a workplace forum would have more positive than negative effects on the organisation. Among the positive effects mentioned are better communications and understanding,

attention to real issues with no hidden agendas, increased productivity, consultation and joint decision-making. The negative effects included reduction in management prerogatives and the risk of confidential information falling into the wrong hands.

There can be guarantee that both management and labour will experience only positive effects from the introduction of a workplace forum. Its success will depend largely on the maturity of their approach and commitment to co-operation.

Most of the respondents indicated that their organisations already have some form of management/labour discussion structure ranging from a joint labour forum, worker representative committee, shop steward's council to a national bargaining council. They will continue to make sure of these employee involvement participation programmes.

These findings indicate that a participative culture is not unknown in the respondent organisations. It is clear that the scale of this study was very limited and that a wider-ranging in-depth investigation needs to be conducted before valid conclusions can be drawn. It is however possible to come to some general conclusions based on the study and other available information.

2.17.2 Conclusions of Ruan van der Walt study

At the time of writing the CCMA had received a total of 34 applications for the establishment of workplace forums and of which only 11 workplace forums had been formally registered in the entire South Africa. Most applications that were rejected did not meet the necessary requirements of coming from majority trade unions. It appears that opposition by trade unions is the major impediment to the establishment of workplace forums. However, many employers are also reluctant to relinquish their 'management prerogative' in order to accommodate consultation and joint decision-making with their employees. Both employees and employers have much to gain from greater employee participation and involvement at various levels in the organisation. The challenge facing trade unions and employers is to overcome their prejudices against workplace forums and to engage in constructive debate on removing their respective fears of being undermined and losing power.

It may be a flaw in the Labour Relation Act that only representative trade unions may apply for the establishment of workplace forums. It is important that industrial democracy as made possible through the workplace forums should be extended to all employees including non-union employees, and that such involvement should not be limited or delayed at the instance of the

trade union(s). This virtual 'veto' role of the unions was not included in the original draft bill and now that it is clear that progress is being impeded, the issue should be revisited in NEDLAC.

Proper functioning workplace forums have the potential to enhance efficiency of South African organisations to become strong competitors in the global economy, provided organised business, organised labour and the State take active steps to promote the system. (Van der Walt, 1998:37-38).

According to Jilly Welch (1996) in his article "Forum row threatens to spark new strikes," further strain is being put on South African industrial relations by the very workplace forums devised to help. Labour relations experts are warning that strikes and industrial unrest may again flare up in South Africa if employers do not get to grips with their requirement to implement workplace forums.

In an attempt to give employees a voice in their firms' decision-making process for the first time, the government's new labour Relations Act stipulates that employers must introduce structures to allow elected representatives to contribute to company policy on strategic development, salary levels, equal opportunities and health and safety issues.

The forums, intended for companies employing over 100 staff, can only be convened at the request of the workplace's union, although elected representatives of all staff are required to be involved in regular exchanges of views. But both management and unions, keen to achieve better relations but anxious to retain as much ground as possible, are struggling to make the act's ideals a reality.

"There is a tremendous amount of ignorance from both sides about how this will work," Pierre Marais, a leading South African labour lawyer, told People Management. "Companies are already making mistakes and damaging employee relations, because the foundations for these changes are not yet strong enough."

Eskom, South Africa's major electricity supplier, hopes it has avoided such troubles with a three-year "democratic participation" programme to help ease its own bout of strikes. But its industrial relations consultant, Riana Smith, agreed that the majority of the country's employers will be caught off-guard by the requirements.

"It is easy process to implement the structures for these forums and task forces," she explained, "but it takes a very long time to change the culture of the organisation to be able to manage such collaboration." South Africa's

institute of Personnel Management has been undated with calls from human resources (HR) staff requesting practical information on how to set up the forums.

"There is a desperate need for training and workshops to address not just the practical issues but how to change ingrained attitudes and mindsets about listening to your workers," Marais said.

Directors at JCI, one of the largest and more strike-hit mining companies in Johannesburg, hope to avoid further conflict by setting up branch-level forums and smaller representative groups for discussions at board level. Its human resources chief executive, Andre Goldenhuys, admits that there is a lot of suspicion from both sides about closer strategic collaboration.

"The union is scared this will replace collective bargaining, and management is scared it signals the end of the management prerogative," he explained: "There is a reluctance to go full stream ahead until a better spirit of trust has been developed." But some employers, particularly those in heavier industries, remain unconvinced that the forums will be able to address the deep divisions caused by decades of "patrician" management.

"The question is, can you legislate for co-operation? I have my doubts". said

Mark Tucker, human resources manager for Tongaat Hulett's Sugar (Welch,1996:13).

There are three distinct levels in the structure of any big organisation that is, top management (corporate), line management and employees. Top management has to provide information to all line managers to enable them to communicate set objectives to staff at lower levels. Line management has to clarify the objectives to be met to the employees, and this usually leads to problems. The business concepts used by managers when talking to their subordinates are not always understandable to them. On the other hand, the line managers are unaware that this lower level employees do not understand the information. He delegates the job tasks and activities and expects good results. Conflict arises when the employee is scolded for not doing the job as he was expected to and given due warnings, emphasising the conflict. Conflict is caused by a misunderstanding of business concepts in the communication process to the shop floor in the department. It is not easy for the manager to talk on the level of the employees. When he communicates he himself understands, forgetting that the employee's level of understanding is lower than that of management. Differing culture backgrounds, differing levels of business exposure, type of training received by employees, geographic environment, are some of the factors causing this misunderstanding which eventually leads to conflict in the workplace.

It is not easy to combine the three levels of the organisational structure into one common picture and language that is simple and understood by all. Employees see managers as owners of the company and managers see workers as employees of the organisation. This causes a division between the parties. This gap of misunderstanding affects the organisation, its customers and its employees (Niewmeijer and du Toit, 1994: 219-220).

To prevent misunderstanding between top and line managers, certain communication norms should be followed. Communication should be clear and unambiguous. It should be simple, direct and to the point and must be brief, because some employees may not be able to comprehend long "stories". Communication must be carried out in a language which is common to all. Misunderstanding between top management, line management and employees should be resolved in order to build a common vision for the whole organisation or department so as to prevent conflict in the workplace (Niewmeijer and du Toit, 1994:223-224).

Conflict is universal yet distinct in every culture, it is common to all persons yet experienced uniquely by every individual. Conflict is a visible sign of human energy, it is the evidence of human urgency, it is the result of competitive striving for the same goals, rights, and resources. A conflict is destructive, has destructive consequences, if the participants in it are

dissatisfied with the outcomes and all feel they have lost as a result of the conflict. A conflict is constructive in its process and consequences if all participants are satisfied with the outcome and feel that they have gained as a result of the conflict. The more equally participant groups are satisfied, the more constructive the conflict (Deutsch, 1969:10). Conflict is essentially competitive but not all competition is conflictual. Productive conflict occurs when parties can call a time out when a conflict process is out of control, and can discuss what is going wrong with more insight than feeling. Each partner is more committed to achieving mutually satisfactory solutions than to winning at the other's expense. Non-productive conflict occurs when parties feel stuck in a conflict style that continues in spite of all efforts to change it. The participants feel the relationship is out of control and they are both powerless to interrupt it. The conflict rituals produce only increased tension, suspicion, powerlessness, and unhappiness with self and other. When one partner feels powerless, helpless, and optionless, then discussions are beyond reach and the relationship has become non-productive (Augsburger, 1992:18-64).

The difference between constructive and destructive conflict bears on our selection of the criteria of institutional effectiveness. Some might challenge the appropriateness of equating institutional effectiveness with high ratings by the identification and rules criteria, especially the former. It might be

argued that conflicts are more readily resolved if products and rules are not clear (Powelson, 1972:55).

Conflict is not only inevitable to growth but a requisite of it. Provided that institutions operate effectively, the continuing conflict between buyer and seller (over quality, performance, and price) leads the seller to seek ever less costly ways of production. If the political system operates well, conflict between candidates can lead to greater output by the government. Furthermore, the character of conflict changes with growth. Labour seeks higher wages, which management can pay only if productivity goes up. Thus conflict, properly contained and managed, actually propels growth. Economic growth generates conflict. A continuously growing national product brings with it disagreement over how increments will be divided. Economic growth requires an increasing division of labour. Skills become more specialised, society more differentiated. Conflict is defined as the joint action of two or more parties seeking inconsistent goals. It is also defined as necessarily having a resolution (Powelson, 1972:16-34).

Conflict can be defined a situation in which interdependent people express (manifest or latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests, and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals. The moment that people enter conflict, or have the potential for

conflict, they assume the ability to affect one another's thoughts and or behaviours. In other words, conflict requires interdependence, and more important, it often promotes interdependence as people continue to fight. After conflict, people may decide to terminate the relationship, thereby ending the interdependence. But when conflict continues, people reaffirm their interdependence by simply confronting one another to achieve their goals. They may not like or trust one another, but they remain interdependent. - Finally, conflict is triggered by perceived interference. When both parties see the other as standing in the way of goal attainment, conflict flares up (Donohue and Kolt, 1992:4-7).

Workplace conflict is of special interest. Increasingly, managers and team leaders are using mediation to solve productivity problems resulting from poor communication and co-operation between employees-estimated to account for 65% of job performance deficiency. It is impractical to train managers extensively in mediation techniques. Managing workplace conflict is rarely a primary job function. Managers hold a significant advantage, compared with mediators who are not in roles of authority. If necessary, the manager can override employees' reluctance to participate by pointing to the impact on productivity resulting from their difficult in working co-operatively. Because the managerial mediation session is a business meeting, not a discussion of personal issues, it is a powerful means of solving organisational

problems (Dana,1996:116).

Non-supervisory staff may also apply simple mediation in the workplace- personnel specialists, employee relation staff, internal organisation development consultants, employee assistance program counsellors, and training consultants. Simple meditation is an especially useful skill for members of self-directed work teams (Dana,1996:17).

There continues to be strong emphasis on collective bargaining as a useful way of wage determination in industry. The role of the employer in this respect can be easily understood, bearing in mind that he wishes, for the most part, to show that his wage rate and conditions of service reflects his particular economic and business situation. As far as workers and their unions are concerned, the existence of conflicting views about the ideals of industrial relations is partly a reflection of their misunderstanding of the capability and effectiveness of the collective bargaining process and partly due to their own structural inertia which hitherto made it difficult for them to strike a balance with their employers. Therefore, a new approach to collective bargaining is suggested, incorporating the respective goals, aspirations and interests of the three actors-labour, management and government in the economic sphere.

This approach pre-supposes that the ambitious economic development programmes as well as the quest for rapid industrialisation in the country calls for government involvement, primarily to co-ordinate the activities of all the major interests groups and economic decision makers, particularly in an age of increasing emphasis on incomes policy and high productivity. Therefore, what goes on at the bargaining table should be of as much interest to the government as it is to labour and management. Thus, in a typical bargaining situation, government, labour and management should all be represented and the agreement thus reached will have a greater enhance of acceptability. Government efforts should be oriented towards co-operating as well as participating with the parties involved in the setting of wages and conditions of employment, and in assisting them to assume responsibility for solving day-to-day problems that arise in the workplace through the process of collective bargaining and the legal framework (Fashoyin, 1980:5-6).

One of the most significant developments in trade unionism in recent years has been the growth of workplace bargaining and the increasing power of shop stewards. Shop stewards are trade union representatives at the place of work. The role of the shop steward has many features of sociological interest. He interacts with three sets of participants in the industrial relations systems - his members (i.e. his fellow-workers), the full-time

officers of his union, and members of management in the firm for which he works. His 'opposite member' on the management side is the foreman or first-line supervisor, and most of his management contacts are on this level. The role he plays is thus divided into three sectors, and his skill as a negotiator and mediator is tested by his ability to satisfy the different demands of the groups he deals with. To his members, he is someone who speaks up for them to management and wins better pay or conditions for them. To his union, he is someone who carries out union policy at the workplace, and to management he is (according to the attitude of the particular management members) someone who is a troublemaker to be mastered or a responsible mediator between themselves and the ordinary workers. The 'ideal type' of a steward would combine each of these role sectors into an integrated whole. He would manage to reconcile the conflicting role expectations which each of the three groups has of him. In practice, however, most stewards consider their obligations to be primarily towards only one of these groups (Parker et al, 1972:140-142).

Complete work stoppage and outbreaks of violence due to industrial disputes are certainly the most dramatic expressions of industrial conflict. For the general public they are also the most disturbing. In the minds of many, industrial conflict has come to mean strikes. It is the phenomenon of strikes that most compellingly leads people to call for remedial measures. But a true

understanding of industrial strife and what should be done about it demands consideration of related less-spectacular manifestations as well. It may even be suggested that the general object of study is not the labour dispute, the strike or the lockout, but the total range of behaviour and attitudes that express opposition and divergent orientations between industrial owners and managers on the one hand, and working people and their organisations on the other hand. Labour disputes occur within larger context, they are part of a complex total relationship and can be understood only as the entire relationships held in view (Kornhauser et al, 1977:12-13).

Many studies of strikes are based upon official government statistics. Some countries include lock-outs in the definition, whereas others, more sensibly, separate them (Eldridge, 1968:13). He further suggested that the notion of an industrial relations system, used as a heuristic device, which can facilitate the analysis of industrial conflict. The notion has been used and elaborated particularly by John Dunlop (1958). He defines an industrial relations system in the following way: "an industrial relations system of any one time in its development is regarded as comprised of certain actors, certain contexts, an ideology which binds the industrial relations system together, and a body of rules created to govern the actors at the workplace and work community." The broadest contextual category is clearly the locus and distribution of power in the wider society. It is the power context which is seen as defining

the status of the actors in the industrial relations system. Hence, in empirical terms, this is an invitation to examine the prescribed functions and interrelations of workers' organisations, management organisations, and government agencies relevant to the conduct of industrial relations. This may well throw light on the ability or rights of management and workers to be involved in strikes and lock-outs and on the kinds of procedures which exist for setting disputes (Eldridge, 1968:13, 19-20).

In analysing industrial conflict one may choose to begin by looking at shifts in the status and power of the actors in a country's industrial relations system over a period of time, or one may wish to compare the industrial relations experience of different countries with reference to the power context since, in Dunlop's judgement, it is in the rules most directly derived from the power context that there exist the greatest differences among countries. Dunlop's definitional statement, that is the ideology which binds the industrial relations system together, might give the impression that the systems are 'naturally' stable and integrative. Ideology refers here to the body of common ideas that defines the role and place of each actor and that defines the ideas which each actor holds towards the place and function of others in the system (Eldridge, 1968:20-22).

Among the duties of management in personnel practice is the informing of

employees and groups of employees what they have to do, and what progress they are making towards their objectives and giving them opportunities for job satisfaction. These duties recognise the fact that work will be more efficiently done if it is well organised in a way that gives the individual an emotional stake in it. It requires the management to have a comprehensive organisation chart and statement of responsibility for individual members of management so that they know what they are supposed to be doing, to whom they report and who reports to them (Torrington, 1972:52).

Management should ensure that fair and effective arrangements exist for dealing with disciplinary matters. These should be agreed with employeerepresentatives or trade unions concerned and should provide for full and speedy consideration by management of all the relevant facts. Management need to reconsider their procedure for dismissal and discipline to make sure that it conforms with the standards laid down in the code and that it is operated scrupulously, it should then be possible to keep out of the tribunals (Torrington, 1972:62).

Learning to cope with conflict successfully is a social science problem. Conflict is viewed as the active striving for one's own preferred outcome which, if attained, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred

outcome, thereby producing hostility. It is well to differentiate between two kinds of conflict, substantive conflict and affective conflict. Guetzkow and Grey (1954) define substantive conflict as conflict rooted in the substance of the task. They define affective conflict as conflict deriving from the emotional, affective aspects of the interpersonal relations (p. 369). A conflict is viewed as resolved when all the opposing parties are satisfied with the outcome. A conflict remains unresolved as long as any party is dissatisfied with the outcome. When differences exist, conflict may or may not be present. Differences, particularly differences in values, often lead to conflict. Whether differences actually do lead to conflict depends on the character of the interaction processes. There is ample evidence in the mass media and elsewhere that bitter, unresolved conflict is widespread and increasing in frequency. It occurs at all levels of society, among nations and within nations, among organisations and within them (Likert and Likert, 1976:6-8).

A grievance is any employee complaint about the employment relationship. It refers to the system established by the parties for the processing and settlement of grievances. This system is shaped by certain environmental forces, union and management organisational characteristics and policies, employee characteristics and attitudes, and the nature and structure of the bargaining relationship between the parties (Lewin and Peterson, 1988:2).

Grievance procedures are pervasive in industrial union contracts where employees work for a single employer, but are generally not present in craft union contracts where employees move from employer to employer on a job shop basis, such as in the construction industry (p.18). The unionised grievance procedure has several functions. One function is to ensure that there is compliance with the collective bargaining agreement. In the case of the early craft unions, the business agent or working delegate visited the work site to check working conditions and see that both employees and employers abided by the contract. Following the unionisation of industrial workers in the 1930's the shop steward came to save the role of a contract 'policeman', but often without the powers to compel the employer to conform to the agreement. Typically, management felt obligated only to hear complaints and to dispose of them only in terms of management's conception of its own rights (Kuhn, 1961:88).

Grievance procedures are commended not only for providing a peaceful means of resolving day-to-day workplace disputes and for enabling workers to participate in decisions that affect their work lives, but also for the benefits that they provide to management. These include a virtual guarantee of uninterrupted production during the life of the labour agreement, the use by management of union resources and personnel to police the labour agreement, and a systematic source of information about problem areas in

the workplace, information that can be used for subsequent evaluation and corrective action (Lewin, 1983:127-128).

Conflict management is perhaps the most widely recognised benefit of a grievance procedure. Without such a conflict resolution mechanism, workplace disputes in unionised settings presumably would be resolved through test of economic strength. Grievance procedures are also said to enhance institutional strength, for example, by assisting unions in developing employee loyalty. Briggs (1984) and Kuhn (1967), as examples, believe that the union's major role in grievance processing is to help develop a bond of loyalty among bargaining unit employees. The procedures can also benefit both union and management personnel by assisting in the training and development of shop stewards and supervisors. Personal objectives are also furthered by grievance procedures (Lewin and Peterson, 1988:27-28).

In British industrial relations, grievance can be a notoriously unspecific expression that embraces both individual and collective issues (Marsh and Evans 1973), and so the line between grievance and dispute is often a blurred one (Singleton 1975). It is clearly in an organisation's interests to have a grievance procedure which offers the following guidance: All employees have a right to seek redress for grievances relating to their employment. Each employee must be told how he can do so. Management

should establish, with employee representatives or trade unions concerned, arrangements under which individual employees can raise grievances and have them settled fairly and promptly. There should be a formal procedure, except in very small establishments where there is close personal contact between the employer and his employees (Rollinson, 1993:148-149).

Individual grievances and collective disputes are often dealt with through the same procedure. Where there are separate procedures they should be linked so that an issue can, if necessary, pass from one to the other, since a grievance may develop into a dispute. The aim of the procedure should be to settle the grievance fairly and as near as possible to the point of origin. It should be simple and rapid in operation (Rollinson, 1993:149).

Conflict means an element of workplace relations, which may be termed conflict at work, as well as overt industrial conflict, which may take an individual or a collective form. A reduction in strike activity can come about for many reasons. The previous stage that leads to a strike is the existence of a dispute between a group of workers and their employers. A dispute need not lead to a strike if there are alternative means of resolving differences. Thus, workers need some degree of collective organisation to sustain a strike, which generally means that they unionised. Lower unionisation would thus tend to reduce the number of strikes. Union

organisation and economic, legal and structural forces could all reduce strike levels without affecting any underlying 'disputatiousness' of workers and managers (Edwards, 1995:434-435).

The reason why workers went on strike in the past, also help to show the significance of the fact that they do so much less. Many strikes can be traced on an environment that promoted disputes and the assumption that a strike was a normal means to try to press a case. The reduction of strikes may mean that some of the motivations to pursue a dispute have been removed (Edwards, 1995:436).

Strikes occur when employees as a group refuse to work until changes are made in compensation or conditions of work. The strike is a pressure tactic, it is also a method of notifying other people that a dispute exists between the employer and the workers. But the strike, and the threat of a strike, constitutes the principle device by which unions in our society apply economic pressure in labour disputes. The employer has a form of action available that is somewhat analogous to a strike. It is called a lockout. In a lockout the employer closes the plant or other facility in which a labour dispute exists. The employees are unable to work and do not get paid. As a result, the lockout brings pressure to bear on the employees to settle the dispute (Mills, 1978:169).

Whether a strike is legal or not depends primarily upon its objectives, its timing, or the conduct of the strikers. Employees who strike for a lawful aim fall into two classes 'economic strikes' "and unfair labour practice strikers".

Both classifications retain their rights as employees, but unfair labour practice strikers have greater rights of reinstatement to their jobs. If the objective of a strike is to force the employer to make economic concessions such as a higher wages, shorter hours, or better working conditions, the striking workers are called economic strikers. They retain their status as employees and cannot be discharged, but their employer can replace them. Employees who strike to protest unfair labour practice committed by their employer are called unfair labour practice strikers. Such strikers can be neither discharged nor permanently replaced. A strike may be unlawful because the purpose of the strike is unlawful. A strike in support of a union unfair labour practice or one that would cause an employer to commit an unfair labour practice may be a strike for an unlawful purpose (Hagburg and Levine, 1978:83-84).

Mace and Mace (1979) define conflict as disagreement heated up. A difference arises between two parties (individuals or groups). The interventions taken to solve the difference will determine whether it is resolved, aggravated or perpetuated. Differences of opinion or outlook are

obstacles, and when the two parties fail to reach agreement (even an agreement to disagree), the outcome is disagreement. If this disagreement leads to anger in either or both of the parties, it leads to conflict (Kemp, 1992:108).

According to Schein (1970), conflict if handled properly, can be transformed into enriched problem solving. Managers who desire to use conflict creatively, that is, to benefit the organisation need to listen with understanding and refrain from evaluating, recognise and accept the feelings of the individuals concerned, facilitate communication between individuals and they must be able to clarify the nature of the conflict. It is essential to get to the root of the conflict. Individuals in conflict are often actually saying the same thing in different ways. Any manager involved in conflict should make sure that he knows what the conflict is about. This will also help him address the problem rather than attack the person, that is, it will divert anger and lead to a problem-solving mode (Kemp, 1992:113).

The distinction between organised and unorganised conflict is of great analytical importance. While both types of activity represent worker's response to a work situation that causes dissatisfaction or deprivation, the nature and implications of this response differ markedly. Put simply, in unorganised conflict workers typically respond to the oppressive situation in

the only way open to them as individuals. Such reaction rarely derives from any calculative strategy. Indeed, unorganised expressions of conflict are often not regarded as conflict by the persons in the situation (Scott et al, 1963:40).

It should be no cause for surprise that the grievances expressed by workers in strike situations centre primarily around wages. In a market economy, many things that workers, and others, seek can be secured only through cash transactions (Gouldner, 1955:32). As one factory worker has put it, 'work at factory level, has no inherent value. The worker's interest is his pay-pocket. The accented money is understandable after all, we are shorter of it than most' (Johnson, 1968:12) as cited by (Hyman, 1989:122).

Another sociologist has argued, more grandly, the primary goals of the worker relate to economic advancement and economic security for himself and his family. His taking a job is a means to this end. In Industrial conflict, to give paramount importance to satisfaction with wages is not necessarily an acceptance of simple economic determinism. Since income remains the all-important means for satisfying human wants and needs, wages will continue to be a major consideration in industrial conflict (Katz, 1954:95).

The 1988-1989 Annual Report of Eskom, records with pride the

improvement in productivity achieved as a result of the company separating from superfluous staff. Nearly 10 000 workers lost their jobs. Eskom believed it had retrenched workers fairly. At the time union commentator David Lewis wrote an article in the weekly mail (23.3.1989) on the growing problem of unemployment estimated at 30% of the population. He mentioned the COSATU congress resolutions, which identified reasons why Black unions do not accept the rationale for retrenchment and demand other ways should be found to save jobs. The labour movement has to influence national policy in order to establish an economic policy that prioritises employment creation in the central areas of economic activity (Dekker, 1989:7).

This paper argues that any attempt to understand union attitude and how quality and reliability can become goals accepted by workers, requires an acceptance of the inherency of industrial conflict and the difficult challenge of institutionalising it at all levels of the industrial relations system. In South Africa, there are some problems to be tackled. Power conflicts to achieve wealth distribution in order to attain a living wage is the goal of the Black unions, whereas managers, particularly since 1987, are requiring that a problem solving approach is adopted to achieve wealth generation through productivity improvement. If the collective bargaining procedure is strengthened through the right to strike to picket whilst the monthly meeting

procedure is strengthened to provide codetermination, then the unions are likely to honour the peace obligation for the period in between annual collective bargaining (Dekker, 1989:7-8).

In 1976, the year of the Soweto riots, there were 245 recorded strikes in South Africa. Ten years later, in 1986, there were 643 recorded strikes. The number of cases referred to the industrial court has increased from 2 in 1979, the year of its introduction to over 2000 in 1987. There is no doubt then, that there has been an increase in industrial conflict and unrest (Campbell, 1987:10).

The reasons for this increased level of conflict have been well documented, ranging pay disputes through grievance and discipline to problems with pension funds. Before the advent of a strong Black trade union movement there was no way of measuring polarisation on the shopfloor. It could be argued that polarisation was always there, entrenched in legislation and in the way in which enterprises were managed, that there was just no channel through which the polarisation could be expressed. A strike is not necessarily a measure of increasing polarisation. Although it is an indication that negotiations have broken down, it is also a demonstration by one party to a negotiation that it has bargaining power and is prepared to use it. The belief that polarisation can be entirely eliminated in the workplace is probably

naive - the challenge facing management is to contain it and manage it. So the answer to the problem of the management of polarisation on the shopfloor, quite clearly lies in negotiation. And it is arguable that the only meaningful and effective negotiations that are taking place in South Africa today, are happening in industry, where trade unions and employers are sitting down together and reaching negotiated settlements that work in the practical sense. (Campbell, 1987:10).

According to Sowetan (July 8:3), The National Union of Metal Workers (NUMSA) and employers in the metal industry were optimistic that they would resolve a wage strike in KwaZulu-Natal. The strike by thousands of workers from Monday was sparked when talks between NUMSA and employer organisation, the Steel Engineering Industrial Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA), deadlocked over wage increases last month. Numsa is demanding 9 percent increase for general workers and seven percent for artisans. Seifsa is offering six percent across the board. Seifsa spokesman Mr Neil McGregor said it was difficult for employers to meet workers' demands. He said nine percent was above the inflation rate. "We are losing jobs daily in the metal industry and we have to minimise job loses by keeping more people employed." said McGregor. He said allowing a high wage increase would result in the retrenchment of too many workers. KwaZulu-Natal Numsa spokesman Mr Lucas Mthiyane said his union was prepared to

compromise on its percentage. However, Mthiyane said it was strange that negotiations failed to agree on wages, while a settlement over the new benefit scheme and the setting of the monitoring committee that would evaluate workers had been signed. "How can we call off the strike if our opening demand is not considered?" he said. Further talks are expected tomorrow, when it is hoped the parties will compromise. Public service unions will consult their constituencies this week on a new salary offer tabled by the Government in the Central Bargaining Charter (Hlophe, 1998:3).

According to the Mercury reporter, the 80 000 members of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa in KwaZulu-Natal have called off their strike against the Steel Engineering Industrial Federation of South Africa after the employer body agreed to pay wage increases of about six percent to the highest paid workers and eight percent to the lowest paid workers. Mr Lucas Mthiyane, the regional organiser of Numsa, said workers would be briefed from today about the agreement and that some would return to work today, while others might only do so the following day. Meanwhile, a last-ditch effort by Telkom the South African Post Office and the Communications Workers' Union averted a strike by more than 20 000 workers (The Mercury reporter, 1998:5).

Telkom, the Post Office and the union were scheduled to meet late last night in a bid to reach a settlement. The union was expected to discuss the latest offer with its members. At least 160 post offices were closed yesterday by workers demonstrating over an earlier wage dispute (The Mercury reporter, 1998:5).

Trade union involvement in declaring and resolving disputes has not been clearly documented. This is because government records do not routinely indicate whether unions formally trigger disputes. Nonetheless it appears that most strikes are organised by unionised workers. It is also not clear whether unionised workers generate more individual disputes than non-unionised workers.

Anecdotal evidence from Namibia is that the majority of disputes reported to labour officers are generated by non-unionised workers, whereas unionised workers are better able to resolve disputes internally without recourse to labour officers. It may be for this reason that domestic servants (who tend not to be organised) have declared more disputes in the last three years in that country than other sector (Christe, and Madhuku, 1996:4).

Human resource or industrial relations strategies are not determined solely by external forces and the demands of business strategies. Instead, the values

held by top organisational executives serve as filters through which potential policies or options must pass. Thus, the expressed or implicit values or ideology of management toward unions and toward workers more generally influences the choice of industrial relations policies and practices of the firm as well. It must be recognised that employers in general are reluctant participants in collective bargaining. The vast majority of employers would prefer to be non-union. Most, therefore, participate in bargaining only if they are compelled to do so by law (that is, a union has been duly certified as the exclusive bargaining agent of their employees) and if the union is powerful enough to force the employer to bargain and keep the employer from withdrawing from the relationship (Kochan and Katz, 1988:190).

2.18 METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

2.18.1 The Canadian system of conflict resolution

The Canadian system of industrial conflict resolution is more closely controlled by law than that of any other industrialised democratic countries, even more so in some ways than the American System. The basic reason for the central role of legal regulations in Canadian and American labour relations probably lies in the fact that North American unions, unlike those in Western Europe, needed affirmative legal support in order to develop any substantial economic power (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:25).

A fundamental purpose of trade unions in Canada as elsewhere, has always been to alter the operation of the labour market. Canadian unions were therefore considered illegal at common law as being "in restraint of trade." In 1907, the Federal Parliament enacted a new legislative scheme that has retained a good deal of influence to this day. That scheme, embodied in the Industrial Dispute Investigation Act of 1907, did not seek to further collective bargaining but only to limit strikes and lockouts through a process of compulsory conciliation. Either party to a dispute could apply to the Minister of Labour to have the matter referred to a conciliation board. The great depression of the early 1930s finally led to the growth in Canada and the United States of Industrial unions which organised semi-skilled and unskilled workers. However, even those unions still lacked the economic strength to force employers to accept collective bargaining legislative action was needed. In 1935, the American Federal legislature passed the National Labour Relations Act, usually known as the Wagner Act, which provided a detailed administrative process for the choice of bargaining agent by employees and required an employer to bargain with a union once it had been certified as bargaining agent (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:25-26).

The Canadian labour relations system relies heavily on trade unions and collective bargaining to improve terms and conditions of employment and to give employees an effective voice in the governance of their working life.

However, only about thirty percent of the civilian workforces are union members. That proportion has remained almost constant for the past ten years, despite the steady growth of public sector unionisation. Three features of the Canadian system of labour relations help to explain the relatively low incidence of collective bargaining. The first is the central role of the dual principles of majoritarianism and exclusivity. The second is the predominance of workplace-level bargaining. The third is the tenacity of employer resistance to collective bargaining (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:29).

Under the principle of majoritarianism Canadian law denies a union the right to engage in collective bargaining within the facilitative framework of labour relations legislation unless that union has first obtained majority support in a "bargaining" unit of employees. Once a union proves to the labour relations board that it has majority support in the unit, it is given legal 'certification' as exclusive bargaining agent for all employees in that unit, non-members as well as members of the union. The principle of exclusivity prohibits the employer from bargaining individually with any employee in the unit without the union's concern, even for better terms than those negotiated collectively (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:29).

A second reason for the limited extent of collective bargaining is the

prevalence of workplace-level bargaining and the corresponding absence of effective industry-wide or regional bargaining structures or even, in most cases, company-wide structures. Except for the construction industry, the law usually envisages only single-employer bargaining units, and makes no provision for multi-employer certification. An employer may therefore have a strong incentive, even in an industry where most enterprises are covered by collective bargaining, to try to gain a competitive advantage by resisting unionisation of his employees. Canadian law does not generally provide for the extension to unorganised workplaces of any collectively bargained terms and conditions that might be predominant in the particular industry (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:30).

A third and perhaps more important reason for the limited extent of private sector collective bargaining is the persistence of employer pressure against unionisation. Clyde Summer's words, written with respect to the United States, are almost as true for Canada:

The overwhelming majority of employees has never accepted the basic premise of industrial democracy, the premise that their employees have a right to an effective voice in 'what shall be their condition and how the business shall be run' (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:30).

Once a union has been certified as a bargaining agent, the law imposes on both the union and the employer a duty to "bargain in good faith" toward a collective agreement. The duty to bargain is one of the areas of Canadian Labour Relations Law most beset by the tension between power and principle. The conventional wisdom of Canadian labour law is that the duty to bargain is not a duty to agree. Basically, what it requires is that each party must make serious proposals at the bargaining table, must consider the other side's proposals, and must be willing to sign a collective agreement if a settlement is reached. Multi-branch employer such as banks and retail chains, which have some unionised and some non-unionised branches, have held not to violate the duty by adamantly refusing to give employees at a newly unionised branch better terms than those of employees at non-unionised branches.

Although the strike weapon may be used at the unionised branch in such a situation, it is unlikely to be effective, because the employer can usually manage to keep all of its other branches operating during the strike. The newly certified union is thus very susceptible to decertification, which is usually the employer's objective (Hanami, and Blanpain, 1987:31).

A union which has been certified as bargaining agent has considerable authority over the job rights of individual employees, through its exclusive

right to make a wide range of decisions affecting the bargaining unit as a whole or members of it as individuals. A few examples will show how broad that authority is. Firstly, only the union can decide what terms will be asked for at the bargaining table, although unions usually submit the terms of a negotiated collective agreement to a ratification vote by the employees in the bargaining unit before signing the agreement. Secondly, once a union is certified, the employer cannot negotiate on an individual basis with any employee in the bargaining unit, even for terms better than those negotiated by the union.

The terms of the collective agreement, in other words, are a ceiling as well as a floor. Thirdly, if an employee brings a grievance under a collective agreement, only the union can decide whether the grievance will be arrived through to arbitration or dropped on route, and the union has the exclusive right to present the matter at the arbitration hearing (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:39-40).

In some respects, the Canadian system of industrial conflict resolution appears favour employer interests over employee interests. The fact that a majority vote of employees in favour of union certification is required before any other steps can be taken to compel an employer to bargain collectively, together with the fact that a union once certified is exposed to periodic

decertification votes, often induces employers to foster anti-unionism among their employees. It also encourages competition rather than co-operation among unions, and precludes the establishment or survival of collective bargaining in many situations where it would clearly improve terms and conditions of employment.

The fragmentation of private sectors collective bargaining on a predominantly single-employer, single-enterprise basis is another factor which tends to limit the effective concentration of employee bargaining power and to preclude unions from developing a strong political voice. It also encourages employers to fight the unionisation of their employees, for fear of yielding an economic advantage to non-unionised competitors. The rigid prohibition of strike action of any kind during the lifetime of a collective agreement, and the persistent use of the "management rights" doctrine in the interpretation of the agreement, have limited the ability of unions to respond to unilateral employer initiatives with respect to the operation of the enterprise (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:42).

In some respects, however, employee interests are advanced by single employer bargaining through one clearly identified union. Collective bargaining in Canada is seldom a remote process that hovers far above the workplace. The centre of gravity is at workforce level, and the union is

directly accountable for the workforce at that level. The "micro" scope of most Canadian collective bargaining facilitates the negotiation and enforcement of very detailed collective agreements which govern many aspects of employees' working lives.

Many employers would undoubtedly prefer higher-level, multi-employer collective bargaining, with less direct union involvement at workplace level and less specific, less legalistic, and less easily enforceable collective agreement language (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:42).

2.18.2 Industrial Conflict Resolution in Great Britain

By the standards of most countries, the procedures for conflict resolution that are used in British employment relations are extremely untidy. A variety of arrangements have developed over many years with little central direction or legal restraint. Industrial conflict is generally treated as a strictly private matter between employers and their employees and attempts by parliament to limit its public costs have met with little success. This account starts with an explanation of why the legal framework is so weak and then goes on to describe the processes and institutions of collective bargaining upon which conflict resolution depends. It concludes with a brief account of recent developments in industrial disputes in Britain and of the government

agencies that seek to minimise them (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:103).

2.18.2.1 The legal framework

Most industrialised countries owe the basis of their labour law to a particular major crisis-industrial unrest, economic collapse, or military defeat, which obliged their governments to intervene with legislation that was to have enduring consequences for the conduct of collective bargaining. This was not the case for Britain. The crucial legislation, the 1906 Trades Disputes Act, was passed at a time when employer felt relatively secure, both economically and in their voluntary bargaining relationship with trade unions. The purpose of the Act was thus to keep bargaining free from judge-made liabilities. It ensured that unions (and employers associations) could not be sued for any damages resulting from industrial action if they acted 'in contemplation of furtherance of a trade dispute. These "statutory immunities", as they are generally called, act as the equivalent to the positive rights to strike of other countries (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:103).

The 1984 Trade Union Act, which inter alia required a positive vote from a ballot of union members of their intended strike were to be immune from action for damages, is further inhibiting and altering the conduct of strike action. But the greater use of ballot has been popular with trade union

members and it would, in any case, be politically difficult for a future government of any party to try to repeal much of the new industrial relations legislation concerned with balloting and trade union immunities. Since it is thus unlikely that the spirit of the 1906 Act can be fully reasserted, the trade union movement is giving serious thought to the desirability of a positive right to strike. There are also proposals that a specialist industrial relations court should be established in order to achieve greater consistency of judicial interpretation. The mid-1980s find collective labour law in Britain in a state of considerable uncertainty (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:108).

2.18.2.2 The nature of collective bargaining

Despite these recent developments in labour legislation, the Britain tradition of 'voluntarism' is sufficiently deep for the general conduct of conflict resolution to continue much as before. Central to it is the practice of collective bargaining, that is, the management of the employment relationship in a way that acknowledges a role for trade unions. Although only half the employed workforce is unionised, approximately three-quarters are covered by some sort of collective agreement for pay fixing purposes.

An explicit policy of anti-unionism is relatively uncommon among British employers, partly because successive governments throughout this century

have encouraged the extension of collective bargaining. Despite this, there is nothing unusual about workplaces where no trade union is recognised. These are however, typically small (fewer than 50 employees), independent establishments, many in service industries, where the issue of recognition has often not been raised. There are some large firms which make a virtue of managing without trade unions, but they are relatively few, and are typically American-owned. Non-union employers deal with conflict, with techniques that range from the dismissal of aggrieved employees through to the use of careful personnel management to pre-empt and thus prevent grievances. For most employees, however, there is some degree of union recognition and union representatives are involved in the management of labour to a greater lesser extent.

Until fairly recently, the main institutional vehicle for this involvement was an agreement and bargaining arrangements and later on a nationwide basis. In the first decades of the century, the government generally encouraged the form of collective bargaining, and many of the joint industrial councils' (as the negotiating body of employer association and trade union representatives was often called) continue in existence today (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:105-106).

There is a little rationality behind the coverage of Britain trade unions. Their long history, the variety of organisational principles upon which they were found, and the absence of an active government agency regulating their recognition, have all combined to produce a very haphazard structure. In 1988 there were 365 certified trade unions, but the 22 of these with over 100,000 members accounted for 80 percent of the total trade union membership of approximately 11 million. The organisational problem presented by their structure has not been so much one of too many unions in total, but of heavily overlapping coverage, so that it is commonplace to have several unions represented at one workplace, often vying for membership over the same occupational group of workers (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:109).

When bargaining occurs at the place of work, as is particularly common in Britain, union activists have developed a remarkably effective device for achieving inter-union co-operation by means of the joint shop stewards' committee. The phenomenon of the shop steward is distinctive and central to British trade unionism. It can be traced back to the early days of craft unionism when managers become accustomed to workers at the place of work.

The shopsteward is likely to remain, central to the process of conflict

resolution in British employment. Although the legislation of the 1980s will encourage trade unions to increase internal discipline, both managers and members are sufficiently accustomed to giving a key role to shop stewards for them to remain important. They provide an easily accessible, highly responsive means of communication between management and employees. The organisations they have constructed within the workplace enable binding commitments to be made on behalf of diverse employee interest groups. They facilitate an enterprise-oriented form of trade unionism was in tune with management priorities (Hanami and Blanpain, 1987:110-111).

The dominant position of collective bargaining in conflict resolution in Britain, and the fact that the State has, until recently, been able largely to avoid involvement in this, has meant that there has been relatively little scope for government agencies. Two major developments have modified this position. The first, the Industrial Tribunals, deals with the grievances covered by the statutory rights of individuals, while the second, the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS), acts both as a filter for the Tribunals and as a third party aiding the resolution of collective employment disputes.

Although there will always be a role for arbitration as a final stage in many disputes procedures, it is unlikely to become a central element in British conflict resolution. Both sides tend to see arbitration as a device for the

issue they can afford to lose or the issue they feel they have back down over graciously. For more serious matters the commitment to collective bargaining without third party intervention remains undiminished. Conflict resolution in British employment is an unending process of negotiation (Hamani, Blanpain, 1987:113 & 115).

2.18.3 Industrial conflict resolution in Sweden

Sweden was fairly late to industrialise but once under way development was rapid. By the turn of the century, both employers and employees had begun to establish a system of organisations which in turn facilitated an increasingly collective regulation of working conditions. Once this process had started the role of Government and Parliament remained primarily supportive for a long time, with direct control and regulation more the exception than the rule. Apart from material legislation on specific employee categories, the main trend was to encourage collective agreements, to contain the scope for overt conflicts within moderate bounds and to provide the labour market parties with instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes between them (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:163-164).

In Sweden, there is no legislation even in the public sector, to prevent or prohibit disputes which may be said to endanger vital services. Legislation

of this kind has been noted on several occasions, but the outcome of deliberations has been a consensus that it is primarily the labour market parties' obligation should be retained. At central level the labour market parties have also agreed to have the potential danger of an action to essential services appraised by boards they have themselves set up, and they have undertaken to follow any recommendations those boards may take. There are four boards, with parity of representation for employers and employees, covering various sectors of the labour market. If one party considers that a dispute is liable to cause undue disruption of essential services, it may call for negotiation with the aim of preventing, or circumscribing the dispute. If the parties are unable to reach agreement, the matter is referred to the board for decision. In the public sector, the ban on industrial action applies for a fortnight after the question has been referred to the board, and the latter can obtain a further week's respite. Owing to their composition, the boards have sometimes found it difficult to make any unanimous recommendations to the parties concerned (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:176-177).

A public institute for mediation in labour disputes, set up by the Government and Parliament, has existed since the beginning of this century. Today, it consists of a central conciliator's office, with conciliator for different geographical regions. The permanent conciliators are usually experienced

lawyers for whom conciliation is a spare-time occupation. These conciliators have no powers of direct action, the only obligation which conciliation imposes on the parties is that of presenting themselves at the negotiating table when called upon to do so. Conciliation is the normal resource in Swedish labour relations whenever there is deadlock in an interest dispute of any importance. In the vast majority of cases, the parties succeed in reaching a settlement without resorting to industrial action (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:177-178).

The Industrial Dispute Commission found that the current system of settling disputes worked well on the whole, by all accounts, but that there might be reason to expand access to conciliators, extend the period of notice in certain critical sectors and alter the composition of the boards charged with determining the social hazards of disputes. However, these modifications should, in the Commission's view, be adopted voluntarily by means of agreements. The parties had stated that they unequivocally opposed state intervention in collective bargaining (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:180).

Negotiations on disputes concerning the interpretation and application of Acts and agreements, legal disputes, are not as such distinct from collective bargaining negotiations. However, they differ in that the ultimate means of resolving a legal dispute is usually to refer it to the Labour Court, and

industrial action, the ultimate means of bringing pressure to bear in conflicts of interest, is not permitted in legal disputes.

In order for a legal dispute to be considered by the Labour Court, there must have been direct negotiations between the parties. This barrier rule is of immense importance: the overwhelming number of legal disputes are resolved by negotiations and only a negligible number go to the Labour Court. Virtually all-collective agreements include provisions on procedure in dispute negotiations. A two-tier system is prescribed in the union-level agreements, with local negotiations followed by central ones if the parties cannot agree locally. However, if an employee's trade union is unwilling to adopt this cause, or if he does not belong to a union, he is referred straight to the court (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:180).

The whole country comes within the jurisprudence of the Labour Court (AD). The Labour Court is the first and supreme instance in all proceedings filed by an employers' or employees' organisation concerning the application of legislation or collective agreements. Other labour disputes are settled by a common court of first instance, in which case Labour Court serves as court of appeal. This mainly applies to labour disputes involving non-union members, or union members whose organisations are unwilling to represent them. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Labour Court must be

experienced judges, selected from persons who cannot be regarded as representing either employers' or employees' interests.

Proceedings begin with written or verbal preliminaries. The Court must try to reconcile the parties, if this is judged appropriately. In recent years Labour Court has been increasingly active in this respect. When the *preliminaries are concluded, the case proceeds to the main hearing for determination*. The Labour Court is highly regarded for the detail and lucidity of its judgements (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:180-181).

Only a minor proportion of dispute cases in the Swedish labour market go to arbitration. Arbitration may be used to resolve both legal and interest disputes when negotiations have failed to reconcile the parties. Instead of approaching the Labour Court where there is a legal dispute, the parties can agree (except where certain issues are concerned) to refer the dispute to the arbitration board.

The parties may conclude an arbitration agreement concerning both a dispute that has already arisen and a prospective dispute. Most collective bargaining agreements in the private sector of the labour market have set negotiating procedures whereby issues of certain kinds are automatically referred to arbitration. In many cases, the boards are permanent. In the municipal

sector, too, there are agreements on arbitration boards, and in some branches of enterprise rulings on particular issues by arbitration boards are relatively common. For example, many agreements contain clauses to the effect that disputes on piecework remuneration must be resolved by an arbitration board. In the newspaper sector, there is a collective agreement which prohibits industrial action even where interest disputes are concerned. Disputes must instead be resolved by an arbitration board (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:181).

The composition of arbitration boards varies. They may have either odd or even numbers of members. In interest disputes it is common for employers and employees to be equally represented, which makes for negotiation rather than arbitration. No legal qualifications are required of arbitrators, but the chairman of an arbitration board is often a lawyer, and in many cases he is also connected with the Labour Court.

Arbitration proceedings are usually credited with the advantage of a more open-ended discussion of the issue at stake, without particular emphasis on precedents (after all, unlike Labour Court, arbitration boards can adopt compromises), added to which they may be cheaper and are often quicker. And above all, the procedure and outcome in Labour Court are public, while the content of arbitration proceedings need not be disclosed (Hamani and

Blanpain, 1987:181-182).

2.19 Evaluation of Collective Bargaining and Conflict Resolution Processes in Canada, Great Britain and Sweden

Among the three countries covered by this study, the role of law and government is most extensive administrative framework for the regulation of collective bargaining and industrial conflict, a system of grievance arbitration for the enforcement of collective agreements, and a recent history of income restraint legislation. The system in Great Britain is less legislative and the function of law has long been relatively remote because of the voluntary nature of industrial relations. In Sweden, extensive legislation has also been introduced since 1970. However, although the role of law and the amount of litigation have increased, the autonomy of the parties is still well preserved.

In all three countries, industrial relations systems have had some success in achieving the four goals, particularly in recent years, the goal of providing a fair distribution of wealth without unduly restricting basic human rights. In terms of peaceful prevention of disputes, they are also doing reasonably well, Great Britain having shown the most marked improvement.

The type of government role is different in each country. In Canada, there is

a detailed statutory framework, administered by Labour Relations Board that are subject to review by ordinary courts. In Great Britain, the Industrial Tribunals and Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) play an important role, although the functions of ACAS are relatively limited. In Sweden, the autonomy of the employers has declined due to the introduction of legislation which, however, only sets up frameworks in most cases, leaving substantive terms to be settled by the parties.

There is no doubt that Great Britain has the most informal industrial relations system among the three countries. In Sweden, formality has been growing in recent years, both in the private and the public sector. In Canada, day-to-day problems are often resolved informally, particularly at the shop floor level, in spite of the highly regulated nature of the general system. Although grievance arbitration is required by law and is widely used, the great majority of rights disputes are settled through a process of negotiation. The reality in all three countries is that industrial relations practices tend to be informal and flexible, particularly at the lower level, regardless of the nature of the total system.

In none of these countries are unions suffering greatly from political rivalry, although in Great Britain and Sweden, unions are more political than in Canada. Unions are most influential in Sweden, where union density is very

high and union organisations are very well established within the society. In Great Britain, unions are suffering from currently hostile government in spite of their traditionally well-established organisation. Unions are fragmented in Great Britain but in recent years this long-standing problem has been reduced by the development of inter-union co-operation.

In Sweden employers are well organised in employers' associations, while in Great Britain single-employer bargaining is the rule except in a few highly competitive industries. In Canada, in spite of the legal obligation to bargain, employers are often reluctant to bargain with unions and to co-operate with one another for collective bargaining purposes. As a result, employers' associations are weak.

In Canada and in Sweden, employers are legally obliged to bargain collectively with unions which represent their employees, while in Britain, unions use economic rather than legal pressure to persuade employers to bargain. In Canada and in Great Britain, bargaining tends to be decentralised. An unfortunate result in Canada has been the ability of many employers to avoid collective bargaining. In Britain, the emergence of formal single-employer bargaining and joint shop steward committees has permitted greater success in conflict resolution. In Sweden, the scope of issues of bargaining is broad, and bargaining is well established and characterised by a

system of both high centralisation and local level bargaining.

Consultation, as distinguished from collective bargaining, is not widespread in Canada. In Great Britain, consultation is distinguished from bargaining but fairly well integrated into the bargaining process. In Sweden, workers' participation is well established, it is the only one of the three countries where that is so in the form of worker directors, information sharing and co-determination.

In Canada grievance procedures, including grievance arbitration, generally work relatively successfully but have not been very effective in resolving disputes over 'management rights'. In Sweden arbitration plays a minor role but grievances are settled more through negotiation because of the broader scope of the duty to bargain, which even covers such matters as personnel reallocation, recruitment, managerial appointments, new working methods, new production, the preparation of the budget and organisational change. In Great Britain, grievances are normally handled through negotiation with shop stewards as the major channel of communication between management and labour. However, in Canada, rights disputes are sometimes dealt with at the bargaining table, and interest disputes often intrude into grievance arbitration.

In Canada the public sector labour law often restricts the scope of collective

bargaining, and often imposes additional limits on the right to strike. Some statutes entirely prohibit public sector strikes. In Great Britain the public sector has no special law, and a consultative type of bargaining has been encouraged, although in the 1980s the government has become increasingly hostile to the unions. In Sweden there are only marginal restrictions in the public sector and conflicts are rather frequent there.

Among the three countries, the regulation of industrial relations is the most restrictive in Canada. Those restrictions seem to have been relatively unsuccessful in encouraging collective bargaining and preventing conflict, although government intervention in the form of compulsory conciliation has had some success in limiting strike action. In Great Britain, the parties have been successful in creating more stable industrial relations in recent years, partly because of the changing labour market situation and the development of single-employer bargaining. In Sweden the total industrial relations picture has been stable, with a relatively small number of strikes and a high level of industrial democracy including an elaborate scheme of labour participation (Hamani and Blanpain, 1987:184-185).

In terms of the above theoretical discussion, it appears that the work of Mtayi, Van Holdt, Marais and Israelstram have a direct bearing with the establishment of the workplace forum in this research. It could still be

recalled that Mtayi (1997:98) argued that workplace forum is intended to be one of the primary instruments of the Labour Relations Act to democratize the workplace. He further argued that the functions of the workplace forum are to promote the interest of all employees (whether they are union members or not), enhance efficiency in the workplace, provide for consultation between management and labour on specified issues, and, on others, require joint decision-making. However, such decision-making envisages that management may not take decisions without the consensus of the workplace.

Van Holdt (19995:18-19), argued that a majority union or a group of unions which represent more than half the workers in a workplace, can only initiate a *workplace forum*. He stressed that this is important as it means that a workplace forum cannot be imposed upon unions against their will and they cannot be used at non-unionised workplaces as a way of avoiding unionisation. He showed that workplace forums will have rights of consultation on some issues and joint decision-making over others. He pointed out that on matters for joint decision-making there is no right to strike, and the Act provides for arbitration.

Van Holdt (1995:31-32) agreed that the functions of a workplace forum are to consult with the employer on a range of workplace and production issues

with a view of reaching consensus, to provide for worker participation in the workplace, and seek to enhance efficiency. However, to ensure that this is possible, he said: the Act provides the forums with considerable powers in the form of co-determination rights. He said that the employers are obliged to disclose the information to the forums, to consult with the forums on some issues and enter into joint decision-making over others.

It could be still recalled that Marais and Israelstram (1997:41) argued that workplace forum's meetings with the employer not be seen as a routine step in the process. Instead, the forum and the employer could set up a joint sub-structure taking the form of an employee-employer co-leadership team made up of employer representatives and the forum members. They said that this may not reduce disagreement, but it will provide a powerful platform for all parties to resolve differences constructively. They recommended that new co-operative skills, attitudes and actions, applied within the structured format of the workplace forum system, will hopefully lead to the less adversarialism within a company and permit more energy for all the stake holders to add value and share in the creation of wealth.

It is said that workplace forums are designed to facilitate a shift at the workplace, from adversarial collective bargaining on all matters to joint problem solving and participation on certain subjects. Workplace forums are

designed to perform the functions that collective bargaining cannot easily achieve, like the joint solution of problems and the resolution of conflicts over production (Legal Task Team, 1997:137).

According to the Government Gazette No.16259 (February,1995), the purpose of establishing a workplace forum is not undermine the collective bargaining but to supplement it. It is said that the workplace forum achieves this purpose by relieving collective bargaining of functions to which it is not well suited. It is said that the need for establishing a workplace forum in an organisation cannot be over-emphasized since it expand the worker representation beyond the limits of collective bargaining by providing workers with an institutionalised voice in managerial decisions.

A critique of the various methods of conflict resolution in Canada, Great Britain and Sweden shows that it is not a complete success in resolving conflict. For example, in Canada grievance procedures, including grievance arbitration, are partially successful but have not been very effective in resolving disputes over 'management rights'.

Consultation, as distinguished from collective bargaining, is not widespread in Canada. In Canada and in Sweden, employers are legally obliged to bargain collectively with unions which represent their employees, while in

Great Britain, unions use economic rather than legal pressure to persuade employers to bargain. In Canada and in Great Britain, bargaining tends to be decentralised. An unfortunate result in Canada has been the inability of many employers to avoid collective bargaining.

In Canada the public sector labour law often restricts the scope of collective bargaining, and often imposes additional limits on the right to strike. In Sweden there are only marginal restrictions in the public sector and conflicts are rather frequent there. Those restrictions seem to have been relatively unsuccessful in encouraging collective bargaining and preventing conflict, although government intervention in the form of compulsory conciliation has had some success in limiting strike action.

The inference which could be drawn from the above discussion is that workplace forum has not been fully developed and utilised in conflict resolution.

2.20 Hypotheses for this Research

In light of the literature review and the theoretical framework discussed above, the hypotheses for this research are as follows:

- Workplace helps in improving trade union activities.
- Workplace forum is useful in achieving efficiency in the industry.
- Workplace forum can be used in resolving industrial conflict.
- Workplace forum is consulted by employers on some policy issues.

2.21 Concepts used in this Research-Operational Definition

Conceptualisation is necessary to enable the researcher to study, organise and differentiate the variables of the study. It is the process during which the specifications are constructed for certain terms. According to Fitreit and Robenson (1998:121), they argue that it is necessary to explain the concept used fully because our everyday language is sometimes vague and only general agreement exists about the meanings of terms being used.

2.21.1 **Workplace Forum**

Workplace forum in this research, are essentially structures that are made up of the representatives of workers (non-senior management employees).

According to this research, workplace forum is a forum of a majority union.

2.21.2 **Majority Union**

Majority union is defined in this research as one or more registered unions with a membership of 50 percent plus one.

2.21.3 **Conflict**

In this research *conflict* is seen as an informal state of confrontation and under given conditions has the potential to become a labour dispute.

2.21.4 Industrial Action

Industrial action is considered in this research as strikes, lockouts or similar collective actions. They were understood in the sense that they were collective acts, or, to speak more exactly, a collective abstaining from work, or refusal payment for collective non-working.

2.21.5 Strikes

In this research strikes are seen as an obvious expression of industrial conflict. It is a collective act involving a group of employees and as such it requires a certain amount of worker solidarity and organisation.

2.21.6 Grievances

In this research grievance is defined as an occurrence, situation or conditions that justifies the individual lodging a complaint.

2.21.7 Negotiation

In this research negotiation is seen as an interactive process aimed at a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable position of one party in the

interaction vis-à-vis the other party. It may also be viewed as the actual execution of the collective bargaining process, where the physical interaction between the parties takes place.

2.21.8 Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining in this research usually referred to as a process because it involves human behaviour. It also involves more than one person or group of persons, and the groups have reciprocal effect on one another, since the behaviour of one group affects the behaviour of the other. For this reason, collective bargaining is referred to as an interactive process.

2.21.9 Bargaining

In this research bargaining is said to be a win or lose interaction between two parties in an economic exchange process, whereas negotiation has been described as a deliberate interaction between any two units attempting to define or redefine their terms of interdependence.

2.21.10 Conciliation

According to this research conciliation occurs when the parties in dispute get together with a third, neutral party, a conciliator. The conciliator does not decide who is right or wrong, but attempts merely to assist the parties to reach agreement. The Act states that conciliation can include mediation, fact finding or the making of a recommendation to the parties. It is up to the conciliator to decide on which is the more appropriate process.

2.21.11 Industrial Sabotage

In this research industrial sabotage is defined as 'that rule-breaking which takes the form of conscious action or inaction directed towards the mutilation or destruction of the work environment.

2.21.12 Arbitration

In arbitration the dispute is referred to a neutral third party, called an arbitrator, who hears both sides of the dispute, and then makes a decision about whom is right. The arbitrator will issue an arbitration award, which is binding on the parties. There is no appeal against the

decisions of the arbitrator, but a review might be possible.

2.21.13 **Mediation**

In this research mediation is seen as the intervention into dispute or negotiation by an acceptable, impartial, and neutral third party who has no authoritative decision-making power to assist disputing parties in voluntarily reaching their own mutual acceptable settlement of issues in dispute.

Mediation involves the intervention of a third party which first investigates and defines the problem and then usually approach each group separately with recommendations designed to provide a mutually acceptable solution.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the research techniques used by the researcher to solicit for the necessary information from the respondents.

3.2 Research Design

This study was conducted at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry. The company is located 14km from Empangeni, 18km from Esikhawini and 25km south of Richards Bay. Geographically it is located at the centre of the three areas (see, Appendix B). The reason for selecting Felixton Sugar Mill Industry was that it is near the University of Zululand where the researcher is studying, so the costs for travelling expenses will be afforded.

3.3 A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FELIXTON SUGAR MILL INDUSTRY

In the history of the Felixton Sugar Mill Industry it was found that Sir James Liege Hulett was responsible for establishing the original Felixton Mill in 1911. He was granted a concession by the Natal Colonial Government to crush the cane produced by growers who had also been granted a concession to produce sugar cane from leased land in that area. The establishment of the Felixton Mill followed Sir Liege's successful venture into sugar production with the establishment of the first Hulett Mill in 1903 at Tinley Manor.

The first Felixton Mill, under Mr A. Warner and Mr Bax de Keating the general manager and manager respectively, was established on the banks of the Umhlathuzi River. It was designed and erected by Harvey Engineering of Glasgow with a nominal crushing capacity of 35 tons cane per hour and which, during its third season, produced approximately 12 000 tons of sugar. The original cost of the Felixton Mill together with its infrastructure was £80 000.

The Felixton Mill was expanded over the years with the introduction of new and more modern equipment including a Krajewski crusher and by

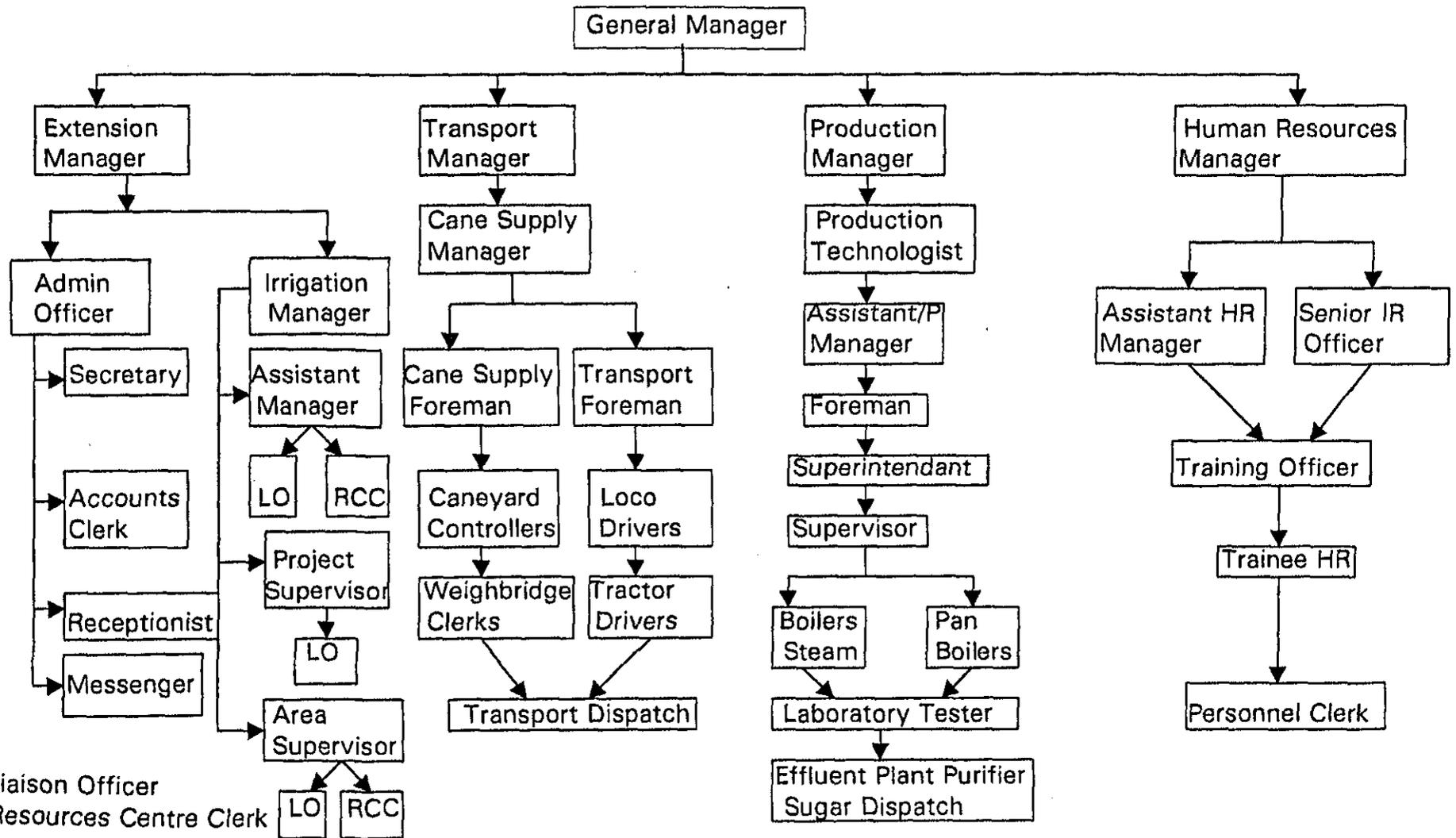
1950 this mill was capable of crushing 95 tons of cane per hour. A major expansion of this mill then took place when the Darnall tandem, which had been replaced by a new and modern mill at Darnall, was transferred to Felixton increasing capacity of Felixton to 196 tons of cane per hour with two tandems operating in counterposing directions.

The Empangeni Mill was acquired by Sir J.L. Hulett & Sons in 1957. It was expanded by the installation of a diffuser which gave this mill the capacity to crush 1 000 000 tons of cane per annum. The combined crushing capacity of the Felixton and Empangeni Mills at the time of their closure was 395 tons of cane per hour as compared with the designed capacity of 600 tons per hour of the new Felixton Mill.

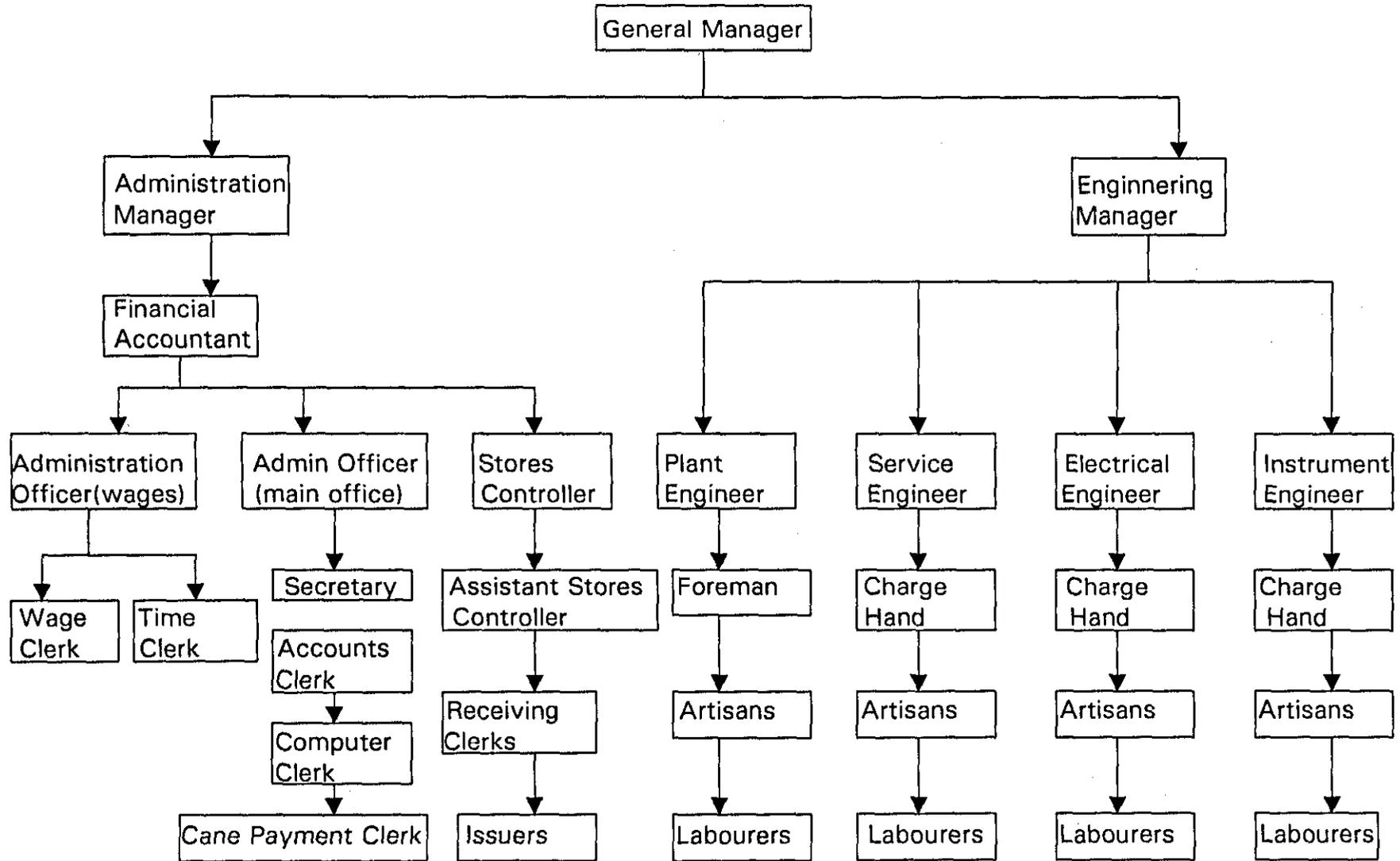
3.3.1 LOCALITY

The Felixton Mill is approximately 160 kilometres from Durban by road. It nestles in the lush green cane fields of Zululand in close proximity to Empangeni and only 25 kilometres south of Richards Bay.

THE HIRACHICAL STRUCTURE OF FELIXTON SUGAR MILL INDUSTRY



Continuation.....



3.4 THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

On top of the organisational structure there is a General manager. Below the General manager there are six managers representing six different departments that is, the Extension manager, Transport manager, Administration manager, Human Resources manager, Engineering manager and the Production manager. All these managers are in the same level. Looking at their functions, the General manager to start with, is in charge and responsible for the whole plant. He controls the budget. He gives the targets to be achieved and take control of the achievements. The General manager also delegates responsibilities to different departmental managers and make sure that the work is done properly. In other words he is the chief planner in an organisation.

The managers who report to the General manager are in charge of different departments. Their main function is to carry out plans. Looking at the Extension manager, his functions are to liaise with the cane growers. To make sure that the advisers give them advises about how to plant sugar cane and when is the right time for planting and which fertilizers to be used. He is more responsible to acquire cane from small growers. He is also responsible to acquire more growers to deliver cane in the plant. He makes sure that the customers are maintained, meaning that they get paid and kept

happy. The Transport manager liaises with the growers. He is responsible to make sure that transportation comes in time, and that the cane is being transported from grower's field. He monitors cars. He is responsible for building department. In other words he is involved in housing for the Felixton employees. The Administration manager is responsible for the wages and payments. He is in charge of store and buying departments. He is responsible for the worker's needs. He maintains all financial payments and is responsible for all the money that comes in and goes out. In other words he balances the books.

The main functions of the Human Resources manager are, to make sure that policies and procedures are maintained. He is responsible to make sure that the right people with right qualifications are employed. He is also responsible for training employees. The main function of the Engineering manager is to make sure that the mechanical equipment is running and the technology is in place for the production process to be effective. Finally, the main function of the Production manager is to make sure that the process is carried through.

3.5 INNOVATIVE DESIGN

Felixton has a number of new concepts and design innovations.

3.5.1 CANE HANDLING AND PREPARATION

The cane-handling system at Felixton allows cane delivered by road or rail to be fed directly into the two extraction plants with the minimum of double handling. Surge storage capacity is provided in specially designed rail trucks which are fed via the rail tippers when required.

The cane is billeted into short lengths from which tramp iron can be easily removed. It is then fed through a surge bin into an intensive shredding operation. The arrangement is cost-effective and allows for a simple mill yard layout, using rubber belts for cane conveying.

3.5.2 CANE DIFFUSION AND BAGASSE DEWATERING

The diffusion process of sucrose extraction was chosen because it is cost effective and efficient. The two largest cane diffusers ever constructed, in two 300 tons per hour extraction lines, have been installed in the Felixton

Mill to cater for the relatively high fibre cane supplies available, at sucrose extraction of over 98%.

Drying of diffuser bagasse has always presented problems. The 6-roller mills installed in Felixton, were designed in co-operation with Smith Mirrlees and were tailor-made for the special dewatering needs of diffuser bagasse.

3.5.3 CLARIFICATION

The history of low purity juices with problematic clarification, led to the provision of a dual clarification system to ensure export sugar quality at all times. Short retention clarifiers of SRI design were provided for primary clarification of diffuser juice. After evaporation, syrup flows to a syrup clarifier, of Tongaat-Hulett design, where further clarification incorporating air flotation takes place.

3.5.4 EVAPORATION

To minimise process steam demand the evaporator, as the major steam user in the factory, was designed to reduce steam requirements. It provides vapour to heat the diffusers and vacuum pans from the second effects of quintuple effect evaporators. The very large (5 500 m²) first and second

effect vessels are of long-tube climbing film design and are probably the largest cane juice evaporators ever built.

Provision has been made in the layout for the installation of mechanical vapour recompression to be installed to accommodate any future requirement for increased thermal efficiency.

3.5.5 PAN BOILING AND CRYSTALLISATION

The *continuous pan boiling system* is the first of its kind in the world. Nowhere else has the continuous boiling technique been successfully applied to the production of high quality VHP sugar.

Experimental work over a number of years led to the development of a continuous pan design, capable of boiling A-sugar to the required crystal specification. This resulted in the installation of continuous boiling pans for A-, B-, and C-sugars, and are followed by continuous vertical crystallisers for all massecuites.

3.5.6 ENERGY BALANCE

A sugar mill is one of the few industries which is self-sufficient in both energy and water supplies. All power and process steam demands are satisfied by generating steam from bagasse and by careful design, a surplus energy in the form of power or unused bagasse can be generated.

At Felixton, an optimum arrangement of steam use in the factory has provided surplus bagasse fibre which is supplied to the adjacent Mondi paper mill.

3.5.7 STEAM SUPPLY

Boilers are provided to burn bagasse, bagasse pith, and coal as an auxiliary fuel. Three 150 ton per hour units of moderately high efficiency are provided and these can be upgraded in the future if further export of fibre becomes desirable. Wet scrubbers are provided for the flue gas with the fans installed after the scrubbers and so protected from erosion.

3.5.8 CONTROL AND INSTRUMENTATION

The plant is controlled from a centralised control room situated high up and having visual contact with the main operating areas. Control is provided by a distributed micro-processor based system with overall computer monitoring of vital areas. Operator stations are provided for control loops which can be controlled manually under emergency conditions.

The system is designed for reliable and easy operation and control of all vital processes. The monitoring and co-ordination of the whole mill is considerably improved by the centralising of controls into one operating centre.

3.6 PLANT OPERATION

3.6.1 CANE PREPARATION AND EXTRACTION

Up to 600 tons of cane per hour is delivered by road and rail to be weighed and offloaded into two extraction lines. The cane stalks are chopped in the billeters into manageable pieces for feeding into shredders which shred the cane into small pieces for the extraction of juice in the diffusers. Here hot imbibition water is continuously sprayed onto a moving bed of the finely

prepared cane to leach out the sucrose-rich juice. Wet bagasse from the diffusers is passed through heavy roller mills to remove the residual juice and to dry the bagasse for use as fuel in the boilers.

3.6.2 POWER GENERATION

Bagasse is the main fuel for the boilers but a portion of the bagasse is passed through depithers to separate the pith from the cellulose fibre which is used to manufacture paper in the adjacent Mondi Mill.

The boilers produce high pressure steam that drives turbo-alternators for the production of some 20 megawatts of electricity to supply the factory and village. The exhaust steam from the turbines is used to provide the process plant heat requirements. Boilers flue gas is passed through wet scrubbers to control air pollution.

3.6.3 JUICE CLARIFICATION

Diffuser juice is weighed, heated, limed and has flocculant added as it passes to the clarifiers. The impurities settle out in the clarifiers and clear juice is decanted. The settled mud is mixed with bagacillo and fed onto vacuum

filters where the remaining sucrose is washed out. The filter cake is transported to the fields as fertilizer.

3.6.4 EVAPORATION

The clear juice is passed through heaters, and quintuple effect evaporators which use the turbine exhaust steam to evaporate off water and concentrate the juice into syrup. Remaining undissolved solids are then removed in a syrup clarifier.

3.6.5 CRYSTALLISATION

Syrup is fed to seed vacuum pans that produce the base sugar crystals for the continuous vacuum pans where the crystals are enlarged by crystallising sugar from the syrup feed. The vacuum pans are heated by second effect vapour from the evaporators at just over atmospheric pressure and boil under vacuum at a low temperature to prevent deterioration of the sucrose. The continuous pans are automatically controlled by computers in a central control room to produce a consistent mixture of sugar crystals and molasses. This massecuite is fed to crystallisers that allow further crystallisation under the action of stirring and water cooling to exhaust the maximum quantity of sucrose from the molasses.

3.6.6 CURING

The cooled massecuite passes to centrifugals that separate the sugar crystals from the molasses and produce up to 70 tons per hour of raw golden brown sugar that is 99.4% pure. The sugar is dried, conveyed to a storage bin and transported to the central Refinery for conversion to white sugar or to the Bulk Terminal for export.

The high grade A-molasses is again crystallised in two further boilings. The lower grade B- and C-sugars obtained are remelted and fed with syrup back to the A-boiling.

The exhaust molasses is sold for the manufacture of animal feeds and alcohol. The whole discussion is represented by means of a diagram in Appendix C.

In this study which deals with the role of the workplace forum in resolving conflict, both the management and the employees at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry were randomly selected to participate. This involves visiting participants in the workplace for the purposes of privacy and concentration. This helped the researcher to have an access of meeting all the respondents.

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research techniques because they were both found to be useful to the researcher. The orientation of qualitative research, its assumptions about social life, its objectives for research, and the way it deals with data are often at odds with the quantitative approach. Such differences can create confusion among students, researchers, and the readers of research reports. Those who judge qualitative research by quantitative standards are often disappointed. Nevertheless, most people find reports on qualitative research more enjoyable to read. Some people think that qualitative research is easier to understand than quantitative research.

Although qualitative researchers do not have to know about statistics and rarely begin with formal theory, the belief that qualitative research is easy is a myth. Simple dichotomies between better and worse or easier and harder research will not help to understand differences between qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research conceptualize variables and refine

concepts as part of the process of measuring variables that comes before data collection or analysis. By contrast, qualitative researchers form new concepts or refine concepts that are grounded in the data. Concept formation is an integral part of data analysis and begins during data collection. Thus, conceptualization is one way that qualitative researcher organizes and make sense of data.

This research design was chosen because in it the data is coded after all the data has been collected. Coding data has a different meaning and role in qualitative research. A researcher organizes the raw data into conceptual categories, and creates themes or concepts, which are used to analyse data. Instead of a simple clerical task, qualitative coding is an integral part of data analysis. It is guided by the research question and leads to new questions. It frees a researcher from entanglement in the details of the raw data and encourages higher level thinking about them. It also moves the researcher towards theory and generalization.

3.7 Research Technique

In this research 30 respondents were selected from 230 employees using a simple random technique. The cluster system was also used to divide the industry into departments from which the final respondents were selected.

Although 30 respondents may not be sufficient for a research of this capacity, the observation method was also used to collect and solicit the necessary information for this research. In addition to this, the researcher made use of most of the official records and statistics that were made available to her by the management at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry.

The researcher also used a questionnaire survey. The researcher asked people questions in a written questionnaire handed to respondents. The researcher also used interview technique to solicit the necessary information. The researcher manipulates no situation or condition, people simply answer questions. In questionnaire survey, the researcher asks many people numerous questions in a short time period. The researcher typically summarizes answers and questions in percentages, tables or graphs. Surveys give the researcher a picture of what many people think or report about the survey.

To supplement the questionnaire survey the researcher used it in combination with the interview study method for the purposes of reaching a broad spectrum of the respondents. The main part of the interview consists of asking questions and accurately recording answers. This is easy for closed-ended questions. The interviewer knows how and when to use

probes. A probe is a neutral request to clarify an ambiguous answer, to complete an incomplete answer, or to obtain a relevant response.

3.8. Target Population

The target population was drawn from a large number of 230 employees and management working at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry, in Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province of South Africa. It involves people from different ethical groups, gender, age, and people of different religions. It also involves people who are members of the workplace forum and those who are non-members of the workplace forum. It also involves people who are members of different trade unions and those who are non-union members.

3.9 Ethics of the study

In this study all the participants were assured of confidentiality. They were allowed to formulate any answers they think were appropriate for the purposes of the study. Therefore, in no way can the findings of this study be used to victimize those who participated because they will remain unknown.

The respondents in this study were allowed to share ideas with their colleagues and also to consult their personal records before answering

questions. The clarity of the ambiguous questions was made. The participants in this study were not biased by an interviewer. Those respondents who cannot read and write were assisted by the researcher.

3.10 Methods of data collection

The following methods were used as the instruments for the collection of data in this research, mainly because of their suitability and relevance to the nature and purposes of this research.

3.10.1 Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire survey was used in this research, for it meets favourable some of the aims of this study. They were presented in a written format and subjects wrote their answers. Besides some shortcomings that most researchers will associate with a questionnaire, the researcher feels that, the questionnaire was however, most suitable and relevant to use in collecting data for this investigation. In this regard Mouly (1972:245):cf. Paragraph 3.2.2, stated that, although the questionnaire may have certain weaknesses, it remains however, the most widely used technique in normative research.

The use of a questionnaire was justified by its ability to allow a wide

coverage with the minimum effort, financial expenditure and time consumption. In this way it afforded greater validity and reliability in results because it was able to place more candid and objective responses because of its impersonality.

Mrwetyana (1983:115) in Ndlala (1985:52) concurs with the above view by saying that the questionnaire seems to be the best tool to use in instances where not all the respondents are within easy reach in any given target population. It is for similar reasons and consideration that the questionnaire was used in this research.

3.10.2 Pre-testing the questionnaire

The following points were listed to highlight the significance of pre-testing the questionnaires, namely to:

- provide a trial run of the questionnaires as a data collecting tool,
- identify problems encountered by the respondents in the handling of the questionnaire, and
- determine whether the respondents could complete the questionnaire within a specific time limit.

3.10.3 Wording of certain items

Some respondents experienced difficulty in responding to certain items. The apparent ambiguity in those terms was eliminated by means of providing some explanations.

3.10.4 Elimination of certain items

No items were eliminated on grounds of irrelevance or lack of clarity. This may be attributed to the scrupulous of planning and drafting.

3.10.5 The final draft of the questionnaire and its administration

Having conducted the pre-testing of the questionnaire, necessary modifications were affected, the questionnaire was then drafted to its final form. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions. These were chosen because of their ability to make up for their apparent weakness of limiting and directing respondents. Space was left at the end of some questions for the respondents to give additional comments. Most of the respondents used this opportunity quite effectively.

3.11 Statistical Analysis

The aim of using statistical method was to develop tests for assessing the level of rejection of a hypothesis, that is, to determine the probability of an error being produced in generalizing a property of a sample to the entire population. The multiplicity of such tests reflects the variety of problems and conditions. The researcher used a chi-square test (χ^2), which is a commonly used non-parametric test. Non-parametric tests are statistical tests that analyse data without assumptions about the distribution.

The chi-square test simply tests whether the observed or actual frequency of a phenomenon corresponds to the frequency which should have been recorded, that is, which is expected if the hypothesis under study was correct. It is thus based on comparison between observed frequencies and expected frequencies, that is, between the given facts and the theoretical anticipation, in order to assess whether the facts support the theoretical considerations.

The chi-square (χ^2) test is a test of significance of the observed differences (like the student test), a measure of correspondence between the facts and theory. However, the chi-square test does not give any information about the

degree of the relationship or association between the variables. Its strength resides in the breadth of its applications : if the data are of a nominal nature, their frequency of occurrence in each separate category is recorded. Being a non-parametric test, the chi-square test does not assume a normal distribution of the population nor require any other parametric conditions to be fulfilled. It addresses itself to random independent samples or groups.

As mentioned above, the aim of the chi-square test is to compare the observed and expected frequencies in order to assess whether the observed data support the hypothesis.

Thus, the general expression of this test is:

$$X = \sum \frac{(\text{observed frequency} - \text{Expected frequency})^2}{\text{Expected frequency}}$$

In order to perform this analysis, the data must be presented in a contingency table, each category in its cell, and the expected frequency computed. Moreover, the degrees of freedom of the problem must be defined, and the χ^2 -table must be consulted.

The significance level was chosen, this is the criterion for deciding when

observed difference is significant or not, that is, when a null hypothesis (H_0) has to be rejected or not. The level of significance is symbolized by the Greek letter α (which reads alpha). H_0 belittles or even denies the difference between two groups while H_1 emphasize the experimental group as being different from the control group.

3.12 Limitations

Although the data in this research was collected, there were some shortcomings in collecting all the relevant information. The researcher encountered some problems because, sometimes the respondents were illiterate (they cannot read and write). Other respondents left the questions unanswered. Others refused to answer the questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the introduction part of this work, it has been pointed out clearly that the purpose of this research is to investigate workers perception toward the establishment of workplace forum.

In view of this, the following hypotheses will be investigated in this chapter:

- (a) To find out if workplace forum help in improving trade union activities.
- (b) To find out workers perception in the possibility of achieving efficiency through workplace forum.
- (c) To find out the nature of consultation or utilisation of workplace forum by an employer.
- (d) To find out respondents perception on problems that hinder the establishment of workplace forum.

4.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THE RESPONDENTS INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE IN WORKPLACE FORUM.

Table 4.2

Age in years	Interest to participate in workplace forum activities	Percentage
15-30	11	37
30-45	12	40
45-55	5	17
55-65	2	6
TOTAL	30	100

Table 4.2 above shows that forty percent (40%) of the respondents that showed interest to participate in the workplace forum activities were between 30 and 45 years old by the time of this study. Thirty seven percent (37%) of the respondents were between 15 and 30 years old while seventeen (17%) were between 45 and 55 years old. Only a small percentage namely, six percent (6%) of the respondents were above 55years old.

The inference we can draw from the above table is that individuals at their thirty's and forty's are more likely to participate in workplace forum activities. As individuals move towards their fifty's and above, their interest

to participate in workplace forum activities decline. Perhaps the reason we can attribute to this, is that they are moving towards their retirement age.

4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO SEX

Table 4.3

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	21	40
Female	9	30
TOTAL	30	100

Table 4.3 above shows that thirty percent (30%) of the respondents were females while seventy (70%) percent were males. Both males and females were represented in the sample, although males were the majority.

The rationale for interviewing both sexes was on the assumptions that there is a significant difference on the attitudes of males and female respondents towards the workplace forum.

4.4 DISTRIBUTIONN OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO RACE

Table 4.4

Race of the respondents	Number	Percentage
Asian	5	17
Black	13	43
Coloured	6	20
White	6	20
TOTAL	30	100

Table 4.4 above confirms that the majority of the respondents, that is, forty three percent (43%) were Blacks. Twenty percent (20%) were Coloureds, and also twenty percent (20%) were Whites. Only seventeen (17%) percent were Asians.

The above findings revealed that most of the respondents were Blacks, meaning that Felixton Sugar Mill Industry is dominated by black people.

4.5 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACROSS DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Table 4.5

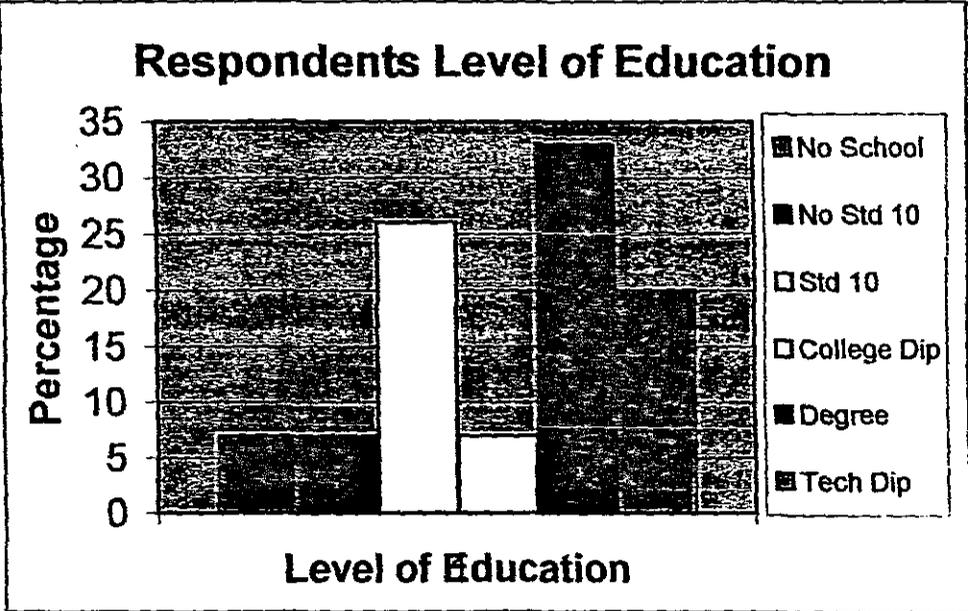
Respondents level of education	Number	Percentage
No school attended	2	7
Did not complete Std 10	2	7
Standard 10 completed	8	26
College Diploma	2	7
University Degree	10	33
Diploma from Technikon	6	20
TOTAL	30	100

Table 4.5 above shows that the majority of the respondents interviewed who are also members of the workplace forum are university degree holders. This shows that the level of education among workplace forum members is very high. In the same vein, this must also have contributed to the ability of the workplace forum to negotiate for their demands with the management of the industry.

This showed that the majority of the respondents were suitably qualified since thirty three percent (33%) of them reported that their highest level of

education were full bachelors degree. Twenty six percent (26%) of the respondents said that they completed standard ten. Another twenty percent (20%) of them reported that their highest educational qualification were diplomas from technikon. Seven percent (7%) reported that they are college diploma holders. Another seven percent (7%) reported that they did not complete standard ten while only seven percent (7%) had never attended school. This is represented graphically in figure:1 below.

Fig : 1



4.6 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR WORK EXPERIENCE

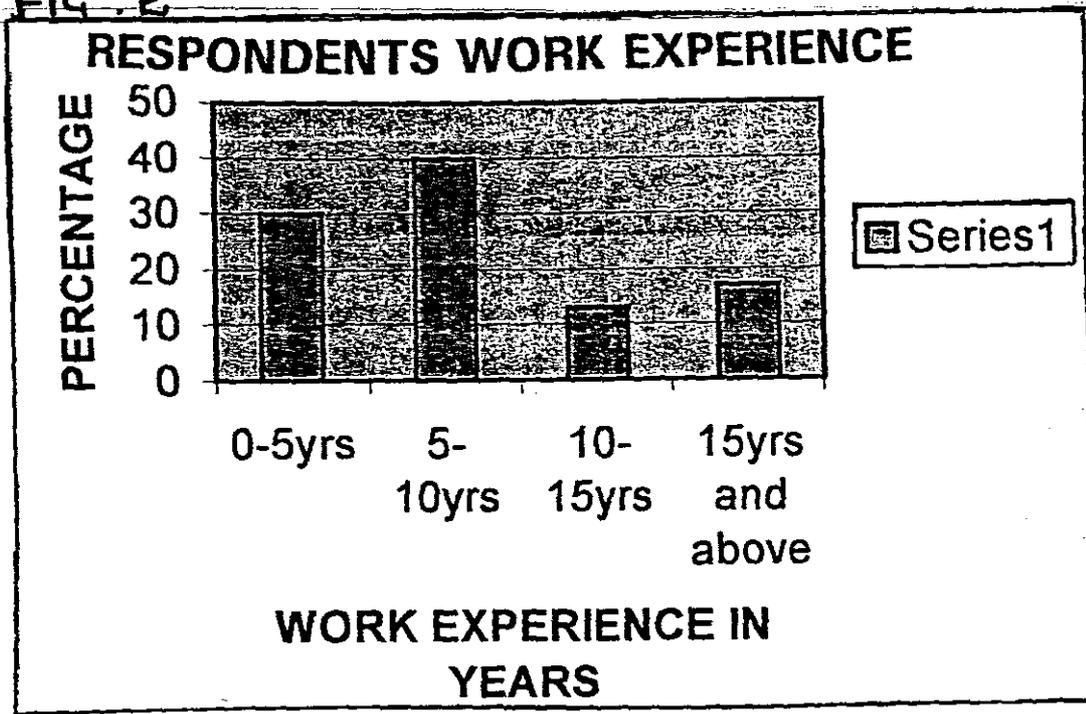
Table 4.6

Respondents work experience	Number	Percentage
0-5 years	9	30
5-10 years	12	40
10-15 years	4	13
15 years and above	5	17
TOTAL	30	100

Table 4.6 above revealed that forty percent (40%) of the respondents which is the majority worked for the company for a period of five to ten years. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents reported that they worked for a period of not more than five years. Seventeen percent (17%) of the respondents have been working for a period of more than fifteen years.

Thirteen percent (13%) of the respondents said that they worked for a period of about ten to fifteen years at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry. This is represented graphically in figure: 2 below

Fig : 2



4.7 THE IMPROVEMENT OF TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE WORKPLACE FORUM

Hypothesis 1

Ho : Workplace forum does not help in improving trade union activities.

H₁ : Workplace forum helps in improving trade union activities.

Table 4.7

Respondents view	Female	Male	Total
Yes	9 (8.7)	20 (20.3)	29
No	0 (0.3)	1 (0.7)	1
TOTAL	9	21	30

Observed $x^2 = 0.44$

Critical value = 3.84

Df = 1

Level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

Therefore H_1 is accepted because the observed x^2 is less than the critical value.

This confirms that workplace forum help in improving trade union activities.

The contingency "C" = 0.12

This therefore shows that there is a fairly weak relationship between the improvement of the trade union activities and the workplace forum.

The above table 4.7 reveals that 20 (male) respondents out of 21 respondents are of the view that workplace forum helps in improving trade union activities. Only one male respondent is of the view that workplace forum does not help in improving trade union activities.

This research confirms the analysis of Van Holdt (1995:31&33) that workplace forum could be a break-through in the struggle for democracy at work. Workplace forum could provide unions with the tools to improve the

quality of working life and prevent management from unilaterally restructuring the workplace. It is said that workplace forum offer the unions an opportunity to intervene in management decision making and shape decisions to meet worker's interests. Van Holdt says that workplace forum could provide the focus, the powers and the resources to revitalise union organisation in the workplace.

However, the forums undoubtedly raise a number of concerns for unions, some practical and some principled. The forums provide unions with the opportunity to increase capacity through rights to training, paid time off, full time representatives, administrative facilities and hopefully finances to commission expects. It is also said that forums will entail a greater emphasis on co-operation. But it must be stressed that this co-operation does not mean the end of conflict and struggle.

4.8 THE ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE FORUM IN ACHIEVING EFFICIENCY IN PRODUCTION SYSTEM

Hypothesis 2

H₀ : Workplace forum is not useful in achieving efficiency in industry.

H₁ : Workplace forum is useful in achieving efficiency in the industry.

Table 4.8

Respondents view	Female	Male	Total
Yes	3 (4.2)	11 (9.8)	14
No	6 (4.8)	10 (11.2)	16
TOTAL	9	21	30

Observed $x^2 = 0.918$

Critical value = 3.84

Df = 1

Level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

Therefore H₁ is accepted because the observed x^2 is less than the critical value.

This therefore confirms that workplace forum is useful in achieving efficiency in the industry.

The contingency "C" = 0.17

This shows that there is a fairly weak relationship between the efficiency in industry and the usefulness of the workplace forum.

This analysis therefore confirms one of the expected functions of the of the workplace forum as clearly stipulated by the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 namely, they must seek to enhance efficiency in the workplace and to participate in joint decision making to mention a few.

According to Van Holdt (1995:31&33), the workplace forum provide unions with a firm and stable base to engage in issues of production, efficiency and quality without always submitting to management's agenda. He mentioned that workplace forum provide unions with the opportunity to increase capacity through rights to training, paid time off, full time representatives, administrative facilities and hopefully finances to commission experts.

Involvement in workplace forums could increase workers' identification with

the interest of the enterprise and its productivity and competitive position, and so undermine class solidarity. In that way this analysis confirms that workplace forum is useful in achieving efficiency in the workplace.

4.9 THE ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE FORUM IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Hypothesis 3

H_0 : Workplace forum is not useful in resolving conflict.

H_1 : Workplace forum is useful in resolving conflict.

Table 4.9

Respondents view	Female	Male	Total
Yes	8 (6.9)	15 (16.1)	23
No	1 (2.1)	6 (4.9)	7
TOTAL	9	21	30

Observed $\chi^2 = 1.07$

Critical value = 3.84

Df = 1

Level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

Therefore H_1 is accepted because the observed χ^2 is less than the critical

value.

This therefore confirms that workplace forum is useful in resolving conflict.

The contingency "C" = 0.19

This therefore shows that there is a relationship between the usefulness of the workplace forum and conflict resolution.

This analysis therefore confirms that workplace forums are designed to facilitate a shift at the workplace, from adversarial collective bargaining on all matters to joint problem-solving. Workplace forums are also designed to perform functions that collective bargaining cannot easily achieve, that is, the joint solution of problems and the resolution of conflicts over production. Workplace forums expand worker representation beyond the limits of collective bargaining by providing workers with an institutionalised voice in managerial decisions.

A workplace forum must be given an opportunity to make representations or proposals, after which the employer must invoke any agreed dispute procedure before proceeding to implement a decision. If no agreement between the employer and the workplace forum is possible, the dispute must

be referred to either arbitration or to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA) (The Ministerial Legal Task Team, 1997:137).

4.10 CONSULTATION OF THE WORKPLACE FORUM WITH THE EMPLOYER.

Hypothesis 4

H₀ : Workplace forum is not consulted by the employers on some policy issues.

H₁ : Workplace forum is consulted by the employers on some policy issues.

Table 4.10

Respondents view	Female	Male	Total
Yes, is consulted	8 (7.8)	18 (18.2)	26
No, is not consulted	1 (1.2)	3 (2.8)	4
TOTAL	9	21	30

Observed $\chi^2 = 0.05$

Critical value = 3.84

Df = 1

Level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

Therefore H_1 is accepted since observed x^2 is less than the critical value.

This confirms that workplace forum is consulted by the employers on some policy issues.

According to the Government Gazette, No.16861, December 1995, a workplace forum is entitled to be consulted by the employer with a view of reaching consensus about the matters referred to in terms of section 84 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. It is also entitled to participate in joint decision-making about the matters referred to in section 86 of the Labour Relations Act. A workplace forum is entitled to intervene in management decision-making and shape decisions to meet workers' interests. It is entitled to be consulted with a view of preventing management from unilaterally restructuring the workplace.

It is an economic imperative for South Africa that every effort should be made to create employment opportunities and prosperity through greater efficiencies and rising productivity. These efforts should be made at every level in every organisation and effective workplace forums could play an important role in this (Van der Walt, 1998:36).

4.11 RESPONDENTS VIEWS ON PROBLEMS THAT HINDERS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKPLACE FORUM

Table 4.11

Respondents views	Number	Percentage
Unions problems.	8	27
Management concerns towards non-disclosure of information.	13	43
Establishment of other forums within the organisation.	3	10
Relationship between the workers and the employees.	6	20
TOTAL	30	100

Table 4.11 above shows that forty three percent (43%) of the respondents agreed that the management interest towards the non-disclosure or abuse of information hinders the establishment of the workplace forum. Eight percent (8%) reported that union problems also hinder the establishment of the workplace forum. This indicates their awareness about different interests and goals between management and trade unions. Only three percent (3%) of the respondents reported that other forums existing within the plant might hinders the establishment of the workplace forum. Their views show a significant relationship with the early hypothesis formulated by this research.

The views that were given by some of the respondents revealed that there

are many problems hindering the establishment of the workplace forum. Among other things, they pointed out that different interests between the workers and employers, union problems, management concerns towards non-disclosure of information and the establishment of other forums within the organisation are also problems that might hinder the establishment of the workplace forum.

4.12 Workplace Forums from a Comparative Perspective

Examination of various labour relations systems shows, that no industrial society can compete and prosper in the world market unless there is co-operation and mutual problem solving between management and workers. Workers (even unskilled and uneducated workers) know things about the reality of production processes in their workplaces, the causes of defective products, lost time and work injuries, and the potential for improvement which management never learns. At the same time, workers have the choice to do the least required or the most possible, which employers cannot control by command. Every knowledgeable personnel expert agrees that giving the workers a voice in the decisions that affect their working life is essential for productivity and profitability. And giving workers a voice is equally essential for improving the quality of the employees' working life and providing a democratic workplace. The worker's voice cannot be shouts of

protest or demands answered by the employer's assertion of management prerogatives. The worker's voice must be one that answer management's seeking of assistance with a willingness to listen, a willingness to share in problem solving and a willingness to consider employees not as suppliers of hours of labour but as partners in the enterprise.

The countries which have prospered, both domestically and in world competition, are those which have developed institutions and attitudes which have fostered this sense of partnership. It is to this end, that the proposals for workplace forums are aimed. There may be controversy about the details of the proposal. The basic question to which the workplace forum is addressed is how to develop a co-operative consultation process at the workplace level; how to break through an adversarial confrontation climate that has developed in the collective bargaining process. To address this question, an experience will be drawn from four different systems, that is , Germany, Sweden and Japan-and one which has been a marked failure-the United States (Summers, 1995:806-807).

4.12.1 Comparative Perspective

First, it cannot be proved that the potential for non-confrontational problem solving is greatly increased by a separation of functions. The resolution of

distributive issues, that is, basic economic issues, must be separated from the resolution of workplace and productivity issues. Distributive issues—a division of returns from the enterprise, how much goes to workers and how much goes to the owners or shareholders—are too often inescapably confrontational, reducing the parties to fighting over shares of the pie which are too small to satisfy either side. Workplace and productivity issues are different. Both workers and management have shared concerns over the productivity and profitability of the enterprise. Jobs depend on survival of the enterprise. Wages and profits depend on the quality and efficiency of production. Co-operative problem solving can bring gains to both in terms of job security, increased wages and increased profits. Distributive issues are inescapably confrontational; workplace and productivity issues need to be co-operative.

In Germany, economic terms are bargained at the industrial or sectoral level. Bargaining may be bitter and end strikes, but neither plant managers nor representatives (the works council) are involved in the confrontational bargaining. The adversarial bargaining of the collective agreement leaves little or no residue of hostility to undermine co-operation at the plant level. The same is true in Sweden. Collective agreements establishing economic terms are centrally negotiated. Local union officers resolve workplace problems. The antagonisms generated by bargaining do not carry over to the

day-to-day discussion of workplace issues.

In the United States, by contrast, bargaining is predominantly at plant level. Even in large corporations like General Motors the central agreement is elaborated at the local level and can lead to strikes. The same people who negotiate the collective agreement must then deal with the problems of plant safety, changes in production processes, product quality and productivity. Adversarial attitudes of the bargaining table carry over to daily plant relations. Problems are not solved but fought over. The central question is how to keep the functions separate. The common device is centralised bargaining. Central agreements, for practical reasons, focus primarily on basic economic issues, namely, wages, hours, pensions, holidays and vacations. Plant level problems are left for plant level resolution. In Sweden, both functions are performed by the union, but separate parts of the union. Central agreements are negotiated by the national unions and relations at the plant level by the local unions.

Traditionally, the national agreement in Sweden have never dealt with workplace issues, indeed, collective agreements made by members of the Employers Confederation provide that 'the employer is entitled to direct and distribute the work, to hire and dismiss workers at will and not to employ workers whether organised or not'. But employers have developed co-

operative relations with workers at the plant level. It is important to note that when Sweden passed its Co-determination Act in 1976, and elaborated it by a central co-determination agreement, responsibility and control for co-determination of matters not covered by the national agreements were placed in the hands of local unions and plant management.

In Germany the functions of the works council are legally prescribed, limiting by implication the function of collective bargaining agreements. The union and employer cannot, by collective bargaining, encroach on the statutorily defined functions of the works council, though they can, in effect, delegate functions to the works council.

Most of the countries in Western Europe have an equivalent separation of functions, with centralised agreements establishing basic economic terms and plant structures dealing with plant level problems. In none of them, other than the United Kingdom, are both dealt with at the local level. What is quite clear from these systems is that the distributive issues and the production issues are institutionally separated. Different individuals with different institutional basis perform the two functions. This is fundamental, if the plant productivity issues are to be protected from the adversarial bile of economic negotiations. There must be some demarcation between the functions.

It seems difficult to achieve this without some demarcation of function, either by accepted practice, collective agreement or by law, so that the collective bargaining process does not overlap or intermix with the consultative process. Inevitably, this means some limitation on the subjects placed on the collective bargaining table.

An important subsidiary question is how disputes in the consultation process are to be resolved. In Germany some issues not resolved by consultation are left to management, but many are ultimately resolved by compulsory arbitration. The availability of arbitration on co-determination issues gives the works council leverage on consultation issues. By agreeing not to demand arbitration on a co-determination issue, the works council may obtain concessions on a consultation issue. In Sweden, if no agreement is reached after full consultation, the employer is free to take the proposed action.

What is critical is that these workplace disputes are not resolved by strikes. In Germany the works council is barred by law from economic action and in Sweden the union is barred by statutory peace obligation of the collective agreement. If the parties were free to resolve the dispute by strike or lockout, trial by battle, then it would be nearly impossible to prevent the

consultation process from being poisoned by the potential confrontation.

Japan is different. There, consultation and collective bargaining are performed by the union, but in a very special fashion. Any dispute begins with a process of consultation. If all consultation efforts fail to reach consensus, the parties then begin with collective bargaining, and this can become quite adversarial. This, however, is not a model to be copied, for it is based on fundamentally co-operative relations in which management and employees consider themselves as 'members of the family'. One union may 'strike' by wearing armbands to work to show their unhappiness with management. And management often responds to the social and psychological pressure of this showing of employee dissatisfaction (Summers, 1995:807-809).

The above analysis relating to the workplace forum shows that the majority of the respondents have realised the need for the establishment of the workplace forum and its usefulness. Such observations have been successfully illustrated in this research.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter intends to draw some conclusions on the basis of the findings made. Thereafter some recommendations will be made and a workable plan of action proposed. The proposed solutions will show how the various recommendations can be implemented. This will be followed by the conclusion of the research project.

In chapter one above, the problem of investigation was stated, workplace forums were not established in most industries but they are very helpful and they contribute to the industrial peace. Both management and employees have realised that they need each other in order to achieve their goals. But the two parties required practical ways of showing willingness to co-operate. The aim of this research was to find out by means of empirical investigation whether or not there are any benefits from the workplace forum. A wide range of relevant literature was reviewed in chapter two above. On the basis of the literature review, the researcher looked at how do international countries resolve conflict and on what strategies do they use in order to resolve conflict in work environment. The aim was to establish a broad frame

of reference within which the problem of investigation could be identified and defined. An empirical study was conducted. This was accomplished by the use of the questionnaires which was the main research method used in this study. The use of the questionnaire schedule was fully discussed in chapter three above. Valuable information was elicited from a number of employees at Felixton Sugar Mill Industry.

On the basis of the data analysis, in chapter four, table 4.1 above indicated that forty percent (40%) of the respondents included in the sample were between 15 and 30 years old. Then thirty seven percent (37%) were between 30 and 45 years old. This enabled the researcher to conclude that the majority of the people start working at a fairly young age.

This showed that age and experience were not the factors for consideration on the helpfulness of the workplace forum in industry.

It was found that the majority of the respondents were suitably qualified for the work they do. It was felt that the respondents who are not well educated/trained for their jobs see no benefits from the workplace forum whereas those who are suitably qualified see the benefits.

This showed that education is a considerable factor for in the relationship between the views of the respondents about the helpfulness of the workplace forum and their educational qualifications. This enabled the researcher to conclude that, the more people become educated, the more they realize the need and the helpfulness of the workplace forum in industry as far as industrial peace is concerned.

On the basis of the recommendations made, it is recommended that the management should provide the information and indicate its confidentiality to the employees. It was suggested that the trade union and any bargaining agent should be involved in the forum so as to prevent industrial unrest. It was also suggested here that there should be the prevention of the establishment of other forums within the organisation. It was suggested that workplace forum can help in achieving efficiency in the workplace by looking at the job descriptions and make recommendations. This showed that there is a need for the establishment of the workplace forum in industries.

On the basis of the proposed solutions made for the purposes of reducing conflict in the workplace, it was proposed that companies should train managers so that they can handle conflicts and maintain harmony in the workplace. It was also proposed here that the plan should be communicated and every worker should be involved. It was proposed again that a

supervisor should be concerned when an employee show signs of serious personal stress.

It was proposed that a company should have a strong policy that prohibits any form of harassment or threatening behaviour. Finally, it was also proposed here that companies should develop a crisis management team to handle violent incidents before, during, and after they occur.

This discussion of the research findings showed that there is a great deal of agreement between the views and perceptions of the respondents who are included in the sample. This showed that there is a significant relationship between a number of issues and factors pertaining the role of the workplace forum, such as that for helping in reducing conflict in industry.

Conflict cannot be isolated. It is part of our life so there should be some ways of minimizing it. The need for the establishment of the workplace forum could not be over emphasized. However, this can only be best achieved if and only if, the industries are appropriately and adequately organised in its management style.

It is hoped that the above recommendations and solutions if implemented will bring some changes in the problems that might hinder establishment of

the workplace forum in industries. When that happen, the rate of conflict will show a significant decline. This will contribute towards the general enhancement of the quality of working life in industries.

Consequences of not utilizing the workplace forum are as follows: In the first place, the idea of both workers and management to go to court in order to settle their dispute breaks the cordial relationship between both parties. This does not occur when both parties make use of the workplace forum to settle their disputes. Usually, when parties are involved in court cases, they hardly see eye to eye and in addition to this, the psychological consequences of this is that trust and good faith are broken between the two parties.

Secondly, both the management and the workers waste a lot of time by going to the court. For the final verdict of the case to be given, it may take up to a year, thus a lot of time is wasted by both parties. This is not likely to happen in the case of workplace forum, cases are not postponed from time to time as it occurs in normal court practice. Thirdly, in terms of cost-benefit analysis, both parties (management and workers) spend a lot of money to hire the service of legal experts to represent them. Fortunately, the legal expert services are not needed in workplace forum. Thus, this minimise costs on both parties. Fourthly, the involvement of management in court cases does not project a good image of the organisation or industry. In view

of this it is better for disputes to be resolved within the organisation.

At this juncture the six steps are recommended to the management of Felixton Sugar Mill Industry to be used in with this forum to resolve disputes:

Define the problem. According to Auren Uris, in "The Executive Deskbook", Van Nostrand Reinhold (1988), there are two kinds of problems: "what" problems that require you to determine the precise cause of the problem, and "how" problems that really focus on how you are going to solve the problem since its cause is already known. Still, it may be better to address most problems as "what" until you are absolutely certain of the cause, since many times we tackle the symptoms of a problem rather than the real issue because we assume we know the cause when in fact we don't.

Gather information. You are looking for the possible causes of the problem. Here you will find some analytic techniques you can use to help you with information gathering, including brainstorming which can be used not only to identify the causes of a problem but also solutions.

Identify all possible solutions. Do not worry at this stage about how feasible a solution is. Rather, look for as many solutions as possible from which you can choose the best solution.

Choose the best solution. If you can do so, you may want to present your better solutions to identify the best running small pilot tests. At the end this can save you considerable time and money. Otherwise, you may have to analyse each of your solutions to determine which has the highest chance of succeeding and go with that, making changes and corrections as needed.

Take action. Decide what needs to be done and write these steps down then begin. If you are working as a team, and assignments can be delegated, do so. Likewise, in a department.

Monitor results. Have a plan for contingencies. This plan will help ensure successful resolution of subsequent problems. (Supervisory Management , 1994:9).

Tools and Techniques for Problem Solving

The following techniques can be used to identify the cause of a problem or get a better sense of situation:

Pareto Analysis: This technique recognises that many things may occur which are causing problems but only a few critical. And by addressing these critical few, the situation can be resolved. Measurable data are necessary for

such analysis, so the initial step may be to gather information on quality or cost or productivity. Then the data are analyzed to determine which elements are having the most impact - whether it is busy lines or people being put on hold, that is creating poor customer service complaints or missed delivery dates. Since the process assumes that twenty percent of the elements involved in the process or procedure are having eighty percent impact, then the next step is to identify action plans to address those twenty percent of the elements.

Scatter Diagrams: Here you are studying the relationship between process characteristics to see if there is a relationship between any one and the problem, evident by how frequently they appear together on a graph. The more scattered, the less likely a problem and process element related to each other. You might compare a number of problem incidents to use of a product from a supplier or a particular piece of equipment or even an employee on the line to identify the likelihood of cause of problem.

The Is / Is-Not Matrix: Here you are working with a matrix across which is labeled the headings "Is", "Is-not", "Therefore". Down the side of the matrix you might indicate the physical or geographical location of the event or situation, the time it occurred, the nature of the event, and who was involved. This way you organise your information, and can proceed from

there to verify your conclusions about the cause of the situation. In showing a relationship between two elements, the Is / Is-Not Matrix is similar to a scatter diagram.

Work Flow Diagrams: These show the flow of materials, people, or information within any organisation. Detailed work flow charts will help to identify when problems enter the system, usually because work has to be redone at that point.

Cause and Effect Diagrams: The team first carefully defines the problem, then works together to identify likely causes of the problem, ultimately reaching agreement on the major causes. Once they have this information, they try to visually connect all the causes back to the general problem, drawing lines to show relationships between causes and relationships. More lines are drawn as additional causes traced to these problems. In searching for causes, the team ultimately comes to the root cause of the problem, the one they need to address before they can address the others.

Because the final diagram often resembles a fishbone, the technique is also called a fishbone analysis.

Variance Analysis: Here you review all the steps required to produce a product or conduct a process, looking at where problems are likely to occur and their consequences. Once you have identified likely causes, you can go back to the real process to determine if the problem you are experiencing stems from there. The technique can also be used to design work processes to prevent problems from occurring by taking steps in advance.

The chart that comes out of this analysis resembles a matrix, with variances across the top and the work by sequence down the side. Variances are indicated on the matrix as well as their later impact on the process. The variances are then studied to determine which are having the biggest impact, and these are addressed to reduce the likelihood of problems occurring (Supervisory Management, 1994:9).

How to Identify Solutions

There are a number of techniques to stimulate individual or group creativity. One of the most-well known is brainstorming, and you can do it on your own as well as a part of a group.

If you do it alone, just take a piece of paper, limit yourself to five minutes, and proceed to write as many solutions as you can think about. Do not

evaluate your ideas, just write whatever comes into your mind. After the five minutes, look over the list and draw lines where you can see connections. Then think how you could put those connections to work to solve the problem you are facing.

In a group setting, encourage your team members to freewheel, that is, to vocalize any idea, no matter how silly it might seem. These should be no judgements made until the brainstorming session-which should last about thirty minutes-is over.

If your group is not likely to call out ideas, then suggest everyone write down their ideas, and either collect and put these ideas on the flipchart anonymously or go around the room and ask each person to call out his or her ideas until you have every idea on the flipchart.

Let's assume you have several good ideas, all of which meet your criteria for success to some degree. How do you choose the idea to pursue?

If your brainstorming has left you with a multitude of good ideas, you might want to try multi-voting, which is a technique in which you review the ideas, linking ideas where possible, then ask for a vote. Each time you vote, the list is reduced by half. In a short time a list of fifty items can be reduced to a

workable number for further study and research and ultimate decision making. If you have few ideas, you can vote on them to determine whether you have consensus on any single idea, keeping in mind that you just want to select an idea that everyone will support. (Supervisory Management, 1994: 9).

SUMMARY

The findings of the study revealed that there is a great need for the establishment of a workplace forum in industries.

It was found that many scholars recommended a workplace forum as the right channel for employee representation since it expand worker representation beyond the limits of collective bargaining by providing workers with an institutionalized voice in managerial decisions.

Lack of the effective communication and genuine trust between management and labour are still major problems. Most of the respondents believed that the introduction of a workplace forum would have more positive than negative effects in an organisation. Among the positive effects mentioned are: better communication and understanding, attention to real issues with no hidden agendas, increased productivity, consultation and joint decision-making. The negative effects included reduction in management

prerogatives and the risk of confidential information falling into the wrong hands.

It shows that workplace forums could be a break-through struggle for democracy in the workplace. In an organisation where the study was conducted, workplace forum had not been established. The reason given for this was that, the relevant trade union had made no attempt to initiate the process. It expressed the fear that a shift in power could result if a workplace forum was formed. But according to the majority of the respondents views, the need for establishing a workplace forum was necessary.

This finding is significant because of the stipulation in the Labour Relations Act of 1995 that a workplace forum can only be established on the initiative of a representative trade union.

Generally it is better for other countries like Germany, Canada, Great Britain and Sweden to adopt a workplace forum method of conflict resolution since it has been successful in South Africa. Among the four countries studied, it shows that their methods of conflict resolution were not a complete success in resolving conflict. For example in Germany, economic terms are bargained at the industrial or sectoral level. Bargaining may be better and ends strikes,

but neither plant managers nor representatives(the work councils) are involved in the confrontational bargaining. The same is true in Sweden. Collective agreements establishing economic terms are centrally negotiated. Local union officers resolve workplace problems. In the United States, in contrast, bargaining is predominantly at plant level. Problems are not solved but fought over. What is critical is that these workplace disputes are not resolved by strikes.

It could still be recalled that in Canada grievance procedures, including grievance arbitration, generally work relatively successful but have not been very effective in resolving disputes over 'management rights'. In Sweden arbitration plays a minor role but grievances are settled more through negotiation because of the broader scope of the duty to bargain.

In Great Britain, grievances are normally handled through negotiation with shop stewards as the major channel of communication between management and labour. *The emergence of formal single-employer bargaining and joint shop steward committees* has permitted greater success in conflict resolution.

We hope that management in other organizations will also find the above recommendations useful.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Augsburger, D.W. (1992): **Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns**, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville Kentucky: USA.
2. Barker, C.E. (1990): **Managing Industrial Relations in South Africa**, Digma: Pretoria
3. Benjamin,A and Wedderburn,K.W. (1972): **Industrial Conflict :A Comparative Survey**, Longman Group Limited: London.
4. Benjamin,P. Jacobs,R. and Albertyn,C. (1989): **Strikes, Lock-outs and Arbitration in South African Labour Law**, Juta and Company Limited: Cape Town.
5. Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J.S. (1983): **Consultation: A Handbook for Individual Development**, Addison-Wesley: London.
6. Bless, C. and Kathuria, R. (1993): **Fundamentals of Statistics: An African Perspective**, Juta and Company Limited: Cape Town.
7. Bomers,G.B.J.and Perterson, R.B. (1982): **Conflict Management and Industrial Relations** Kluwer Nijhof Publishing Massachusetts: USA.
8. Boulding, K.E. (1962): **Conflict and Defence: A General Theory**, Happer and Brothers Publishers: New York.
9. Boulle, L. and Raycroft, A. (1997): **Mediation: Principles Processes and Practice**, Butterworth Publishers (Pty) Ltd: Durban: SA

10. Burton, J. and Dukes, F. (1990): **Conflict: Practices in Management, Settlement and Resolution**, McMillan Press Ltd, Virginia: USA.
11. Campbell, R. (1987) "In 1976, "The year of the Soweto riots," **IPM Journal** 1987, Vol.6 No.3: 10.
12. Carlisle, A.T. (1997) "Power to the people," Pittsburgh Business Times, 1997, Vol.16 Issue 27, **Small Business Journal** : 13.
13. Cascio, W.F. (1989): **Managing Human Resources: Productivity, Quality of Work Life, Profits**, McGraw-Hill: USA.
14. Chalmers, N.J. (1989): **Industrial Relations in Japan: The Peripheral Workforce**, Routledge: London.
15. Christie, S. and Madhuku, L. (1996): **Labour Dispute Resolution in Southern Africa**, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: Cape Town.
16. Clegg, H.A. (1975): "Pluralism in Industrial Relations", **British Journal of Industrial Relations: Vol.13 November**.
17. Clutterbuck, L. (1984): **Industrial Conflict and Democracy: The Last Chance**, McMillan Press Ltd: Great Britain.
18. Dahrendoff, R. (1959): **Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society**, Stanford University Press: California.

19. Davies I. (1966): **African Trade Unions**, Cnicholls and Company Ltd: Great Britain.
20. Dekker, D.L. (1989) "The 1988-1989 Annual report of Eskom," **IPM Journal**, 1989 Vol.8 No.2: 7-8.
21. Deutsch, M. (1977): **The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes**, Yale University Press: New Haven.
22. Diana, D. (1996): **Managing Differences**, MTI Publications: Overland Park: USA.
23. Donohue, W.A. and Kolt, R. (1992): **Managing Interpersonal Conflict**, SAGE Publications: Newbury Park: USA.
24. Edwards, P. (1995): **Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice in Britain**, Blackwell Publishers: Cambridge: USA.
25. Edwards, P.K. (1986): **Conflict at Work**, Bast Blackwell Ltd, New York: USA.
26. Eldridge, J.E.T. (1968): **Industrial Disputes**, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.
27. Fashoyin, T. (1980): **Industrial Relations in Nigeria**, Longman Group Ltd London.
28. Finnermore, M. (1996): **Introduction to Labour Relations in South Africa**, Butterworth Publishers (Pty) Ltd: Durban, South Africa.

29. Fowler, F.G. and Fowler, H.W. (1984): **The Pocket Oxford Dictionary**, Oxford University Press: New York, USA.
30. Gouldner, A.W. (1955): **Wildcat Strike**, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.
31. Gouldner, A. and Miller, S.M. (1968): **Applied Sociology: Opportunities and Problems**, Free Press: New York.
32. Guetzkow, H. and Collins, B.E. (1964): **A Social Psychology of Group Processes for Decision-making**, Wiley: New York.
33. Hagburg, E.C. and Levine, M.J. (1978): **Labour Relations: An Integrated Perspective**, West Publishing Company, St. Paul: USA.
34. Hanami, E. and Blanpain, K. (1987): **Industrial conflict resolution in market economies: a study of Canada, Great Britain and Sweden**, Kluwer: London.
35. Haralambos, M. (1980): **Sociology: Themes and Perspectives**, University Tutorial Press Ltd: Great Britain.
36. Hickling, M.A. (1967): **Citrine's Trade Union Law**, Stevens and Son Ltd: London.
37. Hill, S. (1974): Norms, Groups and Power: The Sociology of Workplace Industrial Relations, **British Journal of Industrial Relations: Vol.12, July**.
38. Hlophe, M. (1998) "Negotiations hope to resolve strike," **Sowetan, Wednesday July 8: 3**.

39. Horwitz, F. (1991): **Managing Resourceful People**, Juta and Company Limited, Kenwyn: Cape Town.
40. Hyman, R. (1978): **Strikes**_(4thEdition) Basingstoke, McMillan Education: Great Britain.
41. Hyman, R. (1989): **Strikes**, McMillan Press Great Britain.
42. Jones, R.A. and Griffiths, H.R. (1980): **Labour Legislation in South_Africa**, McGraw Hill (Pty) Ltd: Cape Town.
43. Kemp, N. (1992): **Labour Relations Strategies: An Interactional Approach**, Juta and Company Ltd: Cape Town.
44. Kernhauser, A., Dubin, R. and Ross, A.M. (1954): **Industrial Conflict**, McGraw-Hill: USA.
45. Kerr, C. and Staudohar, P.D. (1986): **Industrial Relations in a New Age: Economic, Social and Managerial Perspectives**, Jasey Bass Publishers: San Francisco: London.
46. **Know your Labour Relations (1997): A guide to the new Labour Relations Act 1995**, CTP Book Printers (Pty) Ltd: Cape Town.
47. Koghan, T.A. and Katz, H.C. (1988): **Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations** Irwin inc: USA.
48. Korpi, W. (1983): **Democratic Class Struggle**, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

49. Kuhn, J.W. (1961): **Bargaining in Grievance Settlement: The ways of Industrial Work Groups**, Columbia University Press: New York.
50. Landman, A.A. and Swanepoel, J.P.A. (1986): **Labour Legislation, Handbook**, Digma Publications (Transo Press) (Pty) Ltd, Roodepoort: RSA.
51. Lewin, D. (1983): **Theoretical Perspective on the Modern Grievance Procedure**, JAI Press: New York.
52. Lewin, D. and Peterson, R.B. (1988): **The Modern Grievance Procedure in the United States**, Greenwood Press: New York.
53. Likert, R. and Likert, J.G. (1976): **New Ways of Managing Conflict**, McGraw-Hill: USA.
54. Lukes, S. (1974): **Power: A Radical View**, McMillan Press: London.
55. Mace, C.A. (1968): **The Psychology of Study**, Pelican New York.
56. Mace, D. and Mace, V. (1979): **How to Have a Happy Marriage**, Festival Books: Abingdon.
57. Marais, P. and Israelstram, I. (1997) “ Stages of implementing a workplace forum,” **People Dynamics**, Vol.17 No.6 : 36.
58. Marx, K. (1978): **Genesis of Capital**, Progress Publishers: Moscow.
59. Mills, D.Q. (1978): **Labour-Management Relations**, McGraw Hill: USA.

60. Moore, B. (1987): **Authority and Inequality under Capitalism and Socialism**, Clarendon
61. Mouly, C. (1972): **Educational Research: The Art and Science of Investigation**, Allyn and Bacon: Boston.
62. Mtayi, F. (1997) "Historical background on the development of the workplace forum." **Juta's Business Law, Vol.5 No.3: 98.**
63. Mrwetyana, N. (1983): The application of the principle of instructional technology in Ciskeian secondary schools with reference to some teaching aids of the first generation: Med. Dissertation: Fort Hare.
64. Ndlala, W.M. (1985): The Pedagogical significance of supervision and inspection in Black schools with special reference to Kwa-Ngwane: Med. Dissertation (UZ) Kwa-Dlangezwa.
65. Nel, P.S. (1997): **South African Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice**, J.L. Van Schaik Publishers, Hatfield: Pretoria.
66. Neuman, W.L. (1994): **Social Research Methods: Qualitative Quantitative Approach**, Allyn and Bacon: Massachusetts: USA.
67. Nieuwmeijer, L. and Du Toit, R. (1994): **Multicultural Conflict: Management in Changing Societies**, HRSC Publishers: Pretoria: RSA.
68. Parker, S.R., Brown, R.K., and Smith, M.A. (1972): **The Sociology of Industry**, George Allen and Unwin Ltd: London.

69. Powelson, J.P. (1972): **Institutions of Economic Growth: A Theory of Conflict Management in Developing countries**, Princeton University Press: New Jersey: USA.

70. Rollinson, D (1993): **Understanding Employee Relations: A Behavioural Approach**, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company: Great Britain.

71. Rycroff, A. (1989): **The Private Regulation of Industrial Conflict**, Juta and Company, Ltd: Cape Town.

72. Schein, E.H. (1970): **Organizational Psychology**, Prentice Hall inc: Englewood Cliffs.

73. Scott, W.H., Mumford, E., McGlivering, I.C. and Kirkby, J.M. (1963): **Coal and Conflict**, Liverpool University Press: Liverpool.

74. **Security Management**, March 1996, Vol.40 Issue 32: 16

75. Singleton, W.T., Fox, J.G. and Whitfield, D. (1973): **Measurement of Man at Work: An Appraisal of Physiological and Psychological Criteria in man-machine system**, Taylor and Francis: London.

76. Sloane, A.A. and Witney, F. (1972): **Labour Relations**, Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs: USA

77. Sollars, R.D. (1996) "The taming of the workplace," **Security Management**, Vol.40 Issue 3: 41.

78. Stagner, R. (1956): **Psychology of Industrial Conflict**, John Wiley and Sons: London: USA.
79. Stephenson, G.M. and Brotherton, C.J. (1979): **Industrial Relations: A Social Psychological Approach**, John Wiley Sons: New York.
80. Swanepoel, J.P.A. (1992): **Introduction to Labour Law**: Lexicon Publishers (Pty) Ltd: Johannesburg.
81. The mercury reporter (1998) "Wages deal ends strike," **The mercury Thursday July 9: 5.**
82. The Ministerial Legal Task Team, (1997) "Designation of the workplace forum," **Journal of African law, Vol 41 No.1: 137.**
83. Torrington, D.P. (1972): **Handbook of Industrial Relations**, Gower Press Ltd: Great Britain.
84. Van der Walt, R. (1998) "Origins of the workplace forum system," **People Dynamics, Vol.17 No.6: 36.**
85. Van Holdt, K. (1995) "What is a workplace forum," **South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.19 No.1: 18-19.**
86. Vester, H. and Gardner, A.H. (1958): **Trade Union: Law and Practice**, Sweet and Maxwell Ltd: London.

87. Welch, J. (1996) " Forum threatens to spark new strike," **People Management**, Vol.2 Issue 24: 13.

C/o Department of Sociology
University of Zululand
Private Bag x1001
Kwa-Dlangezwa
3886

Dear Respondent

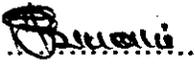
The researcher is an Industrial Sociology student enrolling for her master's degree in Sociology Department at the University of Zululand. She intended to conduct a research in your industry. This survey covers some areas related to industrial relations within an organisation.

Please mark that option which best describes your organisation with a cross(x). If more than one option of a particular question is applicable please mark all appropriate alternatives.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. The information given by you will be treated confidentially and you are assured of remaining anonymous (remain unknown).

Your co-operation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

Thanks
Yours faithfully


P.T.S. Zikhali

PART ONE

Mark an 'x' in the appropriate space provided.

1. Age category.

15-30 years	1
30-45 years	2
45-55 years	3
55-65 years	4
65 years and above	5

2. What is your sex?

Female	1
Male	2

3. What is your race group?

Asian	1
Black	2
Coloured	3
White	4

4. What is your level of education?

No school attended	1
Did not complete standard ten	2
Standard ten completed	3
College Diploma	4
University Degree	5
Diploma from Technikon	6

5. What is your working experience?

0-5 years	1
5-10 years	2
10-15 years	3
15 years and above	4

PART TWO

The role of the workplace forum

6. Do you have workplace forum in this industry?

Yes	1
No	2

7. Do you find workplace forum helpful?

Yes	1
No	2

8(a) Do you get any benefits from the workplace forum?

Yes	1
No	2

(b) If yes, give examples.....

.....
.....

8. Do workplace forum participate in joint decision-making?

Yes	1
No	2

10. Do workplace forum offer the unions an opportunity to intervene in management decision-making?

Yes	1
No	2

11. Do workplace forum provide unions with the tools to improve the quality of working life?

Yes	1
No	2

12. Do workplace forum prevent management from unilaterally restructuring and taking decisions in the workplace?

Yes	1
No	2

13(a) Do employers consult with the forums on some issues?

Yes	1
No	2

(b) If yes, substantiate with examples.....

.....

.....

.....

14. What initiative is taken by the workplace forum if no agreement is reached on matters which are subject to consultation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

15(a) Do you think that workplace forum will help in achieving efficiency in the workplace?

Yes	1
No	2

(b) If yes, to the above question, in what way do you think this can be done?

.....

.....

.....

16. In which of the following conflict resolution processes do you think workplace forum will be more effective?

Conciliation	1
Mediation	2
Arbitration	3

PART THREE

The causes of conflict between management and workplace forum

17. How often does conflict occur between management and workplace forum?

Very often	1
Often	2
Less often	3
Not at all	4

18. How often does conflict occur during negotiations on substantive issues?

Very often	1
Often	2
Less often	3
Not at all	4

19. Kindly list the major problems which you think hinder the establishment of the workplace forum in your industry?

- (a).....
- (b).....
- (c).....
- (d).....

20. How do you think the above problems can be minimized? Please explain briefly.

.....

.....

.....

.....

21. What is management attitude towards the workplace forum?

Hostile	1
Friendly	2
Quasi-co-operation	3

