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**Multinational Enterprises in Africa and Their Role in
Conflict Resolution in Employment Relations:
Empirical Perspectives from Selected MNEs in
Nigeria and South Africa**

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Introduction

Labour disputes are inherent in all employment relations systems (ILO,2001).

The establishment of a system for the prevention and settlement of labour disputes is a cornerstone of sound labour relations policy (ILO, 2001).

Multinational enterprises operation influence the employment relationship that exist in the host environment (Zhao, 1998).

Labour legislative in South Africa regime is rigid and protective of worker rights compare with the Nigeria counterpart.

This study focusses on assessment of efficacy of conflict resolution mechanisms in employment relations at a multinational company between two host countries.

Objective of the Study

To examine how effectively conflict resolution mechanisms are utilised in resolving industrial conflicts within South Africa's as compared to Nigeria's employment relations environments.

To examine the extent to which the multinational corporations adapt to the labour relations climate of the host environments.

To compare the level of efficacy of the mechanisms built into the conflict resolution process of both parties – multi-national company and host countries.



Literature Review

Operations of MNE is not performed without influence on labour relations laws that guide the operations in their host environment.

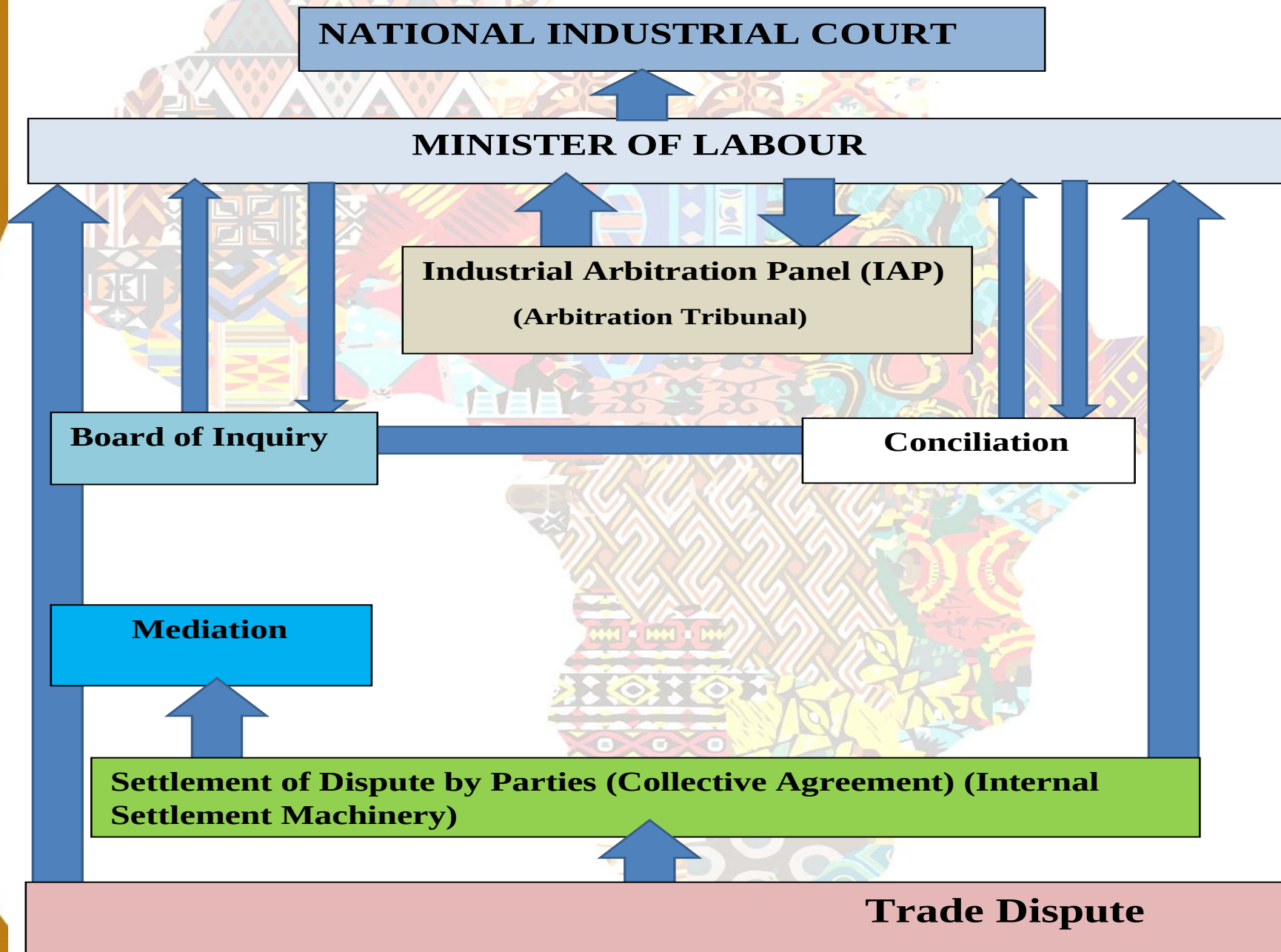
Legal constraints upon the behaviour of multinational corporations since they are effectively "stateless" actors.

MNE may be subject to the laws and regulations of both their country of origin/domicile and the additional jurisdictions where they are engaged in business.

Many host nations don't have stringent labour laws that fully address issues displayed by the MNE which allow them to circumvent the due process of labour laws in their host countries.

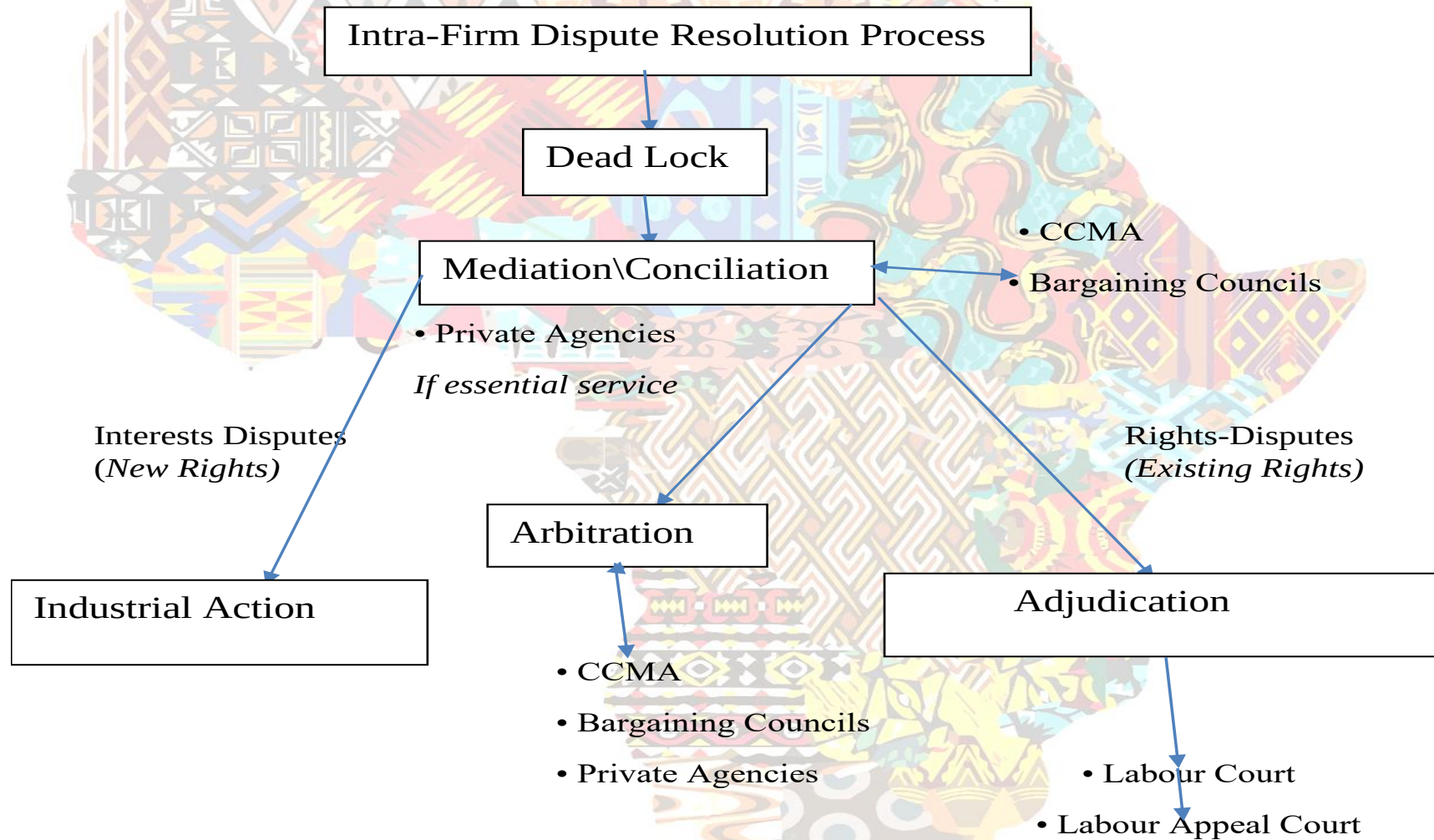
In some cases, the jurisdiction of the host nations can help to avoid burdensome laws.

The Structure of Dispute Resolution System in Nigeria



(Adapted from (2002-2010:78) 9 Nig. J. R.)

The Structure of Dispute Resolution System in South Africa



Source: Analysis of CCMA, (2005)

Methodology

The study applied a non-experimental descriptive research design that employed a survey approach. The study collected data using mixed methods.

At a multinational company in Nigeria and South Africa, a quantitative method of data collection was applied to (400) copies of an online questionnaire among the general workforce and HR professionals to gather information about conflict resolution mechanisms.

The qualitative data collection used an online interview to assess the top leadership staff of both multinational organizations consisting of ten senior top HR/organizational executives in each country, or twenty top executive managers.

Results & Findings

Both MNEs in the two countries adapted quite well to the conflict resolution mechanisms of their host nations, the MNE in Nigeria appeared to exhibit more 'laxity', or took more 'liberty', with the processes or mechanisms than the one in south Africa.

Thus, both MNEs generally adapted to the labour relations environment of the host nations.

This shows that the south Africa company followed the prescribed or acceptable procedures in the execution of mechanism for the resolution of conflicts than its Nigerian counterpart.

Conclusions

Apparently, in Nigeria, the multinational company had a greater influence on the conflict resolution process than it did in South Africa, according to an analysis of survey data.

The reason for this could be due to factors outside the scope of the current study, such as the latitude given to MNEs and the volatility of the Nigerian environment. MNEs do indeed play a role in conflict resolution in the employment relations process.

It is the responsibility of host nations to ensure, by upholding the highest labour standards, that the roles played by MNEs is not deleterious to her employment relations environment.