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Trade Unions, Internal Democracy and Social Movement Unionism: The Case Of The National Union Of Metalworkers Of South Africa (NUMSA) Locals In JC Bezuidenhout Region

(2012-2014).

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A dissertation submitted to the Global Labour University in conformity with the requirements of a MA in Labour Policy and Globalisation, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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Declaration

I, **Gerald Mandisodza**, candidate number **1498904,** hereby declare that this research report is my own original work. It is hereof submitted as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Labour Policy and Globalisation under the Global Labour University at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This report has not previously been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other University. Where I have used the work of other authors, I have properly acknowledged them and I have not copied any author or scholar's work with the intention of passing it as my own.

Signed: ----------

On-------- Day of---------- 2017

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Dedication

To the late Lieutenant-Captain David, J Mandisodza and Constable Susan (Gutu) Mandisodza. The spirit of the fight you fought to liberate the all Zimbabweans, particularly the waged labour lives in this piece of work (Democracy and recognition of workers' rights).
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Abstract

The relationship between trade unions and their members has been a perennial subject of social inquiry and political debate since the establishment of formal trade unions by skilled artisans in the nineteenth century. This study examines the aspects of union democracy (participatory and representative) in trade unions within the broader concept of social movement unionism. The case study for this research is the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) focusing in three locals in the region of Jack Charles Bezuidenhout (J.C Bez) namely: Johannesburg North, Kempton Park, and Tembisa. The main objective of the study is to examine the extent to which NUMSA conformed to principles of social movement unionism against the Michel's (1915) theory of "the Iron Law of Oligarchy" during the period 2012-2014, when it embarked on a process to withdraw its political alliance with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). In 2014, NUMSA was expelled from COSATU after it took its decision to move out from the Tripartite Alliance in 2013. Social movement unionism is characterised by three features which are participatory democracy, forging of alliances (both with civic groups and political parties) while retaining union autonomy, and the broadening of its scope of action beyond workplace politics. While examining the research's main question, the study also looks at the extent to which union locals participated democratically during this decision-making process, which led to its expulsion from COSATU in 2014, and the focus of NUMSA as an independent union in post-2014 period. Methodological tools, which were used to collect data, include in-depth interviews and desktop research. The theoretical framework utilised in this study stems from Michels' (1915) concept of the "iron law of oligarchy." However, it should be noted that, this study tests the claim of the discourse (what Michels' (1915) postulates in relation to oligarchy in organisations) and the practice on ground in NUMSA. Key findings in this study indicate that NUMSA locals participated democratically in the decision making process that led to their ground breaking political moment in December 2013 when the union broke its alliance with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The union has both characteristics of oligarchy and internal democracy (participatory and representative). In relation to aspects of political unionism and social movement unionism, the study found that NUMSA's decision to pull out from its political alliance with the ANC and SACP, its call for the establishment for the movement for socialism, and the establishment of a worker's party, could be indications of the union returning to principles of social movement unionism. However, there are other indicators that the union might be losing the opportunity it had of revitalising its leftist traditions at its 2016 congress in Cape Town. This is evidenced by its non-pursuance of issues relating to eco-socialism and its call to implement the Marxist-Leninist style of union governance.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ANC:	African National Congress
CC:	Central Committee
CEC:	Central Executive Committee
CIWW:	Council of Industrial Workers of the Witwatersrand
COSATU:	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CUSA:	Council of Unions of South Africa
FAWU:	Food & Allied Workers Union
FOSATU:	Federation of South African Trade Unions
GAWU:	General & Allied Workers Union
GWU:	General Workers Union
IAC:	Industrial Area Committee
IAS:	Industrial Aid Society
ICU:	Industrial & Commercial Workers Union
IMF:	International Metalworkers Federation
LSSC:	Local Shop Stewards Council
MACWUSA:	Motor Assemblers & Component Workers Union
MAWU:	Metal and Allied Workers Union
MICWU:	Motor Industry Combined Workers Union
NAAWU:	National Automobile and Allied Workers Union
NACTU:	National Council of Trade Unions
NEC:	National Executive Committee
NDP:	National Democratic Revolution
NEASA:	National Employers Association of South Africa
NEDLAC:	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NUM:	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMARWOSA:	National Union of Motor Assembly & Rubber Workers of South Africa
NUMSA:	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa

SACCAWU:	South African Commercial, Catering, & Allied Workers Union
SACP:	South African Communist Party
SACTU:	South African Congress of Trade Unions
TGWU:	Transport & General Workers Union
TUACC:	Trade Union Advisory Coordinating Council
TUCSA:	Trade Union Council of South Africa
UDF:	United Democratic Front
UMMAWUSA:	United Metal Mining & Allied Workers Union of South Africa
WPWAB:	Western Province Workers Advice Bureau

CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The relation between trade unions and their members has been a perennial subject of social inquiry and political debate since the creation of formal trade unions by skilled artisans in the nineteenth century (Heery and Fosh 1990:1). Hence, the aspect of internal democracy in trade unions becomes one of the controversial area. Often internal democracy in trade unions is not taken seriously, or in some instances, it is entirely ignored as an essential element for unions to achieve their goals of attaining workers' economic and labour rights. According to Della Porta and Diani (2006:240), trade unions and social movements are widely expected to be representative and non-hierarchical with decentralised decision-making structures and increased scope of participation.

The post-apartheid South African labour environment has presented opportunities and challenges to trade unions and the way they operate as movements. Buhlungu (2006:184) and Bramble (2003:187) analysed union democracy and the changing roles of trade unions since the fall of apartheid in South Africa in 1994. Their works highlight crucial aspects such as trade unions, internal democracy and social movement unionism and how trade unions as social movements have shifted continuously from one form to another and the strategies, which they took after in response to both internal and external factors within the labour industry. This research seeks to examine the extent to which the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) conformed to the principles of social movement unionism, which are: internal democracy, establishing alliances with civic groups and other organisations, focusing on a broader scope of issues beyond workers issues and they are politically engaged, but they maintain their independence from political parties, during the period of 2012-2014, when it embarked on the process of withdrawing from its political alliance with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Furthermore, this study will seek to understand how trade union members contributed to the decision-making process at a local level, through the process of participatory democracy with a particular focus on the period from 2012 – 2014. The concept of union democracy (participatory and representative) will be examined against the backdrop of various factors within the labour field such as the dynamic economic, social, and political environment in post-apartheid South Africa. This chapter shall outline the problem statement, research question(s) and, objectives, and the subsequent chapters of the research.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Michels ([1915]2001) observed that despite an early emphasis on participatory democracy in trade unions and political parties, the structures of these organisations ultimately resolve themselves into an oligarchy. According to Forrest (2011:8) a growing complexity in organisational structure, including the development of an administrative bureaucracy, results in a division of labour as professional leaders enter the union. Forrest (2011) notes that there is always a tendency in organisations such as trade unions and political parties to have a smaller number of members who will control and make decisions for the entire body despite authority being vested in the majority of the organisations' members. What this theory suggests, in other words, is that participatory democracy is a utopian idea and that democracy itself is a concept that is limited to thin strata of existing oligarchy[1].

There are several factors which Michels ([1915]2001) claims some causational factors that lead an organisation to end up being oligarchical in nature. One factor is the impossibility of having the majority of union members fully participating in union affairs due to the size of the group or organisation. The second factor relates to the need for an efficient and expert decision-making structure or system and lastly, the natural human desire or avarice for power. Furthermore, Lipset (1969:413) notes the leader poses many resources, which give them an almost insurmountable advantage over their members who try to change policies. Their assets can be counted: superior knowledge, control over the formal means of communication with the membership and skills in the art of politics

Thus, in the end, the behaviour of the trade union leaders and political party leaders would reflect bureaucratic conservatism rather than the interest of their members. Weighing in and explaining further on this phenomenon of trade unions and democracy is Fosh and Heery (1990). They posit that the "issue of the relationship between trade unions and their members emanates from the notion that trade unions, in the long run, tend to develop their institutional interests, which end up conflicting with the interest and the needs of the union members" (Fosh and Heery 1990:2). Consequently, in that process, the issue of decision-making tends to be limited to the union leaders, and the aspect of participatory democracy[2] gets stifled in

[1] Oligarchy is the control of a society or an organization by those at the top and it is a form of an intrinsic part of bureaucracy or large-scale organization (Lipset 1969). In the context of political parties and trade unions, Michels' define oligarchy as a form in which an organization self-generates its own elite that has disproportional influence on the decisions made in the organization (Michels'1915, p.368).

[2] Participatory democratic theory envisions the maximum participation of citizens in their self-governance, especially in sectors of society beyond those that are traditionally (Dahl 1961).

the end. Hirschsohn (2011, p. 8) highlights that union democracy can be distinguished between two types, participatory democracy and representative democracy. He argues that, with participatory democracy, individual members are directly involved in decision making while in representative democracy decisions are made by the elected representatives (Hirschsohn, 2011, p. ibid).

However, Webster (1985) commented on Michel's argument noting that Michels focused on the broader scale of the organisational structure, where decision-making seemed to be centralised. Therefore, the implication of Webster's argument is that membership participation at a broader scale is likely to be limited, but if the view is narrowed down to group involvement, at shop floor and union branch level, the limits to Michels' theory become clearer. Webster (1985) argues that democratic, participatory structures appear to be more effective and efficient where the unit is small and operated at the local level.

In light of the above arguments, this study seeks to examine the level of participation by NUMSA locals by assessing the union's conformity to social movement unionism principles during the period 2012-2014 when it set out on the process of withdrawing from its political alliance with ANC and SACP. Furthermore, the study examines the implication of the 2013 decision to pull out from its alliance with the ANC and SACP made by NUMSA, whether it is a reflection of returning to social movement unionism shifting from political unionism. They are analysed through examining trade unions and political alliances. Numsa helped President Jacob Zuma to take over the ANC from former President Thabo Mbeki in 2009. The prevailing political dynamics led NUMSA and other trade unions affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to shift their support from Mbeki to supporting Zuma (Satgar and Southall 2015:12). Furthermore, in 2012, before the August Marikana massacre, NUMSA had reassured its political support for the ANC and the tripartite alliance of ANC/COSATU/SACP (that it would continue to support and continue to help in swelling the ranks of the ANC and contributing financial support). The decision changed in 2013 at its December Special National Congress when it ended support for ANC/SACP. Linking the above with the debate around Michel's theory, this study examines whether the 2013 decision was arrived at with the serious engagement and participation of union members from the local level up to the national level. In line with the above, the research will try to understand whether shop stewards at a local level were accountable and disseminating information from the regional and national level back to the branch level. Moreover, it seeks to discover opinions from the local level members were reflected and

consolidated in the decision, which NUMSA made at its special national congress. In addition, this study seeks to understand the focus of NUMSA in its post 2013 period, when it embarked on implementing its related congress resolutions regarding the establishment of the united front, movement for socialism and possibilities of forming a worker's party. However, it should be noted that, this study tests the claim of the discourse (what Michels' (1915) postulates in relation to oligarchy in organisations) and the practice on ground in NUMSA. Michels' claims that oligarchical tendencies in organisations tend to show after a long period of time and in this study, the period is short and this allows the study to take a short test whether NUMSA had the characteristics of oligarchy or it conformed to union democracy.

1.2 RATIONALE

This research will seek to add new knowledge to the already existing information in the field. The contribution of new insights will be made by making new inroads studying union democracy from a local-level perspective. NUMSA had to go back to its members and seek a mandate on the way forward is key. Therefore, the study will add knowledge to the existing literature, by examining the concept of participatory democracy from a local-level perspective, which is a bit different for the previous broad surveys done around periods of 1994, 1998, and 2004. Some of the scholars who were involved in these survey studies include Wood and Dibben (2006), Wood (2001), Wood and Psoulis (2001), and they focused on examining internal democracy and the concept of participatory democracy at the federation level. Scholars such as Wood and Dibben (2006), Cherry and Southall (2006) and Buhlungu, Wood and Brookes (2008) have previously conducted studies on union democracy but at a federation level (COSATU).

Buhlungu (2006:51) comments on the surveys carried out in post-apartheid South Africa where shop-floor democracy is analysed at the union federation level. He highlights that the studies, which were conducted since 1998, presented a situation where the ability of unions to represent the interests of their members democratically showed some elements of compromise due to the shortcomings of the tripartite alliance (ANC\SACP\COSATU) in servicing the working class. These deficiencies have been attributed to the haemorrhage of talented and skilled activists and shop stewards to political party structures, government departments, and business deals resulting in less focus on the worker's concerns, and the society's most marginalised citizens. This research will focus on three NUMSA local in the J.C Bezuidenhout Region, which are Johannesburg North, Kempton Park and Tembisa. The reason for choosing these three locals out of all the six locals in the region was solely based

on their perceptions concerning political unionism and union autonomy. Against the argument posed by Michels (1915) that trade unions and political parties tend to become oligarchical in nature and stifle participatory democracy in decision-making, this research therefore, seeks to analyse and prove if this argument holds water with regards to these NUMSA locals during the 2012-2014 period.

Furthermore, this study will look into some of the challenges, which have affected the union and its members in general with regard to their operation since the Special National Congress in December 2013. NUMSA's case study will try to find out: How has NUMSA shifted its mode of unionism in pre- and pros-apartheid South Africa? Is the union changing roles from political unionism to social movement unionism following its call to COSATU to break away from the Alliance and its resolution to build a united front movement in December 2013? By examining the challenges this research will seek to develop a better understanding of the politics surrounding labour movements and the politics of Alliances in South Africa, and whether union democracy is an ideal or a reality.

The reason why this topic has been chosen is the period selected, which is 2012 – 2014. The period selected bears two critical implications within the context of trade unionism in South Africa. The decision made by NUMSA to call for a breakaway of COSATU from the Alliance, and its resolution to forge a united front: Could it resemble the return to social movement unionism by NUMSA? This question draws its basis from the previous attempts and calls by NUMSA since 1993 in influencing COSATU to become an independent worker's federation. Secondly, the manner in which the decision to pull out from the Alliance, where However, the period selected will not only be confined to 2012-2014 as the general contextual framework will stretch back to 2007, a period when the current President Zuma took over from the former President Thabo Mbeki. Satgar and Southall note that this was one of the periods where labour movements believed that by being involved in party politics, ousting Mbeki and voting Zuma into power, they would have made the right choice of electing a leader who would represent the workers adequately in government (Satgar and Southall 2015).

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The research seeks to:

1. Understand the extent to which NUMSA has been living up to the principles of social movement unionism (internal democracy, forging alliances, expanding its scope of actions

beyond workplace issues) against oligarchical tendencies in the union during the period 2012 -2014.

2. Assess the extent to which participatory democracy in the decision-making process was applied at a local level when the union was preparing for its special national congress in 2013.

3. Examine the activities of NUMSA post 2013 in relation to the establishment of alliances and its expansion of scope beyond workplace politics, as mandated by the special congress

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent did NUMSA conform to principles of social movement unionism against oligarchical tendencies, during the period 2012-2014, when it embarked on a process of withdrawing from its political alliance with the ANC and SACP?

1.4.1 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS

1. To what extent did NUMSA locals in the JC Bez region participate democratically in the decision making process towards NUMSA's 2013 December resolution to withdraw from the political alliance with the ANC and SACP, and setting up a new movement?

2. What were the circumstances that led to the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU?

3. What is NUMSA's focus as an independent union in post 2013?

1.5 CONCLUSION

The focus of this investigation is the extent of participation by the union members at local level with regard to union decision-making process. It is through the active participation of union members that trade unions can find relevance and strength within the labour environment. Again, it is through internal democracy, particularly worker participation in trade unions, that the democratisation process in Africa can be achieved. The next chapter will look into some of the literature related to aspects of trade unions and internal democracy, the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. It will situate these issues within the context of this study and build up an analytical framework, which will be utilised in answering the questions in this study.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is organised into six chapters. Chapter 1 has provided the introductory part of the research and provided the background context of the concept of participatory democracy within the broader field of trade unions and internal democracy. The introductory part outlines some of the background of the study and mainly the context in which events unfolded within the labour environment in post-apartheid South Africa. Chapter 2 reviews some of the literature relating to this study and the debates surrounding the concepts like social movement unionism. Chapter 2 engages some of the scholarly with regard to the aspects of trade unions, oligarchy, and social movement unionism among other aspects. The essence of this section is to unravel the concepts and theories, which have been at the core of the debates around the issue of trade unions democracy. This chapter also serves a linking bridge between the existing debates the case study.

What follows chapter two is the methodological chapter, which highlights the methodological tools and challenges that were utilised in this study. In this section, access to the study area and respondents, data collection through a combination of one- on- one interviews and document research, sampling, data interpretation, and ethical issues are explained, assessed, and justified. Chapter 4 highlights the historical trajectory of what is now called NUMSA. It outlines the unions, which existed before the establishment of NUMSA and how these predecessor unions faced challenges and managed to survive through the apartheid period. Also there is reflection on how the tradition union democracy and worker control emerged within the unions, together with some of the strategies that the unions in pre-1987 and post 1987 utilised to fight the apartheid regime. Furthermore, a reflection of how the unions shifted their positions with regards to their nature is outlined in the chapter: a shift from the workerist mode, to social movement unionism under COSATU, then a drift towards political unionism, however retaining features of social movement unionism. The general question is; is whether NUMSA shifted towards social movement unionism or not? The findings and data analysis chapter presents the findings in an analytical way. This chapter also discusses the findings by linking them to the theories and concepts outlined in chapter two. A reflection on these theories and concepts is provided. The concluding chapter is chapter six, summarises the main argument, findings and gives a further discussion about the topic. The chapter will discuss new developments within NUMSA and gives areas and current debates arising which may be areas if further research.

CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Industrial democracy, workplace democracy, labour management, worker participation, and democratic participation are some of the expressions of participatory industrial relations that have featured since the beginning of industrialisation (Kester, 2007). The literature on unions and democracy has been inclined to the pessimistic side. Scholars like Lipset (1977) and Olson (1982) cited in Wood and Dibben (2006) highlight that there have been arguments that trade unions cannot sustain a position of active civil society actor unless leaders are capable of reigning in and mediating the demands of the rank and file. This relates to Michels (1959) theory of the "iron law of oligarchy."

It is the intention of this chapter to outline and discuss some of the literature relating to trade unions and internal democracy and engage to the theoretical underpinnings of social movement unionism. The chapter seeks to situate the study within the broad practice and thought of trade unionism and internal democracy to not only inform its narrative but also engage the thought and practice. This chapter shall also conceptualise some of the key terms that will be used in this research report. As this section of the study will engage with some of the literature and theories around aspects of l democracy, in particular democracy and trade unions, the review will unpack this from a European context, African context and South African context. Within the South African context, this section will discuss the emergence of social movement unionism and outline some of its features, situating the discussion within the context of labour movements in general, and NUMSA in particular. Furthermore, the section will outline the rise and fall of social movement unionism in relation to NUMSA and the factors causing this since the formation of NUMSA.

2.1 OLIGARCHY IN TRADE UNIONS

Michel's theory of "an Iron Law of Oligarchy" relates to the problems of attaining democracy in the so-called socialist organisations of the working class (Maree 1982). After examining political parties and trade unions, Michels posits, "democracy in these socialist organisations of the working class leads to oligarchy and it will contain an oligarchic nucleus" (Michels, [1915] 2001, pp. 21-22). Accordingly, the premise behind the concept of the "iron law of oligarchy" is that organisations end up having a small number of members who end up

making decisions despite the fact that authority will have been formally vested in the majority of the members within that organisation (Michels, [1915] 2001). Thus, the meaning of oligarchy in political parties and unions means the control by a few officials in the top of the hierarchy of that organisation (Michels, [1915] 2001). Michels' further argues that democracy in itself is a self-defeating goal since democracy cannot be attained without organisations and organisation is vital for the political struggle of the working class. Nevertheless, no matter how much the members of the organisation try to maintain democratic structures and systems, there is an inevitable tendency towards oligarchy in every organisation (Michels, [1915] 2001, p. 22). Hence, democracy in labour movements and political parties becomes an unattainable goal.

In Michels' view democracy can only be possible to practice only when organisations are still at the infancy stage and very small since pure democracy entails participation in the organisation all the time (Michels [1915] 2001, pp. 28-31). Michels ([1915] 2001) maintains that as the organisations begin to grow, they start to be more complex, and this would require expertise in leadership to manage the organisation. In this regard, Forrest (2005:8) highlights that the "iron law of oligarchy" therefore stands in opposition to pluralism and suggests that participatory democracy is a utopian idea since democracy is always limited to very narrow strata within the organisational hierarchy. There are various other factors, which explain why organisations will end up being oligarchic in nature. Michels notes that "in trade unions officials need to remain in the office for a long time in order to gain the necessary experience for them to do the work effectively and efficiently, and also to develop a sense of loyalty and responsibility" (Michels, [1915] 2001, p. 102). Due to the specialisation of labour and duties, the mandated officials of the organisation will eventually become indispensable. According to Michels ([1915] 2001, p. 101) "he, who says organisations, says Oligarchy." Thus in his view, wherever there is an organisation, a trade union or political party it will end up being oligarchic in nature.

Jenkins (1977) cited in Voss & Sherman (2000, p. 305) notes that the "iron law of oligarchy" theory contains two major components. The first component suggests that organisations tend to develop oligarchical leadership despite formal democratic processes. Jenkins (1977) notes that, it becomes inevitable to increase the number of professional staff members and this will, in turn, create a rift between members of the organisation and the leadership of the organisation. Thus, the result of such an organisational set up is that it will allow leaders to shape the organisation to serve their interests rather than the interests of their members. The

second component that Jenkins (1977) notes relates to the aspect of goals and tactics being transformed in a conservative direction as leaders become more concerned with organisational survival (Voss & Sherman, 2000, p. 305). In short, according to Michels, the fact is that general participation in the union affairs by the vast majority of members is practically impossible and the need for an efficient and expert decision-making structure or system will see organisations will eventually resolve themselves into an oligarchic structure.

However, scholars like Lipset (1969) have objected critically to Michel's theory of the "Iron Law of Oligarchy." Lipset highlights that Michels' book can be viewed as "a pessimistic book, from the perspective of those who are concerned with a more democratic and egalitarian society" (Lipset, 1969, p. 422). More interesting, is the response and criticism that Michels received from scholars of Marxism and Communism. In this regard, Lipset (1969) argues that the traditional response to Michels' theory has maintained the position that bureaucratic organisation cannot lead to the emergence of a new ruling class since classes require a base, not in the technical form of organisation, but the ownership of economic resources. According to Hook (1930) cited in Lipset (1969), "Michels overlooks ... The social and economic presuppositions of oligarchic leadership in the past. In a socialist society in which political leadership is an administrative function and therefore carries with it no economic power. In which the process of education strive to direct the psychic tendencies of self-assertion into moral and social equivalents of oligarchical ambition, in which the monopoly of education for one class has been abolished, and the division of labour between manual and mental work is progressively eliminated…." An oligarchy cannot consolidate on the other hand, Bukharin (cited in Lipset, 1969, p. 423) did not strongly challenge Michels' theory that the power of administrators under socialism would constitute a problem, but like Hook (1930), he posits that in a real socialist society, this power will be the power of society over machines and not over men.

Hyman and Goulder (cited in Maree, 1982) went as far as suggesting a counter argument, summarising it as the "Iron Law of Democracy." They argue that "even as Michels himself saw if oligarchical waves repeatedly wash away the bridges of democracy, this eternal recurrence can happen only because men doggedly rebuild them after each inundation. Michels chose to dwell on only one aspect of this process, neglecting to consider this other side. There cannot be an iron law of oligarchy, however, unless there is an iron law of democracy" (Maree, 1982, p. 45). Maree (1982) further argues that the tendency towards democracy arises from the members' conviction that their trade unions have to represent their

interests and aspirations. On the other hand, the tendency towards oligarchy in trade unions arises from their need for leadership and efficient administration and co-ordination. The tendency is inextricably linked with the establishment of full-time officials in a mass worker organisation where the rank and file are employed in wage-labour that demands much of their time and energy. Neither democracy nor oligarchy establishes a permanent or decisive hegemony although either can dominate for a considerable time. The forces that determine the dominance of oligarchic or democratic tendencies may be either internal or external to the unions.

Situating Michels' theory in the context of Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), Webster (1985) comments on both theories of oligarchy and worker control in trade unions, noting how decision-making was most likely to be centralised at the national level. Moreover, due the MAWU's links with the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) back then, Webster argues that "membership participation at the federation level is likely to be limited". But he adds that however if one focuses on membership participation and involvement at the shop floor, then limitations to Michels' theory become more clearer" (Webster, 1985, p. pp. 251-252). In this case, democratic structures are most effective in situations where the unit is small and operates at the local level. In discussing the aspect of worker control, Webster (1985) argues that worker control is most effective in smaller units, basing his arguments on MAWU as a case study. There was contestation over the meaning and practice of "worker control" in MAWU, and tensions arose during that period, as oligarchic tendencies seem to emerge at the highest levels and higher union structures, with the concept of worker control being real in principle but in practice difficult to execute (Webster, 1985). The concept of worker control is important for two reasons in this context. Firstly, it challenges the underlying assumption of an institutional logic leading to oligarchy, which states that oligarchy is inherent within trade unions and political parties. Secondly, the concept of worker control points to the organisational base upon which the working class can assert its political independence, not in opposition to the wider popular struggle, but within it (Webster, 1985).

Maree (1982, p.52) based on empirical evidence from South African independent unions in the 1970s[3], concludes, "Both oligarchy and democracy in the unions were present, but it was

[3]Maree (1982) examined democracy and oligarchy in the independent trade unions in the Transvaal and the Western Province General Workers Union in the 1970s.The unions in his study include; the Federation of South

based on situational factors like the political environment, the leaders and idea behind the formation of the union." Maree (1982) maintains that for democracy to be entrenched in trade unions in practice there is need to put democratic practices in all union structures. Although the unions during the apartheid era managed to entrench democratic practices, Maree (1982, p. 52) notes, "oligarchic tendencies were still present in one form or other in all of them. In all the unions and groups the workers had therefore not yet acquired the capacities necessary to seize democratic control of their organisations." Contrary to Michels' argument, the empirical findings on the independent unions in Maree's study do not portray an iron law of oligarchy operating in the unions. Rather in his conclusion, he notes that:

> But nor was there an iron law of democracy at work in the independent unions. The tendencies towards democracy and oligarchy both remained present and circumstances determined which of these tendencies were dominant at any particular time. It was also found that democratic tendencies could be on the increase in one part of an organisation while oligarchy would simultaneously be strengthened elsewhere (Maree, 1982, p. 52).

A case in point relates to the early labour organisations such as the General Workers' Union (GWU), which commenced as the Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau (WPWAB), FOSATU in the Transvaal. These had its roots in the Industrial Aid Society (IAS) and the unions of the Consultative Committee of Black Trade Unions, which owed theirs mainly to the Urban Training Project (UTP). The service organisations were oligarchic in nature as far as their relationship with African workers was concerned (Maree, 1982). However, as the unions began to develop democratic characteristics internally, oligarchic tendencies began to be overshadowed by democratic tendencies. For example "towards the end of 1980 democratic practices had gained a considerable foothold in the GWU although White intellectuals were still influential and played an important co-ordinating role in the union" (Maree, 1982, p. 50). The same can be said about FOSATU and its affiliates like MAWU during apartheid. Maree (1982:51) maintains; "Within FOSATU in the Transvaal region there was a differential development of democracy in the unions that was closely related to their origins. The unions which grew up in the TUACC tradition, in particular MAWU, had the most advanced workplace democracy and leadership accountability built into them with the unions formerly serviced by the UTP displaying the least shop floor democracy".

African Trade Unions (FOSA TU) and the Consultative Committee of Black Trade Unions. The Consultative unions consisted of the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCA WUSA) and a large proportion of the present Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA).

2.2 TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

Trade union democracy can be further defined by measuring the standards it can be measured against. Fosh & Morris (2000) posit that models of democracy consider five elements, which are constitutional arrangements, political organisations, representation, and membership involvement. In addition, Stepan-Norris & Zeitlin, (1996, p. 1) highlight three features of union democracy; these include: "the guaranteeing of political rights and basic civil liberties through an organisational constitution, freedom of members to debate and criticise and union officials and to organise, oppose and replace officials through freely contested election and lastly maximum participation by members in exercising power and in making decisions which affect them". Hirschsohn (2011) identifies some operational measures of union democracy within the South African context, adopting the model of Strauss (1991). The definitions and measurement standards of union democracy given above are salient in that they unpack the meaning of union democracy and give some of the nuances surrounding the concept of union democracy. Relating it to NUMSA, there appear to be similarities considering aspects such as constitutionalism, the freedom of members to participate and criticise in union affairs and their role in decision-making processes. Hirschsohn (2011, p. 8) further highlights that union democracy can be distinguished between two types, participatory democracy and representative democracy. He argues that, with participatory democracy, individual members are directly involved in decision making while in representative democracy decisions are made by the elected representatives (Hirschsohn, 2011, p. ibid). It is key to point out that union democracy can be best assessed by the opportunities that members have, to participate in decisions that affect them, their ability to influence policy, exercise control over their representatives and hold them accountable and by the responsiveness of representatives and leaders to their demands.

Fosh and Morris (2000) argue that participatory democracy in unions can also be understood from four alternative perspectives. Firstly, there are Liberal-Pluralist approaches. With these approaches, the main basis is the extent to which participatory democracy is exercised and whether or not the union has a democratic constitution, reliable voting mechanisms (Stepan-Norris, 1997, pp. 476-477) the degree of membership participation in elections (Fosh & Morris, 2000, p. 96), and/or meetings in general (Seidman, 1957, p. 222). In a classic account, Lipset, (1952, p. 61) argues that member's influence on union policy is most likely to be effective when there are alternative positions and camps within the union. He notes institutionalised opposition as a salient factor that permits members to directly influence

organisation policy through their ability to overturn union government (a similar argument is presented by Taft, (1944, p. 248). In turn, this may give a reflection of how often and closely elections are held and contested (Stepan-Norris, 1997, pp. 477-480, Seidman, 1957, p. 223).

A second perspective is the Consumer Trade Union. This viewpoint considers union members as consumers of services, which are rendered by the union (Fosh & Morris, 2000, p. 97). Under this perspective, for a union to be considered democratic members do not need to necessarily be involved in decision-making as long as their leaders know what the members want (Fosh & Morris, 2000, p. ibid). The third viewpoint involves Grassroots Activism approaches. This focuses on how members are active in decision-making and in controlling their officials and delegates and participating in matters of the union (Fairbrother, 1983, p. 24). (Seidman, 1957, p. 35) For this view what matters is extent to which rank and file is active in determining union policy.

Finally as Fosh & Morris, (2000, p. 98) note, these are Conservative Individual Accountability views. This perspective argues that lack of union interest by the rank –and-file and moderate union leaders may mask a climate of intimidation. Thus for democracy to thrive in such an environment, mechanisms such as secret ballots much be put in place (Fosh & Morris, 2000, p. 98). It should be noted that these views could not be considered as standalone perspectives since there is much overlap between them. Hence, through taking account of these various perspectives, it is possible to develop a standard measurement of union participatory democracy (Fosh & Morris, 2000, pp. 112-113).

Another understanding of trade union democracy according to Hochner, et al., (1990) is one that focuses on two differing models, which are participatory democracy and representative democracy. In participatory democracy, union members are directly involved in the decision-making process while under representative democracy, decisions are primarily made by elected representatives. Democracy in the context of labour movements is defined along the lines of control by the governed or union members, as explained by Hochner, et al., (1990, p. 17): democracy is a matter of degree rather than proposition. Thus, the more control by the governed, the greater the degree of democracy, and the less the governed control, the less the degree of democracy".

The concept of participatory democracy relates to the reciprocal relationship, which exists between organised political institutions or social organisations and the base of support focusing on empowering the members of the organisation to participate in the decision-

making process (Sklar 1986; Williams 2008). Cohen and Fosh (1990) examined union democracy and adopted a participatory framework, rather than the usual prevalent competitive and representative model of democracy. They adopted the model in which they explained as a better basis for the study of local democracy where sub-groups and competition for election may not exist. In defining local union democracy (Cohen & Fosh, 1990, p. 107) highlighted three essential elements which are "representativeness, accountability and membership involvement." Situating concepts surrounding trade union democracy within the scope of this research, helps in understanding the relationship between the NUMSA leadership and members and the different degree of decision-making within its organisational structures. Emphasis is on "bottom- up and up-bottom" approach in decision-making. In addition, how the union lived up to democratic principles through examining the three elements mentioned above in explaining participatory democracy, Williams (2008:21) notes, "within the new appreciation of democracy, two types of democracy have been dominant and these are political democracy and organisational democracy that revolves around the economic and social spheres of life." Similarly, Roberts (1998) posits that political democracy places its emphasis on the importance of democratic institutions as a framework for managing social and political pluralism. However, Williams (2008:21) argues that this narrow view of representative democracy bears a certain resemblance to the liberal political traditions and mainly relying on representative institutions to provide "conflict regulatory mechanisms" that influence the peaceful co-existence of societal projects. In other words, Williams (2008) argues that this explanation of political democracy seems to place borders on the formal political institutions allowing social hierarchies and inequalities to remain in all other arenas of life.

Williams (2008) notes that participatory democracy advocates for popular empowerment of the low-ranking (subaltern) sectors to make decisions and carry through implementation in all sectors, political, economic, and social. The understanding of participatory democracy here views it as a principle of social organisation and not just a political democracy. Williams (2008:22) notes that critical to this notion of participatory democracy is the "view of deepening and extending democratic practices in all three arenas (social, economic and political) of life allowing members and citizens of the society to participate in directly and control decision-making processes in all these three critical spheres". Hence, Williams maintains that democracy is not simply an end but rather a continuous process of social

organisation that directly affects the degree of popular control over collective decision-making in the different spheres.

Key points emanating from the above discussion include the importance of the frequency of attendance at union meetings by members, the regular conduct of elections, the degree of membership participation in elections, the use of secret ballots, and grassroots demands for accountability and recall. This will become a template through which one can examine internal democracy within NUMSA and in particular the role of ordinary union members and shop stewards in decision-making.

2.2.1. Erosion and sustenance of trade union internal democracy

Hochner, et al., (1990) cautions how participatory union democracy can be eroded and be replaced by representative democracy. Hochner, et al (1990cited in Hirschsohn, (2011, p. 9) notes that participatory democracy is susceptible to being replaced by representative democracy when the union continues to grow in a way that leads to the bureaucratisation of trade unions. There is also the likelihood that democracy may erode at the local level, and oligarchy takes over, unless members of the union at local level enforce the accountability of their representatives by requiring ongoing mandating and consultation and by replacing those who fail to perform and conform to expectations (Hirschsohn, 2011, p.9). A case in point, according to Hirschsohn, (2011) relates to how COSATU's 10th national report alluded to this challenge citing problems like poor attendance at constitutional meetings and union meetings. This alone has the possibly of weakening internal democracy. The culture and structures of democracy were easy to entrench within trade union during the apartheid era since they complemented the goals of the liberation movement (Buhlungu, 2006b). However, with the growth of COSATU in post-apartheid period and as affiliates continued to join the federation, there was an erosion of direct democracy and an increase in representative democracy and a widened gap between workers and shop stewards and senior leaders (Hirschsohn, 2011, p. 7).

Due to the decline of internal democracy in South African trade unions, particularly within the COSATU federation, there has been a resurgence of breakaway unions pushing for an exit from COSATU. Examples are the 2000 and 2001 strikes in Volkswagen and Engen, where the workers had to challenge the leadership of their unions, and later opted to create new structures closer to the needs of the rank and file (Rachleff, 2001, pp. 165-166). By trying to build a democratic organisational structure within the union's bottom-up structure for participation and decision-making by members, unions had the mission of avoiding

oligarchical tendencies. They were driven by the desire to promote direct democracy, accountability of delegates, open debate, and the education of activists, and worker participation in decision-making (Buhlungu, 2006a).

As a way of strengthening and preserving union internal democracy Lipset, et al., (1962) posits that there is a need for the existence of opposing parties or factions. These are salient to the functioning of democracy in labour movements and allude to the existence of independent structures of power that can create necessary opposition to officials and autonomous organisational base of rank- and -file activists within the union. The scholars cited raise critical points about and some of the factors that can facilitate or lead to the erosion of internal democracy in trade unions. Such literature helps create some of the pointers and benchmarks for examining the internal life of NUMSA and aspects such as decision-making and level of membership participation within the life of the union.

South African trade unions have managed to grown in numbers and remain strong even in the midst of neoliberal economic policies, which have presented challenges (Wood & Psoulis, 2001, p. 294). Examples of the factors that have assisted unions to remain strong include entrenchment of labour rights in South African labour legislation (Labour Relations Act, 1995) which made it possible for the unification of all workers into one industrial relations system. In addition, the promotion of collective bargaining through the expansion of the organisational rights of unions at work place; and the new laws which facilitated tripartite forum (the state, capital and labour) to engage and discuss important decisions.

2.3 TYPES OF UNIONS

There are various types of trade unions and these types can be divided into three, which are economic unionism, political unionism and social movement unionism. These varying types are also sub-categorised into different variants as shall be highlighted below.

2.3.1 Economic unionism

According to Pillay (2013, p.13) economic unionism also known as collective bargaining unionism, refers to "independent unions which confine their activities to the workplace.” In this mode of unionism the working conditions of union members in the market place become the focus of a trade union and in such a setup, unions are highly institutionalised, conservative but at times militant. Pillay (2013) further notes that unions under this type of unionism use their monopoly power to defend their own interests by any means (whether or not they transgress the interests of other members in the working class). This mode of

unionism is associated with what Marx and Lenin coined as "trade union consciousness," a situation where workers are defined as those members of the working class employed in the formal sector and eligible to be members of a trade union (Pillay 2013).

2.3.2 Political unionism

On the other hand, political unionism is related with trade unions that "engages in state-political struggles but are closely allied or tied (often subordinated) to a political party" (Pillay 2013:14). This type of unionism is often characterised as hierarchical in structure with an oligarchic form of representative democracy, meaning that in as much as office bearers are elected through regular elections, the elected leaders usually operate with a high degree of autonomy from the membership (Pillay 2013). Furthermore, leaders who are found within this type of unionism are usually senior party officials and in scenarios where political democracy is achieved these unions offer unwavering support for their parties during elections. This support can be either through financial support (party funding) or sometimes through having block votes in party congresses (Pillay 2013). Within political unionism itself, there are three sub-types of unionism, which are nationalist, social-democratic, and Marxist-Leninist unionism. Trade unions which are Marxist-Leninist stand in contrary to trade union consciousness which is related to economic unionism and they have a "broader socialist, consciousness, where the entire class interest, including the unemployed and dependents of workers, is served through combining struggles in both spheres of production and social production (community politics)"(Pillay 2013:14).

Under the Marxist-Leninist mode of unionism, various classes are fused into political struggles directed at both the state and capital. Pillay (2013) argues that the practice of Marxist-Leninist unions over the past century has mainly been one of complete subordination to the Marxist vanguard party (both during and after the struggle for democracy) operating as one of many "front" organisations. On the other hand, nationalist unions tend to be populist, and issues of shop floor collective bargaining are often neglected in favour of mobilising support for political parties or leaders of the party during intra-party factional struggles (Pillay 2013). Pillay (2013, p.14) maintains that, "…the ideological discourse of nationalism is limited to the achievement of national democracy, for progressive versions and ethnic or religious power for their conservative counterparts." Marxist-Leninists on the other hand are anti-capitalist and oriented, at least in theory, to the achievement of socialist transformation and eventually a classless "communism." The third sub-type of political unionism is social democratic and under this mode of unionism, unions are characterised by a "well organised,

hierarchical, as their Marxist-Leninist counterparts, but they have a weaker relationship to their political party allies"(Pillay 2013:14).

2.3.3 Social movement unionism

The concept of *social movement unionism* as a type of trade unionism evidently needs reference to the new social movements. The concept of new social movements began to emerge in the late 1970s and it stressed on social movements as the focal point of social transformation and reference was often placed on "new social contradictions, new social subjects, and new social movements" (women, peace, ethnic, ecological and consumer issues among others) (Waterman 1993, p.252). While conceptualising new social movements, Waterman (1993) notes that worker struggles are neither condemned as economic nor glorified as political, but they are recognised as representing one front of the political struggle that must be articulated together with other forms of struggles be they social, economic or community, if the present state of affairs is to be abolished. The concept of social movement unionism was originally developed by progressive scholars in the South, an effort to understand the militant, mobilised industrial unions emerging in the newly industrialised countries such as South Africa, Brazil, South Korea and the Philippines in the 1980s (Lambert & Webster, 1988, p. 23). Thus, social movement unionism is seen as a highly mobilised form of unionism, which emerges in opposition to authoritarian regimes and repressive workplaces in newly industrialised nations of the developing world, and it can be based in a significant expansion of semi-skilled manufacturing work (Lambert & Webster, 1988).

According to Slater (1985) cited by Waterman (1993, p.253), new social movements are characterised by the following: “(1) new forms of struggle in relation to new forms of subordination and oppression (i.e., the generalization of commodification, bureaucratization, and massification); (2) the fact that these new forms of subordination and oppression are not necessarily connected with or concentrated within the proletariat: they take autonomous form and expression, they are not necessarily anti-capitalist, and a new revolutionary subjectivity has to be created (rather than being assumed to inhere in the proletariat); (3) the high value given to empowerment at the base of society, to democracy within movements, to respect for differences, and to a high standard of interpersonal relations”. Although these characteristics may not be as new as reflected by the name of the concept itself, what is key in this study is to understand and appreciate the importance of these characteristics and how they can help in differentiating the new social movements from the traditional labour organisations which are

"customarily centralised and bureaucratic bodies, dominated by their leadership and outside forces commonly seen as instrumental to other ends" (Waterman 1993,p254).

Pillay (2013:15) argues that social movement unionism is society- focused and close to the social movement origins of trade unions. Furthermore, according to Pillay (2013), social movement unionism can be divided into two sub-types, namely "social justice" unions that are typically found in the USA and the more explicitly anti-capitalist, or anti-systemic type found elsewhere (Pillay 2013). According to Pillay (2013), this second sub-type of social movement unionism is often robust during the phases of struggles for democracy, but, if allied to a political party, tends to drift towards social justice unionism or political unionism once political power has been achieved. Again, it is important to note that anti-systemic social movements unions can be further divided into popular-democratic and syndicalist sub-types. Pillay (2008) notes that popular-democratic refers to the combination of class and nationalist politics and it avoids the debilitating effects of populism on the other hand and workerism on the other hand. Syndicalism or syndicalist unionism is another sub-type of anti-systemic social movement unionism that sees unions and class struggles as primary means for revolution

The difference between popular –democratic and syndicalist social movement unionism lies in the aspect of state power and political parties approach, which syndicalist tend to eschew (Pillay 2013). A working definition of popular-democratic, transformative social movement unionism, which is where COSATU in its early years could be located, is that it seeks the hegemony of working class aspirations, to achieve a participatory-democratic form of socialism (Pillay 2013: 15). In other words, popular-democratic transformative unionism combines struggles as it has a broad, inclusive scope of activity where production politics and struggles for workplace improvements are combined with community struggles and state-power politics (Pillay 2013). It is a reflection of participatory forms of decision-making combined with representative democracy through the harnessing of a democratic form of organisation involving maximum transparency, worker control, mandates, and regular report backs.

However, social movement unionism has been criticised by van der Walt (2014), as he argues that the main problem is that within the context of social movement unionism, unions tend to end up drifting or degenerating into political unionism, as they will be combining class and national politics due to alliances with political parties. In contrast to Pillay (2013), van der

Walt (2014) places syndicalist unionism as a separate type outside the social movement unionism sub-type as envisaged by Pillay (2013).According to van der Walt (2014, p.239) the tradition of anarcho-syndicalism "envisages an anti-bureaucratic and bottom-up trade unions as key means of education and mobilisation of workers". The tradition of anarcho-syndicalism focuses on society transformation through "union led workplace occupations that will institute self-management and participatory economic planning, the abolishing of markets, hierarchies and states" (van der Walt 2014: 239).

Accordingly, van der Walt (2014) highlights some limitations associated with social movement unionism and he argues that the limitations of the concept lie in that it opposes more than what it proposes. That is, the demands of social movement union activists stop short of a clearly defined programme for systemic change beyond for democratic reforms. van der Walt highlights another challenge that is associated with political unionism, where he argues that "social movement unions move quickly into the approach towards political unionism which entails allying with political parties at state power with the hope that they will provide working class access and benefits to state power and policy making" (van der Walt 2014, p.242). The third problem with social movement unionism as van der Walt (2014) argues lies in the issue of subordination of unions to states and ruling parties. He notes that alliances tend to limit the autonomy of the trade union, its vision, and internal democracy and in some instances: unions tend to end up being divided into rival blocs of party loyalists. Lastly, as van der Walt argues social movement unionism continually faces an exodus of seasoned unionists into state employment, which has few effects on state policy yet it, has serious effects in union capacity promoting careerism amongst unions. He cites Musgrave (2014) giving an example of the 2014 elections, where COSATU had its senior officials, about twelve, awarded with senior state appointments (van der Walt 2014, p.242). While van der Walt (2014) gives an exposition on the limits of social movement unionism. It can be argued that the environmental circumstances, which have prevailed in South Africa, presented a different context in which it was inevitable for trade unions to be influential in directing formulation of policies, which are worker inclined by forging an alliance with revolutionary parties. Trade unions during the apartheid period, like MAWU displayed characteristics of social movement unionism which did not degenerate into political unionism until the period when it merged with other unions to form NUMSA and similarly when NUMSA became an affiliate of COSATU when the struggle for democracy led unions

aligning with revolutionary parties, which became a popular form of social movement unionism.

2.4 SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM AND DEMOCRATISATION IN AFRICA

Kester (2007) discusses workplace democracy and how it can facilitate and deepen the democratisation process in Africa. His research project, conducted in a longitudinal manner in some states in Africa, focussed on the role of trade unions in the democratisation process of workplace relations within the continent. He argues that, for democracy to thrive in any environment, participatory democracy is the essential element that can act as the driving force for the democratisation of the economy when participatory democracy is harnessed. Kester (2007:23) outlines the development and evolution of workplace democracy, giving a sweeping history of the concept from a European perspective. Similarly, Kester (2007) highlights some of the pioneers who were called utopian socialists, such as Buchez who believed in the idea of republics in workshops, Proudhon a forerunner of syndicalism who was a fervent believer in bottom-up democracy, and Saint-Simon who favoured for great state control on behalf of workers (Kester 2007). The contrast between the utopian Socialists and Marxists-Leninists is drawn from the fact that the utopian socialists believed in democratic control by workers in principle on a voluntary basis while the Marxists argued for Proletarian Socialism, which meant party control on behalf of the workers. A new social democratic system was later implemented which saw the state, capital and labour coming up with a labour relations framework in Western Europe (Kester, 2007).

This framework saw the trade unions agreeing to negotiate the best deals for waged labour without challenging or dismantling the means of ownership or production, and the state intervening through social legislation to ensure a levelled socio-economic field between capital and labour. Kester (2007: 16) concludes that the post-independence period saw the landscape of labour relations change drastically from the past. A contrasting analysis between the periods 1950-1985 and the 1985 - present, shows how the global economic dynamics have affected labour relations and the perception of workplace democracy from a political and economic perspective. Kester and Pinaud (1996:2) note that during the period of the 1960s and 1970s when the concept of worker participation and o-determination was a growing phenomenon in Europe, governments also played their role by offering financial support and facilitation to participation schemes in the public sector. This even went further

to fund the education, training, and research, for labour movements, as another way to help spread and legitimise worker participation.

In the third world context, Kester (2007:29) highlights on how South American states attempted to realise a democratic transition towards workers self-management within the country's existing constitutional frameworks. An example, in this case, is early 1970s Chile. Kester (2007) maintains that in countries like Algeria, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, governments under the philosophy of "liberating participation", mainly aimed at transforming the political and economic order, introduced the concept of participatory democracy. Participation in these nations aimed at increasing economic efficiency and production, and this included the involvement of workers in decision-making and reduced alienation in the workplace, and to develop democracy, training workers to identify themselves as part of the political environment as a step toward achieving democratic socialism (Kester, 2007). In relation to this study, Kester (2007) gives an exposition of how trade unions and the state managed to forge alliances aimed at improving both the workplace environment and economic efficiency and production. Also the conscientisation of the worker in the political environment towards achieving democratic socialism. These are some of the workplace and production struggles that are merged with nationalistic struggles. However, in most cases, the system involved the subordination of unions to nationalist part states.

2.5. SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR HISTORY

There are four waves of black trade unionism in South Africa and according to Friedman (1987), cited in Pillay (2013: 16) the first wave was related to the formation of the Industrial and Commercial workers union (ICU) of the 1920s. Then the second wave of around the mid-1930s and 1940s saw the emergence of the Council of Non-European Trade unions (CNETU) formed by the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) activists, and their Trotskyist counterparts in the Joint Committee of African Trade Unions , led by Max Gordon and Daniel Khoza. The third wave saw the formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in the 1950s. SACTU was part of the congress alliance led by the ANC and the Alliance was bound by the Freedom Charter, a set of social-democratic demands launched at the Congress of the People in 1955. The fourth wave saw new unions formed from the 1970s, culminating in the formation of COSATU in 1985. With the formation of the UDF in 1983, the Freedom Charter was revived and became the guiding document of the movement (Pillay 2013).

Maree (1985:281) notes that SACTU had “allied itself to the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People’s Congress (CPC), and the (white) Congress of Democrats.” This alliance gives a reflection of political unionism in SACTU during its days of unionism in the apartheid era. SACTU's strategy was to emphasise establishing factory committees that would not only take up issues in the workplace but also be groupings of advanced workers who would combine the close links between economic and political demands of the working class (Maree 1985). According to Maree (1985:p.282), “SACTU’s interwovenness with the Alliance therefore incurred the state's oppressive wrath at a stage when SACTU was not resilient enough to withstand the onslaught". After the effective destruction of SACTU as a union, an uneasy calm settled over industrial relations in South Africa. Progressive working class leadership either was in prison, had been driven into exile or was pushed of public life.

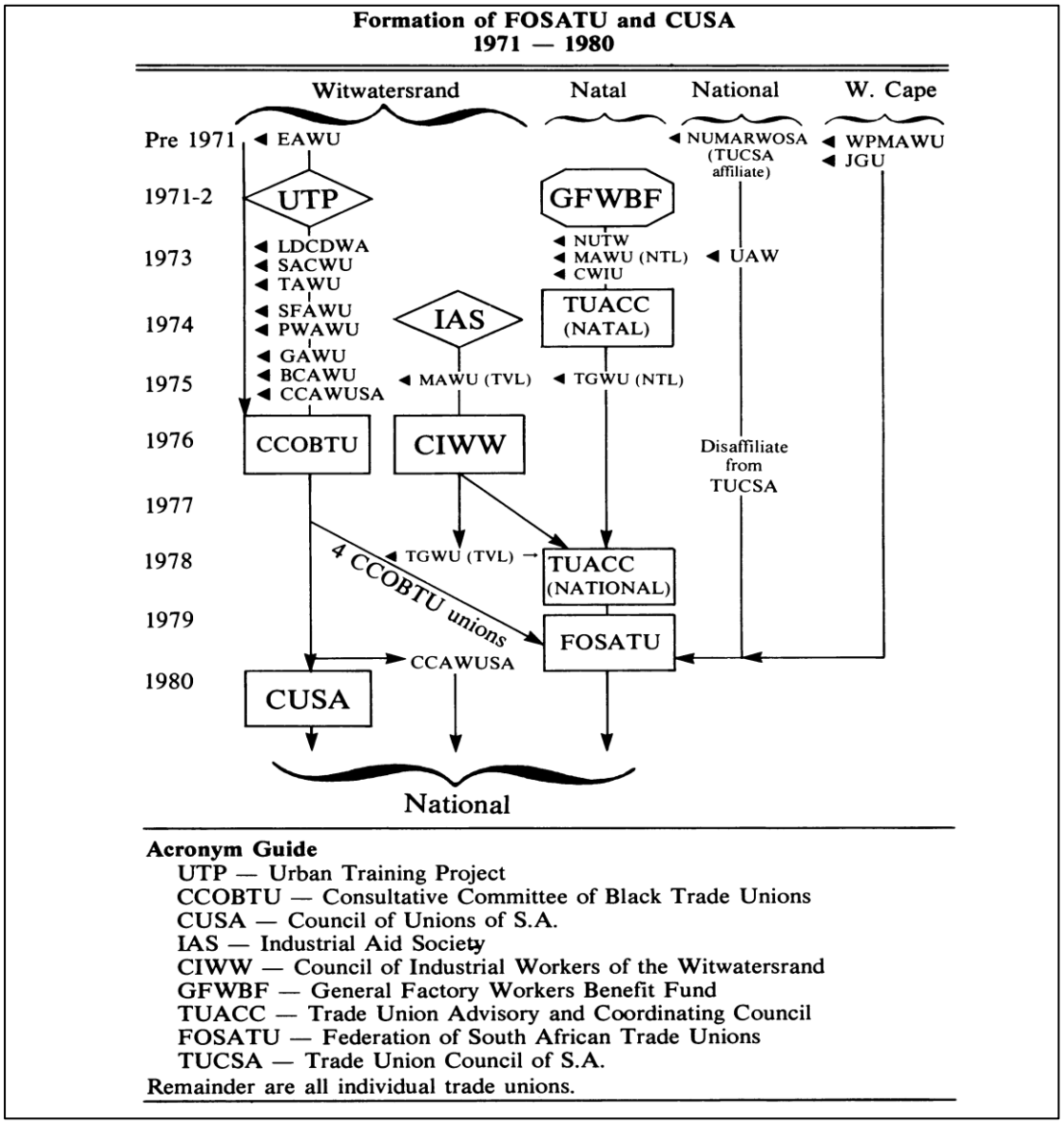
The revived non-racial union movement, particularly those unions that formed the Federation of South African trade unions (FOSATU) in 1979, was initially cautious about its relationship with the ANC and SACP. FOSATU’s reservations stemmed from SACTU's experience with political unionism which saw SACTU being subordinated and “hijacked" by middle class populist politicians in the 1950s (Pillay 2013). FOSATU maintained that the demise of SACTU in the 1960s was a result of its inclination to political unionism, such that the period when the leading organisers (ANC /SACP) were being politically victimised by the apartheid regime, SACTU became a powerless labour movement without support from its victimised members (Pillay 2013). Thus, FOSATU wanted to establish strong, durable mass organisations at workplace before entering the unsafe terrain of state power politics during that time. However, FOSATU insisted that the strategy was to build strong shop floor organisations and only on that basis engage the state and politics (Pillay 2013). According to Pillay (2013: 16) FOSATU at that time, “flirted with a number of ideas which its critics from ANC/UDF/SACP labelled ‘workerist’ or ‘syndicalist’ namely forming its own working class party, or engaging with state power as an independent union formation and entering into alliances with other groups entirely on its own terms. It is on this basis that FOSATU refused to join the UDF in 1983”. Figure.1 below shows the formation of FOSATU and CUSA between the periods 1971 to 1980 through the unification of various independent trade unions during different periods.

Around 1984, pressure mounted up within FOSATU to become more active in state-power politics and this was due to township rebellions, which had spilled over into the workplace.

The union movement was caught in between “workerist” and ANC populists unionism and social movement unionism, and the key players in mediating between this deadlock were ANC sympathisers within FOSATU (Naidoo 2010 in Pillay 2013:17). This mediation resulted in the formation of COSATU in 1985, bringing together FOSATU and its allies, the UDF unions, as well as the NUM from CUSA. NUM became the union, which championed the cause of the ANC within COSATU, against more sceptical unions from the FOSATU tradition like MAWU (Allen 2003; Butler 2007 cited in Pillay 2013: 17). At its inception, in 1985, COSATU exemplified social movement unionism where democratically organised workers engage in both production politics at workplace and the politics of state power, and this involved explicit alliance with movement outside the workplace, but under strict conditions of union independence based on shop-floor accountability (Pillay 2013). Naidoo (2010) in Pillay (2013) highlights that a strategic compromise, which recognised the increasing popularity of ANC -SACP alliance, was reached in 1987 with the adoption of the Freedom charter by both NUM and NUMSA. This was seen as a stepping-stone to socialism by COSATU. A shift from social movement unionism to political unionism in COSATU can be seen to be evident since 1990. Pillay (2013: 17) argues that "although always fiercely independent, COSATU found itself gradually drifting towards a form of political unionism, with strong elements of all three sub-types (namely nationalist, Leninist and social-democratic), in that it became a junior part of a political alliance with the ANC and SACP" with which it was now formally allied in the Tripartite Alliance.

From 1997 to 2007, relations between COSATU/SACP and the government became increasingly strained as the working class organisations felt that their concerns were ignore during the period of President Mbeki, and as dissatisfaction mounted, the option of withdrawing from the Alliance and re-igniting COSATU's social movement unionism became an increasingly real one within COSATU (Pillay 2013). However, the opportunity was lost as COSATU decided to continue with its strategy of having its cake and eating it, namely by following weak forms of political unionism and social movement unionism. In addition, as well as defensive strategies to protect workers’ rights embedded in labour legislation immersing itself in ANC factional politics, in the face of increased market pressures as a result of global competition (Pillay 2013:19).

Figure 1: Formation of FOSATU and CUSA 1971-1980



Source: Maree (1985): The Emergence, Struggles, and Achievements of Black Trade Unions in South Africa from1973 to 1984.

The legislative and political reforms enacted by the new South African Government in the 1990s were systematically designed to exclude a socialist society, and so the desired goals of many trade union activists in the 1980s (Bramble, 2003). The system was designed in such a way that there will be a deracialised and stable system of capitalism (Bramble 2003). This type of capitalist system and the change of the political landscape of South Africa had an effect on the way in which the labour movement operated. Caught in-between political unionism and social movement unionism, the COSATU federation in general and NUMSA to be precise were found compromising their previous positions and practices. According to Bramble (2003), trade unions that existed in the 1980s such as MAWU (NUMSA) used to

conduct extensive internal debates and discussions involving both shop stewards and organisers whenever they deemed to plan industrial actions. However, this seems to have changed since 1990, when two parties, which were fighting for South African independence (ANC and SACP), were unbanned and COSATU officially becoming part of the Tripartite Alliance. This is the period when the federation of workers (in which NUMSA was an affiliate to) found itself caught between a robust social movement unionism and political unionism (Pillay, 2011). Changes that came along with the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, in 1994, saw them affecting the nature of unionism, resulting in a decline in grassroots mobilisation or neutralisation of social movement unionism, and incarnation of political unionism.

Other scholars argue that post-apartheid South African model of social movement unionism could be viewed as a unique and advanced one. Hirschsohn (1998) cited in Bramble (2003,p.188) argues that social movement unions in South Africa were advanced due to the federation's adoption of what call strategic unionism which combines negotiations inside institutionalised political and industrial relations framework and collective action outside. This is evidenced by the current set-up where workers, employers, and government negotiate conditions through NEDLAC, also the deployment of union activists in public institutions like the labour department and legislative caucus bodies, but through ongoing use of mass strikes.

Bramble's work: *Social Movement Unionism since the Fall of Apartheid: The case of NUMSA in the East Rand (2003)* examined the concept of social movement unionism focusing on two essential elements of the concept, which are representative and participatory democracy in NUMSA. Other factors that he considered include independence from political parties and links to non-workplace political struggles. His study was conducted within the Wits East Region (now Ekurhuleni) in 2001.His study concluded that NUMSA retained characteristics of social movement unionism measured against some of the benchmarks that he indicated. He maintained that the organisational structure of NUMSA showed that apart from participatory democracy at local level, the union still had representative democracy, evidenced by constitutional structures like the Regional Executive Committee (REC) and National Executive Committee (NEC) (Bramble 2003, p194).

The same happened at local level where local shop stewards council's still met weekly; the same was also at factory shop stewards committees, while general plant meetings occurred

weekly or fortnightly in the better-organised plants. Furthermore, the concepts of worker control and union member's mandates were still considered important, and with regard to communication between the regional and local office, it was still working efficiently (Bramble 2013).

The attainment of democracy in 1994 saw however, a real drift from social movement unionism to political unionism. COSATU was caught in a compromise situation where it had to forgo its principles of social movement unionism, from the periods 1985 to 1990. Adler and Webster (1995) and Marie (1992) hinted at some of the challenges that COSATU and its affiliates might experience in the future, as the federation became part of the Tripartite Alliance. Three possible factors highlighted by Adler and Webster (1995) and Marie (1992) (cited in Bramble 2003) include the breaking of the mandate principle as peak union representatives increasingly struck deals with employers and government representatives without referral back to members. Second one being, a growing gap between leadership and the base with locals turning into passive recipients of the national directives. Lastly, the decline of the motivating union vision; and the dominance of the ANC within the Tripartite Alliance. With these three factors, the possible implication for the federation is that it would run the risk of bureaucratisation and co-option in all spheres, slowly having its power ebbing away.

Also interesting for this research are the works of Forrest (2011), Webster (1985) on the emergence and sustenance of the concept of "worker control" of the unions. The influence of the ideas of Turner (1980) and Gramsci (1919), on shaping the way NUMSA and its predecessors operated and how they fought to build power and internal democracy within the union was key. Forrest (2011) gives a detailed historical outline of how NUMSA's predecessors had to deal with the issue of forming and sustaining an independent worker movement. The challenges that MAWU and NUMSA faced in the early 1980s are what NUMSA has been dealing with in the twenty-first century. These were issues that were related to political alliances (when and where to participate) and social alliances without compromising their independence as trade unions (Forrest, 2011, p. 320). These are the same issues that the union has been dealing with and trying to convince the COSATU federation in 1993 not to be too heavily involved in the political alliance with the ANC and SACP and the same reasons that made the unions call for a Special National Congress in 2013. According to Webster (1985, p. 247), the two core principles of MAWU (shop steward structures and factory level bargaining) in its third principle which is workers control over the union. In

building his argument and giving a case study of MAWU, Webster (1985, p. 247) responds to the question: To what extent can it be shown that there is actual participation in and worker control of decision-making by the rank and file? The response resonates with aspects of accountability and the process involved in negotiations in both rank –and- file, and he notes that this has been stressed by MAWU (Webster 1985). Forrest's (2011) outline of the history of NUMSA and its predecessor unions is critical to this research in showing the interesting processes and procedures that the union had to go through in forging an independent union that has its base and strength on worker control and participatory democracy in decision-making. This literature brings out the concept of participatory democracy in the traditions NUMSA and its predecessor unions. About the above research, this study will examine if the traditions of participatory democracy are still intact within the union against the postulated theory by Michels ([1915] 2001).

2.6 TRADE UNION STRATEGIES IN APARTHEID AND POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Post-apartheid South Africa has seen trade unions implementing various strategies to fight and defend the rights of the waged labour. These strategies have been determined by various factors such as the political, economic, and social issues within the environment, union-party relationships. Forrest (2011: 416) brings to life the aspect of union's changing roles for example, she notes the way "NUMSA changed its workerism role to political unionism in the 1990s, moving to shape the political landscape of South Africa by becoming more flexible with political movements which also meant that it had to compromise its independence as a trade union". This is related to work by Scully (2015) where he reveals lessons from the political strategies of post-independence African trade unions. Scully (2015) argues that the political strategies utilised by unions and the conflicts they experienced in the party-union relationship have largely been shaped by the ideas of economic development at national level.

In a broader context, Scully (2015) gives a different exposition of union-party relationships within the context of political strategies in post-colonial countries. Examples of how other unions have experienced relations with political parties and the state are drawn from countries like Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In his work, he delineates two crucial phases about union-party relationships that are the "economic development era" between 1950's and 1970's where the relationship was cooperative in nature and the phase is from 1970's to the present "neoliberal era." During this phase, the relationship was viewed as either conflictual or controversial, about the union-party association (Scully 2015). This

literature is essential in understanding the union-party relationships in post-colonial Africa in general and in particular, how the NUMSA, COSATU, and ANC relations developed before and after the 2013 moment.

The role of trade unions in the struggle for independence from colonial rule in Africa has caused a different debate within the existing academic literature. On one hand, scholars like Adler and Webster (1995), (2000), Webster and Von Holdt (2000), Lambert (1988), Buhlungu (2000) and Scully (2015), argue that the trade unions in Africa have proved to be critical in the fight against authoritarian and colonial regimes in the early nineteenth century and twentieth century. Ndlozi (2010:23) comments that these scholars argue that these African trade unions, particularly the ones in South Africa, utilised and are still using aggressive strategy in their operations in both economic and political arenas. It is also key to note that these scholars also noted the emergence of "worker control" (the democratic union practice of participatory and representative democracy and shop steward structures) in the early 1970s as a sharp break with the earlier African unions of the era like SACTU, before the banning of political parties in the early 1960s.

Scholars such as Barchiesi and Bramble (2003), Callinicos (1992), Ndlozi (2010) and van de Walt (1997), agree with the above scholars on the salience of trade union militancy and worker control. They, however, view this issue with more scepticism, particularly noting the development of South African trade unionism, in the post-apartheid era. These scholars focus on the post-apartheid trade unionism and their works resonate with the works of independent Marxism and by Anarcho-syndicalism. Bramble (2003:200) notes that the majority of African labour movements have been subordinated by the post-colonial governments and at times transformed into government's agencies. Years later after independence, COSATU became very closely integrated into a political alliance dominated by the ANC (Bramble 2003). With regards to NUMSA, however, Bramble (2003) argues that NUMSA as a trade union has been somewhat more independently minded than most COSATU affiliates in its relations with the ANC. Bramble (2003) further argues that political autonomy has direct links to one of the features of social movement unionism which is - ties with outside communities and to non-workplace political struggles. During the 1980s, MAWU/NUMSA was heavily involved in community struggles involving workers, students, and township residents (Ruiters 1995). In the late 1980s, after the declaration of the State of Emergency, COSATU affiliates including NUMSA became the core forces of mobilisation behind the Mass Democratic Movement (Bramble 2003).

The decision to break its ties with the Alliance and its attempt to influence COSATU to break away from the Alliance too was not a new idea thing within NUMSA. It is on record that this call was even made before the attainment of South African independence around the 1980s and later in 1993 (Bramble 2003, p.200). According to Pillay (2015, p.49) "the NUMSA moment can be seen as a return to the 'workerist' or (social movement unionism) roots of NUMSA where in the 1980s as MAWU, it led the argument for an independent but politically engaged labour movement which is uncontaminated by the nationalist politics of the liberation movement".

Baskin (1991, pp.215-22) notes that "At NUMSA's founding congress in 1987, the union endorsed the Freedom Charter, but argued at COSATU's Second National Congress in the same year for a 'Workers' Charter' which aimed to give the Freedom Charter a more distinctly socialist perspective". Six years later in 1993, the anti-Charterist current succeeded in winning the vote at National Congress to withdraw support for the alliance with the ANC, but the next Congress overturned this decision in 1996. The rejection of the1993 proposal by NUMSA resulted the union in taking a compromising position between political unionism and social movement unionism.

Historically NUMSA has been on record with regard to union-party relations, arguing that "trade unions need not be aligned with political parties, but they must remain independent labour movements with significant autonomy to criticise the government and political parties whenever they go against the worker's concerns" (Bramble 2003, p.200). Bramble (2003) further argues that one of the gravest dangers related to political party alliances with trade unions is that the mandate for labour movements to defend and fight for the rights of workers will be lost. What this means is that there will be domination of the party over the trade union and the deployed labour activists in the party, end up defending the position of the party in government. Bramble (2003) notes some of the NUMSA organisers in the Wits East Region (now Ekurhuleni) were concerned with the level of growing intolerance within COSATU towards any voice that became critical of the ANC and its government policies. This shows that the federation had become more like a defender of the ANC party and its policies implying that COSATU was taking orders and following to the demands of the party in the government, even against members and affiliates

Pillay (2015) notes NUMSA's two crucial moments the "ecological" and "political" moments[4] in which the "political moment" led to the resolution by NUMSA to leave the Alliance in December 2013, and build towards a united front of all progressive organisations. In this build up, Pillay (2015) highlights the internal political dynamics, which NUMSA experienced within the COSATU federation. For example, the political dynamics and oligarchical tendencies, which NUMSA experienced within COSATU and the ANC, led alliance facilitated to the build up towards the call made by NUMSA in 2013. Secondly, Pillay (2015) highlights the internal leadership infighting that took place within COSATU. According to Pillay (2015; p.59), these two moments potentially define the "new age of the labour movements in South Africa – the assertion of an independent working class politics and the questions the productivist growth paradigms….".

Currently, NUMSA appears to have sustained its strong interests in community and non-work struggles, and this can be linked to one of its 2013 resolutions, building up the United Front (UF) a movement, which will have the characteristics of social movement unionism.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with some of the literature, which relates to this study and the theories that can be linked to the study. The case study of NUMSA between 2012-2014 can be linked to some of the arguments surrounding theories of oligarchy and social movement unionism How the unions try to avoid the rule and management of few officials in the union, and in breaking the oligarchical tendencies, how they emphasise the concept of worker control and members of the union contributing in the making of decisions within the union. New social movement have also been discussed and situated within the discussion of social movement unionism. The next chapter will deal with the research design.

[4] His two NUMSA moments discussion was written and published in 2015, when there was high optimism in relation to NUMSA and social movement unionism revitalisation. (Pillay 2015)

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The preceding section has introduced the research topic, the research questions, and objectives together with some relevant literature related to this study. I have also presented some theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this study and some of the arguments surrounding social movement unionism and trade unions. This chapter shall focus on the methodological issues in this study. The first section of this chapter will be a detailed outline and justification section on the use of qualitative methods in this study. What follows is an outline of how the study was conducted and a brief narration of some challenges faced in the process of doing this research. These methods and techniques were useful in answering the research question in the sense that the individual respondents will be able to give actual experiences and interpretations which cannot be found in secondary sources. In addition, thematic coding was useful in the sense that raw collected data was processed into meaning information, which can be used to answer the research questions, through analysis.

3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 17) note that qualitative research is “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” Qualitative research seeks to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study in its particular setting or context. In this regard, a qualitative researcher aims to acquire in-depth knowledge in the perceptions researched (Barnes, 1992, pp. 115-116). Thus, the hidden and covert elements of social life are explained in detail through qualitative research. Hoepfl (1997, p. 49) stresses the fact that qualitative research relies on the natural setting as its source of data and that the researcher acts as an instrument for data collection. He further adds that; "Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning of events for the individuals who experience them and interpretations of those meanings by the researcher." Qualitative techniques as Strauss & Corbin (1990) posits, also allows for an interpretive and contextualised approach and a sustained focus on the complex creation and maintenance of meaning. The research sought to gain a deeper understanding as to whether NUMSA conformed to its principles of social movement unionism and also if its members at the local level were indeed involved and consulted during the period when the union was preparing for its special national congress in 2013.

3.1.1 Case study research design

The study adopted a case study method, focus on NUMSA locals in JC Bez region, because this research design fits well within the context of the "what," "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 1989). Knight (2002, p. 41) highlights that case studies "are described as in-depth analyses that seek to go beyond the surface to look for meanings and to construct understandings on a small scale when compared to surveys." It is fundamental to know that a case study can be geographically bounded. This means that the approach will be useful in exploring the unknown, being manageable when compared to national and generalised surveys because a small-scale case study allows the researcher to concentrate on the few specific variables and explore them in-depth. Kumar (2005, p. 113) notes that: "This approach rests on the assumption that the case being studied is typical of cases of a certain type so that, through intensive analysis; generalisations may be made that will apply to other situations of the same kind." Taking a leaf from Kumar (2005), the researcher was aware of the fact that the results found in this case study cannot be just generalised since they remain unique to the case study.

Apart from that, the case study design also works best for in-depth and critical analysis of the issue or aspect under investigation. In this case, it is the issue of union conformity to its principles of social movement unionism and union members participating democratically during and after the 2013 political moment. Burawoy (1979, p. 9) posits, "case studies are not chosen for their statistical representativeness but theoretical relevance. On the other hand, De Vaus, (2001, p. 134) concurs that a case study research design "can seek to explore a topic where there has been little prior knowledge or understanding." One of the reasons why this study was undertaken was the need to make inroads on researching the life of union locals and examining the aspect of union democracy from a local-level perspective.

3.1.2 DATA COLLECTION

As highlighted before, qualitative research is mainly concerned with getting "meaning" from the respondent's viewpoint on the issue in question. The findings from this study drew much of its data from the in-depth interviews conducted and secondary sources through documentary search both in printed and online format relating to the NUMSA 2013 moment.

3.1.2.1 IN-DEPTH FACE TO FACE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The researcher conducted fifteen in-depth semi-structured interviews with shop stewards and union members from Tembisa, Kempton Park and Johannesburg North locals. These

interviews also included general informers and independent academic analysts from the regional level (JC Bez Region). According to Greenstein (2003, p. 56), this method of data collection includes an explicit list of aspects and issues and questions to be addressed. Moreover, it allows more flexibility on the sequence in which questions are asked, and the respondent will have the ability to respond broadly even in cases where further probing is done on the issues discussed. One reason why this method of data collection was chosen by the researcher is that of its strength in giving detailed data and information about the issues being discussed.

Since the confidentiality and safety of the interviewees was one of the ethical priorities, each respondent who participated in this study was given a pseudonym to protect their identities[5]. This means that the names, which appear in this study, are not the original or real names of the respondents. However, this method of in-depth interviews as a data collection tool has been criticised for its shortcomings in research. Some of the disadvantages include time and labour consuming activities, which involve the interview scheduling, transcribing the recordings, and analysing the results.

3.1.2.2 RECORDING AND TRANSCRIBING THE INTERVIEWS

All the interviews conducted for this research were recorded with the consent of the respondents. Through recordings, interviews were captured in their original form and provided a reference to check during the data analysis phase. These interviews were transcribed from audio format to readable transcripts for ease of access during data analysis. In a bid to avoid distorting and misrepresenting data due to forgetting, the researcher also had to take down field notes along with every interview recording conducted.

3.1.2.3 PRIMARY DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

The usefulness of primary documentary research is found in the rich technical and historical information that one cannot easily find or get through interviews, focus groups and participatory observations (Skocpol, 1996). In this study primary documentary, research and analysis was useful in highlighting key and relatively accurate details about issues and aspects surrounding participatory democracy in NUMSA locals. The researcher read and utilised primary data like interview transcripts, NUMSA Secretariat reports, discussion papers on the main issues for the 2013 special national congress, union on-line newsletters,

[5] See the Appendix D – Letter of informed consent.

on-line video debates, and published interviews with the national union leadership about the 2013 moment decision. Furthermore, secondary data sources such as academic books, journals, and newspaper articles, which commented and gave the views of other unionists and critics about the decision made by the union in 2013, were also noted

3.2. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in this study utilised non-statistical procedures since they are generally not associated with quantitative methods in research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A more analytical and interpretative procedure was adopted which focused on transcribing of interview data sets, coding, content synthesis and presentation of interpreted data on the basis of set out theoretical and conceptual frames, particularly in the form of typologies.

3.2.1 Coding of transcribed interviews and thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a widely utilised analytic method in qualitative research, yet it is poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). According to Gale et.al (2013), in purely deductive studies, the codes may have been pre-defined by an existing theory, or specific areas of interest to the project. One of the main purpose of coding is to classify all of the collected data in interview transcripts so that it can be easy to analyse and systematically be compared with other parts of the data sets (interview transcripts and secondary sources). This research study utilised the thematic coding method in analysing the transcribed interviews particularly in relation to questions that had to do with perceptions of respondents.

3.3 INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

The interpretive paradigm stresses the subjective views of the respondents. An approach that places cognisance of the fact that reality is shaped by human perceptions. In other words, there are several subjective truths, which can be studied and measured empirically as research areas. In the case of this study, the views of the union members at a local level who were part and parcel of the NUMSA 2013 political moment. The focus here is not to only to give a descriptive study or evaluate truth but to interpret and understand that biased views of the respondents targeted in this study. In such a situation, the context becomes a fundamental element in understanding the biases and views of the interviewees. This concept of interpretive approach partially owes its origins from Weber (1981) notion of *Verstehen,* meaning that the researcher ought to understand and be able to perceive the world using the same lenses as the respondents.

Weber (1981) warns that the knowledge gained through this interpretive approach cannot be generalised, as it remains context bound. According to Weber (1981, p. 151): "An understanding of human behaviour achieved through interpretation contains in varying degrees, above all, a specific qualitative self-evidence."

Following through with what Weber (1981) posits, the researcher made himself more familiar with the context in which the 2013 NUMSA moment took place and the period before the union made the final decision. This was done through an extensive academic literature review and examining both newspaper and journal articles. Books and some videos on seminars and workshops conducted by the union.

3.4 SAMPLING

Sampling is a process that constitutes selecting the needed number and characteristics of a particular population to be included in the study from a given (Ferley 1989, p. 39). Brewer and Hunter, (2006, p. 80) highlight some of the factors that should be considered during sampling. These include the cost of the study, time and the need for precise and accurate data and information relevant to the study. This study was situated within the confines of JC Bez, as per NUMSA's regional demarcations. This was a reasonable location since the researcher stayed around the university of Wits campus, and the NUMSA national and regional offices, and the locals were accessible regarding distance and location. There was enough time and funds for transport to go around three selected locals within this region. The targeted group for this study, situated in the JC Bez under the Gauteng Province, was chosen based on feasibility and accessibility.

The set target population for this study was set at twenty respondents, but only fifteen interviews were successfully conducted. Although the sample distribution was placed at five interviews from each selected local and key informants, the planned distribution did not come out as planned. This is attributed to the challenges that were experienced in the field[6]. This was planned with the hope that the interviews would be backed up with primary sources such as local meeting minutes and reports and secondary sources such as academic journals, newspaper articles, and union website. The initial sampling plan had a provision for a gender proportional distribution between male and female members of the union within the region. The idea was to get a balance in terms of the views from both female and male members of

[6] See section 3.7 Research challenges.

the union as perceptions do vary according to gender basis in some instances. However, because less female members were available, the set gender balance became a bit skewed in favour of male union members. This could allude to the fact that most female members of the union are not very active in some of the union affairs and meetings compared to male union members.

3.4.1 Sample area

The chosen area of this study was the region of JC Bez, which constitutes six union locals. The three selected locals were Tembisa Local, Kempton Park local and Johannesburg North local. The reason for choosing these three locals out of all the six locals in the region was based on their perceptions concerning political unionism and union autonomy. Tembisa local is known to be one of the most vocal locals against the current arrangement between labour, capital and the state in South Africa. Kempton Park union members constitute a significant number of young unionists in which some have been members of the ANC Youth League, and some are still active members of the League. Even so, they were classified vocal and critical of the ANC-led alliance. The last union local, Johannesburg North, constitutes both young and veteran ANC and NUMSA members. As it will be highlighted in the analysis chapter, this local also has a mixture of the members who are politically non-aligned, yet supported the Alliance, and held the view that NUMSA should not break away from the Alliance. These different positions and political views were deemed essential for this study since they will enhance in bringing out the reality of how the union members had to deal with such issues and the anti-ANC decision, which they resolved to hold to in 2013.

The term "local" means a geographic area within a union region in which the Central Committee has set out the boundaries[7] (NUMSA, 2014, p. 42). In this context, this will refer to union locals at the bottom of the union structure within the segmented regional areas. For example, in the case of this research, NUMSA locals within the JC Bezuidenhout Region include Johannesburg Central, South, North, Tembisa, West Rand, and Kempton Park. These locals are demarcated according to the NUMSA constitution, as organisational and representational structure that demarcate local governance in NUMSA as a union.

[7] Refer to Annexure A – Definitions in the NUMSA Constitution as amended in 2013.

3.5 ETHICAL ISSUES

Before all respondents took part in this study: informed consent for participation was sought first and secured before an interview was conducted. In this regard, participation was mainly based on a voluntary basis; confidentiality was prioritised, and no respondent was coerced to take part in this study. All participants were briefed on the purpose of the research. This study uses pseudonyms as mention before, to those who chose to remain anonymous and no harm was inflicted on the participants.

3.6. GAINING ACCESS

Before commencing fieldwork, the researcher approached some NUMSA union leaders, members, and veterans who attended the Global Labour University (GLU) tenth-anniversary commemorations at the University of Witwatersrand. This allowed the researcher to understand the channels and protocols that one has to follow before being granted permission to study the union as a case study for the research project. Access was further made possible by some of the union officials from the head office and regional offices who were GLU students or GLU alumni from the University of Witwatersrand. It is important to note here, that without their assistance, gaining access would have been difficult, just like having access to some of the local shop steward meetings and regional members during their meetings. Although the regular and institutional access was granted, there were few challenges related to accessing the targeted respondents and other potential officials who were target respondents to this study. These challenges are discussed herein in the next section of this study chapter.

3.7 RESEARCH CHALLENGES

The study faced a couple of difficulties and hindrances, which delayed progress, particularly during the data collection process. Some included institutional bureaucracy and confidentiality policies of the union, while some had to do with the scheduled respondents being unavailable due to the union and work related missions; and in some instances, union programmes such as regional and national Congress preparations interrupted. Interestingly, this is a reflection of what Buhlungu (1996 p. 30) once pointed out:, “unions remain suspicious of the motivations, and intentions of researchers except in cases where such researchers have been commissioned by the union." On the other hand, even after the commissioning or approval of access, there remain respondents who will be doubtful. In some cases, some research questions will not be entertained, as they were deemed sensitive within the context of the research and union confidential matters.

3.7.1 Bureaucracy and confidentiality policies.

Due to institutionalised union policies on confidentiality and privacy, the researcher was not able to gain access to the union minutes and meeting reports from the locals under study. Respondents from Tembisa, Kempton Park and Johannesburg North and the local leaders were unable to assist the researcher with the requested minutes, or reports of political discussion forums (PDF's) or policy workshop discussion forums held during 2013.From 11-25 October, for example factory level and local shop stewards held meetings across all the locals of the union. These are some of the primary documents, which could have supplemented the interviews, and secondary documents used in this study. The same applies to the regional minutes and reports that could have helped with this research. NUMSA local chairpersons in JC Bez region highlighted that they were not allowed to release reports and minutes to anyone unless the union leadership at the national level authorised. At the same time, they highlighted that such information would not be released due to confidentiality policies, and the national-level leadership would not provide such information to anyone outside the union due to high levels of suspicion and fear that such information may be used by the wrong people, whether for academic research or not.

3.7.2 Unavailability of scheduled respondents

A challenge that the researcher faced during the data collection was the sudden unavailability of certain targeted respondents from both the locals and region of JC Bez. These officials at the regional level and the local shop stewards asked for a rescheduling of the appointment, which stalled the progress, and at times, they apologised for failing to accommodate in the study. Two main reasons given were the preparation for the regional and national Congress, as some of the shop stewards were office-bearers either at local or regional level. Some local shop stewards failed to meet up due to factory or plant-related issues, which include; servicing union members having disputes with management. In some instances, the researcher would try to maximise opportunities by attending when the locals had their Local Shop Steward Council Meetings (LSSC), and try to have interviews with those members who were involved during the 2013 moment.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented some of the methodological aspects, and the data collection process. In addition, some of the research challenges faced during data collection have been raised and discussed herein. Data collection tools used in gathering data have been

highlighted above and lastly issues that have to do with research ethics. The fifth chapter that follows will discuss and analyse the data collected and related the information to answering the research questions regarding this study. The next chapter however, provides more information on the history and structure of NUMSA.

CHAPTER 4 - BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL METALWORKERS UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (NUMSA)

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the background of NUMSA union from 1987 but will draw some of the predecessor unions that existed before the amalgamation of the unions in the metal and auto industries. This brief historical background will assist in making it clear on how the union has to be a unique hybrid of different union traditions and how this later influenced its ability to construct considerable power in the 1980s and the years that were to come in post-apartheid South Africa. This will be followed by an outline of the structure of the union, how the practice of worker control union works or worked within NUMSA and an overview of the way participatory democracy works in the union.

4.1 BACKGROUND AND FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL METALWORKERS UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (NUMSA).

In the early 1980s, a small politically independent section of the trade union movement blossomed centred on FOSATU. It reinstated the dignity of labour in fundamental ways, and at times, it dominated the political landscape. In the struggle to transform the apartheid workplace and ultimately the apartheid state, certain unions emerged as potent forces for change, pioneering organising policies and methods, which greatly bolstered worker organisation (Forrest, 2005). The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and its predecessors were some of these unions. Four metalworkers' unions merged to form NUMSA in 1987 from the engineering, steel, energy, motor, and auto and tyre sectors, mainly from unions formed the 1960s and 1970s. These include the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), the Motor Industry Combined Workers Union (MICWU), the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU), and the United Metal, Mining and Allied Workers of South Africa (UMMAWOSA) (Leander, 2015). Unions such like MAWU and NAAWU had their roots from the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA).

The Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) was founded in October 1954 by 61 unions mainly representing White workers and mixed unions of Coloured and Indian workers (Leander, 2015). Initially, unions represented in TUCSA were members of the South African Trades and Labour Council (SATLC), popularly known as the Trade and Labour Council,

which was formed in the 1930s by various trade unions from different backgrounds. They ranged from conservative craft unions, White racist industrial unions; White dominated racially mixed industrial unions and non-racial industrial unions. Leander (2015) notes that TUCSA's founding union broke away from the SATLC because they were opposed to its socialist ideologies. The largely racially mixed unions were also concerned by government attempts to dissolve multi-racial unions. Though TUCSA wanted to maintain interracial unions, it was not opened to membership of Black unions. The council adopted the policy of accepting membership of only registered unions. Because Black unions were not permitted to register by law they were therefore automatically excluded from TUCSA membership. As a result, TUCSA became a union for skilled workers only.

MICWU started as a union for Coloured workers, and it emerged in 1961, during the period when laws in apartheid South Africa divided unions and their membership along racial lines. It focused on the motor industry, components manufacturing, body building, servicing and petrol attendants, where it organised and represented workers in these sectors (Leander, 2015). MICWU operated a closed shop and managed to negotiate through the Motor Industry Industrial Council. This meant that Coloured and Indian workers of a certain grade and skill in a company automatically joined the union (Forrest, 2005, p. 60). The closed shop helped MICWU to accrue membership employing minimal resources. However, it eliminated significant contact with the membership as little active organisation or recruitment as necessary.

This setup led to a situation where workers who joined a company simply had to fill in a stop-order form, which was forwarded to the industrial council offices, and in turn, the new member a union number. MICWU did not engage in industrial action to defend its members, and strikes were unheard of by the union. Active workplace committees never existed, and the union members were serviced in a way, where union officials had to call the employer in case of a problem between the employer and the members of the union (Forrest, 2005, p. 61). In 1984 MICWU, left TUCSA due to racist and reactionary policies, and it later joined the IMF (International Metalworker's Federation). It was at the IMF that MICWU, MAWU, and NAAWU had to engage in diplomatic talks where they were trying to avoid the poaching of each other's membership in the component sector. Moreover, it this through these discussions, that ideas of creating one metal union were strengthened.

Around January 1973, there were spontaneous strikes in Durban and Pinetown. These strikes unearthed the deep-seated inadequacies of South Africa's dualistic labour relations system and signalled a reawakening of working class militancy and the rebirth of African trade unions. The aftermath of the 1972-1973 strikes saw some new trade unions being formed, including the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), which had the objective of organising African workers around the issues that had sparked the industrial unrest (Forrest, 2005, p. 37). According to Forrest, it was due to the 1973 strikes that an influx of members was realised at the Pietermaritzburg branch where workers began to link up with Durban membership (Forrest, 2005).

In April 1973, MAWU was formed, and its initial membership was 200 workers. Forrest (2005) notes that MAWU was known to have been one of the first national industrial unions to have been non-racial[8]. During the time of its formation, it comprised of two branches, which were Pietermaritzburg and Durban. In 1974, the Trade Union Advisory and Coordinating Council (TUACC) was formed, and MAWU was a founding member of this council. It was also a founding member of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) that was formed in 1979. In what appears to be a tradition that NUMSA followed, MAWU members would initially develop a concentration of power at specific, and then through the development of a working class consciousness, progress to identify with metalworkers across the industry (Forrest, 2005, pp. 38-41). Through this way, metalworkers in the sector would be united through the trade union and the federation and prove their power and unity in tandem with workers from other sectors of the economy and other parts of the globe.

During the period when MAWU formed and its early years, the union would established an organisational presence in a factory or work [lace and go on a drive to recruit members at the plant level. There was the development of a responsible leadership, which later became the shop steward committee (Forrest, 2005, p. 41). It is through this way that MAWU established the roots of “worker control” unionism as it had problems with TUCSA’s bureaucratic form of unionism. This trend and tradition has shaped the current NUMSA union in post-apartheid South Africa.

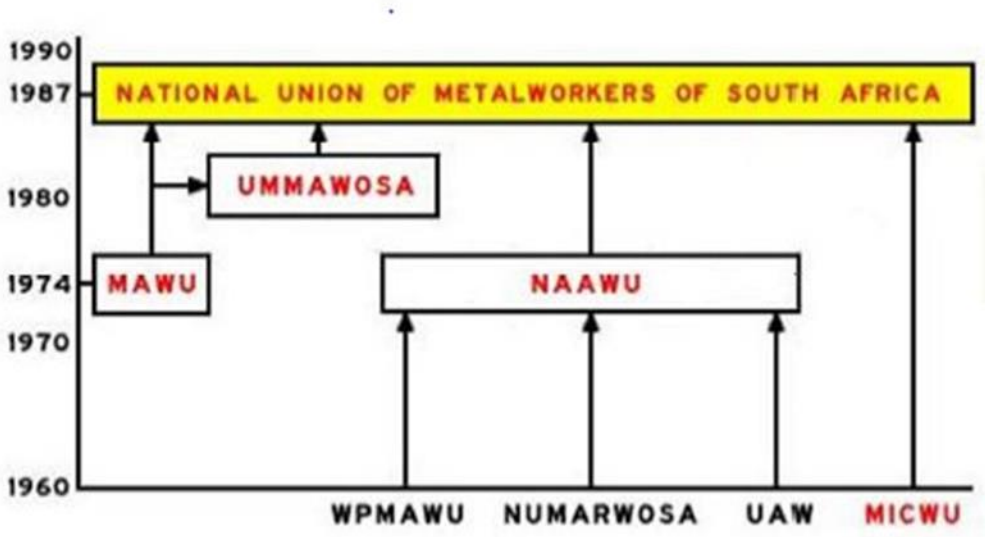
In 1980, NAAWU was formed, a merger of three unions in the motor assembly industry, NUMARWOSA, WPMAWU, and UAW. NUMARWOSA and WPMAWU had their bases

[8] Interview with Enoch Godagwana by Forrest K, September 2003 cited in Forrest (2005).

in Eastern Cape and Western Cape respectively and the laws during that time compelled them to organise only one "race" Coloureds unions (Leander, 2015). NUMARWOSA later set up an African union parallel to it, the UAW, which attracted a huge membership. Due to racism and conservatism in TUCSA, NUMARWORSA and WPMAWU were forced out and later became some of the instrumental unions in pushing for the birth of FOSATU (Leander, 2015). The new federation formed in 1979, brought these unions together with MAWU and talks of building a large metalworkers union began. Dissatisfied members of NAAWU broke away in 1980 to form another metal union – MACWUSA. Similarly, UMMAWOSA was a breakaway from MAWU, established in 1983 (NUMSA, 2016). NUMSA and its predecessor MAWU were seen to be on the 'workerist' side of the debate, but it was the populists who eventually won the discussion, leading COSATU to an alliance with the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the form of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) in 1988 (Leander, 2015). In 1990, the Congress for South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the ANC formed a bloc that was to become known as the Tripartite Alliance.

After the formation of NUMSA in 1987, the member unions moved out of their old head offices into Cosatu House, in Johannesburg, South Africa, to centralise the administrative functions of the unions in a new headquarters. With approximately 130,000 paid-up NUMSA members, Daniel Dube was elected the first President of NUMSA in 1987, holding the position until 1991 (Leander, 2015). David Madupela was elected NUMSA's first Vice President, while Percy Thomas was elected Second Vice President. Moses Mayekiso, who was serving 33 months in detention, was elected Secretary-General in absentia in 1987 (Leander, 2015). In December 1988, he was released on R10, 000 bail and in April 1989, he was acquitted and took up his Secretary-General post. NUMSA was the first union to recognise the need for dedicated resources to focus on the conduct of campaigns both in its ranks and in COSATU (Leander, 2015). In 1988, for example, it was involved in the "Release Mayekiso Campaign", the anti-Labour Relation Act (LRA) Campaign, and the Living Wage Campaign. . Figure 3 below shows a picture of the formation of independent unions, which later coalesced together towards the formation of NUMSA in 1987 (NUMSA, 2012).

Figure 2: The formation of NUMSA 1960-1987



Source: NUMSA Secretariat report: Organisational 2012.

Other COSATU trade unions like "the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU) and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), had to give their members in the metal industry to NUMSA" in line with the one-industry-one-union principle (Sephiri, 2001, p. 8). The union was the second largest union within COSATU, with approximately 130,000 paid-up members during its formation years, second only to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), with 261,901 paid-up members (Forrest, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, as of 2013, the union's membership was at 360.000, making it one of the largest union in the history of unionism in Africa and larger than NUM (Polgreen, 2016). This is also in confirmation with the NUMSA membership statistics given in the secretariat report of 2013, as indicated in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: NUMSA membership as of November 2013



Source: (NUMSA, 2013b)

NUMSA contributed towards the development of some of the major union economic blueprints, like the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994. NUMSA is in the historical records as the first to develop the RDP, which was later adopted by COSATU, and then the ANC as a political party adopted it too as its programme for development and reconstruction (Sephiri, 2001, p. 8).

In 1993, a motion proposing that COSATU should break away from the Tripartite Alliance and form a workers' party, was passed under the leadership of Moses Mayesiko, a figure always scornful of compromises with “populist” nationalists (Leander, 2015). However, this motion failed to garner enough support, and it was declined and defeated at the COSATU Congress and one of the trade unions which was against the idea of splitting from the Alliance was NUM. Eventually, NUMSA ended up backing the COSATU's support of the ANC in the 1994 elections

4.2 STRUCTURE OF THE UNION

4.2.1 Local level

The structure of the union as described in a NUMSA Information booklet of 1988 that democratic workers control of the union takes precedence above all (NUMSA, 1988, p. 7). This is evidenced by the way the structure is made up from factory (or workplace) to the local shop stewards councils, and then the regional Congress and the National Congress and finally the Central Committee. At a local level, the union members are expected to hold general meetings, as stipulated by the union constitution, to elect shop floor stewards who will be representing them at the plant level. The shop stewards will be the link between the employees and the employer at the plant level. The elected shop stewards will form a committee in which they will have the right and liberty to discuss and share problems faced by their members from the plants (NUMSA, 2014).

The shop stewards who are employed in factories in the local areas are expected to meet regularly in Local Shop Stewards Councils (LSSCs). The total number of shop stewards from factories in a local area will constitute the union's Local Shop Steward Council (NUMSA, 2014). The purpose of this Council is to control the affairs of the union in the local area, this is achieved through means such as discussions, organising recruitment of new members, carrying out campaigns, and planning of them, and carrying out the resolutions of NUMSA made at the regional and national level (NUMSA, 1988, p.7). According to the way the leadership structure is set out, the "the local stewards' council elects a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary and then elects representatives to the regional congress. The local branch is entitled to elect one delegate for every one hundred paid up members employed in the area of the local" (NUMSA, 1988). The Local Shop Steward Council is also expected to call a general meeting at least once in three months and these meetings must include all NUMSA members employed in the local area, and the general meeting can overrule the shop steward council if at least thirty percent (30%) of the members in that local attend the general meeting (NUMSA, 2014).

4.2.2 Regional level

The structures above the local shop steward council are the regional Congress (RC), the Regional Executive Committee (REC), and the Regional Finance Committee (RFC). The regional Congress controls the affairs of the union in a region, subject to the general control and direction of the Central Committee and the National Congress (NUMSA, 2014). It is mainly composed of delegates elected from shop stewards (one delegate for every one

hundred members employed within the jurisdiction of each local level) and the regional office bearers. According to the NUMSA constitution, some of the duties of the RC includes to decide on all matters affecting the region subject to the direction of the National Congress and the Central Committee. Also, to establish Local Shop Stewards Councils and define their areas of jurisdiction; to review the decisions and activities of Local Shop Steward Councils, to confirm, alter or reverse such decision and to elect regional representatives to the Central Committee (NUMSA, 2014).

In this setup, the region elects regional office bearers from amongst its members a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and regional treasurer (NUMSA, 2014, p. 17). From amongst its members and staff, the regional Congress also elects a regional secretary, who will be a full-time employee of the union. The Regional Executive Committee (REC) consists of the office bearers of the Regional Congress, members of the Regional Finance Committee and four local office bearers from each of the Local Steward councils, and its purpose is to administer the affairs of the union at regional level (NUMSA, 2014, p. ibid). Some of the duties of the REC as stipulated by the union constitution includes, employing persons in the region subject to the approval of the central committee, to appoint sub-committees to investigate and report on any matter referred to it, to review decisions and activities of the Local Shop Steward Council and to confirm, alter or reverse such decisions. The REC also deals with disputes referred from Local Shop Steward Council between members and their employers and attempts to settle such disputes by conciliatory methods possible, and lastly to suspend any shop steward of shop steward committee on sufficient cause shown and take over the management of their affairs until another shop steward committee is elected (NUMSA, 2014).

4.2.3 National level

The highest level of the union structure is the national level, which consists of the National Congress, Central Committee, National Executive Committee, and the National Finance Committee. According to the union's constitution (NUMSA, 2014, p. 20), the National Congress (NC) is the supreme governing body of the union. National Congress is held every four years, and the Central Committee gives written notice to the REC of the union at least six months before the regional congress is held. In the same vein, the Central Committee has the power to call for a Special National Congress when it is necessary. Some of the duties of the NC include; making policies for the union, to decide on resolutions submitted to the congress by the regions and central committee. In addition, to consider and decide on reports

presented to the congress, to review and decide on the financial position and progress of the union, and to nominate and elect the union's national leadership (NUMSA, 2014).

At the national level structure, the Central Committee is responsible for management of the union's affairs. This body constitute both the national office bearers and regional office bearers and regional worker delegates elected at regional congresses. The constitution of the union stipulates that the Central Committee shall have the power, among other duties, to appoint sub-committees to investigate and report on matters referred to it by the NC, to review decisions of the RCs, and to confirm, amend or reverse such decisions (NUMSA, 2014, p. 20). The Central Committee also has the power to establish regions and to define their areas of jurisdiction, and to take over the management of the affairs of any region where the REC has been suspended until another RC has been constitutionally elected. The constitution of the union stipulates that the National Executive Committee has the mandate to manage the affairs of the union between meetings of the Central Committee and this body consists of the national office bearers, chairpersons, and treasurers of the Regional Executive Committee National Finance Committee and the regional secretary from each of region. The NEC meets at least once every three months (NUMSA, 2014, p. 22). According to NUMSA's regional education officer:

> In the plant level, the shop stewards subordinates himself or herself to the plant shop stewards committee. The plant shop stewards committee subordinates to the local shop stewards council, and then the Local shop stewards council subordinates itself to the regional executive committee or the regional congress. Regional congresses or Regional Executive Committee subordinates itself to the central committee of the union or the national executive committee (Interview: D.B, 2016)

4.3 THE BUILDING OF SHOP STEWARDS AND WORKER CONTROL

The worker control tradition in NUMSA dates back to the predecessor unions like MAWU, which understood and utilised the concept in factories during the apartheid era. There were three essential principles, which underlie MAWU's structure and policies, and these were, building shop steward structures, factory level bargaining and worker control (Webster, 1985, p. 232). Webster (1985) notes that in MAWU members in the plant elected shop stewards from every department and these elections took place at the workplace, at the union offices or in the hostels. The current shop steward structure in NUMSA is an accurate reflection of MAWU, where well-organised shop stewards met once a week at the workplace and once a

month at the union office or the hostel with the union organiser. The duties of shop stewards have not changed much from the period NUMSA was MAWU. In MAWU days, the shop steward task was to represent the interest of the union members in his or her department, to protect the rights of workers against management and if necessary, to challenge management decisions and finally they were the link between the full-time union officials and the members of the union.

Webster (1985, p. 237), notes the importance of the aspects of accountability and participation in decision-making. In which the shop steward was the facilitator, and maintains that during the MAWU era, shop stewards conveyed the policy decisions of the union to its members and recruited new members within the factory, and they were directly accountable to the shop floor, which was another form of democracy.

Worker control was the most important principle MAWU believed in for the union to be relevant and vibrant. Webster (1985) posits that MAWU's two primary principles – shop steward structures and factory level bargaining were all contained in its third principle, which was worker control over the union (Webster, 1985, p. 247). Webster (1985) gives a historical outline and analysis of how MAWU introduced and managed to maintain the ideas of shop stewards and control of workers over both union issues and workplace concerns. The early years of NUMSA saw the concept of worker control during the apartheid period and then the newly found democratic government, not ideal to implement. The union had the objective of extending the aspect of worker's control through a more cooperative and shared management of the workplace.

This expanded idea had two main aims for two reasons: to replace the hierarchical supervisory model with a flatter and more democratic team based formation and cooperative negotiations with factory management to promote, in the unions words "intelligent production" (Forrest, 2005, p. 486). Workplace control was part of the three-year bargaining programme introduced by the union, and during its initial stages, it faced serious challenges due to the prevailing political and economic environment. Forrest notes one of the challenges that the union was bound to face, and it is what Crouch (1982, p. 213) perceives as a "central contradiction in trade unions attempt to build power." This deals with the effect of trade unions being involved in national economic issues and having to shift their proceedings away from the issues that individual workers and shop floor stewards are interested in. In this

regard, the participation of union members becomes limited to national level, and the danger will be that it will be against some of the major interest of the union members at local level.

Another challenge was in relation with servicing members. One of the challenges that NUMSA faced was servicing more than five thousand workplaces in the engineering sector alone about the issues that their members were facing (Forrest, 2005, p. 488). As highlighted before, one of the main obstacles to implementing the three-year bargaining programmes was the uncertainty of the environment in which NUMSA was operating. This was because many of the policies that the union wished to implement were dependent on the regulations, policies and the systems which the new government of South Africa was about to implement. In addition, it had to face the reality in which government bureaucracy had to affect their union policies due to the process of dismantling the apartheid practices, which had been in place for decades in the industries.

However, in the midst of all these and other challenges, the union strived to implement worker control at the workplace and democratise the union in a way that gave workers a voice in decision-making processes. Accordingly, the National Bargaining Congress of 1995 made a resolution on a national programme of regional and local shop stewards meetings being linked to key negotiating dates, to ensure continuous report backs (accountability) and mandates from members of the union and the shop stewards (South African labour bulletin 1995). There was also an agreement that working groups in centralised bargaining forums should not be permitted to have autonomous powers to take an independent life is when it came to union issues. All these resolutions from the 1995 bargaining congress proved that the union leadership was acknowledging an area that it had neglected, and it was fighting to reassert the primary decision-making role of shop stewards and union members in the factory.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This section has unpacked the historical background of the union, beginning with the predecessor unions such as MAWU, MICWU, NAAWU, and UMMAWOSA. It highlighted the struggles that the predecessor unions had to go through to fight for the workers' rights and the solidification of the concept of worker control and democratising the workplace. Also provided was a brief description and outline of the unions organisational structures and how decisions are made, also the roles that each elected office bearer from plant to Local Shop Steward Council up to the National Congress, are supposed to execute in line with the unions constitution. The chapter also gave a brief background on how the concept of worker control

at workplace and union level emerged and the obstacles they had to face in trying to promote democratisation and worker control within and beyond the union. The following chapter will look into the findings of this study and analyse them, situating them within the framework of the research questions and theories highlighted above.

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the general background of the union, covering the formation of NUMSA from the period when the predecessor unions were formed during the apartheid period, to the merging of predecessor unions in 1987 into becoming what is now called NUMSA. NUMSA is presented here as a union that took a ground-breaking decision in 2013 to break with the Tripartite Alliance, a reflection of a possible return to social movement unionism roots. Using the case study of three NUMSA locals in JC Bez region (Tembisa Local, Kempton Park and Johannesburg North Local), this chapter presents the findings and answers to the research's questions. To what extent did NUMSA conform to social movement principles during the period 2012-2014, when it embarked on a process of withdrawing from its political alliance with the ANC and SACP?. To what extent did NUMSA locals in the JC Bez region participate democratically in the decision making process that led to NUMSA's 2013 Special National Congress resolution to withdraw from the political alliance with the ANC and SACP? What were the circumstances that led to the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU? What has been NUMSA's focus as an independent union in post 2013-2014 period?

The benchmark elements to consider in analysing the level of membership participatory in this political decision of 2013 have been drawn from some of the models utilised by scholars like Strauss, (1991) Cohen & Fosh, (1990) and Hirschsohn, (2011). These were previously used in analysing union internal democracy, particularly participatory democracy in the United States, the United Kingdom and South African contexts respectively. The key elements raised by these scholars in measuring union democracy include accountability of shop stewards, representation, membership involvement in union decision-making processes constitutional provision of regular elections for office bearers, and the ability of union members to contest office and speak in opposition to the leadership of the union without fear of reprisal. Situating NUMSA and the 2013 "moment" within these elements at local level, one found participation of union members was present. Answers from the respondents clearly show that the union did consulted and allowed room for discussion and debate and dissent before the 2013 decision was agreed upon.

This chapter shall be segmented into various sections that outline and discuss the findings in this study. However, before delving into the findings of this study it is essential to outline

some of the political developments and NUMSA's decisions that took place prior to NUMSA's 2013 break. The July 2012 NUMSA congress, Marikana incident of 2012, the ANC December 2012 Mangaung congress, and the 2013 NUMSA Central Committee meeting are some of the crucial events which all show how relations between the union and the ANC and SACP changing indicating shifts in the of unionism of NUMSA, which also emerges from the research including interviews

5.2 DEVELOPMENTS LEADING TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF MARCH 2013

Prior to the Central Committee meeting held in March 2013, various developments took place in the South African political and labour environment. At NUMSA's July National Congress in 2012, the union made various resolutions about the organisation about politics, economics, bargaining, and society. According to Pillay (2015, p.125) the decision that NUMSA adopted in 2013 at its December congress was a dramatic reversal of the 2012 July National Congress which resolved to continue supporting the Alliance. Politically the union resolved in 2012:

> 1. That the role of the working class in the ANC is to participate and influence the policy direction of the ANC to be in favour of the working class. 2. To invite the recruitment desk of the SACP to NUMSA operational meetings in order to ensure the implementation of the resolution 3. That Cosatu should ensure that all the affiliates drive and monitor the implementation of the federation's longstanding resolution to encourage workers to swell the ranks of the ANC, which may include the establishment of political commissions within the affiliates (NUMSA 2012).

Thus politically, NUMSA resolved to continue playing its part within the Alliance through encouraging workers to "swell the ranks" of the ANC and inviting and setting up recruitment desks of both the ANC and SACP to NUMSA operational meetings. This resolution shows one of the characteristic of political unionism, which is offering support to a political party by mobilising and campaigning for it.

A month later, the Marikana massacre took place, in which about thirty-four mineworkers were shot dead at Lonmin mine near Rustenburg in August 2012 by the South African Police during a wage strike (Chinguno, 2015). This tragic incident shocked NUMSA and Pillay (2015) maintains that NUMSA was the first union to issue a strong statement in support of the striking mineworkers two days after the massacre. Kimber (2014) posits that the tension that was produced after the Marikana incident was too great to contain within the structures of the ANC-led Alliance. Kimber (2014) subsequently argues that the call by NUMSA to call

for a central meeting to discuss and rethink was "partly" because of developing turmoil in COSATU, and partly because the ANC and SACP showed no sign of learning from the uproar after the massacre". After Marikana NUMSA seriously criticised the ANC and SACP but still then committed itself to win back the SACP so that it would become a true vanguard party or workers. However, this call and project was later abandoned (Kimber 2014).

The further development that became a catalyst to the breakdown of relations between NUMSA, the ANC, and SACP was the adoption of the National Development Plan (NDP) by the ANC at its 2012 December in Mangaung. According to Pillay (2015: p.126) the SACP was accused abandoning its role of defending the working class since its top leadership went into government. NUMSA argued that the NDP:

> …will reproduce the same results we have suffered under the current neoliberal economic trajectory – mass poverty, rising unemployment and deepening inequalities, mostly affecting the black working class, including the marginalised and despondent youth of the country. After a thorough analysis, the CC came to the extremely disturbing conclusion that significant and strategic parts of the NDP were directly lifted from DA policy documents; especially its Chapters on economic restructuring, infrastructure, role of the state, agriculture, and rural development (NUMSA 2013c).

In addition to the above other issues which might have resulted in NUMSA calling for an augmented meeting in March 2013 include "the lived experiences of little change at the workplace, stagnant real wages and the persistence of an apartheid labour regime", caused a lot of debate within NUMSA leading to the call, form below, for a Special National Congress (Sikwebu 2014 cited in Pillay 2015: 126).

5.2 CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 2013

The idea of calling for a Special National Congress in 2013 emerged from an augmented Central Committee meeting which took place from 4-7March 2013. The meeting was an "augmented" meeting meaning that, unlike the usual CC meetings, the platform was open and included worker-leaders from the local structures of NUMSA as well as various shop stewards who served in leading positions from the ANC and the SACP and workers unions COSATU. The meeting took place at NUMSA's Vincent Mabuyakhulu Conference Centre (VMCC) in Newtown, Johannesburg, and the agenda of the meeting included political reports from the NUMSA president who gave a political overview and the NUMSA Secretary General (Irvin Jim) giving the Secretariat report. The report was built on from the political overview and went into detail. In addition, there was also a report from the union treasury, giving the financial position of the union. Key issues discussed during this meeting apart

from the reports given by the NOBs included a review of the ANC 2012 Mangaung policy resolutions, especially the National Development Plan (NDP), and the 2013 national budget speech given by the government's finance minister among other issues.

This study found out that notion of calling for an SNC on the position of the union within the Alliance was called for during the debates and discussions at the augmented Central Committee meeting, about the economic blueprint, the ANC had adopted at its Mangaung Congress. According to one of the respondents who had the task of presenting an assessment of the NDP,:

> What I did was to take the NDP and contrasted it with the one economic policy by DA. Therefore, when I read the plan it rang something and I went back to my archives and got the DA documents. I contrasted and noticed the cut-paste from DA to ANC NDP policy. So as I was presenting I pulled the slides and told the CC to refer to the DA economic policies. Surprisingly, they also saw the similarity of the economic policies and how ANC had just copied the neoliberal economic policies. I was stopped in the middle of the presentation, by an old veteran of the union, and he said, "we have been taken for a ride" I had to stop there and pack my computer. He said we have been taken for a ride since 1994 and we have to review our relationship with the ANC led Alliance(Interview, Chris 2016)

This led to a motion being put forward that NUMSA find ways of breaking away from the Alliance and find ways of convincing COSATU to do likewise as delegates from various regions began to second the motion after they realised that the ANC led Alliance had copied some of the DA's economic policies. The most vocal regions that made the motion to be taken seriously were KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape, and as the debate grew to become a serious one, the NOB leaders had to intervene and agree with members in finding the best way to deal with the issue that was termed a "serious political decision impending". What the research also found out was that the narration of what took place at the Central Committee meeting of March 2013 was congruent with the press release of 18 October 2013 issued by the NUMSA. The press statements states that the Central Committee had to call for a Special National Congress after a debate on the issue of the Alliance, and how the ANC had let down the working class. According to NUMSA's deputy general secretary Karl Cloete "The Central Committee decided to call for a Special National Congress after a sober analysis that led to a conclusion that a lot has happened since our last ordinary National congress in June 2012". (Karl Cloete in (NUMSA, 2013a)

This call was therefore a result of what NUMSA termed the 'disturbing "conclusion" the shocking truths that the Central Committee discovered and the arguments that National

Development Plan (NDP) economic blueprint that NUMSA termed a "neo-liberal document" (NUMSA 2013c). Also key was the revelation of how the 'state could attack and kill workers to protect capital' at the Marikana massacre of workers (Kimber 2014). The paralysis and incapacity of COSATU to take forward the workers struggles and implementing its 11th Congress resolutions, programs and campaigns and the signing into law the privatisation of public roads through the new system of "e-tolling" (NUMSA, 2013a). These are some of the key issues, which led to the discussions that resulted in a political decision to break away from the ANC- led Alliance in 2013. The union leadership resolved that before any major decision was made at the central committee level, the union had the responsibility of going back to its members and seek the mandate on the way forward regarding the matter in question. This shows the impotency placed on a democratic process in this key discussion.

In preparing for the Special National Congress, the union tasked the NOB's to prepare a framework document. According to the NUMSA secretariat, the report of 11 of August 2013 by the CC endorsed a proposal from the NOB to examine the "material conditions confronting the labour movement and the alliance" (NUMSA, 2013d). The following themes then constituted the agenda of the SNC: 1. The challenges confronting the labour movement and the Alliance; 2. Building a unified COSATU and labour movement; 3. NUMSA's approach to 2014 elections; 4. Positioning NUMSA as a shield and spear of struggling workers; 5. Update on Numsa's Campaign for Sustainable Industrialisation as an Engine of Growth (Section 77 campaign) and lastly 6. Adoption of a draft NUMSA Service Charter (NUMSA, 2013d). A discussion paper was commissioned on the 29th of August 2013, and the main aim was to stimulate discussion and debate throughout the union from factory level up to national level.

In addition to the discussion documents, which were circulated among the union members in all the locals, the union also produced a DVD, which introduced the upcoming congress discussion topics, a stimulant for further debate and discussion (NUMSA, 2013d). Similarly, a discussion program and planned series of meetings was set out, giving all members within the union structures time to discuss and have their say over the matter in question. Figure three below shows the schedules of meetings ahead of the Special National Congress of 2013 in Cape Town named the *Roadmap to Birchwood*.

Figure 2: NUMSA's roadmap to Birchwood



Source: NUMSA secretariat report 2013.

5.3 NUMSA's 2013 CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

At its 2013 Special National Congress, NUMSA adopted resolutions regarding Alliance, the "paralysis" in COSATU, the 2014 general elections and general challenges facing the labour movement in South Africa (NUMSA, 2013). According to Kimber (2014), the union discussed and assessed the points and concluded that the Tripartite Alliance of the ANC, SACP and COSATU "is dysfunctional, in crisis, paralysed and dominated by infighting and factionalism. Right wing forces… chances of winning back the alliance to what it was originally formed for (to steer the revolutionary programme for fundamental change and transformation) were very slim, have captured it. Kimber (2014) further notes that although NUMSA had criticised the ANC and SACP over the Marikana incident of 2012, NUMSA had first dedicated itself to winning back the SACP as true working class party but the idea failed and was later abandoned. In light of these conclusions and experiences, amongst others, NUMSA at its Special National Congress made the following resolutions:

> The Congress therefore resolved the following:

> Call on Cosatu to break from the Alliance
>
> Numsa calls on COSATU to break from the Alliance. The time for looking for an alternative has arrived.
>
> Establish a new United Front
>
> NUMSA will lead in the establishment of a new United Front that will coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities, in a way similar to the UDF of the 1980s. The task of this front will be to fight for the implementation of the Freedom Charter and to be an organisational weapon against neoliberal policies such as the NDP. For this to happen our members and shop stewards must be active on all fronts and in all struggles against neoliberal policies, whether these policies are being implemented in the workplace or in communities.
>
> Explore establishment of a Movement for Socialism
>
> Side by side with the establishment of the new United Front, Numsa will explore the establishment of a Movement for Socialism, as the working class needs a political organisation committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a socialist South Africa. Numsa will conduct a thoroughgoing discussion on previous attempts to build socialism as well as current experiments to build socialism. We will commission an international study on the historical formation of working class parties, including exploring different type of parties – from mass workers parties to vanguard parties. (NUMSA 2013).

Clearly, it seems, the adoption of the 2013 decision was arrived at through a democratic process, which NUMSA calls "democratic centralism."[9] Democratic centralism here means ensuring effective decision-making, with a thorough discussion of political questions with enough airing of minority opinions, then making a binding collective decision overall based on the majority winning views in a debate (Saba 1981 in Marxists.org 2017). In responding to critics and attacks from former NUMSA leaders and members who were in disagreement with the resolution that NUMSA adopted in 2013, the NUMSA office bearers explained how the process leading to the decisions of 2013 went. According to an open letter by NUMSA Office Bearers (2014), "these criticisms were a calculated attack on Numsa that essentially emanates from the disgruntled individuals and their uncomfortability with respect to the principle of democratic centralism. Wherein differing views are debated in the structures of the organisation but once a decision is taken by the majority, the minority must submit themselves to the majority." This indicates that although union members had different views regarding the 'Alliance question' (to stay in or leave the alliance) the majority of the NUMSA members voted to leave the Alliance.

[9] Democratic centralism is a method of organization that embodies two elements, democracy, and centralism, in an ever-changing dialectical relationship of struggle and unity. See: https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-7/basoc/ch-5.htm .

Regarding the locals in JC Bez region, findings in this study found that two locals, Kempton Park and Tembisa were in support of the idea that NUMSA should leave the Alliance and become an independent union. According to a regional official from JC Bez, Tembisa and Kempton Park were leading locals holding the view of breaking away from the Alliance: "those were the two leading locals which canvassed for the union to leave the Alliance. They had the position that you can't remain in a dysfunctional relationship, and the Alliance is no longer working for the workers in general" (Interview: Bravo, 2016). Another respondent from the local also noted that:

> For example, as Tembisa local it was a long time where we are saying we affirmed that this Alliance is no longer working for us. Even in 2008, national congress Tembisa was having that position that lets break away from the Alliance. Moreover, that time the current general secretary was still regional secretary in Eastern Cape and we are still having this nice honeymoon with the ANC. and the majority in that congress they achieved not to break that Alliance… We have all structures in the organisation normally we are saying in the organisation, democracy is a brutal exercise because the majority views will suppress the minority… So if the majority is not on our side we are not happy, if the majority is on our side we are happy, like the case in 2013 when we supported the idea of breaking from the Alliance as Tembisa local (Interview: Green, 2016).

The Kempton Park local had two divided opinions, which on one hand the group consisted of the youths in the union who were also members of the ANC Youth League. This group supported the notion of NUMSA breaking from the Alliance. On the hand, the veterans and elderly of the union and the ANC were of the view that issues and challenges faced in the Alliance could be resolved from within than breaking away from the alliance. The debate in Kempton Park was centred on aspects of party history and symbolism against the promises and action programmes that the ANC had promised to the people of South Africa and the working class in particular. In the end, the young members in NUMSA won the debate and the consolidated position of the local was in favour of pulling out from the Alliance. One shop steward revealed that:

> The old folks who were in support of the Alliance. But questions arose and people were asking "is it about the emblem, colours of the party flag, or we are about the programme of action, a promise made by the ANC a better life for all. Now the question was that, "have we realised the benefits of democracy as ordinary members of the society, what has changed since 1994? . We noted that there are several changes made, but fundamental issues have not changed. Young people dominated the discussion and the " Malema vibe" took centre stage where the people were brave to ask

> questions. Then we took all these resolutions and submitted our position as a local calling for NUMSA to withdraw its support to the political Alliance (Interview: Cde VF, 2016).

Another respondent who has been a long serving member of NUMSA from local level up to regional level shared the same view that the decision made in 2013, was not an easy one to arrive at since the views from local union members were divided between the younger and the older generations. As a regional official, he notes that he was heavily involved in making sure that the local meetings took place and debate was encouraged. Explaining how democratic centralism was invoked at local level, he notes that:

> …in those meeting I don't want to say there was no voice which opposed the position of breaking away from the Alliance, there were Cdes who said let's not breakaway for the Alliance and those who argued for staying within the alliance and solve the issues internally lost the debate. That is how the democratic process works, even after the congress, there are Cdes who realised that indeed we have resolved to breakaway, they later change the position. And the position was driven by the young metal workers, only the adults in the union were not happy and sceptical about the notion of breaking away from the Alliance. But the spirit from the Locals, was "no turning back.

Within the region of JC Bez only two regions, that is Johannesburg North and Johannesburg Central, were of the idea that the union must not break away from the Alliance. They had hopes that whatever issues the union and the political parties in the alliance were having, could be solved within the Alliance. Respondents from Johannesburg North indicated that democratic centralism was invoked and although they lost the vote to convince the union to stay within the Alliance, they embraced the outcome at the congress of 2013. A shop steward from Johannesburg North recalled; "My local was on that called for transformation from within the alliance and not leave the Alliance. However, we were defeated at regional level and accepted the decision. When we came back from the regional congress, we had the responsibility of reporting back to members of the union on the outcome of the congress" (Interview: Jack, 2016). Respondents recalled how they tried to convince the union to remain within the Alliance and try to find solutions from within. This also was said in relation to the crisis in COSATU, as they believed that problems and issues could only be resolved from within. She recalls that:

> The stance was not to leave the Alliance, but to fix, find the wrong elements inside the alliance and remove them. Joburg north has always said, we don't have to leave the alliance, but first let's diagnose the problems in the alliance, and remove those elements that are troublesome. Even in the

> COSATU leadership, we have told them that the crisis in COSATU has to be solved from within since there is vibrant leadership. During that, moment things happened in an environment where we had started to discuss these challenges for a long time now (Interview: J.B, 2016).

Findings from the above indicate that some principles of social movement unionism are in place, particularly internal democracy. All the respondents showed that the union leadership took time to get views and mandate from the local and regional level structures before calling for the highest decision making body which is the national congress. In addition, the models of internal democracy, which can be picked up from the above discussion, are participatory and representative democracy. In relation to making the final decision, NUMSA utilised and still utilises democratic centralism.

5.3.1 PARTICIPATION OF UNION MEMBERS IN DECISION MAKING AT LOCAL LEVEL

Borrowing from models utilised to measure participation of union members by Strauss (1991), Cohen and Fosh (1990) and Hirschsohn (2011), this study used the same elements to assess the extent of membership participation at locals in JC Bez region. The elements are as follows: membership involvement in union decision-making processes, shop stewards accountability, and representativeness, the ability of union members to speak or object in opposition to the opinions or views of the union leadership and full provision of adequate information by the union leadership to shop stewards and union members at local level.

5.3.2 Circulation of documents and meeting agenda items to locals

Respondents in this study indicated that, before the 2013 decision was arrived at, all the union members and shop stewards at local level had the time, and opportunity to deliberate and debate on the key agenda issues and participate and give their views and opinions on the matter before the Special National Congress was held. In other words, their participation in the 2013 political decision was done through factory and local level meetings. These meetings allowed debate and discussions and were held based on set agenda items that were organised and compiled through various commissions set up by the NOB's. The agenda items became part of the discussion documents that circulated throughout all locals within the union, before the Central Committee and the NOBs could meet again and plan for the December SNC 2013. One respondent who was responsible in the organisation of these discussion workshops highlights that,

> I was the regional education officer by then, so I was responsible for these workshops in all six locals. At that time we established committees, called

> Political Commissions, and these commissions reported to me as the education officer (Interview: Bravo 2016).

In addition to that, another member of the union, who was also part of the organising committee, confirms that the structure of these documents was set up in such a way that the union members could debate and choose from a range of options within the discussion papers. He confirmed that:

> a template to start everything at this level was developed and I was the key figure and at some point the process involved a number of issues like the structures of the questions….. Members were allowed to deliberate and discuss the issues, like, others wanted to remain in the Alliance and the federation while other opted to move away and become an independent union. The same process that took place at a local level, also took place at a regional level (Interview: TK 2016).

As indicated in the figure3 above, the discussion documents were finalised by 10^{t} October, and the union members at factory/plant level were allocated an eight-day discussion period. This means that they could engage and debate on the issues in question before their views were consolidated at the Local Shop Steward Council meeting on 19 October. This is confirmed by the NUMSA Secretariat report of 2013, which shows how the factory members and local shop stewards prepared and participated in the discussions leading to the decision, which was arrived at in December 2013:

> October 12
>
> In all 49 locals, throughout Numsa's nine Regions, local meetings took place. Core leadership and staff prepared for workplace general meetings and local meetings during the next week.
>
> Week of Oct 14
>
> A special NUMSA's News supplement was circulated to membership. It gave a brief, straightforward introduction to each of the six topics. During the week, workplace meetings were encouraged to discuss the six topics.
>
> October 19
>
> Again, in all 49 Locals, policy workshops of shop stewards or general meetings of members took place. Locals made their own decisions about which form was more suitable for the discussion. The meetings were able to see a DVD, which introduced the Congress discussion topics. This had been

> produced nationally and circulated to all the Locals. The meetings then discussed the topics.
>
> October 22
>
> Each local submitted a report on its discussion to its Region. At the same time, the six national discussion papers were distributed to the Regions. The Discussion documents were produced in two forms, a full document, and a summary, in order to reach as many shop stewards and members as possible. (NUMSA, 2013d, pp. 7-8).

5.3.2 Consultation of union members through meeting at local level

Data collected from interviews confirms that the decision that NUMSA took in 2013, were taken after the union took time to involve members at local level and through a process that created a platform for meetings and discussions on the political matters and the state of the alliance in South Africa. All respondents confirmed that the process was democratic and that they participated through debate and discussion at plant level and in local shop steward meetings. Meetings were held as scheduled and the attendance ranged from fifty to sixty (50-60) members in every local. However there were cases where the attendance number fluctuated and at times the numbers would go below fifty (50). This fluctuation was mainly attributed to the fact that some union members only attend meetings, which were related to bargaining issues, and they tend not to commit their time to political and social meetings called by the union. One respondent indicated t:

> We have general meeting at local, regional, meetings; there are those who attended and those who did not. Those who were absent are the ones who claim that they were not consulted and deny being part of the resolution. In relation to the decision of 2013, due processes were followed. All the meetings were held and if someone can come up to me and give evidence that none of the process was followed through, then I can as well resign my position. All due processes were followed (Interview: DB 2016).

In the same vein, another respondent confirmed the aspect of attendance, maintaining that:

> The only thing we cannot say is that we had 100% attendance at local meetings. Remember it is a Special National Congress is something which means there is reasons why are you going to that particular activity. Therefore in terms of local meetings like that, you can't expect 100% consultation (Interview: Green 2016).

5.3.3 Shop stewards accountability and representation to the Local Members

Concerning shop stewards being accountable and fully representing their locals, the study found that shop stewards managed to present the position of factory union members both at Local Shop Stewards council meetings and at regional policy workshop discussions. Respondents gave positive affirmation that local leaders managed to give them feedback on how the discussion went through at these meetings. However, some respondents noted that there were times when the meeting attendance would be low, such that the feedback given by the shop stewards would be rendered not useful. This would result in situations where some plant union members raised concerns about accountability and representativeness within the union. This would make them claim that the union did not have internal democracy since they were not fully involved and consulted.

> let me refer you to the plant level, I can say that we were consulted fully (100%), but at times some members would choose to deliberately absent themselves from these meetings, then later they come saying there is no democracy since they were not consulted too or briefed about the discussion during these meetings (Interview: Morefire 2016).

5.3.4 Agenda items discussed in numsa locals in preparation for the December SNC of 2013.

As NUMSA was preparing for its highest decision making body, the National Congress (NC), members were allowed time to meet, discuss and debate regarding issues which had to do with: the alliance; divisions in COSATU; 2014 general elections and challenges of the labour movement (*See appendix A*). According to the *NUMSA News* of September 2013 (Supplement), the union's Central Committee had to take the questions raised at their last meeting, consolidate them and they circulated them to all the union members of NUMSA (NUMSA, 2013b). This was done as a way of respecting the union's principle of democracy and workers control as stipulated by its constitution[10] (NUMSA, 2014). Respondents to this study confirmed that they received the newsletter supplement and a DVD, which explained the purpose for the Special National Congress, and issues, which led to the call for the special national congress. Thus in discussing and debating at plant level and Local Shop Stewards meetings council, NUMSA local members, interviewed stewards that they went into the

[10] NUMSA Constitution 1.5(b iii and iv) (NUMSA, 2014)

debates and discussions well informed about the purpose and the need for their views and opinions.

Due to the tense relations between NUMSA, SACP, and members from ANC and COSATU, the process building up towards the 2013 congress was alleged by some to be undemocratic. In an article by Greg Nicolson from the *Daily Maverick* of December 2 2013, the Secretary General of the SACP Mr Blade Nzimande was cited arguing that;

> NUMSA is convening a special congress later this month, ostensibly to obtain a democratic mandate from its membership on the future of the union's participation in the ANC-led alliance and the role of NUMSA in next year's elections. But despite all the rhetoric about worker democracy, the leadership clique has already predetermined its strategy. Last week on Thursday, the clique convened a secret, off-the-record meeting with selected journalists to tell them that NUMSA would launch an independent workers party in 2015. (Nicolson, 2013).

There are obviously technical difficulties in advancing democratic processes within a big organisation like NUMSA. Participatory democracy becomes a difficult to apply and handle in such a context as Michel's (1915) argued. However, this cannot discredit the proven efforts by NUMSA, to involve union members to contribute their views and opinions, as non-democratic and non-participatory in nature. The fact that they were back to union members and seek their input, providing time for members to debate and have information circulated and make their final say, shows that NUMSA has e sustained internal democracy from within, even on very controversial issues.

With regard to the extent to which union members participated in the discussions on matters arising in relation to the issue of the Alliance and the challenges facing the labour movement, this study can state that all the respondents confirmed that they participated in the shaping up of decisions at the congress in 2013. This was done through a well set out and planned programme by the NUMSA Central Committee and National Executive Committee, which facilitated the debates and discussions at factory level and local shop steward meetings. By going back to the union members and seek a clear mandate on the way forward the study can argue that, the principle of participatory democracy (seeking solutions using the bottom-up approach in an organisation) was recognised. The leadership of the union used the bottom-up approach in the decision making process that led to the 2013 political decision in Birchwood. All union locals under study and others, which fall within the jurisdiction of JC Bez, submitted their final discussion positions on 22 October 2013, and from 25 October regions

took time to consolidate all the provisional positions from the locals pending a final union position at the Congress through discussion and debate (NUMSA, 2013d).

5.4 EXPULSION OF NUMSA FROM COSATU

The aftermath of NUMSAs political decision in December 2013 Central Executive Committee the CEC of COSATU resolved to expel NUMSA from the federation on 8 November 2014. The expulsion of NUMSA was based on charges that COSATU laid against NUMSA. NUMSA's general secretary noted:

> In particular, the CEC records that many of NUMSA's decisions, declarations and resolutions, which emanated from its Special Congress in December 2013, contradict the decisions of the Federation or are intended to act against the interests of the Federation. These include, but are not limited to: a) The decision to call on COSATU to break its alliance with the ANC; b) The decision to organise a march to COSATU House to coincide with the 1st CEC in February 2014; c)The decision to hold back on paying affiliation fees to COSATU until the special national congress is held; d)The decision to cease to pay our contribution into the COSATU/SACP levy; e) The decision to extend our scope of operation (Numsa General Secretary: 2014).

Pillay (2015, p.56) notes that NUMSA resolved not to leave COSATU, but instead campaign to win over the federation to its positions by the time it convened its next congress in 2015, the Central Executive Committee of COSATU eventually voted to expel NUMSA its largest private sector affiliate in November 2014. Pillay (2015, p.127) in Satgar and Southall (2015) maintains that after NUMSA's 2013 resolutions "knives were out for NUMSA, as the SACP led the attack to have NUMSA expelled from the federation. Furthermore, despite efforts by an ANC task team the hard-line SACP faction (the public sector unions in COSATU particularly) succeeded to expel NUMSA in November 2014". Pillay (2015) in Satgar and Southall (2015) argues that the expulsion of NUMSA was clearly motivated by the union's antipathy towards the ANC and SACP but he notes that another reason why NUMSA was expelled from the federation was its decision to expand its scope of operation beyond metals. Respondents in this study attributed various reasons, for the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU; they cited political and ideological reasons, NUMSA's decision to expand its scope of operation and personal leadership differences.

This study examined these reasons by gathering views from local union members and shop stewards, and academics and social commentators who were involved, or followed on this matter after the SNC of December 2013. Figure 5 below presents these findings from the interview data sets, which were thematically coded. The frequency of the coded themes in

this section indicate that political reasons were seen as the main cause that led to the expulsion, with the highest code frequency of fourteen (14) while leadership differences between COSATU, SACP and NUMSA leaders recorded a code frequency of four (4) values. Lastly, about three (3) values of the interview data sets coded indicate that NUMSA was expelled from the federation due to its resolution, on expanding its organisational scope.

Other analysts gave reasons related to long-term deep- seated structural crisis that was in the federation, which can be dated back to 2012. Analysing these reasons, this study posits that political, leadership conflicts and the contradictions with the federations organising policy were immediate reasons that led to the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU. The long-term cause could be the deep-seated paralysis of the federation since the 1990s when it showed signs of drifting from social movement unionism to political unionism. A period where it's level of internal democracy became limited, the creeping oligarchy and growing repression of groups or voices that call for an end of the Alliance and unwavering and uncritical support of the ANC during election. This confirms the argument raised by Pillay (2013; 17) that "although always fiercely independent, COSATU found itself gradually drifting towards a form of political unionism, with strong elements of all three sub-types (namely nationalist, Leninist and social-democratic), in that it became a junior part of a political alliance with the ANC and SACP".

5.4.1 POLITICAL FACTOR

Amongst the reasons given by respondents to this study, the political reason was the dominating one, when they gave their own perspectives as to why NUMSA was expelled from the federation. Respondents to this study claimed that the federation had been "captured"[11] by the politicians and especially the SACP hard-line faction, which dominated within the federation for their own party and personal gains. NUMSA's general view is that, COSATU had been brought to a point of "paralysis" and it was no longer a federation of workers but "a political tool" for the ANC and SACP. One respondent referred to the manner in which the ANC had secured its influence and dominance within the federation, and noted that:

> They were saying we were supposed to observe " protocol" (which meant keeping silent). We were told when to organise, and not how to support them

[11] "Captured" – the meaning of this term with regards to this study, relates to a situation where the federation of workers had been infiltrated and has its policies mainly influenced by individual or a small group of politicians from the ANC and SACP.

> at political level and others. I know of no other reasons that caused us to be dismissed other than that (Interview: DB, 2016).

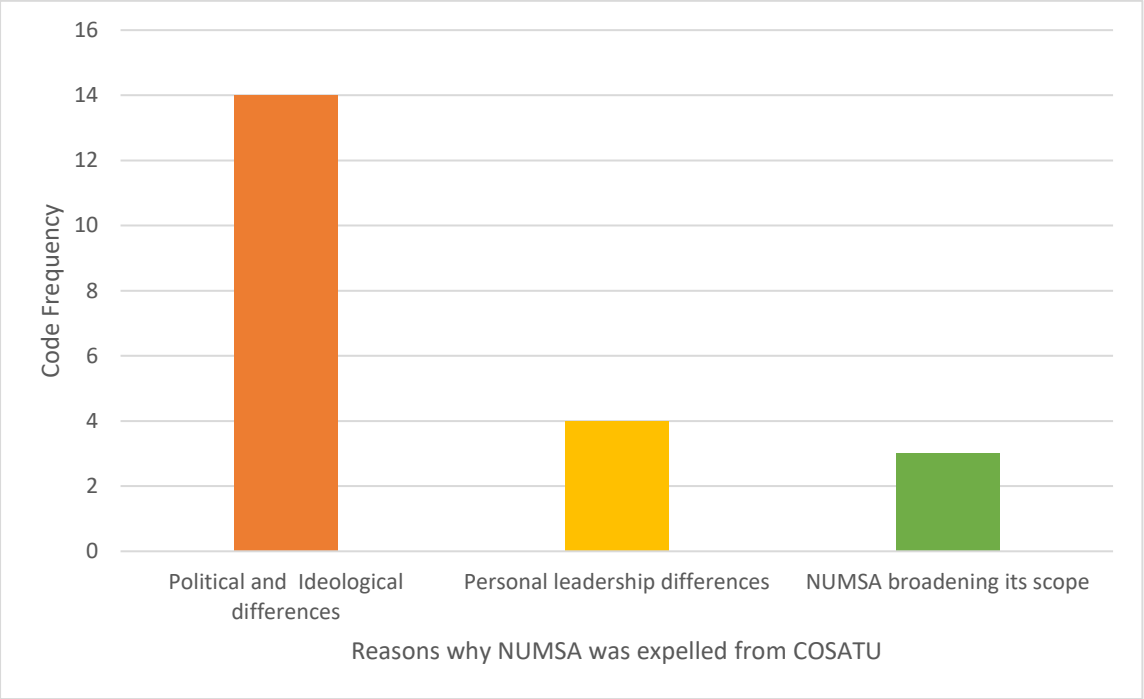
Furthermore, the federation leadership were accused of using COSATU as a "stepping stone" to gain positions within the political parties and the government too. Most of the respondents argued that the point of conflict and ideological divergence between COSATU and NUMSA, emanated from when NUMSA had resolved at its SNC in 2013 to call on COSATU to break away from the Alliance and resolved to cease supporting the ANC and SACP (financially and through mobilisation) (NUMSA, 2014). Due to the decisions of 2013, NUMSA local respondents believed the federation resolved to expel NUMSA. One interviewee from Kempton Park recalled:

> Also COSATU was acting like ANC, where they victimised those affiliates who did not support ANC and certain party leaders….. and they would marginalise you for the rest of the term if you disagree with them on issues of the Alliance, its malfunctioning and questioning the leadership of the ANC (Interview: VF 2016).

Another respondent from Jorburg North gave his opinion, noting that the most worrying thing for COSATU a hard time was the decision made by NUMSA in 2013.

> From the level of COSATU, the federation questioned why NUMSA chose to leave the Alliance, and not support the ANC ... Mind you, this 2013 resolution is not a new debate in NUMSA, historically the debate started in 1993, and there is evidence, that at that time, we were saying, we are in Alliance with ANC, but come 1994, once the party wins, we must move out from the Alliance and avoid taking a compromise position. Because the state has its own way of dealing with government issues and the ANC was bound to compromise its position with regards to the working class, for example the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies which are anti-worker (Interview: Bheki 2016).

Figure 3: Reasons why NUMSA was expelled from COSATU



Source: Study Interview data sets.

The views of the respondents above are not so different from what one social and labour activist commentator, Ighsaan Schroeder (2014) (Co-ordinator of the Casual Workers Advice Office), highlighted. In an interview conducted by the South African Civil Society Information Service (SACSIS) in November 2014, Schroeder argued, "the reason given for the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU is that it called for a break with the ANC." Schroeder (2014) notes that "the real problem or the underlying basis for its collapse is this disagreement over the question of support for the ANC or non-support for the ANC….That's the immediate reason for NUMSAs expulsion."

This view was also confirmed by one of NUMSA's veteran leaders, then national education secretary, Dinga Sikwebu, who argued that the decision, which COSATU took in November 2014, was politically motivated. In a discussion forum conducted by SACSIS in November 2014, Sikwebu (2014) did not dismiss other reasons why NUMSA was expelled from the federation, but he maintained that:

> …the people at COSATU expelled NUMSA because they think that it is a policy for the federation to stay in the alliance and that Numsa violated that policy. There are other charges against the metalworkers' union, but in the main, Numsa sees its expulsion from Cosatu as being politically motivated…

, Schroeder (2014) gives another point of view, arguing that the real causes of the disagreement between COSATU and NUMSA date back to 2012, and these are serious structural problems within the trade unions in South Africa. Issues of factionalism among affiliates, corruption, and generally crisis in the federation at large were some of the deep structural problems noted to be present by Schroeder (2014). This view is even further substantiated when Schroeder (2014) refers to a statement made by NUMSA general secretary about the COSATU CEC:

> For example - this CEC that has just sat - he mentions in his report that at least seven affiliates were riven completely with factionalism, with problems of corruption and generally his tone in his report is that the federation is dysfunctional. If you…compare that report to the report he tabled in 2012 in the Congress of 2012, its much – the theme is the same and that's long before the expulsion of NUMSA. So, in many ways, this is really a confirmation of that long process and what it might well do, it may, it may formalize...you know it might accelerate the formal collapse of the federation.

5.4.2 LEADERSHIP DIFFERENCES AND COMPROMISES

Although not referred too much by the majority of the respondents, this reason is closely linked to the political reason discussed above. Findings show that the leaders of the trade unions within the federation and the federation leadership shared different views and perspectives concerning the federation's purpose within the Alliance. Some NUMSA local respondents believed that the leadership of both the federation and other union affiliates believed that the status quo within the Alliance was a lucrative avenue for them to use as a stepping-stone to gain influential positions with the ANC structures and government. In this view, this becomes impossible for the federation to leave the Alliance and the leadership of the federation would do whatever it takes to remain as part of the Alliance and cut off Alliance "spoilers" and their demands. One interviewee held that members of the federation at leadership level and some union affiliate personally sacrificed the main objective of the workers federation for personal political gains as members within the Alliance:

> Politics and that other people in leadership positions were and are hoping that someday the ANC will remember me and take me to the heavenly parliament where I will escape poverty and have a helicopter view of the workers….hence they saw NUMSAs view as a bad idea to influence the federation to leave the alliance (Interview: DB, 2016).

The above view is also closely related to the opinions of interviewees who cited the conflict of interests among the leaders of the federation and other affiliates. They explained the

typical situations that some of the federation leaders were caught up in and highlighted that the benefits and influential positions they had in various structures in the Alliance and government departments, make them compromise the principles of the federation for personal gain. One example was cited by an interviewee and he noted that:

> COSATU had a clear position and mandate from the National Congress to fight labour brokers. But the only problem that COSATU has is the implementation of that resolution because immediately when COSATU wanted to implement the position they will be called in Luthuli House [ANC headquarters]… And after that they forget about the resolution…. When you go to Luthuli house they will say, remember next year you want to be a minister and how you can march (protest) against us?….for example, Sdumo Dlamini (president of COSATU) got a position as an NEC member in the ANC. So how can you say no to the demands and influence of ANC? If you are an NEC member there is the opportunity that you can also be a Minister" (Interview: Green, 2016).

Another respondent lamented how the leadership of the federation had been "pocketed" in the ANC's political pockets and began to view the call by NUMSA as unimaginable. This led to the call for the expulsion of NUMSA by the federation and other union affiliates' leaders who had personal interests in gaining benefits from the Alliance:

> I do not think it was not only politics, but I feel that there were some personal leadership differences that had nothing to do with workers. The fall out of the relationship between COSATU and NUMSA was due to leadership differences. COSATU was pocketed under the ANC arms and it became a challenge for the federation leaders it to stand up for workers and do what they must do, to defend the cause of the workers (Interview: Liz, 2016).

Assessing this reason in relation to some arguments raised by scholars like Adler and Webster (1995) and Marie (1992), the opinions raised here are a true indication of the negative effects of political unionism within the field of labour movements. The dominance of the political party over the union, the breaking of the mandate principle, an increase in the striking of deals with governments and employers representatives without consultation and referral back to members, can be identified in this case.

5.4.3 NUMSA'S POSITION IN CONTRADICTION WITH THE FEDERATION'S ORGANISING POLICY

While some respondents in this study were of the view that the reasons for their expulsion were political, others indicated that NUMSA was expelled from COSATU in 2014 because of its resolution to broaden its scope and recruit in other sectors. The study found out that when NUMSA resolved to expand its scope, COSATU did not take the position easily since it

viewed the move as "membership poaching" from other trade unions. Paton (2013) argues that this was the most 'unforgivable offence' that NUMSA chose to act upon and according to the federations founding principle "one union, one industry."[12] NUMSA broke the founding principle of COSATU. Further evidence indicates that NUMSAs idea of expanding the scope did not go down well with COSATU and it was considered a provocative move such that COSATU would expel the union form the federation. An interviewee to this study notes that:

> The second issue of enlarging the scope did not also go down well with the COSATU leadership. Because some unions like SATAWU, NUM, CCEPAWU, complained about our idea of scope enlargement and NUMSA will be poaching members. They saw it as a resolution to poach members from their unions. COSATU asked us (NUMSA) to reverse the decision or we face expulsion from the federation. NUMSA made it clear that it is not possible to reverse the decision, unless they had to wait for another congress (Interview: Bravo, 2016).

The other view given by the respondents in this study was that COSATU felt threatened by NUMSA move because NUMSA took this decision after thorough consultations and assessing the dynamic changes within the field of labour. Particularly noting the changes in technology, production and restructuring of sectors globally and the impact of value chains, which called for new organisational strategies. In relation to the above, one respondent noted "so the situation is like we have the cleaners, catering etc. At the same company organised in the same sector and through that there is need to bring workers together in solidarity and that did not go well with COSATU" (Interview: TK, 2016).

Responding to NUMSAs decision, concerning scope expansion, the General Secretary of COSATU was placed on record, commenting on NUMSAs decision to expand its scope into other sectors, "It is wrong to even contemplate organising beyond your scope. You cannot do it…..While this would clearly be grounds enough to expel Numsa; Mr Dlamini says the federation will not do it under provocation. "If people do things in the hope they will be expelled, we won't expel them. We want them to conduct themselves properly," (Paton, 2013). This indicates that even though NUMSA was caught on the wrong side, the federation

[12]**One industry, one union - one country, one federation** - In order to unite workers across sectors, we have grouped our unions into industries. Our 6th National Congress resolved to merge unions into cartels or broad sectors such as public sector and manufacturing (see list of unions) - See more at: http://www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?ID=925#sthash.2iLd3Y5L.dpuf See: Brief History of COSATU - Available from: http://www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?ID=925 .

did not rush to expel the union but it called for NUMSA to reverse its decision on expanding its scope into other sectors.

What is intriguing on the issue of NUMSAs expulsion in this study is the contrast between the reasons given by the respondents on the reasons, which led to NUMSAs expulsion from COSATU. Two of the reasons given above by the respondents are similar to the ones, which were listed on the charges laid against NUMSA by COSATU. It is key to note that it was not only NUMSA, which had breached the principles of the federation but other affiliates to COSATU were found to have overlapped their own scopes onto other sectors. For example, in his address to COSATU CEC in November 2014[13], the secretary general of NUMSA argued that:

> Almost all constitutions of affiliates overlap in scope and to date the federation has not addressed this. Here is a list of affiliates that organise in the same scope as per the records of COSATU: 1. SACCAWU and SATAWU both cover tollgates, cleaning services, sports clubs, parking garages and security services 2. SASBO & SACCAWU both cover financial institutions 3. SASBO & SATAWU both cover Road Accident 4. Numsa & Ceppwawu cover plastics, rubber and batteries 5. Num & Ceppwawu cover quarrying…. (NUMSA Secretary General: 2014: 17).

In light of the evidence above, it becomes clear that the reason why NUMSA was expelled from the federation was not solely, because NUMSA resolved to expand its scope but it becomes an issue that validates the politically motivated reasons. If other unions were guilty of breaching the federations founding principles, why is it that NUMSA has to be expelled alone? The possible explanation that could answer this question is that "the hardliners wanted a clean break, seeing NUMSA in the words of SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande, as a 'stinking corpse' that needed to be removed" (Sunday Independent of November 2014 cited in Pillay (2015, p.128). Thus the sensible reason was political which can only make sense and in relation to the views of the respondents in this study.

Most of the respondents in this study cited political reasons over the union's contradictions with COSATU's constitution and founding principles. A few explanations could be made out this matter. The first one is the political context in which all these events took place. From the discussion above, the SACP was very active and determined to see NUMSA being disciplined and made to conform. Hardliners in the, SACP wanted NUMSA expelled

[13] For a detailed NUMSA's General Secretary presentation to COSATU CEC of November 2014 see: http://www.numsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/141107CosatuCEC_21.pdf .

completely from the federation. In his address, the NUMSA general secretary argued, "On this one, we must be clear from the beginning. This is not the reason for our expulsion, even though we expect those of you who support our expulsion to focus on it. We know the reason for our expulsion. It is that we are attacking the status quo. The status quo, as we have explained, is against the working class. Those who seek our expulsion support that status quo" (NUMSA Secretary General, 2014).

NUMSA overlooked the implications of their decision to expand scope and address the key issue which had to do with how the Alliance had failed the working class (with regard to ANCs economic policy the NDP), and how the federation had been deeply consumed by political unionism, neglecting its main objective of fighting for the rights of workers.

The reasons highlighted above give a clear indication of the negative implications of political unionism within the context of this study. COSATU is seen failing to execute its mandate from the workers. Furthermore, the federation is caught up in a compromising situation, where it is failing to fully service its members according to its founding principles and policies. In addition, the argument raised by Michels (1915) in relation to unions resolving themselves into an oligarchic structure is also relevant. There is also another issue; NUMSA's secretary general has announced that the union is prospecting on avenues to form a worker's party based on the principles of Marxists-Leninist in 2015. Pillay (2015, p.12) argued that "This is a highly contested issue within Numsa, and within the United Front which has a more open and inclusive process of organisation building – in contrast to the top-down vanguardist politics associated with 'Marxist-Leninist' parties". This would indicate a contradiction with social movement unionism principles with particular reference to internal democracy and its participatory aspect on decision making within the union.

The decision that NUMSA made in 2013, that is to establish a united front and the establishment of the movement for socialism, at its SNC in December can be related to one of the logics behind what Tourine (1992) postulated in relation to news social movements. Tourine (1992) in analysing new social movements, he locates the theory in two logics, one of a system that seeks to maximise production, money, power and information and the second logic relates to subjects seeking to defend and expand their individuality and autonomy. It appears from that from the above discussion, NUMSA's decision to break away from the alliance can confirm the second logic postulated by Tourine (1992). In addition, its calling for the formation of an independent new federation (with no political ties) and the formation of

the United Front indicates the push by NUMSA to expand its autonomy during the aftermath of its 2013 Special National congress. However, the stress at the same time on forming a new Marxist-Leninist party seems to compromise these steps.

5.5 CHALLENGES, WHICH HAVE AFFECTED NUMSA AS AN INDEPENDENT UNION OUTSIDE THE ALLIANCE SINCE 2013.

The resolutions that NUMSA took in 2013, to break away from the Alliance and its expulsion in 2014 from COSATU, came with its fair share of challenges. These challenges have affected either the way the union operates now or its activism strategies as they defend the rights of their union members. Respondents in this study cited four challenges, which have hindered the union's operation since 2013. These include isolation from both government and employer engagements, the loss of bargaining levies, an increasing incapacity to hold legal strikes, and finally a loss of union members to the splinter union called the Liberated Metalworkers Union of South Africa (LIMUSA). Union members at local level lamented how the labour landscape has been difficult for them due to these challenges, and one highlighted that:

> The challenge is you can't be an independent union outside the federation, because your voice can't be heard. Either by the employer or the government… our union has suffered some considerable setbacks both in negotiations with the government and the employers… (Interview: Bravo, 2016).

Figure.5 below shows the coded frequencies of the challenges as they were analysed from the interview transcripts. The figure below shows clearly that, of all the challenges highlighted by the union members and local shop stewards, the most common challenge that respondents bemoaned of is " isolation of NUMSA from both government and employers engagements" . Several setbacks have come along with these challenges according to respondents in this study. For example, one union member highlighted that:

> For example, we were participating in NEDLAC, through COSATU, and NUMSA was the one leading the delegation from the labour sector. Now things changed when NUMSA was kicked out, there was no one from NUMSA leading the NEDLEC delegation and its now only COSATU and a few Cdes from other trade unions. Hence, it is now difficult for us to be heard or raise our views in NEDLEC. This is one of the reason why we are working on building a new federation... (Interview: Bheki, 2016).

Due to the makeup and structure of the Tripartite Alliance and other structures there in, the sector is represented through COSATU and all affiliates are mandated to send delegates who will represent their unions in workshops, meetings, and negotiations with the government and

the employers. Since the labour terrain changed when NUMSA left the alliance and when they were kicked out of COSATU, the union feels isolated and left out in some of the crucial workshops and negotiations relating to workers government and employers. When NUMSA was expelled from the federation in 2014, they lost ability to influence the political parties within the Alliance, particularly the ANC. Some respondents who cited NUMSA being isolated indicated that this has been working to their disadvantage as some companies are shutting down, while in some cases the government itself seems to be reluctant to increase import tariffs on steel and metal products, at times giving tenders to steel and metal industries where there are no NUMSA members. The main issue with the union is failure to influence and negotiate with the government mostly and employers due to lack of federation cover. The local members of the union deplored with great concern, how the state has failed to support the metal industry in South Africa. They feel that they have been left outside and the local industry being left to collapse while the state has been promoting the importation of metal and steel products from China. One shop steward noted that:

> The second thing that is worrying NUMSA is the lack of state support in the metal industry and the challenges the sector is facing. They have let a collapse of local industry and promoted the importation of products from China… (Interview: Jack, 2016)

For example, a case in point related to the above concern is of a steel company called Arcelor Mittal South Africa (AMSA) and other steel and metal companies had to partner with NUMSA and engage the government in trying to stop a looming " job loss blood bath" in 2015 (NUMSA, 2015). Respondents in this study, argued that the reluctance of government to take action and save jobs was a way of punishing NUMSA for its action, in 2013 of breaking away from the Alliance and ceasing support for the ANC in any way during elections. The issue at Arcelor Mittal South Africa has been viewed by some respondents as a way of punishing NUMSA not the struggling steel company. One interviewee claimed that:

> Government has decided to punish the company not because it is not viable, but due to one reason…. because there are NUMSA members there….so we are being isolated, punished and victimised in every way because of our resolution to leave the alliance in 2013 (Interview: JayBee, 2016).

Another issue associated with the above is lack of political and federation cover for NUMSA since the day they were dismissed from the COSATU federation in November 2014. One respondent explained on the level of marginalisation that the union and its members are facing and how it is affecting them in general:

> The second issue is because the union no longer has political cover from the federation and alliance, its capacity to interact with the state to influence the state policy is limited…… So now the NUMSA comrades are being isolated and victimised, excluded in getting the opportunities and being heard as they fight for better working conditions and fighting for their jobs (Interview: Green, 2016).

Associated with the challenge of isolation, is the issue of loss of collective bargaining levies, which NUMSA members highlighted: they no longer receive their share from the Bargaining Council. The union has been losing an amount that is close to ninety million rands (R90M); the strained relations between NUMSA have exacerbated the situation, and ANC led Alliance members, in particular the Ministry of Labour not being sympathetic (NEASA 2016). According to NUMSA (2003), the collective bargaining levy or agency shop fee agreement stipulates that:

> every worker who is employed as a scheduled worker in the engineering industry and who does not belong to a trade union that has signed the collective agreement with employers, must pay 1% of their basic wage to the Bargaining Council. Non-union members do not have to join any of these party trade unions. The Bargaining Council will pay the money that it collects from these non-union members, to all the party trade unions on a proportional basis – for example, trade unions that have organised 60% of engineering workers, will receive 60% of this money; trade unions with 20% of the membership, will receive 20% of the agency fee and so on.

According to the respondents in this study, after NUMSA was dismissed from the federation, the share of the agency fee that the union used to receive from the bargaining council ceased to be paid out to NUMSA. In NUMSA's statement to the Minister of Labour (2015), the union maintains, "In the Metal, Iron and Steel Industry Bargaining Council, the Minister of Labour is a lame duck by allowing the National Employers Association of South Africa (NEASA) to drive an agenda to liquidate the metals bargaining council. Also, denying unions the right to receive Agency Fee moneys because to date the Minister has failed to gazette the Collective Bargaining Levy (thereby denying us close to R90m)".

It is not quite clear of government of NEASA is the main problem, but some local members linked this to the isolation strategy used by the Alliance members (ANC and SACP), as a way of punishing NUMSA for resolving to leave the alliance:

> The union used that money to train shop stewards and organise its campaigns, but since we were dismissed from Cosatu in 2014, the Department of labour intervened and it seems that it is reluctant to release what is due to us…..we haven't received it since then and this also means the state institutions are being used against us… (Interview: DB, 2016)

The union members also cited another challenge: being increasingly unable to hold legal industrial action as an independent union since they were expelled from the federation in 2014. The situation has seen NUMSA plant workers being victimised by the employers as they will be locked out from factory premises and given demands to accept if they want their jobs back. According to *NUMSA News* (2014) after the NUMSA-led engineering strike of 2014, over five hundred (500) have been locked out of work by employers who own companies, which are represented by NEASA. Some of the NEASA employers made demands that, if workers need to be allowed back to factories and work they must abide by the following conditions: a) resign from NUMSA in order to return to work and to b) accept an increase lower than that signed in the Bargaining Council. Respondents noted the political dynamics playing to their disadvantage, where they indicated that the employers are now colluding with the ANC-led government and the police to inhibit NUMSA's legal industrial actions. In some cases, the police would show their presence at the plant or factory supporting the employers.

> The second one, is during strikes, you find that police interfere more with our union members. They have a problem with us moving up and down, and they would side with employers who hire the private security guards who can shoot at our people marching. However, police takes sides. I remember I once led a march to Braaban police station, to highlight those things. We had lot and many arrests, some of them fictitious. I do not want to say to you, "our members never break the law". Nevertheless, I am saying in most of those arrests, our comrades would go out freely, because there was no case whatsoever. I would conclude that the state collaborated with the employer in order fail us as NUMSA (Interview: Liz, 2016).

Lastly, though not so significant is the split that happened soon after NUMSA resolved to leave the Alliance. There was the formation of a splinter union called the Liberated Metal Union of South Africa (LIMUSA)[14] led by NUMSA's former president Cedric Gina and other members, who believed that the 2013 decision was untimely and arrived at undemocratically[15]. LIMUSA membership nationally (consisting of all its six regions in

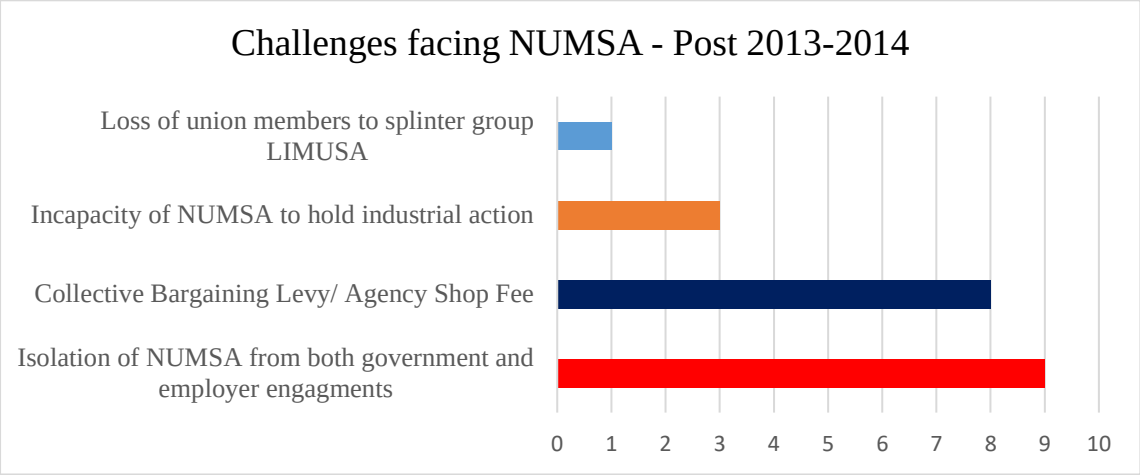
[14] LMUSA was officially registered as a trade union on 28 November 2014 by the Department of Labour. On the 30-31 March 2015 LIMUSA was duly accepted as an affiliate of Cosatu. For more details about LIMUSA see:
http://limusa.org/about-limusa/1-history/ .

[15] LIMUSA argues that "The decision to establish Liberated Metalworkers Union of South Africa (LIMUSA) came after a long period of internal resistance and struggle against the reactionary direction taken by NUMSA leadership which opportunistically imposed its will over that union through various form of despotic

South Africa) was at a modest 11 064 as of April 2015 (COSATU 2015). According to one of the respondents, the emergence of LIMUSA was orchestrated by the ANC, COSATU, and SACP in a bid to crush and discredit NUMSA:

> When NUMSA was kicked out from the federation, ANC, COSATU, SACP, established a new union called LIMUSA. The idea was to crush NUMSA because they were targeting big NUMSA companies. I would say it worked here and there, but generally, NUMSA members resisted these moves. LIMUSA started well and showed potential, but this was never durable, because members realised that this LIMUSA union was not genuine (Interview: Morefire, 2016).

Figure 4: Challenges facing NUMSA in post 2013-2014 period



Source: Research interview data set

There are party-union relationship lessons, which can be drawn from the case of NUMSA and the 2013-2014 challenges. While alliances seem to provide strong institutional strength and help unions to achieve significant numeric growth (Scully 2015), the case of NUMSA seems to highlight the problems in relation to alliances. Although NUMSA is facing some challenges as indicated above, the union seems to be still growing strong amidst shake-ups and threats from rival unions. A union local member admitted that though the union has faced some setbacks the union has not been affected much institutionally: "since we left COSATU there is not much that we have suffered as a union…..By the way as much as we were members of COSATU, you still have the servicing of your members" (Interview: DB, 2016).

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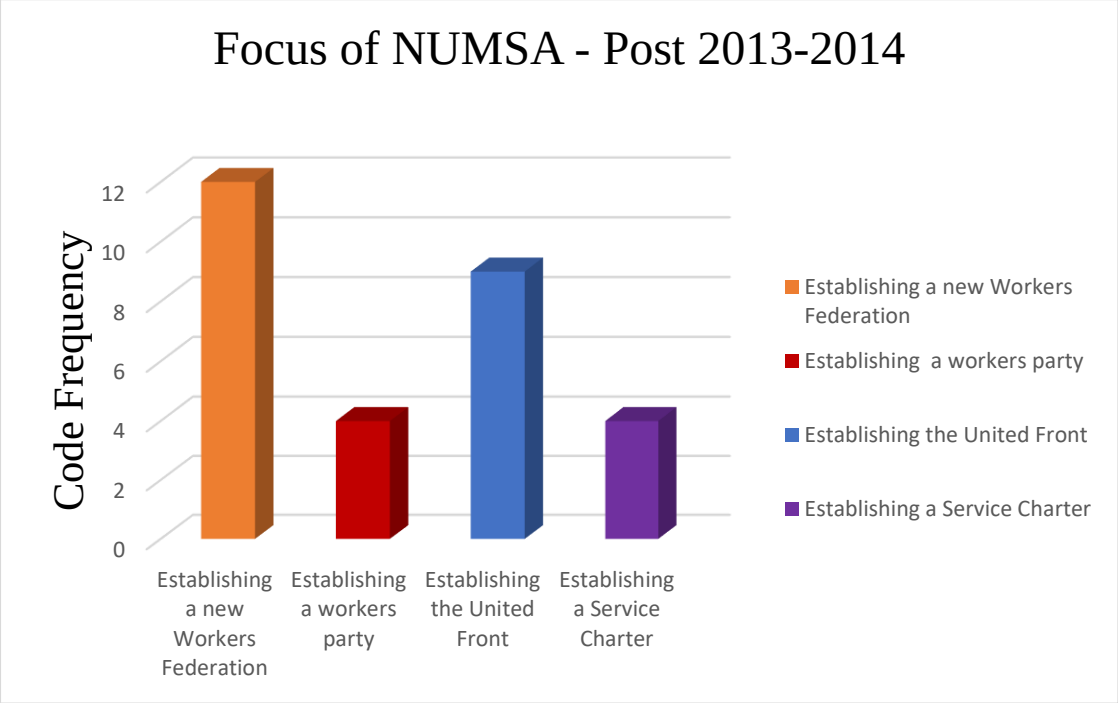
manipulation. While calling for dialogue and democracy elsewhere that leadership ruthlessly stamped on dissent within its ranks" (LIMUSA 2017).

Furthermore, although the exact figures have not been released, the union claims that its membership is growing with more than 350 000 members and striving to reach their target of 400 000 members (Musgrave 2014). Musgrave (2014) quotes the secretary general of NUMSA that: "Numsa's opponents predicted that its membership would decline once it was expelled from Cosatu because many metalworkers would prefer to remain in the federation and aligned to the ANC…. We have workers who want to join us in their droves." Despite the interference and frustrations from the Alliance partners and networks, as indicated by respondents in this study, NUMSA seems to be retaining its critical voice and striving to advocate pro-worker policies. This is evidenced by its bold resolution to create a United Front movement, a new workers' federation built from below and to explore a workers party (Marshall, 2015). This indicates that NUMSA's case can be a criticism concerning the argument raised by Scully (2015).

5.6 FOCUS OF NUMSA IN POST 2013-2014 PERIOD.

The 2013 ground breaking moment of NUMSA gave the union an opportunity to explore other alternatives in advocating for pro-workers and a socialist system in South Africa. Respondents highlighted what NUMSA is focusing on. NUMSA had a premonition of how events will turn out to be in the COSATU CEC meeting of November 2014. The secretary general of NUMSA argued that the expulsion from COSATU was not a shock since it was a predetermined move (Leander, 2015). NUMSA locals highlighted NUMSA's other 2013 plans and that the union has been focusing on building a new workers' federation, a social movement body called the United Front, and exploring ways in which it can establish a worker's party and servicing its members fully. Figure seven below shows how respondents in this study frequently mentioned the aspects that NUMSA has been focusing on in its post 2013-2014 period. The figure below shows that the highest coded aspect was NUMSA's focus on establishing a new workers federation, followed by the establishment of the United Front. Focus on establishing a worker's party and service charter was not mentioned much in the interviews.

Figure 5: Focus of NUMSA in post 2014



Source: Research interview data set

Asked what NUMSA has been working since it was expelled from COSATU in 2014, and its declaration to leave the Alliance in 2013, the majority of respondents mentioned establishing a new federation, which represents workers and defends them. They highlighted the nature of this workers federation as one that is political party non-aligned and which uses a bottom-up approach in communication channels among its members:

> NUMSA is busy with the creation of the new federation which will not be a replica of COSATU, but will be democratic from below and inclusive of all interested trade unions which are progressive and pro-socialist (Interview: Bheki, 2016)

Another respondent who is a chairperson of a local in the region highlighted that:

> …Thirdly we agreed that we will fight to start with everything (servicing our members and forming the United Front) but if we fail with everything, we need to build a federation that will not be in alliance with any political party, a federation that will be militant and vibrant defending the rights of the worker… currently we are in that line because our coordinator is Zwelinzima Vavi, coordinating very well even yesterday he was speaking to the media that "yes we are busy dealing with the issue of the federation that will make sure that workers will be represented and workers will fight for workers issue and not sleep in one blanket with the snake" (Interview: TK, 2016).

Faulkner (2017) notes that the idea was to establish a workers federation which is non-aligned to parties, transparent, active but politically independent (although it must define its political position in a more precise manner), accountable adopting principles of worker control and participatory democracy, and including both the formalised and informalised workers[16]. The idea was the brainchild of both NUMSA and the "other unions"[17] which became disgruntled by the way COSATU was handling the issue of NUMSA and its COSATU's then secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi, Who was seen as targeted by the ANC and SACP. The study found out that NUMSA is serious with the initiative and plans are underway to launch the federation in March 2017. The launch dates keep changing, with some respondents noting April 2017:

> …the congress in Cape Town 2016, resolved that NUMSA must forge ahead with the building of the united front, the new federation and the federation must be launched in March 2017…. (Interview: Jack, 2016).

The other focus of NUMSA in post 2013period is the establishment of the United Front to link workers struggles and community struggles. The idea of establishing the United Front is not a new idea within the labour field. According to NUMSA's Special National Congress declaration, the secretary general noted that the United Front will focus on coordinating struggles in workplace and communities, in a similar way to the UDF[18] of the 1980s (NUMSA, 2013b). For the United Front to work and become a success, the secretary general of NUMSA called on the union members to be involved at both workplace struggles and community level in fighting neo-liberal policies, which affect the ordinary South African.

Furthermore, the union members explained on the plans to establish a service charter, which will be a blue print that will focus on how the union can best serve the interest of the members first before anything else. A local shop steward noted, "So we have created a

[16] Interview: Faulkner (2017).
[17] These include the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), South African Catering Commercial and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA), South African State and Allied Workers Union (SASAWU), Communication Workers Union (CWU), South African Football Players Union (SAFPU) and Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (PAWUSA) (Pillay 2015).
[18] The United Democratic Front (UDF) was an anti-apartheid body that incorporated many anti-apartheid organisations. It was launched in 1983, in Mitchells Plain. From the 1970s and into the early 1980s, people across South Africa began to organise community-based groups to oppose the many hardships that apartheid created in their lives. These groups brought together people with similar concerns - sometimes as residents of the same township, at times as women's groups, or student groups, or church groups, or as workers in a factory or an industry. (http://www.saha.org.za/udf/origins.htm).

service charter that focuses on servicing the members…that is one of our priorities now" (Interview: Liz, 2016)

Most respondents did not say much about the worker's party idea. What is interesting for this study in relation to NUMSA establishing a worker's party is that, while the respondents did not say much about it, a probable indication that it is not first priority now, a lot of media reports and labour commentators have been anticipating the formation of the workers party as an immediate concern. Fogel (2014) notes that much of the media's idea was that NUMSA would announce the formation of a party and contest the 2014 election. The trade union chose instead to pursue a strategy of building a United Front with left-leaning elements of civil society, other unions, and community organisations before it moves towards building a party. Furthermore, the idea of establishing a worker's party appears to be an impossible due to dynamics emerging within the union. One of the respondents argued that the idea of forming a worker's party was out of line with the expectations of ordinary members. Suggesting that the idea was had not really been driven from below or widely discussed. He highlighted that:

> I am not sure if 60% of the union members are embracing with the decision of 2013. For example, the formation of the political party and up to now there is no political party. It says a lot of things about the big decision they made…. (Interview: Chris, 2016)

In all the post 2013aspects, one thing remains crucial and key, if ever the ideas need to survive and materialise. As Satgar (2015) argues, a crucial ingredient in this moment is the importance of placing participatory democracy at priority. Satgar (2015) argues that participatory democracy in the formation of the United Front and the new federation is key, and he further stressed the need to think with but also go beyond Marx, to appreciate other facets of democracy in the political and economic spheres (representative, direct and associational democracy) which might not have existed during Marx's time. Another key element that Satgar (2015) highlighted on, relates to the dynamics found in building the United Front. He argues that for the United Front to be a formidable force, NUMSA has to deepen the organic links between community and workplace struggles as part of a new politics of solidarity. This means that there has to be reciprocity between the union and its solidarity and sister civic organisations, also there has to be a well-pronounced model concerning decision-making process within the United Front and capacity building.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the key findings of this research and analysis in relation to theories related to participatory democracy, oligarchy, new social movements, and social movement unionism. Contrary to some of the argument made by Michels (1915), NUMSA shows a different scenario is possible when one examines the concepts of oligarchy and participatory democracy in unions. Findings in this study have presented NUMSA as a case where democracy and some elements of oligarchy exist. Internal democracy in the union, as indicated above, can be found in two forms, direct or participatory democracy at local level, and is evident and present, then at regional and national level. This model of democracy translates itself from participatory to representative democracy at different levels, as Webster (1985) suggested as key. In some instances, some oligarchical elements or tendencies are found to be present within the union. This is evidenced by on NUMSA in which some of the union structures clearly resolve themselves into making decisions and shaping the way in which the decisions are shaped in their way of thinking (e.g. Forrest 2005, 2011).. It can also be noted that there was a time, too, when the ANC, SACP and the federation affected NUMSA. But the evidence of real participatory democracy is clear.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

This section concludes this research, reflecting on the research's main question: to what extent did NUMSA conform to principles of social movement unionism between the period 2012-2014, when it embarked on withdrawing its support from the ANC and SACP? Emerging out from this main question were the characteristics of social movement unionism, which include internal democracy, forging new alliances and the expansion of the unions scope beyond dealing with workplace issues. The study examined the role of internal democracy, particularly participatory democracy concerning decision making within the trade union of NUMSA. This allowed reflection on issues like oligarchy and political unionism. The focus of this research was a case study of NUMSA and its 2013 decision, which was ground breaking. Looking at three NUMSAs locals in Jack Charles Bezuidenhout (J.C Bez), the study looked at the views of the union's ordinary members at factory level, shop stewards, and key informers. It should be noted that while findings from this study may not be applicable universally to all trade unions within South Africa and the African continent. The findings presented herein highlight the key issues within the labour studies in relation to union-party alliances in post-apartheid South Africa, and union democracy. Hence, the arguments presented in this study can be utilised as points of departure for further studies and debates surrounding issues of trade unions and internal democracy with particular focus on issues of decision making from the unions local perspective.

This chapter proposes two arguments concerning trade unions and internal democracy and Michel's theory of the "Iron Law of Oligarchy," based on the case study.

The first is that, participatory democracy was found to be strong and present at local level within the selected NUMSAs locals. This kind of internal democracy includes the participation of both ordinary union members at factory level and shop stewards both at plant/factory level and Local Shop Stewards Council meetings (LSSCs).Borrowing from models utilised to measure participation of union members by Strauss (1991), Cohen and Fosh (1990) and Hirschsohn (2011), this study assessed the extent of membership participation in these locals in the JC Bez region. The elements are as follows; membership involvement in union decision making processes, shop stewards accountability and representativeness, the ability of union members to speak or object in opposition to the opinions or views of the union leadership and full provision of adequate information by the union leadership to shop stewards and union members at local level. The study found out that

these elements were present at local level, most of the union members at local level participated largely in the union's decision to break away from the Alliance. Its resolution to build the United Front, by attending the meetings and contributing their own views and ideas. The union provided the platform for them to participate through both factory meetings and Local Policy Workshops (LPW's). At local level, all the union members were encouraged by the Regional Office Bearers and National Office bearers and coordinators who were part of the preparation for the Special National Congress, to meet, discuss, and debate on the agenda items presented within the discussion documents.

The platform for meetings was facilitated, by a scheduled program that gave time lines on how discussions would be conducted in all the union's structures. Furthermore, this study also confirmed that there are two practices of democracy, which exist in NUMSA. The first is participatory democracy, which is evident and prominent at local level, particularly at factory level and at the shop stewards meetings. Another form of democracy manifests itself from the local Shop Stewards Council meetings up to regional level and national level. At this structural level of the union, the elected local office bearer's and some ordinary union members at local level (appointed as delegates at regional policy workshops and congresses) take up the resolutions made at local level meetings and present them at regional policy workshops and congress and the Central Committee. When it comes to national congress, the regional office bearers, and appointed local delegates, will take up the decisions and position of the region and present them.

Further analysis indicates that, while union democracy might take a different form as one goes up with the structural hierarchy, NUMSA has managed to put in place means of checking that the decisions made by union members at local level have not been manipulated with or altered. This is done through a system of delegate deployment from local level through to regional and national level workshops and congress meetings. These delegates would have come from the local level structures in relation to regional congresses and delegates from regional level structures in relation to national level congresses and reports and information flow downwards.

This study also confirmed that unions, which are based on the concept of worker control and high levels of membership participation, like NUMSA, are not easily overridden by oligarchical tendencies. Findings in this study indicate that NUMSA is still a worker-controlled union that has active membership participation in decision-making processes at

shop-floor level. As such, Michel's (1915) theory is found wanting and too pessimistic, in relation to NUMSA during the period studied.

However, on the other hand, due to the complex model of union democracy, which is found in NUMSA, one cannot totally rule out the fact that oligarchical tendencies and features do exist in the union. It can be argued that, the decision that NUMSA made in 2013 December was not entirely a locally based idea made by the ordinary union members. This is because that a task team of NOBs directed by the Central Committee drafted and consolidate discussion documents. There is no evidence that locals were involved in the task team to drafts these documents, has an implication of a top-down approach here in communication, decision-making, and not the other way around (bottom-up). Documents were prepared at national leadership level and what the ordinary members at local level had to do was to discuss the issues within the confines of what already prepared within these discussion documents. Similarly, the lack of familiarity with and support for the new workers party announced by NUMSA raises questions.

However, this does not totally discredit, again, the fact that the decision to stop supporting the Alliance was arrived at after consultations, discussions, and debate before the SNC of December 2013 in Birchwood was held. This study then concurs with the previous arguments made by scholars against the theory of "Iron law of Oligarchy." Scholars like Hyman (1956) and Lipset, et al (1956) posit that Michels' theory is mainly drawn from examples principally from the German unions, which were highly centralised, and this made him neglect the possibility of some countervailing factors and pressures and experiences. These factors include; active participation of members at shop floor level in decision making; technical and mechanical methods of union governance in a decentralised model and the different contexts in which trade unions operate in.

Conclusions in this study engage two theories, which are the theory of oligarchy in voluntary organisation (Michels 1915 "Iron Law of Oligarchy") and the theory of new social movements postulated by Tourine (1974) and Melucci (1989). Credit can be given to these scholars for bringing up these insightful theories, which have continued to spark debates on issues of trade unions, oligarchy, internal democracy, and the emergence of new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. Whilst Michels theory unpacks the internal organisational dynamics of trade union in general, the argument he posts in his theory that "...There is a generic pattern of trade union organisations in ending up being bureaucratic,

rigid, and non-democratic, which in turn will result in a small number of members making decisions for the whole organisation without consulting the ordinary members" (Michels' 1915) Basing on evidence highlighted in the findings section of this research, this study posits that concerning aspects of oligarchy and democracy in trade unions, NUMSA presents a complex model of internal democracy.

Whilst NUMSA may exhibit some oligarchic tendencies within its organisational structures, convincing evidence in this study shows that NUMSA members from local level are involved in the union's decision-making processes through participatory democracy. There is evidence of a reciprocal model of communication and participation in decision-making processes within NUMSA. Evidence is drawn from cases and events in which NUMSA's National Central Committee meetings and workshops by the National Executive Committee deliberate and engage on crucial issues. Before key decisions were made, the Central Committee meeting, which convened in March 2013, sought mandate from the union members at local level. In this case, this means that they had to take the issue down to the local structures of the union and have them give their views and opinions. This can be viewed as a top-down consultative approach in organisational communication models.

Similarly, the locals within the union structures were given the space and time to discuss, debate and came up with their positions with regard to the state of affairs within the alliance (see Appendix section). The views of union members and local shop stewards at local level were captured and consolidated into one local position (whether it is different or similar to another local), and presented at regional policy workshop meeting as evidenced by the information in the findings section. This is an indication of a bottom-up approach model in decision making within the communication structures of the organisation.

It is evident that participatory democracy is present and findings indicate that before the 2013 decision was made., Union members and shop stewards at local level fully participated in the workshop meetings in which they gave their views and positions with regards to the questions of the alliance, the situation in COSATU and the 2014 election question, among other issues discussed. Furthermore, findings indicate that the elected shop stewards were accountable and responsive to the views of the local union members at both regional and national workshops and meetings during the period when the union was preparing for its Special National Congress in December 2013. The elected shop stewards role of representing their members at local level in regional and national workshops and meetings during the period in

question show that other form of democracy, which exists within NUMSA, that is representative democracy functions. Whilst there may be pessimistic views concerning the representative model of democracy in unions and parties, (for example the likelihood of elected shop stewards intentionally altering the decisions of the ordinary members to serve either their own interests or national leaders), NUMSA's case presents a different scenario. As indicated in the findings, the union utilises a hybrid system of representative democracy in which at every level of workshop, congressional or augmented meetings, non-official[19] delegates are appointed to represent their locals and regions at the meetings and be part of the discussions and debates. In other words, this is union system of check and balances utilised in crucial decision-making meetings or workshops within the union, so that the views or opinions from local are well articulated and presented.

However, it would be erroneous for this study to give a blind eye to the fact that oligarchical tendencies or traits seem to be present within NUMSA. For example, the union leaders were publicly accused of holding secretive meetings during the build-up of the 2013 congress. This indicates that some union leaders may have their predetermined strategy to win over even though all procedure was followed. This confirms Michels' argument, relating to the emergence of oligarchic tendencies within organisations, that one of the reasons why unions will eventually resolve themselves into oligarchic structures is because officials will be determined to offer efficient and quality services to their unions and members. Hence, some of the decisions and issues, which might be highly technical, will only call for a few to gather around and decide on behalf of the whole union without consultations and contributions from ordinary members at local level. This argument is sustained by findings in this study by the fact that there is nothing much that was said about the task team, which drew up the discussion question and documents, in terms of the composition and representativeness of all union members in general. Maybe this can be another departure point for further research on unions and internal democracy: the question of technical processes that unions go through in setting up democratic space in trade unions in post-apartheid South Africa.

According to the findings in this study, after NUMSA's 2013 resolution and its expulsion from COSATU in 2014, the union has been focusing on building structures and allies and this reflects some of the features of social movement unionism. This study argues that by making

[19] Non-official delegates in this context represent those members who do not hold official positions within both constitutional and non-constitutional structures in the union. These are ordinary union members.

such moves and resolutions, NUMSA represents a union, which is going back to traditions of social movement unionism. This means, a trade union, which is independent of political party alliances and densely networked and focusing on both workers and community struggles. The establishment of the United Front, set to be launched this year in March, and the formation of a new workers federation, may be indicators of how NUMSA sees the way COSATU has failed and betrayed the workers in South Africa. From the evidence found in this research, those efforts by COSATU to reach out to other sections of society were in part constrained by its Alliance with the ruling party (Pillay 2017). Furthermore, Pillay (2017) notes "its strikes over wage demands remain inwardly focussed and rarely elicit support from communities." COSATU had become increasingly undemocratic in nature, in dealing with its affiliates and the effects of political unionism had taken toll on COSATU. To such an extent, COSATU appears to have been highly influenced by politicians and internal democracy within the federation and many affiliates had been stifled.

However, the prospects of NUMSA setting the United Front and establishing successful new workers Federation seem to be dwindling since 2013 when the call was made. There are various factors that can probably explain these new trends, which are emerging within NUMSA. One analyses argues, "The leadership has ensured that the resolution on a worker's party does not escape from the central committee. Where, starved of the oxygen of open democratic debate within the membership and with left forces in the movement for socialism, it is trapped in a sterile, meaningless disagreement over whether it should be a 'mass' or 'vanguard' party" (WASP 2016). NUMSA has also indicated at its 2016 congress that it is embracing the Marxist-Leninist ideology, a move that seems to have placed skepticism within NUMSA and among its allies outside workplace struggles. This can result in a "lost" moment in which NUMSA may just degenerate into the same form as SACP, in relation to the ideology and alternative route as worker leftists. However the issue of whether NUMSA is moving back to social movement unionism or back to political unionism, remains open.

Appendix A: NUMSA's discussion questions and topics 2013.

Divisions in Cosatu

- What do you think are the causes of the divisions in Cosatu?
- What can Numsa do to unite Cosatu and make the federation a fighting organisation again?
- What must we do if our plans to unify and bring back the fighting spirit of Cosatu fail?

2014 General Elections Challenges facing the labour movement

- Which of the following options should we consider and debate in our Special National Congress?

Unequivocal support:

- ☐ We drop (or at least mute) our criticism of ANC and SACP
- ☐ We tone down activity / mobilisation until after the election
- ☐ Our priority is for ANC to have a two-thirds majority so that we can then win the leadership and overturn entrenched clauses of the constitution

Critical support:

- ☐ We reject the positions of the leadership of the ANC, but we recognise that it is the party which has mass working class membership
- ☐ We continue to criticise the ANC whilst supporting them at the elections

Reject ANC; look at the options

- ☐ The ANC is irretrievably lost; its leadership is entrenched in a pro-capitalist direction
- ☐ Our key demands as the working class cannot be won

- What should be Numsa's approach in the 2014 general and provincial elections?

Direction of the Alliance

Congress after congress, Numsa and Cosatu always decide on measures to restructure the Alliance between the federation, the ANC and SACP so that the Alliance becomes an instrument to advance the interests of workers and poor people. We have spoken about reconfiguration of the Alliance, consultation on deployment of cadres and the joint development and monitoring of policy.

- Are we winning the battle to restructure the Alliance, if not why not?
- What should we as Numsa/Cosatu do with the Alliance?

Challenges facing the labour movement

- What are causes of the splits within the labour movement?
- Why do workers leave unions for other ones?
- What must we do as Numsa in relation to workers who want to join our union although they fall outside the scope in our constitution?
- What must we do as Numsa to avoid splits happening in our own union and the possibility of large numbers of workers leaving our union?

Source: Numsa Special National Congress Supplement of September 2013, No 3.

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

JC Bez Locals	**Name**	**Interview Venue**	**Date**	**Time**
TEMBISA	Cde Green	Factory/ Plant Site	Sept-02-2016	2:10-2:43pm
	Cde Morefire	Factory/ Plant Site	Sept-03-2016	3:00pm-3:40pm
	Cde Ginger	Tembisa Local Office	Sept-03-2016	12:30-1:20pm
	Cde Storm	Tembisa Local Office	Sept-03-2016	11:55-12:28pm
	Cde Pums	Tembisa Local Office	Sept-03-2016	1:30pm-2:10pm
Kempton Park	Cde V.F	Wits University West Campus	27-Oct-16	5:00-5:33pm
	Cde Monday	Kempton Park Office	21-Jan-16	11:43-12-30pm
	Cde Maps	Kempton Park Office	21-Jan-16	12:52- 1:40pm
Johannesburg North	Cde J.B	JC Bez Regional Office	7-Dec-16	12:30 - 1:15pm
	Cde Jack	JC Bez Regional Office	20-Nov-16	1:00 - 2:05pm
	Cde Jimmy	Tembisa (homestead)	18-Jan-16	10:34-11:25 am
General Informers	Cde D.B	Ekhuruleni Regional Office	8-Sep-16	1:00 - 2:49pm
	Cde T.K	Wits University - West Campus	15-Sep-16	1:00 - 1:50pm
	Prof Chris	Wits University -	16-Dec-16	3:30 - 4:05 pm

		West Campus		
	Cde Steve Faulkner	JC Bez regional office	20-Dec-16	10:00am-11:15am
	Cde Bravo	JC Bez Office	20-Dec-16	12:00:12:48pm

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Research topic: Trade unions, Internal Democracy and Social Movement Unionism: A Case of NUMSA Locals in JC Bezuidenhout Region (2012-2014).

Date of interview:

Name of interviewee:

Prior Activity: Explain Interview Format and Objectives; Guarantee Confidentiality

Questions:

1. Briefly comment on your background and experience (profile) as a member of NUMSA.

2. How much do you understand about the organisational structure of NUMSA from national level down to the local branches?

3. To what extent did NUMSA members participate in the process of decision making during the period of 2012-2013? How was the process conducted (consultations, feedback from the leaders and access to full information on the matter) during the period in question?

4. In your opinion, to what extent did the NUMSA members at local level participated in the decision making process towards preparing for NUMSA's special nantional congress in 2013?

5. What reasons that could have led the union to break away from COSATU?

8. What factors have affected the union (political, social and economic), which has shaped its strategies and operations since 2013?

9. Since the withdrawal of NUMSA's support for ANC led alliance (2013)and its expulsion from COSATU (2014), what has been the focus of NUMSA as an independent union in South Africa ?

Appendix D: Letter of Informed Consent

Letter of informed consent



Dear Sir/Madam

Research Participation

My name is Gerald Mandisodza. I am currently doing my Master's degree in Labor Policy and Globalization at the University of Witwatersrand. I have decided to study on the aspect of participatory democracy in trade unions focusing on local branches. The full title of my research is *Trade unions, internal democracy and social movement's unionism: A Case of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) locals In JC Bezuidenhout Region (2012-2014).* I am inviting you to participate in this study. I would like to find out from you about your understanding on the aspect of participatory democracy in NUMSA from the local branches perspective focusing on the 2012-2014 moment when NUMSA withdrew its support from the alliance.

As part of this study, I would like to interview you. Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue for any reason any time. I would like to tape record the interviews, which I would type out with your permission. All the information will be kept safe in accordance with the University of Witwatersrand rules. In writing up this information, I will use pseudonyms to protect identities. There are no monetary rewards for your participation in this study. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help me understand this important matter sociologically.

Thank you for considering my request. If you agree to participate, please sign the attached form. If you require any information, you are free to discuss with me any time or you can contact my supervisor Prof Devan Pillay at the Sociology Department, University of Witwatersrand (Devan.pillay@wits.ac.za , 011-717-4331).

Gerald Mandisodza (jtmandisodza@gmail.com , 0721382231)



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Trade unions, internal democracy and social movement unionism: A Case of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in JC Bezuidenhout Region (2012-2014).

I hereby agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so freely. I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary.

I agree that the interview may be tape recorded and typed out. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to my personal identity unless I specify otherwise. I am aware that there are no monetary rewards with regard to my participation. I have been informed that the findings of the study are strictly for academic purposes and will be kept safe by the researcher. If I have any questions, I am free to contact the student researcher or his supervisor. I have been offered a copy of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference. I have read the above form and, and have been acquitted of its contents. I consent to participate in this study.

Participant's signature ----------

Interviewer's signature ----------

Date ----------

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