

https://dspace.org/

Trade unions, political unions and social movement unions: a case study of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in the context of Polokwane

Anisha, Edwin C.

2011-05-26
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/9950

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Trade Unions, Political Unions and Social Movement Unions: A Case Study of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in the context of Polokwane

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Labour Policies and Globalisation
2009

Candidate: Edwin C. Anisha
Number: 397997

Supervisor: Professor Devan Pillay

Abstract

Issues regarding the role of trade unions in the social transformation of nation-states still remain an area of huge debate in academic and official circles - even within trade unions themselves. The debate has centred largely on the capacity and/or appropriateness of political involvement of trade unions. A major concern relates to the temptation for labour to become incorporated in the course of its insertion into politics. Lately, this debate has resonated around developing countries involved in implementing Bretton Woods-inspired reforms, with their stylized economic models that emphasize greater openness to the market; usually at immense social costs and distemper. The challenge appears to be greater in those countries undertaking (concurrently) substantial political and economic reforms in form of institutionalizing democratic governance and market-led economic growth. What has become customary in such countries is massive resentment and opposition towards authorities by subaltern groups led by the working class and their organizations, mainly as a result of deprivations associated with such policies.

The consequence has regularly been the recourse to forms of authoritarianism by ruling elites and governments of these countries in order to push through these reforms - regardless of their performance on the ground. The harsh measures associated with these policies, particularly for workers and the poor, has frequently resulted in tensions between organized labour and the state-even in climes that have had a long history of close labour-state relations. More interesting for analysts and observers has been the relative inability for labour to respond to such developments in countries where a corporatist culture has fostered, in spite of the fact that it usually takes the heaviest toll from such policies. This has tended to support the argument that insertion into politics and participation in corporatist arrangements leads to a

permanent loss of oppositional skill and more vibrant and militant trade union tradition.

The South African case largely adjusts to the picture painted above - at least up till recently. A major change in the leadership of the ANC largely as a result of mobilization of organized labour and its allies has rekindled the debate over the veracity of the narratives that attribute permanence to union political and organizational forms. The view of this research is that these trade union features mutate. The seeming resurgence of the South African trade union as gauged from the Polokwane events has encouraged study on these features. NUMSA was adopted as case study for this research. The research question is quite straight: What is NUMSA's political orientation and its organizational form, especially in the light of its traditions and developments at Polokwane? Can NUMSA be described as a political union, business union or social movement union?

The results of the study reveal a complex picture that shows the presence of elements of all these union types within NUMSA. However, the union continues to show a strong tendency toward independent politics and an organizational form that embodies transformational attributes that are strongly suggestive of the social movement union type.

Declaration:

I declare that this research report is my original effort. It is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg for the degree of Master of Arts. It has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree in any university.



_____

Edwin Chukwumah Anisha

_____13_ th day of _____December_____, 2010

Dedication

To the working class people of Nigeria and South Africa - in salute of their heroic struggles for justice, truth and social transformation.

Acknowledgement

I thank God foremost for the grace given to me to start and complete this programme. I thank also those who inspired me to undertake the programme. I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor Devan Pillay for his tremendous support and guidance, which has ensured the accomplishment of this effort. I have been very much drawn to his supervision-style that encourages the candidate to innovate considerably.

I owe a debt of intellectual gratitude to all my teachers (and facilitators) in the GLU programme - I have richly benefitted from their experience. I acknowledge the supportive roles played by Christine, Zahn and Faith- GLU programme coordinators at different periods. I acknowledge the love and friendship of my classmates. I wish to acknowledge the effort of Alex Mashilo, in facilating access to NUMSA.

A number of factors influenced my decision to undertake this study. First was my long standing and keen interest in union renewal studies and projects. I have been involved in several initiatives directed at developing strategic plans for trade unions in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. The purpose of these efforts was to assist unions reposition themselves in the face of challenges thrust at them by neoliberal economic policies and globalization.

Second, my interaction with Professor Devan Pillay; my supervisor was quite crucial in terms of the crystallizing of ideas and interest into a researchable topic. Through several discussions with him, and reading from a variety of academic resources on contemporary South African trade union politics which he obliged me with, I became further enlightened on the main issues, in addition to identifying knowledge gaps in the area suitable for research.

Third, my South African trade union colleagues on the Global Labour University (GLU) programme played some part in my choice of research theme. They were instrumental in convincing me about the merits of focusing on a South African case study rather than the Nigerian one that I had earlier contemplated.

I wish to thank all others whose influences have had very beneficial effect on me in the course of this programme.

Finally, I accept responsibility for this work.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....i

Declaration:.....iv

Table of Contents.....viii

CHAPTER ONE:.....1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....1

1.2. Aim.....8

1.3 Rationale 9

CHAPTER TWO.....15

LITERATURE REVIEW.....15

2.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....15

2.2.1. Trade Unions.....22

2.2.2. Business Unionism.....23

2.2.3. Political Unionism.....24

2.2.4. Social movement unionism.....24

2.3. Institutionalization and Bureaucratization of the Labour Movement.....29

2.4. Trade Unions and Political Involvement.....31

2.5. South African Labour Movement and the Politics of Alliance.....32

2.6. Neo-liberalism and the Labour Movement.....34

CHAPTER THREE.....37

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES.....37

3.1. Introduction.....37

3.2. Gaining Access 39

3.3. Research Design.....40

3.4. Case Study- NUMSA.....42

3.5. Research Methods and Data Gathering Procedure.....43

3.6. Sampling....46
3.7. Data Analysis....47
3.8. Ethical Issues....47
CHAPTER FOUR....49
THE EVOLUTION OF NUMSA'S POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRADITIONS....49
4.1. Basic trends and assumptions....49
4.2. SACTU and Other Early Influences....50
4.3. The Shop Floor Union....52
4.4. The FOSATU Years....54
4.5. The Terrain of the 1980s....56
4.6. The Politics of Alliance....59
4.7. Transition to Democracy....61
4.9. Democratic South Africa....65
CHAPTER FIVE....68
INTERROGATING THE DIMENSIONS OF POLOKWANE WITHIN NUMSA....68
5.1. Introduction....68
PART ONE....68
5.2. Contesting meaning and vision: The National Democratic Revolution....68
5.3. Neoliberalism and Contentious Politics....71
5.4. Strategizing for Polokwane: Federation versus Affiliate Politics....76
5.5. Polokwane and After....79
PART TWO....83
5.6. Membership and Campaigns....83
5.7. Structures and Workers' Control....85
5.8. Collective Bargaining and Institutional Framework....86
5.9. NUMSA and its financing....87
6.3. Conclusion....97
REFERENCES....101

Others Sources.....108

A. Interviews.....108

B. COSATU Resolutions.....109

C NUMSA Resolutions.....109

D. NUMSA News.....109

ANNEX 1.....110

ABBREVIATIONS

ASGI-SA: Accelerated shared Growth Initiative for South Africa

ANC: African National Congress

BEC: Branch Executive Committee

BEE: Black Economic Empowerment

CC: Central Committee

CEC: Central Executive Committee

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions

CPI: Consumer Price Index

DTI: Department of Trade and Industry

FOSATU: Federation of South African Trade Unions

GEAR: Growth, Employment and Redistribution

GDS: Growth and Development Summit

ICEM: International Chemical and Energy Workers Federation

IMF: International Metalworkers Federation

LRA: Labour Relations Act

NAAWU: National Automobile and Allied Workers Union

NEC: National Executive Committee

NDP: National Democratic Revolution

NEDLAC: National, Economic, Development and Labour Council

NICISEMI: National Industrial Council for the Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Industry

NOBs: National Office Bearers

NUMARWOSA: National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa

NUMAWOSA: National Union of Motor Assembly Workers of South Africa

NUMSA: National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa

MAWU: Metal and Allied Workers Union

MICWU: Motors Industries Combined Workers Union

RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme

SACP: South Africa Communist Party

SACTU: South Africa Congress of Trade Unions

SETAs: Sectoral Education and Training Authorities

TUCSA: Trade Union Congress of South Africa

WPMWU: Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union

LIST OF TABLES **PAGE**

Table 1: Income Statement of NUMSA for year ended December 31, 2006.....90

Table 2: NUMSA's Organisation Forms and Corresponding Union Type....94

CHAPTER ONE:

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

There is a sense in which traditional scholarship on trade unions proceeds with a rigid orientation. This consists largely in casting trade unions and related phenomena in terms of relatively strict and stable categories- a monolithic rather than a living process. Often, this approach results in little sensitivity to history and the imposition of predetermined narratives. This situation is clearly associated with the existence of theoretical gaps in the area. As Johnston (2001) and Cella and Treu (1987) note, there are no systematic theories on trade unionism and labour movements. This inadequacy basically reveals the "limits of metropolitan industrial sociology" (Von Holdt, 2002:285), and encourages a pessimistic view of trade unions and their capacities. This fixated view runs contrary to the basic assumption of this thesis.

The challenge of inadequate theory is immediately manifest in various attempts at defining the role of trade unions. Many traditional models conceive trade unions as specifically linked with the evolution of industrial society, the employment relations it fosters, and unions' socialization and integration into the legally-sanctioned apparatuses of that social order. This tends to promote the view of trade unions as institutionalised orders of organised capitalism. An important subset of this view is that trade unions are associated with narrow corporate consciousness, verging on economic interests (Andersen, 1978). However, history shows that trade unions have regularly been involved in issues other than immediate workplace economics, and that central to the dynamism that has characterised union strategizing are a variety of issues including solidarity, independence, autonomy, organizing, democracy and political involvement.

The alternate construct of trade unions' roles sees them as politically oriented, given the coflictual nature of their station in relation to other actors in the production and social system. Adewumi (2009) argues that a vision that attempts to separate the economic from the political conveniently overlooks the influence of political economy on workplace decisions. Essentially, this line of thought argues that there is a connection between workplace issues and the lived relations prevailing in the wider society. In other words, trade unions must not be conceived as being apolitical since their basic organizing function and objectives frequently demand that they act politically. In any case, the limits of extant institutional frameworks as well as the intertwining of workplace issues with broad social processes have regularly impelled trade unions into politics throughout history (May, 1975:11).

The existence of theoretical gaps is further demonstrated in terms of efforts at classifying trade unions. Various trade union typologies inundate the discourse-economic unions, business unions, political unions, social movement unions etc. What is particularly striking is the incongruence in some of these classifications, and the tendency of regarding same as permanent labels in relation to specific trade unions. Clearly, this approach obscures a more dynamic process within the trade union system, which often results in marked organizational and strategic transformations. This is especially true in the case of political and social movement union types. Some typologies collapse both union types (e.g Webster and Lambert, 1998:21). Others like Scipes (1992:9) insist on a clear distinction.

More generally however, the practice is to regard business unionism as reflecting trade unions' focus on workplace industrial relations and engagement in political activities within the dominant political system, while political unionism is associated with the dominance of trade unions by either a political party or the state. On the other

hand, social movement unions are seen as those 'combining conventional institutionalized collective bargaining with collective action typical of social movements (Hirschsohn, 2007:9). Specific union types tend to have their parallel in the form of working class politics that they engender: "economism" where trade unions in practice confine themselves to workplace issues; "syndicalism" where workers engage in politics but as trade unions and; "worker partyism" where workers form their own independent workers' party (Pillay, 2006:170).

A major factor associated with attempts at establishing a fault line in terms of trade union dispositions, especially in the case of political unions and social movement unions, relates to the reasoning that trade unions become necessarily co-opted or ossified within institutional and political arrangements, causing them to lose their oppositional abilities and social relevance in the process. It is important to point out that similar arguments, bordering on institutionalization, foreground popular notions of business unionism. This represents a linear reflex of sorts. This is because while such arrangements undeniably lend themselves more easily to probable loss of autonomy and transformative vision on the part of trade unions, this is not a given. Similarly, specific political orientations and organizational forms are not permanent features of any trade union.

The concern over their possible incorporation seems to have informed the limited transformative role assigned to trade unions by many established political traditions-Leninism, syndicalism and social democracy. Much of this, it appears, relates to the particular socio-political context within which the trade union operates. Linz (1975:311) argues that some form of corporatism belies all political systems. Further, Frege and Kelly (2003:11) note that in spite of the importance of institutions; defining actors' behaviour and strategy based on specific institutional contexts alone is

simplistic. While institutions influence actors; such institutions themselves are not insulated from being influenced by the same actors.

The point to be made here is that the substantive character of a trade union might more appropriately be gleaned from a complex process, involving the interaction of a variety of factors like union's historical legacies, the union's definition of its role, the strategic choices it makes, and the institutional context within which the union is located. Fairbrother (2008:217) and Von Holdt (2002:297) note that trade unions react variously to developments in their social and political environment.

Clawson (2002) explains this in terms of the 'union' and 'movement' dimensions inherent within trade union systems. For him, these reflect tendencies that basically lie within all trade unions-sometime latent; sometime manifest-with the former moving in the direction of union's institutionalization and the latter toward its assertion of autonomy. Importantly, Fairbrother (2008) and Von Holdt (2002) state, consistent with the approach of this study that the task for labour scholars is to determine the circumstances under which a surge in either of these dimensions of trade unionism occurs.

These issues easily resonate in the literature on trade unions-political party relations. There is a fairly well established global tradition of close union-party relations. This tradition maps around trade unions playing crucial roles in such relationships, including actively establishing political parties, mobilizing electoral support for parties, and participating directly in either the running of governments or political opposition. Although there is substantial literature on the benefits of political mobilization of trade unions, the more dominant trend is to highlight the threat it portends for trade union autonomy. As Beckman and Sachikonye (2010:1) put it,

"there is a built-in conflict between being part of a government, actual or prospective, and negotiating a collective agreement on behalf of your members".

Significantly not all the literature shares this non-sanguine disposition toward union-party relations and its adverse implications for the autonomy of trade unions. As Hellman (1992) notes, workers' associations and other popular movements may logically determine that incorporation into a political party might be in their best interest in terms of ultimate political and social goals. Indeed, she argues against romanticizing grassroots organization's autonomy and simplistically interpreting consolidation into electoral coalitions as cooptation by the state.

A much more persuasive argument on the nature of union-party relations is offered by Ronaldo Munck who suggests that relations between unions and political parties be conceived as evolving through stages in which the interest for autonomy and political engagement among unions alternate in dominance (Munck, 1990). To be sure, the direction of substantive interest and practices of trade unions in terms of relations with political parties is connected to a prevailing socio-economic context, in addition to those conditions and opportunities (or threats) engendered by this process. The point here is that the process is characterized by more dynamism than is often admitted.

Evidence in support of Munck's thesis on the fluidity of relations involving unions and parties appears to exist in developing countries, where the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms has frequently pitched trade unions against political parties and governments. Unions are commonly viewed as obstacles to international strategies of privatization and neoliberal reforms of trade and property rights (Beckman and Sachikonye, 2010:3). This is especially true for developing countries

that are simultaneously involved in economic and political transitions to liberal order-what has come to be termed the "double transition" (Adler and Webster, 1995).

The strain in relations between labour and political parties (government) that usually characterizes countries involved in dual transition is often considerable-even in countries with long standing tradition of cooperation between both. It seems clearly illogical that an upsurge in attacks on labour rights should occur under a civilian-democratic administration. But the explanation for this lies in the very character of this dual transition, especially the desperate economic principles that belie it. It has been argued that the implementation of neoliberal economic policies is implicitly (and explicitly) associated with attempts to control or repress labour (Baskin, 2000:42; Suarez, 2001:54). Similarly, Ocheje (2005:70) notes that "outside of established democracies of Western Europe, radical market-oriented growth strategies have been pursued more often by authoritarian than democratic governments".

A number of important issues derive from the foregoing analysis, and these could be cast in form of the following questions: first, does political involvement of trade unions necessarily result in cooptation? Second, how should we more appropriately characterize a trade union in terms of its political orientation and organizational form, in the light of arguably dynamic social processes occurring within the union and society? The first question represents the underlying concern of this thesis, with the second question forming its central problematic.

South Africa in a sense incarnates these themes. The alliance of COSATU, SACP and ANC presents a special case. While many writers may quickly suggest subordination of the South African labour movement given its involvement in corporatist arrangements, the unions have frequently shown some sign of independence-even if this is sometimes considered rhetorical. Pillay (2008:277) in discussing the behaviour

of the dominant segment of organized labour during the administration of former President Mbeki, highlights this dual tendency within the South African labour movement when he refers to COSATU's support for strikes against the government's policies in one instant, and the trade union federation's release of congress' resolutions that affirm the alliance on another occasion.

However, events at the African National Congress (ANC)'s National Conference held in Polokwane in December 2007 paint perhaps a more complex picture in terms of the character of the South African labour movement. There is reasonable consensus regarding the crucial role played by the labour movement in the turn of events at the conference, especially with respect to change in the ANC's leadership. Turok (2008:14) describes the outcome of the conference as a "revolution within a revolution" in as much as six of the most important personalities in the ANC and government stood for election to leading positions, and were all voted down. While there may be considerable debate over the reasonableness of the role played by labour in the outcome of the conference, or the decisiveness of its effort to that outcome, what is perhaps more interesting from a research standpoint, is the deliberateness of labour to re-assert itself within the alliance. For instance, a resolution from its 9th National Congress held in 2006 states emphatically that COSATU has a "class interest in who leads the ANC, and what policy direction the ANC and the State develop and pursue".

Turok (2008:14) notes that the conference's outcome represents the rejection of an economic system that had not empowered the working people. This economic system was largely represented by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme of the Mbeki government. Instructively, GEAR was theoretically conceived and politically framed within the ranks of labour and its Communist Party

ally, as an assault against them and their constituents-one that demanded a deliberate and strategic reaction. Indeed, the use of the popular refrain of 'the 1996 Class Project' in reference to GEAR, illustrates this point.

Since the events at Polokwane were clearly orchestrated by several forces with the labour movement being a prominent part, there might be justifiable grounds on which to view this process as an attempt by the trade unions to re-assert their autonomy and hegemonize workers' issues within the alliance. This is suggested as one of the nobler possibilities in Pillay (2006:6-7)'s painting of several scenarios, with respect to the motives and implications for the events at Polokwane. More importantly, the outcome of the Polokwane Conference has raised the question anew of whether, and if so to what extent, the dominant trade union strand within South Africa is incorporated holistically into the ANC (Southall and Webster, 2010).

Theoretical guidance for the study's interpretation of these developments, especially the dynamics of union-party relations in South Africa, comes from scholarship on the nature of social movements; the issues associated with their engagement with political associations; the tension between social movement's institutional goals of operational autonomy and political involvement and; the conditions that define the character and direction of these processes.

1.2. Aim

The primary aim of this study is to describe NUMSA's trade union orientation. This consists mainly in establishing the nature of its politics and its organizational form. In tandem with this objective, the research seeks to utilize the ANC's 2007 Polokwane Conference as a contextual framework. This implies the use of developments before, during and after the conference to serve both contextual and organizing functions in terms of analysis. In practice, this has direct bearing on the focusing of the research

with regard to the period (2006-2009) covered as well as the ordering of data. By analysing NUMSA, in relation to developments around the conference, the research hopes to facilitate an objective understanding and classification of NUMSA, especially in respect of its proximity (or otherwise) to political, social movement unionism and business unionism.

In relation to the above, the study is interested in highlighting important debates, activities and developments within NUMSA, and how these crystallized in relation to Polokwane, in addition to further defining the union's orientation. A major subset of this research effort was directed at establishing the macro-structural issues that have impacted on NUMSA's positions in the period under review. Again, the study seeks to clarify NUMSA's engagement with politics and the implications of this for its internal processes, particularly in the light of existing theoretical frames. Importantly, it seeks to analyse the suitability of popular characterising and attributing of most South African trade unions, NUMSA inclusive, by existing trade union typologies.

1.3 Rationale

The South African case often presents an interesting - if not unique - angle, in addition to posing a challenge in terms of popular conceptions of trade union types, especially the genre that attempts to counter-pose the state and civil society or trade unions against political associations. These conceptions mainly suggest inherent unevenness in labour-state (political party) relations, which necessarily results in labour's assimilation into corporatist arrangements and weakening of trade unions. There is a stylized approach to most accounts on the subject; one that obscures any possibility of trade unions' independence or possible benefits of political mobilization. This study can be justified in terms of its potential to match theory with

practice, and clarify the possibilities and limits within political alliances involving the labour movement.

The absence of widely acceptable theories in this area has been associated with narrow approaches to the study of the labour movement. Many studies are given to looking at trade unions from one particular perspective, among a variety of options: union's activities, factors most important to their development, the manner in which they act in society, and the way unions see themselves (Scipes, 1992). This study's approach was a synthesis of all these conventional approaches, making for a much more robust and credible outcome. Also, it bears noting that the practice in relation to characterizing trade unions has largely been that of looking at historical events than on-going processes. Indeed, stable ideal-type categories run the danger of obscuring as much as they reveal. This study was again justified in the sense that it departed from this fixed approach, and made its conclusions on the basis on historical and contemporary events.

This study holds some prospect in terms of facilitating understanding of the important question of 'under what circumstances do trade unions assert their movement dimension?'. Johnston (2001:28) and Von Holdt (2002) have argued that providing answer to this overarching question should be the focus of labour studies. A study that addresses change related processes holds out real prospects in terms of facilitating understanding on that important question. There is therefore strong justification for undertaking a study that applied itself to engendering an answer to this overriding question.

The events of December 2007 in Polokwane represents a major moment in the history of South Africa in terms of its sheer intensity, the role played by the labour movement in the way things unfolded, and the potential of those outcomes-regardless of the way

it all finally turns out. Turok (2008:14) notes that it represented the "first' time in Africa that change was introduced electorally-by the voting out of the top echelon of the ruling party-not by a coup, or by assassination, and neither by the substitution of that party by another party".

The contextual importance of 2006 to 2009 is intricately linked to the 9th National Congress of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which was held in September of 2006. That congress appraised its analysis of the state of the National Democratic Revolution and the Tripartite Alliance undertaken at the previous congress (Southall and Tangri, 2006). The importance of 2006 as a starting point in our analysis is premised on the fact that it represents a moment of sorts in form of the articulation of an agenda by the South African labour movement, which is emphasised in a number of events in the intervening period, and reaches its climax in the ANCs 2007 National Conference at Polokwane.

More importantly, there are two items in the resolutions adopted by the 2006 COSATU Congress that are crucial in terms of understanding the relevance of the basic theoretical assumptions and analytical approach of this study. The first is the congress' firm resolution to advance working class hegemony within the ANC by capturing its leadership and to take a keen interest in who became the next leader of the ANC, and second, the decision to reach out to other mass democratic movements. While the study's main focus was on the highlighted time frame, it also attempted to look briefly at relevant events outside this period to the extent that they helped further the realization of the objectives of this effort.

At a much more theoretical level, Polokwane, it could be argued, appears to have profound meaning: first, it embodies contention between the state and labour as it relates to the implementation of neoliberal policies. Second, it speaks to the expansion

of repertoires of contention in the form of democratic mobilization and voting, with regard to a hegemonic contest within the tripartite alliance. Third, it underscores the argument that the objective basis for analyzing the claims of working people as a class lies within the 'fields of action'. It made sense, therefore, to undertake a study that mapped around these fundamental theoretical issues.

1.4. **Limitation of the Study**

In spite of the bold attempt of this study; it had a few limitations. First, it focused more on a relatively recent part of the history of union-party relations in South Africa, which is generally known to date back considerably. Second, the study relied mainly on documentary analysis, including union resolutions and declarations in addition to interviews. It might have been more appropriate to integrate other methods into the study. However, the constraint of time and resources was a major determinant in respect of decisions and choices made around research design.

1.5. **Structure of the Report**

This thesis is organised into six chapters: Chapter one starts with an introduction of the research area and highlights the main focus of the research. It identifies the inadequacies that exist with respect to theorizing in the area, and how this impacts on trade union definitions and typologies. The chapter also outlines the aim and rationale of the study. Importantly, it makes the argument against the tendency of foisting predetermined narratives as it pertains to state-labour and union-political party relations, while stressing the need for an objective analysis of the character of trade unions based on their actions in the context of real and specific events.

Chapter two examines the theoretical and conceptual arguments as well as relevant literature in the area. It identifies two dominant traditions: the new social movement theories and the labour and protest movement theories. It notes that these theories speak primarily to organizing strategies adopted by unions, and their nearness or otherwise to the vibrant and innovative practices commonly associated with social movements. The chapter also includes debates on institutionalization processes, trade union politics and strategy. The Polokwane conference is discussed in the context of these debates.

Chapter three addresses methodological issues in the study. It reflects on important theoretical and ethical issues associated with qualitative studies.

Chapter four traces the history of NUMSA in terms of the evolution in its political orientation and organizational forms. It highlights the structural legacies, internal debates, institutional context, and strategic choices that have shaped the identity of the union. In particular, it notes the interaction of ideology, strategy and tactics within NUMSA. The chapter also highlights the strong influence of NUMSA's traditions in its perspectives on most issues. Further, the chapter identifies the huge diversity within NUMSA and how this is managed, in addition to pointing out NUMSA's credentials in the area of innovativeness with respect to union policies and strategy.

Chapter five is the section that addresses the research question of the study. It attempts a systematic analysis of NUMSA's positions on a wide spectrum of issues over a period of about four years, with a view to establishing patterns indicative of the union's specific orientation. Issues broadly covered include politics and economics. Of particular interest is the identification of NUMSA's priorities. In this regard, NUMSA's policy positions and resolutions were examined. In many instances, these positions are compared with the positions of other unions and COSATU.

Importantly, the chapter reflects on arguments and posturing within NUMSA in respect of the Polokwane conference. The impact of Polokwane on NUMSA, is also taken up in this chapter. The roles of the main actors in these events are also examined.

Chapter six is the final chapter of this report. It dwells mainly on the issues raised in the previous chapter and their implications in terms of identity and character of NUMSA. The chapter combines the bundle of events, activities, statistics and actions highlighted in chapter five to describe NUMSA's orientation in form of a matrix. Importantly, it speaks on NUMSA's approximation to the study's definition of political and social movement unionism.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

At the heart of theoretical and conceptual models relating to union resurgence is the linking of various trade union organizing practices to formulations of social movement unionism (SMU). The emphasis here appears to be on innovative practices that transcend the more familiar and traditional ones, and therefore show greater promise in terms of helping trade unions reclaim social relevance, which is reckoned to have waned largely in the contemporary times. The names ascribed to such new models are considerable: coalition building, alliances, political action, internationalism, de-bureaucratization-just to name a few. Implicit in these models is the articulation of top-down innovation, effective mobilization and broad rank-and-file participation (Frege and Kelly, 2004:10). However, there remain substantial challenges in respect of operationalizing the concept.

Theory in this area draws substantially from theorizing on new social movements and change. In this regard, two broad perspectives are delineable: new social movement theories and labour and protest movement theories, with each of them having differently implications for trade unions. The new social movement theories tend toward a post industrial/modernist reading of society, and regard trade unions unsuited for the supposedly emergent socio-political environment i.e. the globalised, networked and complex society. For this school, trade unions are anachronistic and may indeed be obstacles to progressive change.

The labour movement protest theories, however, see the recourse of trade unions to new social movement-like organizing practices as a reaction to neoliberal de-institutionalization of industrial relations and its assault against collectivism. These theories also argue that this reflects the unleashing of the movement tendency that lies within trade union systems but tempered-albeit temporarily- by institutional arrangements.

Touraine (1974) is a classic example of the new social movement theoretical perspective. For him, trade unions are considered outmoded because of their perceived institutionalised and rigid procedures, particularly expressed in their leadership and hierarchical structures and their confinement to issues of material improvement of members. This is contrasted against new social movements, which revolve around networks that emphasise autonomy.

Melucci (1989), who is also associated with this perspective, argues that trade unions' decline is connected to the evolution of new forms of information based production in the post industrial society, which engenders a complex and networked social system that trade unions are not able to adapt to. He argues that this situation favours engagement on the basis of networking rather the hierarchical procedures that state and political parties symbolise. For Melucci, these networks are latent in a fracturing society.

This same view is shared by Castells (1996:469) who characterises the emergent society as 'network society', where dominant functions and processes are increasingly organised around networks. The networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture. In this context, the labour movement is said to be unable the fit into society because they have become a political agent integrated into the realm of public institutions.

The situation of the labour movement is said to be further compounded by the network morphology, which is also a source of dramatic reorganization of power relationships apart from influencing institutional procedures and usages. Under the conditions of the network society, capital is conceived to be globally coordinated while labour is individualized, and the struggles between diverse capitalists and miscellaneous working classes is subsumed into more fundamental opposition between the bare logic of capital flows and the cultural values of human experience (Castells, 1996:476).

The post-modernist strain of new social movement theories situates its logic in its view of society's transition from modernity to late modernity in which class related identities, activities and conflicts are subordinated to individualised life politics. Giddens (1998), writing from this perspective, notes that this transition has brought about certain shifts, especially in areas like mass production and full employment, which have generally challenged the relevance of trade unions.

Habermas (1987) notes that institutionalisation and bureaucratization have led to a situation in which trade unions have abdicated oppositional politics and instead have become procedural platforms for channelling grievances. For him, the old conflicts bordering on the economic, in terms of employer-worker relations, where trade unions were relevant, are giving way to cultural conflicts for which new social movements are more adept.

The new social movement theories can be criticised for their overarching and over simplistic assumption of an extensively changed regulatory framework. For instance, its claims about the replacement of collectivism with individualism in terms of worker consciousness, remains largely unsubstantiated. In the same vein, Mathers (2007:24) criticizes the tendency of this perspective to minimise class based analysis and to

suggest the irrelevance of same in the substantive context. For him, this amounts to an inappropriate confinement of class politics to intermittent collective action over questions of material redistribution.

For some scholars, such theoretical arguments represent an accommodation of neoliberalism. As Dunn (2007:134) puts it: "stated most strongly, such theories question the very concept of labour, providing rather dubious foundations for its strategies. It does often appear that we are invited to resist exploitation on the basis of theories which leave considerable doubt about whether exploitation exists and to organise in a world which is essentially disorganised". For Mathers, the new social movement theorists operate with a gradational Weberian conception of class as an economic/market category, thereby limiting class politics to intermittent collective action over questions of material distribution (Mathers, 2007: 24, 25).

Lopez (2003) further criticizes the writers of this tradition for their tendency to see labour struggles as having declining significance because of the thinking that workers' organizations are more or less secure in their positions as 'solidly' based and institutionally guaranteed bodies of representation. He argues that this assertion is not matched by the evidence on the ground-at least in the United States. Lopez however notes that the new movement theories have their merit in the sense that they theorize social movement in historical perspective. In this manner, they do not assume that the logic of collective action is always and everywhere the same.

In contrast, the labour movement protest theories envision a significant role for trade unions in the context of a changing world. According to Lopez (2003:6) this perspective emphasises the "favourable confluence of facilitating factors". Most of the writers of this tradition draw strongly from labour historians and emphasis contentious collective action manifest in the practice of workers under conditions of

strike or protest. Within this theoretical frame there is also an emphasis on the pursuit of justice as a basis for popular revolt and collective action. This stress on justice is critical to understanding the labour and protest movement's postulations on a workers' (and popular) revolt in the context of the neoliberal era.

Neoliberal policies tend to outrage workers' sense of justice as well as those of other subaltern segments of society, thereby creating new cycle of contention between workers and the state. The political opportunities that underlie this new cycles of contention provide the motivation for innovative protests, which have increased the chances of attracting support in form of alliance with other interest groups in society (Tarrow, 1998:24)

For instance the political process model of Dough McAdam (1992), which is a progressive improvement on Tilly (1978)'s political opportunities structure model, traces political, organisational and consciousness change in institutions. Essentially, this model deals with how macro – structural changes bring about political opportunities for protest and organisational resources that can support mobilisation. This process for McAdam leads to the development of consciousness about possibilities of collective action, which he calls "cognitive liberation". As Lopez notes, further refinement of the political process model emphasises the importance of threat as against opportunities and framing processes as against cognitive liberation.

For the political process model there are three key factors central to the development of movements and effecting change. These include an insurgent consciousness that has to do with feelings of deprivations and grievance, and a collective sense of injustice of the system upon which framing processes could be easily fostered; resources mobilization which involves the harnessing of diverse supportive means like material goods, political support and networks of relationships (Giddens,

2000:515 and Passy, 2003:41); and political opportunities which could be translated as the level of vulnerability of the substantive political system to challenge.

The political process model sits well with Tarrow (1998)'s views on "cycles of contention". In this regard, widening cycles of contention can be related to macro-structural changes, which may neutralise the effect of conventional forms of protest, thereby necessitating innovative action on the side of movements. In a sense conventional forms of protest are subject over time to institutional neutralisation as the "cycle of protest" turns downwards and authorities learn to counter-mobilise. Apart from conventional repertoires of protest, Tarrow suggests that movements can develop both "violent" action -which is inevitably linked to small numbers willing to take risk and is subject to repression; and "disruptive" action - which "breaks with routine, startles bystanders, and leaves elites disorientated, at least for a time" (Tarrow, 1998:104).

Importantly, unlike the new social movement theories that are generally contemptuous of the role of leaders, the political process models (and repertoire of contention) suggest that leadership could be instrumental in bringing about change. For instance, Kelly (1996) highlight the positive role leaders can play in mobilizing union members around collective senses of injustice and grievance. This angle is however criticised by Fairbrother (2005) because it suggests a 'vanguardist' approach to union leadership as against his preferred notion of collective strength of workplace organization.

However, as Barker et al (2001:23) note, "Leadership is fateful for movement development at every stage and turning point – their growth and decline, their heritages for the future and their mark on history – are all intimately tied up with their forms of leadership, the quality of ideas offered and accepted, the selections from

repertoires of contention, organisation, strategy and ideology they make". Importantly, this kind of leadership transcends traditional forms of leadership for leadership sake, but one that facilitates the process of mobilizing an alternative belief system that supports collective action for change.

This study orients itself toward labour and protest movement theories, especially the political process model of McAdam, which emphasizes on the structure of political opportunities, and Tarrow's views on cycles of contention. In orienting itself toward this theoretical frame, the study is conceiving trade union estimation and actions in the context of the Polokwane conference which occurred against the backdrop of macro-structural issues such as the neo-liberal policies of the Mbeki government, which would seem to have substantially and adversely affected the labour movement, its constituents, and the poor, expanding in the process the cycle of contention.

Hirschsohn (2007:15) notes that political process approach to social movements is most appropriate in explaining how and why social movement unions (SMU) emerge. This literature addresses the recursive, systemic interrelationship between social movements and their opportunity structure. Valenzuela (1989) distinguishes between "syndical" and "political opportunity structures", and their interaction, which shape the emergence and organizational development of union movements. The emergence of SMU is also likely to be associated with the 'resurrection of civil society', which is in classical terms triggered when an authoritarian state responds to political pressure by broadening space and extending some rights to oppressed groups (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986).

The potential usefulness of the political process model for this study could be gleaned from Pillay (2008)'s analysis of the events at Polokwane, in which he suggests the presence of key elements of this model: feeling of injustice about the system on the

part of labour, especially as it pertained to the neoliberal economic system that the government was implementing; the vulnerability of the political system and structure of opportunity created by the split among the elite classes in the ANC; and the synergy and networking between COSATU and SACP in terms of the articulation of a strategy and mobilization around same.

2.2. **Conceptual Issues**

2.2.1. Trade Unions

Trade unions are collectives of workers-workers' organisations-intended and organised as cohesive social platforms to serve primarily, the interests of workers. The emphasis here is on the collective; hence trade unions' definite social identity. Highlighting this collective or social character of trade unions, Carroll and Ratner (1995) note that "unions' power rests ultimately upon the willingness of members to act collectively". Implicit to this social identity of trade unions is the development of class tendencies and group consciousness among members.

As an organisation representing workers, trade unions are traditionally pre-occupied with sustaining or improving the employment conditions of their members. Consequently, their activities frequently revolve around such issues as wage, unionisation of workers, workplace health and safety, and social benefits; all of which is often captured in the form of contracts or agreements secured through negotiations with the employer.

In practical terms, trade unions usually show a tendency toward either a service orientation, which focuses on issues like workers' rights and resolution of disputes, or an organising orientation, that is concerned with matters like networking, structures and campaigns- subsuming issues otherwise considered immediately outside the

workplace. There is interesting debate around the issue of regarding trade unions as truly representative of the working class. This is as a result of the fact that whereas trade unions can indubitably claim to represent a vast number of workers who work in the formal sector and are their members; the same may not be the case for the considerable population of the working class outside this sector. As Waterman (1991:1) notes "... the overwhelming majority of the world's workers (including the traditionally-defined proletariat) is not unionised. And even if defined as workers, the overwhelming majority of the poor, powerless, marginalised and alienated are not unionisable".

The debate tends to extend to the questioning of the relevance of trade unions in contemporary society, especially under the regime of globalization, thereby underscoring the importance of the discourse for trade unions to reinvent their strategy (ies). Far from popular notions of a radically transformed economic terrain, Kelly (1988) notes certain consistencies in the prevailing global economy. This includes the centrality of capital and the primacy of the capital-labour contradiction. For him the current circumstance is propitious to ascendancy of socialism. Kelly (1988: 304) argues that rather estimations of further decline in influence, trade unions will "play an essential role in this process as principal agents of working-class mobilisation".

2.2.2. Business Unionism

This refers more or less to the conventional form of trade unionism. Hirschohn (2007:9) describes business unions as those that concentrate on workplace industrial relations. Essentially, this form of unionism does not canvass a transformative vision of society. It is often content to accept the capitalist economy and seeks to improve the lot of workers within it.

2.2.3. Political Unionism

Lambert (1988) refers to political unionism as a distinct tradition. For him, political unionism can be said to exist when a trade union leadership consciously, by way of strategic choice, breaks the boundaries of collective bargaining to establish structured alliances with urban social movements nationally. Such alliances are formed to challenge the existing structures of capitalist dominance in all spheres-economy, state, and society-through collective action (Lambert, 1988:34). However Lambert's definition appears to fuse political unions with social movement unionism.

Webster and Fairbrother (2008:312)'s clarification on the difference between political unions and social movement unions suggests that while a political union embeds itself in society through engagements with political associations, in a manner that may compromise its independence; social movement unions embed themselves in society- with other civil groups- in alliances in which the autonomy (equality of the partners) of each element is emphasised. This refers to the integration of the economic and social issues into the trade union's framework of activities or agenda. It also represents the levels at which the union operates in terms of its engagements with respect to securing its goals for its members. For Seidman (1994) this is the significant point of departure between 'political unionism' and 'social movement unionism'.

2.2.4. Social movement unionism

The term social movement unionism is regarded as an attempt to fuse social movement sensibilities into the labour movement as part of the process of reinventing labour (Carroll and Ratner, 1995). Murray (1992) identifies six structural changes which make it imperative for unions to re-invent themselves. These are: The restructuring and relocation of capital on a global scale; Post-fordist flexibilizing

shifts in corporate strategy and organisation; the increasing bifurcation of external labour markets into established-worker and marginalized categories; the entry of new groups in the labour markets such as women and visible minorities and the departure of other groups such as older workers; the State's embrace of neo-liberalism and; the commoditization of everyday life, which has generated rampant consumerism and critical concerns about health, environmental and community issues.

Giving a straight definition of social movement unionism appears problematic. This immediately shows divisions in conceptualizing the term. Von Holdt (2002) defines social movement unionism as "a highly mobilized form of unionism which emerges in opposition to authoritarian regimes and repressive workplaces in newly industrializing countries of the developing world". Hirschohn (2007) argues that social movement unionism links factory-based production politics and community and state power issues. He observes that though social movement unionism combines the factory organizational strength and workplace focus of economism with the political and societal consciousness of political unionism, it is not merely an amalgam of these conventional forms (Hirschohn:11)

Substantial work on social movement unionism avoids defining the term-choosing rather to describe its form. Lopez (2004) for instance associates it with grassroots (rank-and-file) organising and emphasis on campaigns in the form of public protests and disruptive tactics, labour-community coalition and the framing of demands politically. For Johnson (2001), it implies a new way of framing claims and orienting strategies of labour as well as a sense (and commitment) to achieve the promise of citizenship.

It is common now to speak about social movement unionism in terms of a 'trend in contemporary unionism in which workers and trade unions are united in larger

coalitions with an array of community organizations for achieving mutual goals in the furthering of economic and social justice' (Davinatz, 2008).

Fairbrother (2008)outlines basic activities of trade unions that determine their social movement unionism orientation. These he actually refers to as dimensions of social movement unionism. They are:

1. Locally focussed and based, often referred to as rank and file mobilization
2. Experimenting with collective actions, that go beyond strike, or workplace limited activity
3. Building alliances, coalition building, and extending into the community and beyond.
4. Embracing emancipatory politics, framing demands politically and formulating transformative visions.

There is, of course, broad agreement that social movement unionism entails connecting with society and taking up the wider issues. The essential features of this form of unionism involve the embedding of labour in a system of community alliances-political and social. Importantly, it refers to internal democratic practice within the union itself and engagement in non-hierarchical relationships as well articulation with non class movements.

It is also important to note the strategic location of labour within the entire social system in terms of its proximity to the market or society, and the delicate interface that that station demands of it. As Webster and Fairbrother (2008:312) illustrate the crucial implication of the location of labour in terms of its nearness to market or society, and how this defines the union's orientation. They argue that labour tends to be constantly pulled along a continuum that reflects movement in the direction of either the market or society, which is also characterised by corresponding tendencies of movement/mobilisation/autonomy and institutionalization/accommodation, with each of this complex producing a special kind of unionism.

It is not unusual to find in the literature a debate around the similarity or otherwise of trade unions to the new social movements. This aspect of social movement unions-debate revolves around the appropriateness of references to trade unions as social movements and the practicability of integrating methods of the latter into the former. Pillay (1996) defines social movements as those relatively autonomous movements or organisations that are mass based and oriented toward social change but which are not formal political parties. Such movements are not homogeneous, and can either be "progressive", "reactive" (or reactionary) or a combination of both. Significantly for him, trade unions are good examples of progressive social movement if they are working towards a universalistic, egalitarian social order. A reactionary movement would be one that seeks to reintroduce traditional inequalities under new conditions.

Giddens and Duneier (2000) define social movement as "an organised collective attempt to further a common interest or secure a common goal, through collective action outside the sphere of established institutions". Borrowing from Aberle's classification of social movements, Giddens distinguishes four types of movements that is, *transformative movements* which aims at far reaching change in society; *reformative movements* which strive to alter only some aspect of existing social order; *redemptive movements* which seek to rescue people from inappropriate ways of life and; *alterative movements* that seek behavioural change in individuals.

Again, Giddens explains the incidence of social movements in society within broad theoretical frameworks that see them as engendered by class struggle, relative deprivation, the failure of institutionalized mechanisms of control and the presence of structurally predisposing factors. Increasingly, the practice is to label labour movements as 'old movements' (where they are even seen to be such) and to

characterised those other civic groups that are less entrenched within the formal social order of society, but who nonetheless take on popular causes, as 'new social movements'.

Scott (1990) argues that there are qualitative differences between labour and other social movements in terms of social location, aims, organisational identity and form and medium of action. Following this line of thought, Carroll and Ratner stress that the terrain of new social movements is in the civil society as against labour's state centric location. Again, they note that social movements operate in informal networks outside rigid and institutionalized orbits ,while labour appears more circumscribed within a capitalist system's structured space. Johnston strongly disagrees with this position, noting that the labour movement is an eclectic system that varies itself in response to historical circumstances within which they emerge.

A number of authors associate new social movements with the era of globalization. This is true of Waterman (2008) who associates them and their tactic, especially that of being critical of the status quo, with the era of globalization. In this sense, he points to the better location of new social movements within current realities cast in internationalism and networking. He notes further that they appear better able to articulate emerging issues that labour does not appear as yet adept in handling. This argument is not supported by Hyman (2001) who argues that trade unions themselves are products of an era of questioning of a prevailing social order, and have never quite lost that capacity, if it appears dormant for a period.

There is the argument that social movements are better focussed on micro issues that affect daily lives at the grassroots, while trade unions preoccupy themselves with broad structural issues which are connected with older styles of political contention that is rooted in class struggle and political ideology. Adams (1993) disputes this

view, noting that new social movements are involved too-albeit subtly-in ideological contests, and are politically oriented just as labour. He notes that there is an underlying socialist 'face' or tendency among new social movements which is premised on a world view which recognizes and supports subordinated people wherever they exist.

In discussing this issue of trade unions relationship with social movements, Fairbrother (2008) suggests that trade unions are intricately bound up with social movements. For him, they have the same source and flow in similar direction. He suggests that the social movement orientation is more or less a dormant tendency within trade unions that comes to the fore in cycles, which represents a critique of a current form of unionism, and attempts to restore the trade union to its specific workplace agenda, while restating its role and credential as a catalyst for change in the wider society.

For Clawson (2003), social movement unionism is a strategy that unions are obliged to adopt in the face of daunting challenges presented by globalization. For him, therefore, it is more of a process of transformation of the trade union system in a manner that it is better able to defend itself and society given the thinning of the State. A definite point to make regarding the connection of trade unions with social movements is their origin. Hyman (2001) makes this point. Many unions of the South are essentially founded and subsist in social movement traditions. In a sense, it has also become smart trade union tactics elsewhere to recourse to social movement unionism in a manner that reflects the early periods of its founding in such places.

2.3. Institutionalization and Bureaucratization of the Labour Movement

It has being argued that trade unions tend to be given to routine and bureaucratic practices as they "mature". This usually results in the blunting of trade unions'

oppositional reflex; a shifting from traditional disruptive methods; and a limiting of basic goals to routine activities. This phenomenon Lopez (2004) describes these features as typical of business unionism, which consists of "selling unions as a representational service that will benefit those who purchase representation". Union practices that cohere around this type of unionism include focusing primarily on economic issues; conducting top-down campaigns from union headquarters and; non personal contact. For Webster (2008), when this process is embedded in relations with a political party it results in political unionism.

Voss and Sherman (2000) writing on the situation of American trade unions in the post-war period note that definite procedures came to govern interactions among the state, employers and trade unions. This situation, which became largely typical of many countries, resulted in a high approximation to oligarchic conditions i.e. limited leadership turnover, increasing conservative goals, and corresponding non-confrontational tactics. In this way, it has been argues that trade unions adopt bureaucratic structures and practices to survive in economic and political environments like the United States. They argue that bureaucracy could persist in the face of changing environmental dynamics, underlining the point that institutional change is not necessarily the rational organisation response to environmental development.

Webster (1994:267) argues against a simplistic approach that suggests that all unions become bureaucratic and acquiescing as they "mature". He further rejects the related assumption that union growth is often paralleled by a decline in democracy and rank-and - file participation, as well as decline in militancy and idealism. He notes that the evolution of black trade unions in South Africa has differed from this orthodoxy and instead reflected a tendency beyond shop floor institutionalization, in addition to

emphasizing political involvement. He refers to this development as social movement unionism, which is associated with the character of trade unionism under authoritarian circumstances.

Seidman (1994) also notes the correlation between trade union militancy and authoritarian conditions. She refers to trade unions in South Africa and Brazil as reflective of this logic. She notes that social movement unionism is associated with increased discourse on class and citizenship and concern for broad changes in the wider society. Seidman argues that this tendency towards militancy derives from workers' lived experiences, and is frequently characterised by sudden waves of strikes, escalation of demands outside economic issues and the strengthening of links with the community.

2.4. Trade Unions and Political Involvement

Beckman and Sachikonye (2010) argue that there is an in-built conflict that issues from combining trade union role with political involvement by way of direct relations with a political party or government. They point out that labour movements are political contested, both by those who identify themselves as labour and by those who are part of a different camp either as employers or as government that seek to ensure modes of control. They note that trade unions come under pressure of their members to influence politics in their interest. This is because political involvement can enhance trade unions' influence over conditions of production in favour of their members. The writers point out that because political parties and political actors are differently committed in this respect, they come to affect allegiance of unions and workers.

2.5. South African Labour Movement and the Politics of Alliance

Baskin (2000:48) writing on the tripartite alliance of COSATU, SACP and ANC argues that it might be misleading to use the term corporatism to refer to the labour movement's engagements within the South African official institutional framework, given that the usage suggests domination by the State. He stresses that in practice COSATU has not become beholden to the ANC-led government neither has it turned out to be 'conveyor belt' of the party. Baskin considers the term 'concertation' more appropriate to the South African situation since it suggests the major social partners are acting in concert, and finding each other. Hirschohn (2007:11) agrees with the views of Baskin, stressing that in spite of the alliance Cosatu remains autonomous and its leaders remain accountable to members than to its political allies.

For Heller (2001) South Africa reflects a situation where a once strong social movement sector has been incorporated and/or marginalized by the ANC's political hegemony, with the consequence being that organized participation has become atrophied and given away to bureaucratic and commandist logic of development and administration. He points out that the frustration of equity-enhancing reforms symbolizes the case of revision.

Eidelberg (2000) however, notes the precarious circumstance of the labour movement within the alliance and a progressive decline of its capacity to manoeuvre and influence the political process since after the 1994 elections. He argues that this diminishing influence could be seen in labour's apparent inability to hegemonize issues of workers' welfare and other redistributive policies in government's programming. He further notes that the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistributive Programme (GEAR) by the South African government in 1996 represents a turning point in the context of relations within the alliance; one that

symbolises the declining influence of the labour movement within the alliances. For Eidelberg, GEAR represents the government's commitment to neoliberal economics and an attitude that labour does not have to be consulted on all policy matters, in spite of the tripartite alliance.

Eidelberg (2000) also argues that in the circumstance, the South African labour movement is faced with two possible courses of action: either that it accepts a reduced role within the alliance or breaks off, and become part an active opposition with all the risk associated with the latter. It is significant to note here the challenge that GEAR constituted in terms of relations among the alliance partners.

Cherry and Southall (2006:76) note that GEAR became an increasing source of tension between the ANC and its Alliance partners in the years following the 1999 general elections. They note that the experiences of the labour movement within the alliance significantly shaped its leadership's agenda. Cherry and Southall (2006:77) point to the crystallization of the idea on the part of labour's leadership to get more of its members into leaderships positions at highest level of the ANC since the party's December 2002 National Conference. It is important to note the suggestion of the authors of a deliberate and institutional project on the part of labour to determine the leadership of the party as a way of ensuring that working class issues and concerns become central to the government.

Pillay (2008) undertakes an analysis of the events at Polokwane during the ANC's national executive committee elections of December 2007. He notes the characterising of the dramatic events that brought about the ascendancy of Jacob Zuma as head of the party by some as "the derailing of a right wing 1996 class project" (symbolised by GEAR). Pillay (2008) highlights the significant role of working class forces in the outcome of the event. He also notes that this is a positive

reading of the development. A less sanguine reading of the events for him would be the view that the working class may have unwittingly allowed itself to be used to push the agenda of a bourgeoisie segment within the ANC, who feel marginalized in terms of government patronage.

Pillay (2008:16) highlights several areas of friction between labour and the government that fore-grounded the events at Polokwane. These include the failure of the Mbeki administration to meaningfully address widespread poverty in the country, and rising inequality under a conservative market-based macroeconomic policy. While many had questioned COSATU's continued insistence on remaining in the alliance in spite of substantial slide in its influence within same, Pillay notes that the strategy on the part of labour seemed to have been that of returning the ANC to its supposed working class bias as represented by in the outcome of its Morogo Conference in 1969.

2.6. Neo-liberalism and the Labour Movement

The adoption of neo-liberal policies by many developing countries' governments has become a major source of conflict with organised labour and other popular forces in those climes. Most government involved in implementing neoliberal policies have come to see labour as a constraining effect (or nuisance) to its desire to fully implement strategies designed around market and other liberal reforms (Beckman and Sachikonye, 2010). To be sure, those measures have frequently not been in the interest of the labour movement. Suarez (2001) however argues that the tension in labour-government relations in many of these countries is not as a result of economic motives as being commonly argued, but is based more on political motivations and the desire to consolidate on the measures targeted at the political control of labour, undertaken by a previous government.

Four strategies for controlling labour control can be easily observed. These measures vary in terms on content. These measures are not necessarily framed as constrains but also as inducements. These measures include: 1. Corporatism, broadly defined as non competitive , institutionalized , and state regulated system of interest representation; 2. Partisan affiliation, which involves de-radicalization of unions that become affiliated to populist parties; 3.Repression often accomplished through tough and unfriendly legislation and; 4.market liberalization in which workers cease to be protected from the vagaries of the market.

The current tensions associated with national governments that emphasize neoliberal policies and local trade unions reveal differences in the conception of development as much as they define class interest. The neoliberalism represents an uncritical faith in the market. It advocates the implementation of policies designed to place full reliance on market forces (Evans, 1995:23). Importantly, neoliberalism canvasses the deregulation and liberalization of society, in organic terms the "rolling back of the State". The underlying theoretical argument of the neoliberal doctrine is that markets deliver structural change and allocative efficiency.

Chang and Grabel (2005) highlight other arguments of the neoliberal school, which they describe as myths to include the fact that today's wealthy nations achieved success through a steadfast commitment to the free market; that while other economic and development model are idiosyncratic, the Anglo-American model is universally replicable; and that developing countries need the discipline provided by international institutions and politically independent domestic policy-making institutions.

The neoliberal school takes a revisionist view with regards to trade unions; seeing them as more or less obstacles to economic growth and requiring forms of control. The reasoning here appears to be that unfettered economic growth - conceived in

terms of unregulated market forces- must be allowed to proceed even at the expense of labour rights, at least in the short run. Extreme neoliberal arguments suggest that labour rights should necessarily trail economic growth and improve as the latter advances. Proponents of this position are quick to point to East and Southeast Asian countries where industrialization and economic growth seem to have paralleled the repression of labour. Deyo (1997:1) notes that in spite of the hugely acclaimed socio-economic and political changes in the region, organized labour still remains politically marginalized and ineffectual.

Stark and Bruszt (1998) argues that in contrast to the transition problematic as emphasized by the stage based theories and their neoliberal modifications, social change should be seen as a process involving rearrangements, reconfigurations and re-combinations that yields new interweaving of multiple social logics. Indeed as Heller (1999:36) indicates, there are multiple paths to economic modernity and multiple outcomes.

Brenner (1985:18) highlights the importance of class interest and relations in all of this. He argues that economic development can only be fully understood as the outcome of the emergent class relations that is conterminous to new organization of production, technical innovations, and increasing levels of productive investment. This process of course involves loss in power and material terms by one class to another. Under the neoliberal capitalism, in spite of the fact that the cost is already heavily weighted against labour in favour of capital, there still appears to exist a profoundly desperate reflex for the latter to further appropriate wealth, which underlines the tension and conflict in labour-party relations in contemporary times.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

3.1. Introduction

This research work was undertaken for a period of slightly less than one year. In this period of intensive work, the research effort went through several stages of conceptualization and refinement. Often, this resulted in increased tasks than earlier envisaged. All this was directly connected with the determination to ensure that the research conformed to the best sociological traditions of field work. That tradition stresses that research is a physical activity, and that the researcher should adopt methods that put him in closest touch with others' worlds (Sherman, 1994:46). The emphasis here is for the researcher to gain adequate insight into the subject or elements under investigation, in a manner that enables him realize when the important scenes of a particular field have been covered.

In practice the approach of this work involved forms of engagement with the research field and its constituents- in this case NUMSA. The researcher spent many months frequently visiting NUMSA's head office, and interacting with its current and former national office bearers, as well as regional officers, programme coordinators, unit heads, and other staff and members of the union. I endeavoured to be around during critical events and meetings of the union, and to exchange with participants of these programmes.

Although I was often not able to physically attend many of these programmes given that they were specifically meant for designated officers of the union, being nearby during these important sessions usually had its merits-it gave one the opportunity of meeting many of the main actors within the union. In some instances, it afforded me

the chance to do interviews with union officers that would otherwise have been quite difficult to reach because of their more far out locations. One of my most memorable experiences during this research was my attendance of the 2009 edition of COSATU's quadrennial national congress. The chance to observe the conference and follow the debates, while sitting with NUMSA's official delegation to the congress was particularly profound as much as it was helpful in terms of the binaries of the research.

What was paramount for the researcher in all of this was gaining understanding. In doing this, I found myself increasingly drawn to Max Weber's sociology of methods, especially the concept of "verstehen", which in English translates into 'deep understanding'. This approach, which is consistent with the 'action frame of reference' emphasizes that the sociologist (researcher) should proceed by seeking to understand those studied from their standpoint. This involves grasping those ideas, motives and goals that prompt their actions. The main argument here is that by establishing the underlying motives that impel people to act, one is able to effectively invoke the situational logic in explaining their actions.

It should be pointed out that there are arguments as to the most appropriate methods of proceeding with research that is anchored on Weberian principles, especially in the light of the subjective nature of human behaviour or the subtlety of human reactions to a social programme. However, what appears most critical is the systematization of the research process. A systematic procedure may be advanced in terms of a research strategy that is qualitative or quantitative, or both (Kidder, 1981). This procedure bears directly on the issue of objectivity, given that a systematic procedure ensures that erroneous ideas generated by casual observation, dramatic anecdote, and unchecked impressions are dispelled.

These issues were invoked in the ordering of this particular research. To be sure, this required of the researcher considerable research and social skills. This was especially important in terms of accomplishing the schedule of interviews and other exchanges that involved human elements. Besides these human-related exchanges, I made it my purpose to also get a sense of even the inanimate things that were strewn along the research field. Therefore, I took interest in carefully noting certain details, including the notice board and office setting in search of meaning. All this, it appeared at the end, had their specific places in a tapestry of meaning that developed from the research.

3.2. Gaining Access

Ahead of embarking on field work, I approached NUMSA authorities for permission. This was done through a formal letter addressed to the General Secretary of NUMSA, specifically requesting the union's permission to access its members and documents, and for any other form of assistance relevant to accomplishing the research. Approval of my request was communicated to me in form of a letter signed by the General Secretary. It is important to note here that the approval was facilitated by Mr. Alex Mashilo; a staff of NUMSA and a colleague on the GLU programme. His intervention was also very crucial in the area of identifying key individuals to be interviewed and introducing me to some of them. In a number of instances, a few individuals thought it necessary to doubly check with him on details related to my background and that of the research. In this way, credibility of the entire process was considerably enhanced among research subjects.

Although formal institutional access and consent of potential individual participants were resolved quite early in the research effort; there were frequent challenges when it came to scheduling or effecting the involvement of individuals. In practice, it meant

that formal approval or individuals' disposition - even actual consent - to participate did not always necessarily translate into commitment to the research. Curiously, Buhlungu (1996:30) had pointed to challenges of a more institutional than individual dimension, especially as it has to do with securing permission to research trade unions based on his argument that "unions remain suspicious of the motivations and intentions of researchers except in cases where such researchers have been commissioned by the union".

It was not always easy organizing interviews or meetings in spite of what seemed a generally kind disposition toward the researcher. One of the reasons for this must be the nature of trade union work, which appears to impose a considerable degree of mobility on the part of unionists. In a sense, the sheer demand of the job appeared to often conflict with that the research, logistically speaking. Perhaps to a lesser degree as it concerned intervening variables to accessing information, was my impression that the political involvement of trade union, and in particular issues around Polokwane, are somewhat emotive, thereby instigating some level caution on the part of participants. Detailed explanation and clarifications by the researcher ensured a fairly smooth exchange with the interviewees in most cases. This however raises the question of developing appropriate methods for researching trade unions. The researcher's standard response to these challenges was in form of attempting methods that were most adept in the circumstance as well as recourse to ethical best practices.

3.3. Research Design

This effort was mainly designed as a qualitative study, with a descriptive research bias and focused on a particular institutional case. Strauss and Corbin (1990:19) argue that there are many reasons for undertaking qualitative research. This primarily includes the nature of the research problem. They note that studies that have to do with

organisational functioning and social movement processes, such as the current case, are more amenable to qualitative designs and descriptive research. Although there is some criticism of the descriptive model based on the assumption that it focuses on mere description, De Vaus (2001:1) argues that good description is fundamental to the research enterprise and has added immeasurably to our knowledge of the shape and nature of our society. Further, he stresses its usefulness in challenging accepted or popular notions of the way things are, and in provoking action and providing 'why' questions for explanatory research.

Qualitative methods are a set of data collection and analysis techniques that can be used to provide description, build theory, and to test theory. They emphasize the fine grained, the process oriented, and the experiential, and provide a means for developing an understanding of complex phenomena from the perspectives of those who are living it. The primary benefits of qualitative methods are that they allow the researcher to discover new variables and relationships, to reveal and understand complex processes, and to illustrate the influence of the social context.

Qualitative methods began to take root in the social sciences in the early 1900s. In Sociology, the 'Chicago School' adopted a qualitative approach to studying group life. In Anthropology, scholars including Bateson, Boaz, Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, and Radcliffe-Brown established a tradition of fieldwork aimed at creating ethnographic accounts of life in different cultures. Since then, qualitative methods have progressed considerably: they have taken on different styles (e.g. content analysis, word counts, grounded theory, etc); they have been adopted in a variety of disciplines; and a variety of tools and techniques for data collection and analysis have emerged. And, because qualitative researchers often use multiple modes of data collection, they tend to describe their data collection and analysis methods in

detail, an act that both openly reveals their methods for peer review and shows that their methods meet rigorous standards.

The academic convention is to associate designs with specific research methods. Therefore, surveys and experiments are largely seen as quintessential of quantitative research and evaluated against the strengths and weaknesses of statistical, quantitative research methods and analysis (De Vaus, 2001:10). Conversely, case studies are viewed as being typical of qualitative researches that usually adopt an interpretative approach to data, while studying issues within specific contexts and taking into cognizance the subjective meanings that individuals bring to bear on their situation. However, this rigid conception of research methods along the fissures of qualitative and quantitative research, as if they were mutually exclusive is criticized by Yin (1993). He argues especially against the application of this fault line in case studies. For him, the case study design should not be restricted to any 'particular form of data collection- which can be qualitative and quantitative' (Yin, 1993: 32).

3.4. Case Study- NUMSA

The Study's unit of analysis or case is the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). De Vaus (2001:10) argues that case studies are primary examples and means of approaching qualitative researches. Sherman (1994:60) notes that case studies are either used to explain things in a qualitative way or to generalize from one, two or a few cases to a whole population of cases. He further observes that in some instances the researcher is able to judge that a case study is representative because he is familiar with a lot of cases. At other times, the researcher has the opportunity of studying only the case or cases at hand, and then relies on his sociological intuition to infer that they typify many other cases.

NUMSA was specifically selected for a number of reasons: it is among the largest trade union affiliates of COSATU- a member of the alliance- with over 200,000 members, it has a long history and experience in organising and has been associated with innovative union practices and militancy (Von Holdt, 2002:284). Importantly, NUMSA has been described as an institution with immense diversity in which the various tendencies within the broader South African labour movement are present (Forrest, 2006:645) making it quite representative. Lastly, the union was chosen on the basis of its accessibility to the researcher.

3.5. Research Methods and Data Gathering Procedure

Three research methods were used for the collection of data in this study. These include documentary analysis, qualitative interviews and observation. The methods and procedure adopted for data gathering largely reflected the research design, and its emphasis on qualitative techniques. In-depth interviews formed a critical part of the data gathering method of this study. Interviews are generally considered important research instruments. According to Weiss (1994:1-2), interviewing gives us access to the observations of others and is helpful in recovering the past or rescuing "events that would otherwise be lost". He also notes that interviews have tremendous advantages, including the fact that they help us learn about places and settings in which we have not lived. Methods adopted in the study were as follows:

1. Archival data*:* Archival data include pre-existing documents, photographs, email exchanges, audio and video recordings, and other artefacts. Archival data is most often used in conjunction with interviews and observations to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon of interest and the context in which that phenomenon is occurring. However, archival data may be used independently as well, particularly when attempting to understand historical

incidents or economic or social systems. Nonetheless, given the desire of most grounded theorists to get too involved in the context within which the phenomenon is occurring, archival data often take a supporting role to interviews and observation in management research. However, in this study interview served a supplementary role

2. Observation: The goal of observation is to understand what it means to be a participant in the social situation – to understand how the social context influences individual behaviour and how individual behaviour influences the social context. Qualitative observation is fundamentally naturalistic in essence; it occurs in the natural context of occurrence, among the actors who would naturally be participating in the interaction, and follows the natural stream of everyday life. As such, it enjoys the advantage of drawing the observer into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold. The researcher might observe a group, community, or social context as either a participant observer or simply an outside observer, based on the degree to which they interact with other participants. The researcher may choose to explain his or her research interests to other participants or may (covertly) collect data without explanation.

3. Interviews: Interviewing presumes that one can understand how the world is known by asking informants to answer open-ended (but structured) questions about their experiences. Interviews differ in the degree to which informants set the agenda, but in all instances informants describe their own experiences at length, including personal narratives or life histories. In-depth interviews are frequently used to collect differing perspectives on a topic. While most data

collection efforts call for strong similarities in the questions asked across informants (to aid in the constant comparison process), the nature of grounded theory calls for flexibility in questioning to allow each informant some control over deciding what aspects of the phenomenon are most important from their experiences.

The type of interview used in this study is referred to as qualitative interview. Qualitative interviews are interviews that sacrifice uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development of information. Weiss (1994:9-10) notes that qualitative interviews for a number reasons including the need to develop detailed descriptions; integrating multiple perspectives; describing processes; developing holistic descriptions; learning how events are interpreted; bridging inter-subjectivities; and identifying variables and framing hypotheses for quantitative research. In general, qualitative interviews follow less structured (or unstructured) formats. They are commonly used for a more intensive study of perceptions, attitudes, and motivations than a standardized.

Forrest (2006:5) however observes that interviews could be associated with challenges in the form of introducing bias into a study, especially when persons opinions are sought on events that have occurred over a substantially long period of time, with the potential being for individuals involved in those events to forget some detail, in addition to the possibility of their personal experience influencing their account in definite ways. She makes the point however that matching such personal accounts obtained through interviews with data obtained through documentary sources helps to minimise the danger of bias creeping into the research effort. Books and other relevant publications, particularly previous works on NUMSA were consulted in the course of this research work. Interviews were carried out on the basis

of the ‘qualitative interview’ format which avoids rigidly structured interviews (Weiss, 1994:3). An interview schedule was however provided.

In this regard the research involved a focus on both primary and secondary sources of data. In terms of instruments or methods, the research combined documentary analysis and in-depth interviews for primary data, and supplemented with books and other titles for secondary data. Documentary analysis involved a look at important NUMSA related materials like congress resolutions, speeches, reports, pamphlets and newspaper write ups. Archival facilities at the NUMSA head office and at the WITS library were used for this purpose. Forrest (2006:7) notes the importance of documentary sources given the fact that they are quite stable and reliable since they are not usually affected by factors like the passage of time.

3.6. Sampling

In-depth interviews were conducted on a total number of 10 persons. The sample of those to be interviewed was drawn by means of the non- probability method. This number comprised trade unionists and labour experts. The choice of 10 persons for interview was based on the need to deal with a manageable sample size and focus on the specific parameters of interest of the study. Weiss (1994:3) notes the importance of working with a small and effectively manageable number in the case of interviews. The actual sampling method adopted in selecting interviewees was purposive sampling. A keen personal judgement by the researcher of the kind of data required for the study and capacity (and number) of respondents to provide same is the major principle underlying purposive sampling. Kidder (1985:427) notes that the emphasis in purposive sampling should be on the typicality of elements.

In terms of controlling for possible bias that could have arisen as a result of reliance on the researcher’s judgement, actual selection of elements in the course of the

research emphasised the knowledge and nearness of interviewees to events and issues being investigated, in addition to the relevance of their substantive positions. Critical categories of persons captured in the study interviewee sample included union national office bearers (former and current), provincial officers, organisers, and labour experts with research experience on NUMSA and Union types. This approach also helped in dealing with the potentially confounding limitations of the descriptive research model earlier highlighted. Access to NUMSA and key informants was sought through formal requests. This

3.7. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved non-statistical procedures because they are generally not associated with qualitative studies (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:19). Instead, a more analytical and interpretative procedure was adopted with focus on effective transcribing of oral data and coding, content synthesis, diagramming of conceptual relationships, and interpretation on the basis of set out theoretical and conceptual frames, particularly in the form of typologies.

3.8. Ethical Issues

With respect to ethical issues, no major challenges were anticipated and there was no major incident in the field. The researcher had duly assessed the ethical implications of the study and taken care to ensure that the research process and its outcome applied themselves to the concerns and interest of participants in the research. In this wise, certain measures were taken along three broad areas: First, avoidance of questionable practices or conducts. Consequently, participants were not made to participate in this work without having to give their express consent – obtained voluntarily from same after due briefing on the nature of the research. Following from this, written consent

forms were given to participants to fill out ahead of their involvement, with information that they could choose to remain silent on any issues the deemed necessary and seeking their permission to be quoted if need be, clearly indicated. Second is the observance of researcher's responsibility toward participants after completion of the study. The researcher undertakes to ensure that confidentiality is maintained in this regard. Raw data obtained from the effort is been kept away safely by the researcher. Third is utilisation of research outcomes. The research report will be made available at WITS library for reference by future researchers, after submission to the Sociology department. Additionally, the researcher intends to do further academic writing on the basis of findings of this study.

Ahead of going into the field, the researcher sought clearance from the ethics committee of the University of Witwatersrand to embark on research involving human beings. A proposal on the research was submitted alongside the instrument for the research. Approval was granted by the ethics committee, which also issued a certificate in this respect.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EVOLUTION OF NUMSA'S POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRADITIONS

4.1. Basic trends and assumptions

There is an argument frequently advanced in the literature which states that there is a strong relationship between the socio-political context and the internal organizational life of trade unions. This position basically argues that social conditions and political contestations in the broader society become inscribed within the social structure of trade unions, influencing internal practices, workplace strategies and broader alliances (Von Holdt, 2002). The upshot of this argument is that trade unions' identities and politics are forged by developments beyond the workplace, and manifest in forms directly related to these influences.

An analysis of NUMSA's working class politics and organizational forms over the years tends to validate the argument canvassed in the literature. Interesting and consistent patterns appear to exist in relation to the dominant political and organizational forms of NUMSA and the prevailing social and political conditions at a given historical period.

4.2. SACTU and Other Early Influences

In line with the academic tradition in terms of analyzing early major influences on the organizing and political traditions of independent African trade unions in South Africa, it would appear logical to start this discussion in relation to metal workers with the activities of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in the 1950s. While there exists documentary evidence of similar efforts by the Communist Party in decades earlier; it was SACTU's formation and role from the 1950s that introduced a new dynamic in terms of the link between trade union organizing and politics in South Africa. This is connected with SACTU's definite engagement with nationalism and the emergence of the strain of working class politics, technically referred to as the 'National Democratic' tradition (Southall and Webster, 2010).

SACTU considered the metal industry to be strategic to its interests, and in spite of the "difficult" nature of the sector, was willing to commit resources to organise it (Luckhardt and Wall, 1980:182). The keen interest of SACTU in the metal industry was clearly connected with its twin strategy of mobilization and political involvement for the purpose of transforming its small factory base. The effort of SACTU was, however, severely tested by divisions among workers' associations that existed in the industry at the time.

The divisions in the industry were mainly in the form of the existence of multiple racially constituted trade unions. Also, SACTU had to deal with a constraining and uneven legal framework which did not allow for the formation and participation of African (Black) workers in trade unions, though Whites and the other marginalized demographic groups like Indians and Coloureds enjoyed these rights. It became SACTU's preoccupation to try and unite these groups into single trade union

platforms, an example being the Metal Workers' Union that emerged in the late 1950s (Buhlungu, 2001).

The ambitious attempt by SACTU was however frustrated by two factors: first was government and employers' sabotage which took advantage of discretionary rights in the form of trade union registration and recognition procedures, and second, the massive state repression that occurred during the 1960s. The immediate consequence of this was the restraining of the diffusion of the culture of political unionism that SACTU had most passionately espoused and demonstrated in its forging an alliance with the ANC and outlawed Communists. The effect of this early alliance on trade union growth during that period is still a matter of debate among scholars. However, Lambert (1988) stresses that SACTU's participation in the Congress Alliance facilitated the rapid growth of trade unions in certain regions.

There are further arguments among scholars as to the impact of SACTU's mobilization in the earlier decades on the political and organizational traditions of the metal workers' unions (and other trade unions) that emerged in the 1970s. It bears noting however, that metal workers were the first to establish a union following the historically salient 1973 strikes in the Durban area. In her study of union formation during this period, Bonin (1987:171) confirms a certain level of "continuity" of the SACTU experience, in addition to "discontinuity" in the form of the new modes of organization adopted by emergent unions like the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU).

But perhaps the strongest influence on the dominant traditions of metal workers for much of the 1970-80s came by way of Coloured unions who had a tradition that was clearly distinct from that canvassed by SACTU. Two of such unions were the Western Province Motor Assembly Workers' Union (WPMWU), which was registered in 1963

and the National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa (NUMARWOSA) formed in 1967, and was then registered in 1971 as National Union of Motor Assembly Workers of South Africa (NUMAWOSA), with strong affiliation to the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) (Lowry, 1999:119).

4.3. The Shop Floor Union

As trade union discipline fostered among the existing unions, opportunities for a more ingenious interpretation of their commissions and abilities began to emerge. In these Coloured unions a revolutionary assertion of the rank-and-file cadres was clearly underway, and crystallised in the tradition that featured shop stewards prominently at the heart of union organizing and functioning. According to Buhlungu (2001), this development was extremely important in the democratization of the unions. The shop steward system had tremendous merit: it gave the union a direct presence at work. Shop stewards were responsible for sundry union tasks, including recruiting members and representing those with grievances.

The shop steward system had also another important merit in that it strengthened the organizational life of the unions by establishing a leadership core. The leadership structure that this model fostered was fairly well ordered: The shop stewards formed an in-plant shop stewards committee, which elected individuals to sit with representatives from other factories in a particular area on a Branch Executive Committee (BEC). The BEC was staffed by full-time officials, such as Branch Secretary, but these officials had no voting power, and the meetings were conducted by shop stewards. In turn the BEC elected representatives to the union's National Executive Council, and as in lower structures, this body was comprised entirely of workers leaders, though national officials were present in a non-voting capacity (Adler, 1994:220)

It is pertinent to note that the 'shop-floor' unions that emerged were cautious about political action outside the workplace. This placed them in diametrical opposition to the ideological orientation of SACTU and it's of brand of trade union activism. The unions seemed to be consciously avoiding the path taken by SACTU in the 1950s. This came to be expressed by way of denunciation of competing 'community unions' as 'populist'. The shop-floor unions developed a cautious policy towards involvement in broader political struggles (Southall and Webster, 2010). The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), which was formed in 1979, was later to become the hub of this workerist tradition, which was uncompromising in its emphasis on the principles of worker control, accountability and the mandating of worker representatives.

National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU) and the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) - both predecessors of NUMSA and affiliates of FOSATU- were exemplars of this tradition. They saw their practice as the basis for developing a working-class leadership in the factories. It was on the strength of this vision that some within this political tradition supported the creation of a mass-based working-class party as an alternative to the South African Communist Party (SACP) (Foster, 1982). Buhlungu (2001:169) notes that the tradition of unionism which NUMSA came to represent is a hybrid of, on one hand, the tradition of registered and administratively-stable coloured unionism which has its roots in the 1960s and earlier, and on the other, the militant and shop floor-based tradition of post 1973 African Unions.

Although preference for the shop floor tradition proceeded mainly from a realization of the pitfalls of nationalism and the vision to shield working class politics from undue political influence, the tradition was basically reinforced by its practical

successes. These achievements were definitely not instantaneous. At first, the unions struggled to survive but from the late 1970s on, membership increased.

The unions began to develop an alternative collective bargaining strategy by ignoring the government-sanctioned system of formal exclusion and instead commenced signing recognition agreements with individual firms. These agreements were based on common law and resulted in the emergence of an alternative decentralized collective bargaining system (Bezuidenhout, 2000). In 1979, there were five recognition agreements in place, by 1983 they had increased to 406 (Maree, 1987: 8).

4.4. The FOSATU Years

In April 1979 several unions formed the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), with an original membership of around 20,000 (Buhlungu, 1999:4). The FOSATU years signify a period of successful organization and consolidation of metal unions in South Africa. In this period, metal unions flourished not just in numbers but also in terms of organization and consolidation. It is important to point out the centrality of the action of NUMARWOSA in the formation of FOSATU. NUMARWOSA had pulled out of TUCSA in 1976, linking up with FOSATU.

In 1979, at the founding of the federation, it ranked the largest metal union and FOSATU affiliate with approximately 7,000 members. Under the mixed political atmosphere of the 1970s-a combination of turbulence and relative quiet, the metal workers' unions continued to grow in number and factory presence. The varying political condition did little to encourage change to the now dominant workerist dispositions within metal workers unions.

The growth and vibrancy of the trade union movement seemed now to pose definite challenge to the apartheid state, so much so as to force it to concede a reform. The

strong presence of the trade unions in work sites and their capacity to disrupt the smooth operation of capital and the state was no longer in doubt. In this context, the trade unions continued to push for more concession. Earlier in 1977 the apartheid government pressured by the sustained challenge posed by labour, and fearing it might lose grip of the control of industrial relations set up the Wiehahn Commission of Enquiry. One of government's intentions in setting up the commission was to try to control the situation where employers were now negotiating directly with unregistered unions.

Based on the recommendations of the Commission, the government passed the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act in 1979. African workers were included in the legal definition of 'employee' and were granted limited rights. Although the Wiehahn system envisioned incorporating the emerging trade unions into the centralized Industrial Council system instead, unions preferred to focus more on their shop-floor structures first (Bezuidenhout, 2000:6). The unions exploited to their full advantage the legal space created by the new. In particular, the legal term, 'unfair labour practice' was ingeniously utilized to successfully challenge employers in the Industrial Court. The unions were strategic enough to apply themselves cautiously to the institutionalized collective bargaining framework on a sectoral level. Skilfully, they deferred engagement on that level until when they were much better organized (Friedman, 1987).

To be sure, much as developments with respect to the new legal framework opened up opportunities, it did also present challenges for the established trade unions, and the unions' capacity to respond to them effectively came to reflect sublime organizational strength and depth. For instance, TUCSA found itself terribly handicapped by the new

legal framework. In spite of the fact that it had some stature based on its established dominance of the Industrial Council system in the past, nonetheless the largely conservatyive federation of trade unions that catered mostly for white workers was unsuccessful in its attempt to adjust to the new regulatory environment. Its feeble attempt to accommodate the interests of black workers was not enough to guarantee its survival. By the early 1980s it became clear that TUCSA would not survive as a federation, and in 1986 it was disbanded (Bendix, 1996:201-210).

4.5. The Terrain of the 1980s

The ability of metal unions to appropriate the opportunities that the legislative reforms at the close of the decade of the 1970s offered, and to make further progress in the new decade underlines the strength and dynamism of the metal workers' unions and their federation (FOSATU). At the dawn of the eighties the two FOSATU metal unions, NAAWU (formed in 1982) and MAWU, had inherited an organizational form that had delivered impressive results in the late 1970s. This organizational form was deeply rooted in the shop floor traditions.

The unions were not necessarily in a hurry to change their method. At the heart of this method was the building of non-racial national industrial unions that cut across the ethnically constituted state. Equally critical to this approach was the promotion of workers' control expressed through strong factory shop steward structures resting on democratic accountability. Political independence from formal political or other organisations was also a major pillar of this doctrine (Forrest, 2006).

However, these unions faced considerable challenges in form of antagonistic employers and a hostile state, ethnic and migrant/urban worker cleavages, and small localized membership in individual factories. Essentially, these unions did not have enough organizational, bureaucratic, institutional or informal power to effect

widespread concessions in the workplace or to influence the national political or economic agenda (Forrest, 2006). In other words, they were limited in their abilities to influence politics at a more national level, and win more concessions for their members-a direct consequence of their conception of politics.

In the early 1980s the major metal workers unions like NUMARWOSA and MAWU concentrated on constructing greater degrees of democratic organizational and bureaucratic power. This they advanced through a strategic and focused recruitment campaign facilitated by the legal reforms of the previous decade, which encouraged concerned workers to join unions. In spite of otherwise daunting conditions-deepening recession, high rates of unemployment, and rising repression, workers continued to join the metal workers' unions in large numbers.

Besides exploiting the emergent regulatory framework, the metal workers' unions also constructed power by means of their activities on the ground, which largely proved their presence and strength. For instance, using strikes, metalworkers were able secure recognition in individual factories, establish critical worker rights such as grievance, dismissal and retrenchment procedures, and to establish a measure of control, dignity and humanity in their working lives (Forrest, 2006).

The effectiveness of industrial actions by autoworkers in the Volkswagen strike on 'living wage' in 1980, and the 1981 pension strikes among metal worker for the extension of social protection rights to excluded workers underlined the strength of these unions. These strikes propelled MAWU into pioneering tripartite negotiation. The unions canvassed for the expansion of worker controlled structures across industrial areas and for the intensification of solidarity. These efforts at the level of mobilization also had the effect of raising workers' political awareness, in addition to

helping in articulating in them the connection between their workplace exploitation and broader political oppression

The metal workers unions stepped up their focus to include the building of a strong national industrial unions through the promotion of union unity. The new emphasis on building unity and solidarity as a means of consolidating union power was instrumental to the formation of NAAWU in 1981, COSATU in 1985, and NUMSA in 1987. NUMSA's formation significantly brought together metalworkers in the auto industry organized into NAAWU, engineering workers in MAWU, and motor workers in Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union (MICWU), a former TUCSA union. It should be noted that although this union had established a decisive break with the TUCSA tradition, NUMSA nevertheless absorbed many of its strengths through its merged parts, especially with respect to bureaucratic efficiency, provision of benefits to members, and the industrial council bargaining strategy.

Forrest (2006) attributes NUMSA's ideological and political orientation to the legacy of the consolidation and merger programme of unions in the metal industry, which was effected in 1987. She argues that the largely independent and workerist disposition of NUMSA is consistent with the best traditions of its fore-bearers, especially the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU) and Motor Industries Combined Workers Union (MICWU). Forrest (2006:513) further notes that MAWU, NAAWU, and MICWU defined themselves in opposition to the policies of the state and in MAWU's case, to the prevailing capitalist mode of production. These unions were particularly wary of popular nationalist organisations like the ANC, preferring to assert their own independent politics.

The formation of NUMSA allowed for the building of a more efficient bureaucracy to support organizational and bargaining activities of unions in the industry. NUMSA faired quite well in overcoming the ideological, bureaucratic and organizational challenge constituted by the different traditions of its composite members. Relative success in this regard served to embolden NUMSA to seek mobilization of all metalworkers in order to effect changes to the entire industry. NUMSA's strategy was in consonance with its industry-wide vision of organizational influence. It realized that by building strong national negotiating forums in each of its industries it could further the fulfilment of that vision.

In order to build bargaining power, NUMSA joined the National Industrial Council for the Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Industry (NICISEMI). The emergence of NUMSA as a broad representative of metal workers ensured that fresh momentum was channelled into metal workers' 'construction of power on the NICISEMI. Ostensibly to guard it from the pitfalls of institutionalization as well enhance its bargaining power, NUMSA constructed power within and without the industrial council.

Effectively, NUMSA had established a two- tier bargaining strategy that maintained plant bargaining in spite of its participation in the industrial council. Consistent with this approach, it engaged itself in a highly visible Living Wage Campaign which enabled it to shape workers' grievances into a set of negotiable demands. NUMSA formed Shop Steward Councils in all its major companies to standardize conditions across large national companies and ensure its presence in the same.

4.6. The Politics of Alliance

A significant part of the development of the 1980s involved the seeming fusing of the two dominant trade union traditions-the shop floor tradition into the national

democratic traditions-to engender a form of social movement unionism. The formation of COSATU in 1985 was a significant moment. With it, the hostility between these two traditions declined, as COSATU came to embody a 'strategic compromise' between the two dominant political traditions within the democratic labour movement (Southall and Webster, 2010). SACTU, which was then exiled, saw in this an opportunity to revive the national democratic tradition and fully supported the idea of COSATU (Nyameko1985:45).

The high handedness and repressive manner with which the state addressed the opposition and agitations against its policies was another factor that facilitated the decline of the shop floor tradition. Importantly, the invasion of the townships by the South African Defence Force in 1984 put significant pressure on those unions that were still committed to the shop-floor tradition to abandon their critique of 'Charterism' and to engage more politically.

These developments persuaded such unions to increasingly align with the United Democratic Front, the umbrella organisation of anti-apartheid civic organisations which was formed in 1983. However, there were still certain elements of the trade union system who insisted on keeping faith with the non-aligned position, especially those linked with the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), which was formed in 1986 out of those unions who refused to join COSATU. Effectively though, they were now in the margins, and declining. NACTU's approach also involved an insistence on black leadership of trade unions and emphasis on the policy anti-racism rather than non-racialism.

Throughout its history, NUMSA had shown caution about alliances with political associations, and internal debates constantly raged regarding its desirability. However, NUMSA's affiliation to COSATU had the consequence of inserting NUMSA into

political involvement and alliance with the ANC. Von Holdt (2002) argues that NUMSA was thrust into political involvement in its attempt at forging identity, symbols and strategies in the struggle against apartheid in the workplace and in the broader society. It was led into the alliance with the ANC as a consequence of its affiliation to COSATU, which formally allied with party in 1990, after it was unbanned.

Forrest (2006:645) speaks about a certain duality that pervades NUMSA, which represents sentiments within it for and against the alliance. She notes that while the alliance appears to have had obvious effects on NUMSA in terms orientation, the union has always worked towards positions and strategies that would insert working class perspectives into national policies and that more than any other affiliate of COSATU, it has asserted a socialist world view and demonstrated independence from the trade union federation and ANC.

Southall and Webster (2010) also point out that, while COSATU (NUMSA) committed itself to participation in the national democratic struggle under the leadership of the ANC, it joined the tripartite alliance not as a subordinate partner but, formally, as an equal player with an independent power base, strategy and leadership. However, a series of events including COSATU's exclusion from the Convention for a Democratic South Africa and the increasing centrality of political parties to the transition process meant that the ANC came to assert its hegemony over the alliance.

4.7. Transition to Democracy

NUMSA's performance in terms of driving the process to democratically restructure the metal industry, assert working class interests and influence in the period of transition leading to a new democratic South Africa, is mixed. Its achievements in the period immediately leading to democratic South Africa in 1994 were significant. It

made considerable bargaining successes in auto and engineering through its engagement in national bargaining forums in both wage and non-wage spheres. It succeeded in ensuring that both actual and minimum wage levels were above inflation rates. There were also achievements in the area of facilitating progress in social protection provisioning, especially with the establishment of Metal Industry National Provident Fund and the Metal Industries Medical Fund.(Forrest, 2006).

In 1990, under international and domestic pressure from the anti-apartheid movement, the apartheid regime unbanned the ANC and other banned political organisations and entered into negotiations on the future of South Africa. There were series of activities lined up as part of the transition to a democratic South Africa, the development of a new constitution and democratic elections. NUMSA became a part of these events through its alliance with the ANC through COSATU.

Von Holt (2002) notes, that the transition to democratic rule altered fundamentally the position of the black trade unions in society. Their members were now citizens with the right to vote, and their allies in the popular resistance movement now constituted the governing political party. These events were also to have an impact on the culture of social movement unionism which had evolved as a result of the dominant practice which refused to separate the issues of the workplace from broader social struggle. Critical structures that supported that genre of unionism were dissolving: NUMSA officials and other trade unionists were standing for state elections, while the network of community alliance was eroding and community organisations being absorbed into the ANC.

It appeared that a disaggregation of political and trade union struggle had resulted in adverse consequences for militancy and solidarity of workers. To the extent that workers' political identity as supporters of the national liberation movement and their

identity as trade unionists continued to overlap, this implied a more muted activism, and a concern with economic development rather than bringing down capitalism. Attendance at union meetings fell off, and militancy declined (Von Holdt, 2002).

4.8. Adoption of 'Strategic Unionism'

NUMSA was not quite active in the face of these events. True to its reputation as a strategic innovator within the trade union system, it commenced discussions on ways to extract concessions for workers from the ANC once it got into power as well as hegemonize workers' power within the alliance. The issue of a social pact which was underpinned by this consideration was to feature prominently in dialogue within NUMSA. It stands to the credit of NUMSA that the initial design that later constituted the document known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was first conceived by NUMSA. It was later adopted by COSATU, and then the ANC after modifications.

The RDP had three aspects: a set of national developmental policies, union participation in building new institutions, and workplace transformation. NUMSA developed a fairly comprehensive programme in line with the workplace transformation component of the RDP. The goal of the union's programme was the transformation of the apartheid workplace regime, and the construction of a new workplace regime which would be non-racial, democratic and developmental- defined in terms of worker participation and radical democracy which would extend worker power within the companies; devolve responsibility and decision-making to the shop floor and; enhance workers' skills, career prospects and pay. This approach was referred to as 'strategic unionism' (Joffe, Maller and Webster, 1995). The concept of strategic unionism was borrowed from Europe and Australia.

The pressure on NUMSA to adopt a new strategy was based on its judgement of the requirements of a transforming environment in which co-determination strategies would be more effective than adversarial ones, and would better serve the interest of all parties. The Three Year Bargaining Programme became a subset of this new approach. The three-bargaining programme was a complex and integrated set of demands which involved a tapestry of training and grading procedures dovetailed into a broad band of skills linked to an agreed wage increase over a three year period (Forrest, 2006). NUMSA's Industrial Restructuring Programme which sought cooperative relations with employers and managers on who best to run companies.

The new strategy failed generally because of the technical complexity involved in its implementation. These complexities were resulting in growing gaps between shop stewards and members, as well as between a small minority of shop stewards who were able to implement the new strategy and the majority who were not. Also, local and nations structures of the union were not in a position to offer technical support. If anything, they were becoming more weakened as a result of loss of resourceful individuals to politics and government.

The attempt to replicate 'strategic unionism' developed in the more institutionalised and well-resourced social democratic unions of industrial society appeared to be unwise. Further, the attempt to blend it into social movement unionism seemed misplaced, as it contributed to the demobilisation of the latter. A similar attempt at imposing strategic unionism procedures developed in Sweden by Australians failed because of compatibility problems (Ewer *et al*: 1992). Forrest (2006) argues that the inability of NUMSA to impose an ideological direction on its restructuring programme accounts significantly for its failure. She also argues that in the sphere of

politics, NUMSA demonstrated a similar neglect of the ideological terrain and thus also lost the opportunity to effect a deeper infusion of its socialist leanings.

4.9. Democratic South Africa

The years immediately after an effective transfer of power to a democratically elected majority government in South Africa were characterized by labour's consolidation. It had secured for itself a few concessions in the form of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and National, Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). To be sure, these institutional arrangements provided for increased consultations and participation of labour in decision making and involvement in social policies (Forrest, 2006). But they had their challenges as well. Increasingly, they appeared to have further inserted the labour movement in corporatist arrangements. With social movement structures almost firmly dismantled and the alliance arrangement in place, the relationship between labour and ANC looked increasingly like political unionism. This appeared to be the context for much of the post democratic South Africa up till the events of Polokwane.

While the LRA could be said to be a positive outcome of the institutionalised representation of diverse interest groups embodied by NEDLAC, the government's unilateral imposition of the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR) macroeconomic strategy (which was stridently pro-market) confirmed COSATU's subordination within the alliance and indicated that large-scale capital and the financial markets were going to remain far more influential than organised labour with regard to the making of economic policy (Southall and Webster, 2010). Increasingly, COSATU was to complain bitterly and vociferously that it was being marginalised within the alliance: used as an instrument by the ANC for mobilising the vote at elections, but otherwise ignored.

The divisions within the alliance were becoming clearer by the day. For instance, ahead of ANC's national conference of 2002, SACP and COSATU had complained vociferously about the government's turn to neo-liberalism and that this was leading to greater poverty among workers and the poor. If both organizations had thought that their criticism would have made the government sober or cause it to rethink its policies; they were in for a surprise. The reaction of President Mbeki was a firm rebuke, which also was couched in an accusation that the alliance was being subverted by a shadowy 'ultra-left' seeking to advance its agenda in defiance of agreed policies.

The pattern of disagreement within the alliance was to continue. Such disagreements were usually not satisfactorily resolved, thereby opening up channels for further altercations. What existed was more or less muted peace. These disagreements were to pitch SACP and COSATU on one side and the ANC hierarchy (and state) on the other. These tensions were to lead these 'leftist 'interests to support Mr. Jacob Zuma in his formally undeclared battle to replace Mbeki as ANC president at the ANC's national congress in 2007.

This latter struggle was to divide the ANC along a number of major fault lines. However, its major characteristic was that Zuma managed to garner the backing of those who felt excluded by Mbeki's regime (Southall et al. 2006) These included ANC activists denied position and prospect, business interests refused contracts by the state, and motley Zulu ethnic elements seeking to counter alleged Xhosa hegemony, however, the principal element of the support that lay behind Zuma was that it expressed the discontents of the impoverished masses and the formally unemployed who felt left behind by the economy.

Much of Zuma's backing was opportunistic. It was ideological, for Zuma's populist campaign provided no coherent alternative to the government's economic programme.

It certainly provided no substantial basis for COSATU and the SACP to think of breaking from the ANC and launching an independent party of the Left, for two reasons. The first was that, for all that COSATU's membership base had demonstrated on numerous occasions that it was prepared to embark upon militant mass action against the government in defence of jobs and worker interests; it consistently registered strong support for the continuance of the alliance and the ANC. The second was that, whatever their discontents with government strategy, leadership elements within both COSATU and the SACP were too caught up in networks of relative advantage to take the risk of abandoning ship (Pillay, 2008).

Another explanation for COSATU's continued stay and struggle within the alliance is premised on the fact that the labour movement lost much of its strategic location within the economy, given several developments including a growing informal sector not covered by labour, and that it had little option than keeping faith with the alliance in spite of its glaring marginalization.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERROGATING THE DIMENSIONS OF POLOKWANE WITHIN NUMSA

5.1. Introduction

The discussion in this chapter relates to the events of Polokwane, and how these define and impact on the political orientation and organizational form of NUMSA. It is important to again stress that Polokwane is used here mainly, a contextual cluster to aid our discussion on the relevant features of NUMSA. The first part of this chapter deals with issues as they intersect NUMSA's political orientation, while the second part highlights the union's organizational forms.

PART ONE

5.2. Contesting meaning and vision: The National Democratic Revolution

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the idea of a National Democratic Revolution (NDR) crystallized within the South African trade union system in the 1970s. Fundamental to this development was the growing acceptance that workers' struggle in factories and townships were indivisible, and that unions had an obligation to take up community issues. Conceptually speaking, NDR involved the view that South Africa could not be understood in mere class terms (Southall and Webster, 2010). In other words, that social reality in the case of South Africa was based upon "colonialism of a special type", which made a national democratic response strategy more adept in comparison with conventional class struggle tactic.

This analysis became the premise of the argument (and justification) for a multi-class alliance under the leadership of the ANC, and drawing together all oppressed and underprivileged classes in society. There were however different perspectives on the part of unions in respect of how to attain working class hegemony and national transformation, within this arrangement. Although mostly overlain with a commitment to achieving working class hegemony, such perspectives were quite diverse, ranging from an acceptance of a long term view of change to the tendency that saw change as imminent. It also included the view of NDR as a means toward the full realization of socialism, especially through the two-stage theory of revolution, as well as other views that revolved around commitment to a liberal democratic future (Lambert, 1988).

NUMSA's perspective as presented in this comment by its current National President, Cedric Gina reflects a socialist vision of South Africa's social transformation:

> NUMSA believes in socialism, and that is clearly expressed in our constitution (Interview, Gina, 2009).

These remarks by Comrade Irvin Jim, NUMSA's general secretary further points to the position of the union in terms its vision of future South Africa:

> Those who dream of a pure socialist revolution completely divorced from the national, racial, gender, and other social and cultural means by which exploits the working class are pursuing a useless dream: our class struggles must always be firmly rooted in the concrete conditions of struggles of the working class (Secretariat Report, NUMSA's (Mini Congress, 2009: 16).

It is important to add that in the estimation of NUMSA in regard to the NDR, the working class has a central role to play in its implementation, aside from being a major beneficiary of the process. COSATU's view on NDR is closely related to those of its affiliates like NUMSA. An understanding of perspectives on NDR is crucial to grasping contestations within the alliance, especially between COSATU (labour) and

the state, under President Mbeki. The following statement from the Political Resolutions of COSATU's 9th National Congress, Sept. 2006 is instructive:

> Historically, the NDR has always provided a clear and unambiguous attitude toward socialism. Currently, the clear dangers are that the historical of the NDR toward socialism is being challenged within the alliance. Since the April 1994 democratic breakthrough, while the theory of the NDR has been fully adopted by the ANC through its strategy and tactics, the relationship between the NDR and socialism has not being fully discussed within the ANC itself. Failure to address this question has been partly responsible for the rupture on our understanding of the NDR. The strategic socialist direction of the NDR has been increasingly challenged by a capitalist agenda, for example through post-1996 class project.

The seeming rupture in the meanings and vision attributed to the NDR by the state and the labour movement, NUMSA inclusive, appears to have significantly shaped union-party (and state) relations in South Africa for the considerable part of the post-independence era, beginning from 1996. This much is evident in the fact that practically all national congresses (COSATU and NUMSA) during this period regularly paid attention to clarifying their conception of the NDR through resolutions and declarations, in addition to emphasizing the distance between the state's policies and the supposed ideals of NDR.

The posturing between the labour movement and the Mbeki administration, particularly its manifestation in the form of events at Polokwane can be explained in terms of contestations around estimations about 'NDR' and the so-called '1996 class project' (interview, Wayile, 2009). Comrade Irvin Jim, emphasizes the point:

> In Polokwane, Comrades the ordinary working class and poor people of South Africa reclaimed their liberation movement, and dealt a terrible blow to the 1996 neoliberal project which had hijacked the ANC (Secretariat Report, NUMSA's Mini Congress, 2009; 16).

The last note on the neoliberal nature of the '1996 class project' is deeply related with the debate about the NDR, and forms the basis of our next discussion.

5.3. Neoliberalism and Contentious Politics

The adoption by the administration of President Mbeki of the neoliberal macroeconomic policy called the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1996, signalled a new direction in relations between labour and the ANC (and the state). This was essentially a programme of economic liberalization. Bezuidenhout (2005:6) notes that GEAR introduced the "language of flexibility", which argued that the South African labour market was rigid as a result of the Bargaining Council system and other regulations applied to the labour market. Importantly, the introduction of the "language of flexibility" came to displace the "language of rights" in the public domain. GEAR was about cutting public spending, speeding up privatization, monetary liberalization, fiscal discipline and flexible labour market.

The introduction of GEAR marked a formal policy departure by the government from a more equity-enhancing reflex as symbolised by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which South Africa embarked upon at its independence in 1994. The new emphasis bordered on the rolling back of the state and the marketization of social services, which was to pitch the state against the labour movement and other popular sectors.

The switch to the pro-market GEAR confounded not a few analysts in spite of official effort to rationalize it. This was due to a number of reasons: First was the fact that the action of the government did not seem to show sensitivity for South Africa's historical legacy of apartheid and inequality, and the reasonableness for government policies to have a redistributive leaning in order to be able to deal with adverse effects of this legacy. Second, the capital-logic argument often advanced in justifying market-mediated development strategies did not hold in South Africa's case–the country was not subjected to a formal structural adjustment programme, it had

relatively low level of external debt and a significant foreign currency reserve. Also, it had diversified manufacturing base and natural resource endowment that made it less dependent on global financial and commodity markets unlike other developing countries (Heller, 2001: 134).

Perhaps, more surprising was the manner of introduction of GEAR, which suggested that the state had little or no qualms about its potential to generate conflict with the labour movement, given the relatively high level of working class mobilization and its organizational capacity. The abridging of its own procedure that required it to consult with organized labour through an institutionalized negotiating frameworks like the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), suggested estimation on the part of the state that the labour movement had become subordinated. The attitude of the government might also have reflected a determination to take labour head on, given the fairly universal pattern whereby authorities in developing countries perceive trade unions as constituting a stumbling block to international strategies of privatization and neoliberal macroeconomic reforms (Beckman and Sachikonye, 2010).

GEAR became a basis for contestations between the trade unions and the state as this statement by NUMSA shows:

> Government substituted the RDP with the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) premised on the neo-liberal principles popularly known as the *Washington Consensus*. GEAR diverged from the outlined strategic approach. It cut spending which slowed the delivery of services to the poor and led to downsizing of the public sector. It supported commercialisation and privatisation of basic services, leading to big cost increases for low income households. GEAR's emphasis on free-market orientation also ruled out a strong industrial strategy. Instead, it encouraged a narrow focus on supporting exports, while permitting competition from imports in the name of free trade. As a result, the manufacturing sector lost hundreds of

> thousands of job (Secretariat Report to NUMSA's 7th National Congress, September 2004: 22).

More importantly, GEAR became a basis for the contemplation of movement strategies and more innovative organizing practices. Significantly, NUMSA conception of an appropriate response strategy was in terms of a re-assertion of the independence of the working class and a linking up of the labour movement with other working class formations, especially the new social movements. NUMSA went on to strongly canvass this view within COSATU as the following statement indicates:

> COSATU should maintain its political independence and put forward its position and campaign vigorously, and COSATU should continue to build alliances with other social formations in order to achieve its goals.That at all times COSATU must challenge and fight the implementation of GEAR policy. This can be achieved by having a broader alliance with other formations beyond the Tripartite Alliance (Minutes and Resolutions of NUMSA's 6th National Congress, August 2000: 16).

Interestingly, the trade union federation seemed to prefer a much more cautious approach; one that still emphasized the importance of the alliance and selectiveness (or protectiveness) in terms of which social movements to engage as these statements from the Resolutions of COSATU's 8th National Congress (2002:1; 5) suggest:

> The Federation continues to be committed to the Tripartite Alliance with the ANC and the SACP. Progressive changes in our country were brought about as a result of the existence of the Alliance. The Alliance remains the only vehicle capable of consolidating democracy, carrying forward the NDR, and leading the process of transformation.
>
> COSATU and the Alliance as a whole must lead and mobilise mass campaigns to avoid opportunism and undermining of Alliance organisations. The Federation needs to further consolidate relationships with traditional MDM organizations like SASCO, COSAS and SACC, SACBC and NGOs and

> movements like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). We need to help build and strengthen SANCO in order to lead community-based issues. Depending on the nature of issues and campaigns, COSATU should initiate talks with a broad range of progressive social movements in an attempt to strengthen the hand of the working class and communities as a whole, provide leadership, and bring them into our fold.

However, pressured by the government's refusal to rethink its GEAR policy, rising inequality under the prevailing macroeconomic regime, and growing tension among its constituents in the face of widespread poverty in the country, COSATU and SACP increased their criticism of the Mbeki administration and its policies. This opposition was manifest in the actions of the labour movement in relation to anti-privatization strikes, sharp criticism against the government's positions on the political situation in Zimbabwe and HIV-AIDS. COSATU and its affiliates' involvement with campaigns by new social movements on issues of water and electricity privatization, HIV-AIDS treatment, land rights, evictions and other social issues earned it fierce condemnation by President Mbeki of being "ultra left" in 2002 (Pillay, 2008:16).

As if to defend itself from President Mbeki's criticism and underline its rabid support for the alliance and scepticism about new social movements, COSATU went ahead to evict the Anti Privatization Forum from its offices. As Pillay (2008:16) notes instead of linking up with the struggles of new social movements, COSATU and SACP preferred to stamp their dominance over Left politics, and alienated those who dared to question their continued devotion to its alliance with the ruling party. Its strategy seemed to revolve around returning the ANC to it's supposed "working class origins".

In spite of seeming trepidation on the part of the labour movement to intensify collaboration with the social movements, its basic effort would seemed to have been enough to unsettle the government and cause it to contemplate some tinkering with its policies to create a more redistributive slant. The convening of the Growth and

Development Summit (GDS) in 2003 has been described by a few commentators as marking fundamental shifts from the Mbeki government's uncritical position in respect of its market-driven development strategies.

A number of decisions of the GDS, which were formalized within trade union system as gains include a reaffirmed commitment to tripartite sector strategies geared to growth creation, agreements to expand skills development, support for co-operatives, and restructuring of the financial sector, and a commitment to ensure increased investment to transform the economy and meet community needs. A couple of other developments that were directly linked to processes of the GDS attracted commendation from COSATU and NUMSA. These include the evolution of the Financial Sector Charter; the emphasis on the new legislation for co-operatives; the changes in Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) strategies to avoid a narrow elitist approach, and the pressure to improve the functioning of the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

But perhaps, the most notable outcome of GDS and suggested marker of the shift in government policy was the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGI-SA) launched in 2006. The programme basically sought to stir the South African state along the principles of the 'developmental state' and emphasized the notions of 'social contract' and 'compromise by all', which underlined the class compromise philosophical leaning of the scheme. NUMSA (and COSA) appeared quite receptive of the policy as this statement show:

The experience of GEAR and other like-handled policy stands calls on us to be vigilant, take preventive resolutions and measures against similar recurrences. This requires the deepening, advancement and defence of our government's subsequent progressive shifts mainly since the 2003 Growth and Development Summit (GDS), as

it is also visible in the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of SA (ASGI-SA) and is a trend in expansionary fiscal policy approach, among others. Throughout we are called upon to update our methods of work in accordance with the continually changing material realities (Secretariat Report to 8th NUMSA Congress, 2008).

While the real potentials of ASGI-SA may have been overstated by a labour movement desperate to be seen as having managed to secure a change in the government's reflex toward more redistributive policies, the entire initiative was however criticized by several academic analysts and social commentators over its flawed conceptual design. For instance Pillay (2007: 87) observes that ASGI-SA embodied a thin conception of the idea of democratic participation and could only have resulted in the institutionalization of labour, civic and NGO elites in a manner that only serves to legitimize a development path that remains in the interest of big capital. Bond (2008:9) argues that the concept of the "developmental state" in South African context refers to "a combination of macroeconomic neoliberalism and unsustainable mega project.

It is pertinent to note that the GEAR (neoliberal) policy of the President Mbeki's administration formed a major source of contestation between the state and NUMSA (and the labour movement). It is also important to note the effect of this point of disagreement on contentious politics, especially in terms of the expansion of the cycle of contention and repertoire of protest, in addition to attracting other groups in form of the new social movements.

5.4. Strategizing for Polokwane: Federation versus Affiliate Politics

As a consequence of its altercation with the state in respect of the GEAR policy as well as the keen awareness of its declining influence within the alliance, COSATU commenced an internal discussion as to how best to respond. To be sure, its

preference was not for a strategy that encouraged a break from the alliance but one that could increase its influence within it. In its 2002 Congress, the trade union federation had settled for a policy of "swelling the ranks" of the ANC, which translated to getting more of its members to occupy strategic positions within important decision making structures of the party.

At its 9th Congress in 2006 a resolution was adopted that COSATU should identify its preferred candidate on the ANC's National Executive Council (NEC). Additionally, the Congress called for an *Alliance Electoral Pact* to define a new approach to the Alliance. Also the 4th Central Committee deliberated on the meaning of the 9th Congress Resolutions in respect of the list of preferred candidates as well as the notion of the Pact. The Central Committee then agreed on the list of preferred candidates for the officials and mandated the NOBs and political commission to identify further names (Political Report to the 10th COSATU National Congress, 2009).

The decision of course to support specific candidates was controversial for a number of reasons: First, it created problems in terms of defining the boundaries of discretion and autonomy between the federation and its affiliates. Second, there were concerns that the approach could drive the trade unions into murkier waters of politics in addition to causing divisions within the trade union system and compromising its independence, given the complexity of the issue of political allegiance among members. To avoid this divide a decision was taken to emphasise that decision on a preferred list of candidates be resolved be at affiliates' congresses and central committees. The internal divisions the decision of COSATU caused can be gleaned from this statement from one its documents:

We could no longer play a neutral role to unify the two camps that existed. The environment allowed little space for neutrality. This somehow put pressure on our own internal unity and cohesion. A few comrades irrespective of their union's position on the matter were loyal to particular personalities and were broadly sympathetic to the political direction pursued by the dominant camp in the ANC. This small group has not been comfortable with the general direction the Federation, and had on many occasions expressed discomfort with the role COSATU played in the post 2004 period. This grouping kept on wrongly arguing that COSATU was engaging more on the political front at the expense of workplace struggles (Political Report to the 10th COSATU National Congress, 2009).

NUMSA, through its leadership, had clearly been noted as one the unions against the federation's approach to Polokwane. NUMSA's Central Committee meeting held in December 2007, ahead of the Polokwane votes had declared thus:

> We re-affirm the decisions of the COSATU September Central Committee not to nominate but to influence the ANC branch nominations in theirdue and democratic process, and to consider the names that COSATU has decided upon in its regular CEC. We will do this respecting the democratic processes of the ANC branches, regions and Provinces, that entitle the ANC members to decide who they nominate. We will influence this process as COSATU activists in our right as ANC activists. We hold the view that the struggle in this second decade of democracy must primarily benefit the working class and the poor in general. As metalworkers we will ensure that we retain and defend the independence, unity of the trade union movement from any undue influence on these positions (NUMSA's CC December, 2008 Meeting Declaration).

It had been argued that the position of NUMSA was largely a reflection of its leadership's disposition, which was based on its closeness to the Mbeki administration. Closeness of NUMSA leaders had become a fairly established line

since the massive movement of some of its most experienced cadres into the ANC government at the start of the democratic era. Bramble (2003:204) notes that "political ties between NUMSA and government ministers are frequently used, not as a means of pressing working class demands on the government, but as a means of transmitting government demands on the union membership".

The then general secretary of NUMSA, Comrade Silumko Nondwangu was seen as very close to the government. The current NUMSA President, Comrade Gina confirms the perception of a feeling of fusion between the position of NUMSA and the personal views of its former leadership, especially on the issue of Polokwane:

> The previous leadership was leading the union in a direction that conformed more to its personal views and positions (interview, Cedric Gina, 2009)

Another interviewee (name withheld) confirmed this perception of the previous leadership in this remark:

> The general secretary was very close to the government. When an issue involving the government was being debated that required a union position, he would come up and say that he had spoken to the State President about it in a phone call; and that about settled the matter (Interview, 2009).

5.5. Polokwane and After

At the ANC's December National Conference held at Polokwane in 2007, COSATU had managed to rally its constituents considerably, combining strength with its ally the South African Communist Party (SACP) to execute the project on changing the leadership of the party. Positions for the National Executives of the party were keenly contested. At the end of the day, the candidates supported by COSATU (primarily Jacob Zuma for Party President) won.

However, the elections had left COSATU divided as some of its members were said to have rebelled against its decision of supporting the federation's preferred candidate(s). Comrade Silumko's name was said to have been found on the 'slate' (list) of those that supported President Mbeki against Jacob Zuma. Although there were no concrete proofs of the voting decision of Comrade Silumko, it was obvious that his criticism against the approach of COSATU had singled him out as harbouring anti-COSATU's views on the matter. Comrade Phutase Tseki summarizes the Silumko episode thus:

> There was an unfortunate situation whereby we had two slates for the two contestants. Our former GS (Silumko)'s name was found on the slate referred to as the 'Thabo 1996 class project' slate as against the slate of Jacob Zuma. Unfortunately, no one knows who compiled those slates, and discussions have taken place in NUMSA. What I can say however, is that only a thin line exists, politically (Interview, Phutase Tseki, 2009).

The events at Polokwane much as they had gains for organized labour in terms of its estimations, had costs also in respect of union solidarity and unity. Polokwane seemed to highlight syndicalists' critique that trade unions' association with political parties could have adverse implications for their unity. Since Polokwane, the use of the term "purging" in reference to some supposed institutional project by COSATU to 'exorcise' unions leadership of elements that supported Mbeki in defiance of the position of the federation . This had the effect of further polarizing the unions.

Initially, there were reports of COSATU contemplating disciplinary action against Comrade Silumko for not supporting its candidate. Conversely, there were calls within NUMSA for a march to the COSATU office to protest the proposed disciplinary action against its General Secretary, which for them violates the independence or autonomy of affiliates. A decision to take a special resolution

demanding that COSATU formally drop disciplinary charges against Comrade Silumko was suggested but later put off since it was later agreed that the matter be resolved with COSATU through less confrontational means. Clearly however, NUMSA's delegates were quite keen to convey to COSATU the point that NUMSA was an 'autonomous affiliate' and had a policy of allowing any member to stand for any position within the ANC as an ANC member.

The 'ghost' of Polokwane was to rear its head again at NUMSA's 2008 National Congress. The election of its National Office Bearers (NOBs) was contested largely on the Polokwane lines of fissure. Alluding to the divisive effects of the events at Polokwane, the former President of NUMSA Comrade Mtutuzeli Tom during his valedictory speech at the union's 2008 National Congress, counselled members against allowing outside influences divide them:

> We must not be a conveyor belt. Polokwane should not be the determinant of leadership in this Congress. Who are they to undermine the capacity of metalworkers to think independently? Where were they when we formed the Union in 1987? We must defend the basic traditions of this organization – independence, workers' control and worker democracy! It is these delegates, and not factions or groups of any political formation, that should call the shots here. We will fight to the end for the independence of metalworkers! But it's not correct that when there is a dissenting voice, that you go out and build another organization! Let's not chase people out, rather bring them in.

In order to underscore the influence of Polokwane at NUMSA's 2008 National Congress, the Business Report of October 17, 2008's account of the Congress was significantly captioned, " the tsunami of Polokwane is back to tear apart NUMSA". The report suggested that a "cleansing" of Mbeki supporters was taking place in the unions as a fall out of certain individuals' non-compliance with COSATU's order to

back Zuma at Polokwane. Although there have been strenuous attempts at denying that a purge was been effected; the impression seem to have stuck with many, especially the press.

Enoch Godongwana, a NUMSA past general secretary and now ANC's NEC member, told participants at February NEC meeting of NUMSA that there was no purge taking place. He explained that the unions were merely executing a new procedure for ANC's NEC membership that issued from decisions of the Polokwane Conference. According to him, "There are committees in the ANC that must be led by elected NEC members. When the NEC implements this requirement in order to comply with Polokwane, the media is used to spread false information that this is purging" (Business Report, October 17, 2008). At the end of NUMSA's Congress, Comrade Silumko lost his Secretary general position to Comrade Irvin Jim, who is considered a vocal Zuma supporter.

There were also measures undertaken by the union's executive that have been fingered as been related to the "plot" to purge NUMSA of Mbeki supporters. This include the reorganization of the NUMSA Investment Company (NIC) and the sacking of its chief executive as well as the in the position of head of office at its secretariat. However, there are arguments that changes effected by the new executive had to do with competence and transparency issues (interview, Jenny Grice, 2009). The strong impact of Polokwane on the union could be further understood from this statement by Comrade Cedrick:

> The lesson of Polokwane for NUMSA would have to be how the union can manage its internal affairs better so that we do not have the kind of difficult National Congress that took place last year (Interview, Gina, 2009).

PART TWO

5.6. Membership and Campaigns

NUMSA's suffered from declining membership mainly as a result of restructuring in the industry and the adoption of strategies that emphasize lean production by employers (Resolutions, NUMSA's 6th National Congress, 2000). This development mainly reflected the neoliberal macroeconomic framework as symbolized by GEAR. As noted by Bezuidenhout (2000), the social environment became increasingly hostile to social regulation and facilitated certain pressures towards regulation by markets. And to meet new pressures brought about by the government's programme of tariff reduction, employers resorted to casual labour and the intensification of work.

Lambert (1998:73) has argued that many unions have been responding to macroeconomic regimes fostered by globalization (and neoliberalism) through a "form of business unionism". This approach usually involves a retreat to a narrow economic focus and often times, settling for productivity pacts with employers. NUMSA on the other hand has responded to the challenge of membership that the neoliberal economic regime has fostered by increasing services to members and placing a new emphasis on organizing, campaigning and collective agreements.

The union has been encouraging training of members to enable them deal with restructuring related matters. It has designed a special course on retooling, which focuses on making shop stewards become knowledgeable of the main issues around restructuring, so as to be able to defend workers' interest more effectively, especially in engagements with employers on these issues.

Other approaches adopted by NUMSA include engaging government to ensure that its organs provide special support for the industry, in addition to developing policies that help defend jobs in the sector. NUMSA's engagement with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and its argument for greater government patronage of products of local industries is one such example. In March 2009, the union organized a Job Security Conference, which focused on providing solution to the job crisis in the sector. Speaking on the importance of the Job Security Conference, Comrade Dinga Sekwebu states:

> For me, more than the any of the political things, an indication of the revitalization of the union system lies in the renewed focus on the union's core activities and the effective working of its structures. The hosting of the job security conference by the union is an evidence in this direction (Interview, Dinga Sekwebu, 2009).

Another area the union has focused on lately is campaigns. Following a major campaign held in Wits Central West in July/August, 2009 about 7,000 members were added to its membership. Although, it might not be proper to attribute the growth in membership solely to the campaigns (Interview, Jenny Grice, 2009), it suggests the merit in sustaining campaign efforts. Other strategies of the union in respect of membership and jobs are as outlined in this resolution at its National Congress in 2000:

> NUMSA through COSATU to engage both government and business on job creation in defence of our jobs at all levels. NUMSA through COSATU to continue to mobilise workers on the above including the unemployed and enlist the support of all progressive organisations in its campaign for job creation. COSATU to vigorously engage government to develop a concrete framework to defend our local content. NUMSA (or COSATU) to force all employers who have not

yet contributed, to contribute at least 1% of their wage bill to the Umsobomvu Fund towards job creation through Mega Bargaining councils, NEDLAC and collective bargaining forums.

5.7. Structures and Workers' Control

The structure of NUMSA reflects an emphasis on the democratic process, with members' participation being its main marker. There are basically four levels of organization and decision making namely; the plant, local regional and national levels. The plant level is the most basic in which workers are organized in their industrial locations or work sites around shop stewards committees. Mandates are expected to move from here to other levels for both articulation and implementation.

This is the basis of the worker control tradition that NUMSA practices. Implicit in this tradition is the mobilization and organization of workers at the base and their effective participation in the life of the union. This tradition also dictates that the number of representatives on executive committees who are shop stewards, i.e. actual wage workers, should be greater than the number of union officials, i.e. people employed by trade unions or federations. Shop stewards and officials are not allowed to take decisions on behalf of workers without proper mandates.

However as Buhlungu (1999) observes there has always been tension in trade unions between 'democracy' and 'efficiency'. This manifests in rivalries at different levels- between members and officials, between members and elected representatives, and between the structures at different levels local, regional and national. Importantly, he notes that this worker control tradition is being tempered in a number of factors, including exigencies associated growth of the unions.

Adler and Webster (1985) observed certain problems in COSATU and its affiliates in respect of mandates and worker participation since the early 1990s. This involves the

breaking of the mandate principle as peak union representatives increasingly strike deals with employers and governments representatives without referral back to members. A second problem has to do with a growing gap between leadership and base. Writing I the editorial column of the NUMSA News of May 2006, former general secretary Comrade Silumko states thus:

> This may sound alarmist, but the concrete reality in factories and workshops is that the only connection that members have with their trade unions is their subscription.

The changes from the time of independence in 1994 are considered marked in terms of grassroots participation of workers. This is how one of the interviewees put it:

> It appears workers have become bourgeois. Previously they used to show great enthusiasm about attending general meeting (Interview,Hlokoza, 2009).

Nonetheless the worker control principles continue to be basis of NUMSA's organizational life.

5.8. Collective Bargaining and Institutional Framework

Collective bargaining involving NUMSA takes place at different levels. Importantly, this process is guided by the provisions of the Labour Relations Act of 1995. This statute envisions bargaining at three main levels: First is at the level of NEDLAC, where NUMSA is involved through COSATU. Bezuidenhout (2000) notes that some achievement has been recorded as a result of labour's participation in NEDLAC. This includes a degree of success in putting human and labour rights on South Africa's trade agenda. However, he notes that the framework tends to institutionalize labour to accept government's strategies on the macroeconomic front.

The second level of participation is at the industry level through bargaining councils. This is where the bulk of collective bargaining agreement is accomplished. Currently

agreements in the metal industry bargaining council have a life span of 3 years. The last agreement was reached in 2007 and is due for a review in 2010. Under this arrangement, yearly increment is envisioned based on negotiations between employers and trade unions using the consumer price index (CPI) as a basis.

This arrangement has also now become largely discredited within NUMSA because of disagreements over the appropriateness of variables being used to determine CPI, which many argued does not fully reflect actual market conditions, to the disadvantage of the worker (Interview, Jenny Grice). The structured procedure of the bargaining councils requires reasonable conformity to agreements by NUMSA, at least within specific negation rounds. NUMSA is however widely credited to have made considerable progress in the areas of recognition of prior-learning and employment equity, using the bargaining councils (Interview, Phutase, 2009).

Interestingly, the bargaining council tends to reduce the incidents of strike of strikes. Many would argue that this weakens oppositional skills on the part of trade unions. A third level of negotiation in which NUMSA operates is the at the plant level (also referred to as house agreement companies). Participation in plant level helps unions like NUMSA overcome some of the debilitating effects of participating of institutional arrangements

5.9. NUMSA and its financing

Numsa's finances as shown in table 1 reveal a number of things about its organisational form. First, it shows that a substantial part of its income comes from subscriptions, making membership (size) central to its financing. Agency shop fee which is related to non unionised sites within the industry constitutes the next major

Table 1: NUMSA's Income Statement for the year ended 31 December 2006

	2006 R	2005 R
Income	**164,295,780**	147,917,527
Income from investments	**12,758,541**	9,962668
Subscriptions	**105,794,042**	96,013,731
Agency shop fee	**33,448,319**	33,155,425
Interest received		
- WIP Investments Forty (proprietary) Limited	**2,035,378**	1,372,337
- Other	**6,959,267**	3,743,002
Miscellaneous income	**1,990,978**	2,567,914
Donations	**1,124,792**	1,102,450
Dividends received	**4,463**	-
Expenditure	**101,124,149**	94,667,076
Advertising	**36,081**	81,115
Affiliation fees	**4,144,006**	4,131,006
Auditor's remuneration	**550,600**	373,193
Bank charges	**456,764**	234,709
Copy paper and toner	**296,006**	298,862
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	**735,492**	1,102,312
Donations – SACP/Political Fund	**243,970**	607,828
Ferreira Benefit Fund – National	**9,768,000**	9,768,000
General expenses	**5,000**	23,673
Interest paid	**9,154**	76,910
Insurances and licences	**199,995**	268,019
Lease costs	**2,786,411**	2,706,978
Legal arbitration costs	**9,647,421**	9,061,871
Library expenses	**6,758**	-
National meeting expenses	**7,910,454**	7,282,369
National congress expenses	**-**	971,708
NOB house	**218,360**	88,968
Organisational renewal	**720,359**	318,423
HIV/Aids	**-**	216,189
Postage and courier service	**226,995**	227,650
Membership system implantation (Powernet)	**1,284,868**	1,165,845
Regional operation expenses	**5,203,308**	6,021,602
Rent and electricity		
-WIP Investments Forty (Proprietary) Limited	**1,959,108**	1,646,805
-other	**2,287,359**	1,614,945
Repairs and maintenance	**759,914**	580,462
Relocation costs	**-**	69,672
Salaries and contributions	**45,185,891**	41,448,731
Staff dispute settlement expenses	**381,908**	-
Stationery and printing	**208,518**	264,495
Subsistence allowances	**-**	6,250
Telecommunication systems	**1,916,331**	654,084
Training and education	**1,623,687**	2,862,195
Zimbabwe project expenses	**277,300**	427,149
Canadian project expenses	**152,107**	64,968
Education	**1,822,324**	
Surplus for the year	**63,171,631**	53,250,451

Source: NUMSA's Secretariat Report (Financial Statement), 2008

source of the union's income. Interestingly, a substantial part of Numsa's income comes from returns on its businesses. Numsa has an investment company that has substantial stake in several businesses. Numsa Investment Company was registered in 1996 and is 100 percent owned by the union.

The primary aim of the company is to generate income from investment and other sources; to provide financial assistance to various projects conducted for the benefit of manufacturing workers, and which are aimed at uplifting and improving the quality of life of manufacturing workers and their families (Numsa, 7th National Congress Report, 2004). Although Numsa's involvenment in commerce suggests a business union orientation, the union would prefer to see it as a means of ensuring that it more efficiently serves members while guaranteeing its sustenance. The company has grown significantly since its founding. When asked about what he considered Numsa's achievements in the last few years, its former General Secretary Silumko Nondwangu said "Financial Independence" (Interview, 2009)

The expense side of the statement is also noteworthy. Its shows that a substantial part of the union's finances is committed to overhead costs, especially staff salaries. The next major areas of expense involve legal and arbitration costs and benefit funds, which suggest the union's deep involvement in service functions. Significant costs in the area of education and training, and telecommunication systems indicate an organising orientation while donations to political parties suggest political affiliation.

5.10. International

Numsa is active in terms of international labour solidarity. It is a member of the International Metal Federation and International Confederation of Engineering and Metal workers . As a part of its contribution to internationalism, Numsa has

committed itself to work towards building strong trade unions in the region (Southern Africa) by itself and through cooperation with global trade unions (Secretariat Report, 7th National Congress, 2004). This commitment is demonstrated in Numsa's support of organisational development programmes for unions in Zimbabwe; its work in Mozambique which led to the establishment of a shop steward council in Maputo. Numsa enjoys cordial relations with IG Metal and other international trade unions. It is interesting to note that the international foray of the union was substantially influenced by the need to save jobs at home. As the head of its international unit puts it:

> The international unit of Numsa was formed as a result of the need to save jobs within the industry in South Africa. The idea was to be able to mobilize against capital exiting to other countries by way of rallying unions in the benefitting countries against such investments (Interview Hlokoza, 2009).

Numsa's international focus appears to have evolved considerably into building international solidarity as this quote from the Secretariat Report to Numsa's 7th National Congress, 2004 suggests:

> As per our previous congresses' resolutions, the union's influence and impact on international activities is growing especially around the union-building and strengthening our role within IMF activities in the region, working with other unions and COSATU on transformation of the ICFTU, development of common programmes with sister unions, pursuance of code of conduct in multinationals, forging strong worker to worker links and building the union's capacity to participate in Solidarity campaigns

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Specifying Numsa's Organizational Form

The major goal of the preceding chapter was to highlight the organizational form of Numsa using a number of criteria. Importantly, these criteria comprising items like internal democracy, mobilization of members, alliance with social movements, engagement with broad social issues, and functional independence from political associations attempt to establish the nearness (or otherwise) of Numsa to the social movement model of unionism. It is important to point out that this effort is being undertaken within the context of an intellectual debate on whether or not South African trade unions could still be counted as having movement tendencies (Suarez, 2001). A related debate is to what extent political involvement has contributed to the neutering of the culture of trade union dynamism.

Table 2 addresses each of the earlier highlighted criteria and discourses the Organizational form/focus of Numsa is that respect. It also specifies what union type Numsa approximates to based on the specific item under consideration. In the area of worker participation and internal democracy, we found that Numsa strongly emphasizes members' participation based on shop floor organization and shop stewards councils. We noted that while this tradition of mandate principle still exists, it however might appear procedural in a few sites. It was acknowledged that the union still had some work to do in the area of monitoring and ensuring meetings at shopfloor levels (Interviews, Jenny Grice and Phutase 2009). We could state that on the score of worker participation, Numsa approximates a social movement union.

Table 2: NUMSA's Organizational Form and Corresponding Union Type

S/N	Issue	Organizational form/focus (and implication)	Ideal Union Type		
			Business	Political	Social Movement
1.	Worker Participation and International democracy	Strong emphasis on worker control based on the shop floor model; emphasis only procedural in a few instances			✔
2.	Engagement with non-workplace issues	Active on non-workplace issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS and interest rates) based on the principle that these have bearing on the workplace			✔
3.	Involvement with political party(ies)	Allied with the ANC& SACP; often assertive about its autonomy. Alliance however frequently impacts on internal processes and generates tension within as with Polokwane		✔	✔
4.	Links with Community	Not too directly involved with 'new' social movements in post independent South Africa era; not adverse to links with them though. Prefers to relate with these under the liaison of the Federation (COSATU)			✔
5.	Mobilization and Action	Stresses mass support for actions. Rallies members and others through campaigns and militant action. Also involved in concertation (pacting)	✔		✔
6.	Ideological Orientation	Socialist-oriented. Commits to the view of South Africa's transformation into democratic socialist state through NDR based on the Freedom Charter			✔
7.	Financing	Diversified from traditional union funding sources. Focused on building a strong and independent financial base through investment in business schemes. Argues that investments guarantee the independence and sustenance of the union, and ensures members are serviced	✔		✔

Numsa's engagement is not limited to workplace issues. Indeed, the orientation within the unionis that workplace issues cannot be separated from broader societal issues. On the basis of its broad social objective, Numsa could be regarded as social movement union.

In terms of having functional independence from a political party, the situation is a little more complex. For while Numsa is politically allied with ANC and SACP,it frequently asserts its independence. It has been argued (Bramble, 2003) that the presence of a strong cluster within the union, which prefers to assert the independence of the union, Numsa tends to be more critical of its alliance with political associations, in spite of the ideological and personal predisposition of its leadership to close ties with the ANC Government. This current within the union complicates the picture: what you have is that in terms of its approach to relations with political parties, Numsa appears sometimes as a political union and at other times a social movement. It is important here to rehearse our earlier critique of the tendency to assume that political involvement necessarily results in incorporation.

In the area of links with the community and civil society organizations (new social movements), we note that while the union does not actively pursue collaboration with these groups; it has nothing against them. It appears to engage with society through the structures of its political alliances and shop steward council. It should be noted that some level of caution exists in terms of engagement with new social movements in the trade unions system, generally. Indeed the attitude is that Numsa would relate to these groups to the extent that they are willing to respect its freedom to choose to

be in alliance with other (political) associations (Interview, Cedrick Gina, 2009). Clearly therefore, one could still refer to Numsa as a social movement.

Numsa appears to be active in the area of mass support and mobilization. This tendency for activity in the fields approximates to movement tendencies. However, it should be noted that Numsa is also involved in corporatist arrangements like the bargaining councils. Also it should be noted that there appear to have been benefits from participation in corporatist institutions. Recent developments like the recognition of prior-learning in the industry point to potential merits of the arrangement.

However, this involvement has tended to dilute militant traditions. This is because involvement in corporatist institutions tends to generate more routine protest and a more constructive, institutionalized approach to resolving grievances at the collective bargaining table. The cost to unions is easily visible in terms of blunting its oppositional and militant skills. The simultaneous presence of militant and routinized action orientations portray Numsa as both a business union and a social movement union.

The socialist orientation of Numsa more thoroughly adjusts to a movement model, given its transformative and emancipatory agenda. In the area of finance, Numsa reflects the picture of a business union because of its extensive investments and economic interests. However, viewed against the backdrop of investing in order to guarantee the unions' independence and functional efficiency, it could be argued that it is a social movement. Again, on this score the picture is not so simple.

In summary and based on the union's more frequent approximation to social movement union tendencies, we could justifiably refer to Numsa as a social movement. This assertion may not go uncontested based on certain features of the

union-some of which have already been highlighted. But it needs to be stated that there is no single or fully integrated portrait of a social movement union. Disagreements in conception mainly arise from a certain tendency to impose a narrative that regards social movement unionism as a distinct and consistent organizational form that pursues a radical reform agenda, adopting typical and identical social movement modes in the process.

An extension of this view presupposes a specific manifestation of this phenomenon. This is largely the outcome of an overarching focus on external relations with the state, political and social movements while ignoring internal relations (Von Holdt, 2002). More importantly, it reflects an ambition toward "transferability" (generalizability) of union strategies across national frontiers.

A more pragmatic approach will be to conceive social movement unionism as an ideal type, with varying manifestations in practice.

6.2 Theoretical Considerations and suggestion for further research

The presentations in chapter five and the preceding section have interesting implications for the theoretical arguments earlier highlighted in this report. As stated at the outset, the central problematic of this study relates to the debate on whether political involvement of labour necessarily results in cooptation. The issue here appears to centre around interest aggregation: how labour demands are organized and effectively represented in the state. It was noted that the dominant pattern in the literature places social movements explicitly in confrontation with the state (Bayart, 1986).

The conclusion on a conflictual relationship derives from arguments that competition (and tension) exists between the institutional goals of operational autonomy of social

movements and political engagement. It should also be noted that any arguments for non-engagement would need to be made in the knowledge of a potential practical challenge which is that social movements require interaction with the state to ensure that alternative issues, voices and policies receive consideration (Barkan 1994).

What is evident from the analysis on Numsa is that tensions do exist between autonomy and involvement in corporatist structures. However, it is difficult to conclude on the strength of available evidence, that Numsa has been politically incorporated or lost its autonomy. Indeed for Numsa, there might have been some benefits (not just costs) from participating in corporatist arrangements like the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). More interesting is the restraining current identified within Numsa that ensures robust consideration of the extent of its involvement in such arrangements. This finding suggests some merit in Hellman (1992)'s position that workers associations may logically determine that incorporation is the best means by which to achieve their ultimate political and social goals.

Taking together, all evidences on Numsa tends to more thoroughly fit Munk (1990)'s position that social movements' priorities flunctuate between autonomy and engagement, and that as the state develops policies in response to changes in the political landscape, the relationship between social movements and the state will mutate. The discussions in chapter four on evolutionary trends in Numsa's organizational forms and political orientation also show relevance of the political process approach adopted by this research.

Numsa's organizational development has reflected a systematic relationship between the emergence of social movements and opportunity structures. From a firm workerist orientation in the early years of its founding, through the period of

involvement in political mobilization and struggles of the mid 1980s to late 90s, to 'strategic unionism' in the period of transition to democratic rule, Numsa has usually responded to opportunity structures inherent in the prevailing socio-political environment. Renewed pressure to reassert its movement tendency and its position in relation to Polokwane is further hint at the usefulness of the political process analysis.

There are two issues arising from the foregoing which point in the direction of future research. The first is the task of trying to identify a theory that can more accurately describe outcome(s) in terms of relations between social movements and the state. The second task would be to assess if Polokwane has had any permanent impact on the organizational form of Numsa.

6.3. Conclusion

A major theme that runs throughout this work relates to the role that trade unions have regularly played in the socio-political affairs of the South African society in

the period of its fairly recent history. From the period of their political involvement in the days of apartheid to the present period of a democratic dispensation, there is evidence of considerable trade union involvement in vibrant organizational and political traditions.

Importantly, the labour movement has usually presented a specific vision of society, which may not have always fully conformed to the policies implemented by successive political regimes, including those with which labour had formal alliance. Nonetheless, the tradition of conceiving the terms under which social transformation should proceed has become a feature of the South African trade union system and firmly entrenched in its working class politics.

NUMSA is an exemplar of this tradition. A socialist vision of society appears to have forged early in NUMSA (and other trade unions) - more discernibly from the period in which the shop floor and national democratic traditions became more or less fussed. What was to proceed was an alliance with the party of liberation - in this case the ANC - in a manner that reflects classical union-party relations in post colonial Africa.

As in most of the rest of Africa, political mobilization of the trade union did not go without arguable historical gains. This include the passage of relatively progressive labour relations legislation, including some elements of the *Labour Relations Act 1995*, the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997*, the *Employment Equity Act 1998*, and the *Skills Development Act 1999*. The structure that was created to facilitate this process was primarily a corporatist political arrangement that centred on the Tripartite Alliance and NEDLAC (Bramble, 2003)

It is important to add that these achievements were also as a result of labour's grassroots mobilization and associational dynamics, verging on structural location and organizational capacity that have largely influenced the exercise of authoritative power in its favour (Heller, 2003). This indicates that there is a political logic in the relationship between institution building and grassroot mobilization.

As Bramble (2003:187) notes however, the systematic political and legislative reforms ushered in by the ANC in the 1990s were "designed not to usher in a socialist society, the ardently-desired goal of many union activists in the 1980s but a deracialised and stable capitalism". Therefore, the essential conditions of labour subordination subsisted though veiled in a social democratic political structure with a black complexion.

The survival of the capitalist doctrinaire even in the context of national liberation became obvious with the adoption of GEAR. As in most of the attempts at implementing a dual transition in developing countries has shown, there is often recourse to authoritarianism by governments. The introduction of GEAR followed the familiar pattern-a certain level of arbitrariness and a refusal to dialogue on alternative measures.

Although it has been frequently argued that economic motivation account for the conflict-laden relations between unions and states in context of countries involved in double transitions, Suarez (2001) has argued that political motivation underlie such fractious relations. He puts this to the fundamental continuity in labour relations which arises from political parties seeking to consolidate powers from an earlier period in which labour control was motivated by the efforts of a dominant party to consolidate power.

A related discussion in the literature has revolved around the seeming helplessness among trade unions to respond to the threat imposed by neoliberal policies. This weakness has often been analyzed in terms of the incorporation of labour into state corporatist arrangements. This narrative has suggested that political involvement of trade unions has come at the price of neutering much of the dynamism that made the federation such an explosive force for change in the 1980s.

This thesis holds that the disaggregation of political and trade union struggle has had some impact on the militancy and solidarity of workers to the extent that workers' political identity as supporters of the liberation movement and their identity as trade unionists continued to overlap, resulting in more muted activism and a concern with the economic development rather than bringing down apartheid (Von Holdt).

The relevant question has been that can COSATU and its affiliates like NUMSA continue to be regarded as a model of social movement unionism (SMU), which comprises the following elements: mass mobilisation of members; internal democracy; broad social objectives; alliances with progressive social movements; functional independence from political parties; and recognition of diverse membership. Or has routinization tempered those more oppositional skills that the unions were known for?

These same questions have continued to engage scholars. The continued existence of social movement unionism as a moving force in South African unions has been extensively debated by many commentators. The general impression seems to be that SMU has survived, albeit in a modified form. This view is shared by this

research report.

There are some who are given to the view that it has not survived. Von Holt (2002)'s view is that we need to think differently about the concept of social movement unionism. For him, instead of trying to develop a universal model of a particular (progressive) form of trade unionism appropriate to contesting neoliberal globalization, it is best to resolve the debate by understanding the dynamics of the "movement" dimension of trade unionism that is easily ignited in the context of globalization.

These processes can be further understood by the fact that the trade union system is characterized by a constant tension between movement and the institutionalization and routinization of industrial relations, and that a dominant feature emerges based on varying historical conditions. The final argument of this research report is that the case for NUMSA as a Social Movement Union should be seen in the context of its approximation to an otherwise ideal type.

REFERENCES

Adam, B. (1993) 'Postmarxism and the new social movement', *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 30

Anderson, P. (1976) *Considerations on Western Marxism*. London: Verso

Adewumi, F. (2009) 'Unions without unionism Unions without unionism: Towards trade union relevance In Nigeria's industrial relations system and polity' Inaugural Lecture, Crawford University, Igbesa, April 21, 2009

Adler, G. and Webster, E. 19 95. "Challenging transition theory: The labour movement, radical reform and transition to democracy in South Africa", in *Politics and Society*, No. 23(1).

Adler, G. (1994) "The Factory Belongs to All Who Work in it: Race, Class and Collective Action in the South African Motor Industry, 1967–1986", unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, New York.

Ballard, R. et al (2006) 'Introduction: From Anti-Apartheid to Post Apartheid Social Movements' in Ballard et al (eds) *Voices of Protest, Social Movements in Post Apartheid SA* Scottville: UKZ

Barkan, J. (1994) "Resurrecting Modernization Theory and the Emergence of Civil Society in Kenya and Nigeria." In *Political Development and the New Realism in Sub-Saharan Africa,* edited by D. E. Apter and C. G. Rosberg, 87-116. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Barker, C., Johnson, A. and Lavalette, M. (2001) 'Leadership Matters: an introduction' in C. Barker A. Johnson, and M. Lavalette, M. (eds.) *Leadership and Social Movements,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Baskin, J. (2000) 'Labour in South Africa's Transition to Democracy: Concertation in Third World' in Adler, G. and Webster, E. (eds) *Trade Union and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997.* Johannesburg: WITS

Bayart, J (1986) "Civil Society in Africa." In Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power, edited by P. Chabal, 109-25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bendix, S. 1996. *Industrial relations in the new South Africa*. 3rd edition (Cape Town, Juta).

Bezuidenhout, A. (2000) *Towards Global Movement Unionism? Trade Union Responses to Globalization in South Africa*. ILO: Geneva

Beckman, B. and Sachikonye, L. (2010) 'Intoduction: Trade Unions and Party Politics in Africa in (eds) Beckman, B. ,Buhlungu, S and Sachikonye, L Trade Unions and Party Politics: Labour Movement in Africa

Brenner, R. (1977) "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism" *New Left Review* 104 (July-August): 25-92

Bond, P.(2008) 'South Africa's Development State Distraction' in *Mediations* 24

Bonnin, Deborah Rosemary (1987) *Class, consciousness and conflict in the Natal*

Buhlungu, S. **(**1996) "Trade Union Responses to Participatory Management: A Case Study". Unpublished MA thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Buhlungu**,** S (1999) "A Question of Power: Co-Determination and Trade Union Capacity". African Sociological Review, 3,1, 1999, pp. 111-129

Buhlungu, S. (2001) *Democracy and Modernisation in the Making of the South African Trade Union Movement: The Dilemma of Leadership, 1973-2000*. Unpublished PhD thesis, WITS

Bramble, T. (2003) 'Social Movement Unionism since the Fall of Apartheid: the Case of NUMSA on the East Rand in Bramble, T. and Barchiesi (eds) rethinking the Labour Movement in the New South Africa . Ashgate, Aldershot

Carroll, W. and Ratner, R. (1995) 'Old Unions and New Social Movements', *Labour Review*, Vol XVIII 2

Castells, M. (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society,* Oxford: Blackwell

Cella, G. and Treu, T. (1987) 'National Trade Union Movement' in Blanpain (ed) *Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*. Deventer: kluwer

Chang, H. and Grabel, I. (2005) *Reclaiming Development: An Alternative Economic Policy Manual.* London: ZED

Cherry, J. And Southall, R. (2006) 'Union Democracy, Parliamentary Democracy and the 2004 Elections' in Buhlungu, S. (ed) *Trade Unions and Democracy*. Cape Town: HSRC

Clawson, D. (2003) *The Next Upsurge; Labour and New Social Movements.* Ithaca: Cornell

Clawson, D. (2008) 'Neo-Liberalism Guarantees Social Movement Unionism', *Employment Respons Rights J*, 20,207-212

Cohen, H. (1994) "Sociology and You: Good living" in Straus, R. (ed) *Using Sociology: An Introduction from the Applied and Clinical Perspectives*. New York: General Hall, Inc.

Danford, A., Richardson, M. and Upchurch, M. (2003) *New Unions, New Workplace: A study of union resilience in the restructured workplace.* London: Routledge.

David A. De Vaus (2001) *Research Design in Social Research.* London: Sage

Devinatz, V. (2008) 'Introduction to Symposium on the Future of Social Movement Unionism', *Employ Respons Rights J,* 20, 205

Deyo, F. (1997) ' Labour and Post-Fordist Industrial Restructuring in East and Southeast Asia'. *Work and Occupations*, 24

Dunn, B. (2007) 'Problems of Social Movement Unionism' in A. Gamble, S. Ludlam, and A.Taylor (eds.) *Labour, the State, Social Movements and the Challenge of Neo-liberal Globalisation*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Eidelberg, P. (2000) 'The Tripartite alliance on the Eve of a New Millennium: COSATU, the ANC and the SACP' in Adler, G. and Webster, E. (eds) *Trade Unions and Democratization in SA, 1985-1997*. London: Macmillan

Evans, P. (1995) *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. New Jersey: Princeton

Ewer, Peter, Ian Hampson, Chris Loyd, John Rainford, Stephen Rix and Meg Smith (1991) *Politics and the Accord*, Leichhardt, Australia: Pluto Press.

Fairbrother, P. (2008) 'Social Movement Unionism or Trade Unions as Social Movements', *Employ Respons Rights J,* 20, 213-220

Friedman, S. (1987) 'Waves Breaking on the Shore: Unions before the Seventies' in Friedman, S. (ed) *Building Tomorrow Today: African workers in Trade Unions, 1970-1984*. Johannesburg: Ravan

Frege, C., Kelly, J., and Turner, L. (2004) 'The New Solidarity? Strategies for Union Coalition Building in Five Countries' in C. Frege and J. Kelly (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for union revitalization in a globalizing economy,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Foster, J. (1982) 'The Workers Struggle: Where does FOSATU Stand? In Macshane D., Plaut M and Ward D. (eds) Power! Black Workers, their Unions and the struggle for Freedom in South Africa. Nothingham: Spokeman Books

Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* Cambridge: Polity

Giddens, A. and Duneier, M. (2000) 'Social Change and Social Movements', in Giddens, A. and Duneier, M. *Introduction to Sociology.* London: W.W. Norton

Forrest, K. (2006) *Power, Independence and Worker Democracy in the development of NUMSA and its predecessors, 1980-1995*. Unpublished PhD thesis, WITS

Gotz, G. (2000) Shooting Anything that Flies, Claim Anything that Falls: Labour and the Changing Definition of RDP in Adler, G. and Webster, E. (eds) *Trade Unions and Democratization in SA, 1985-1997*. London: Macmillan

Habermas, J. (1987) *The Theory of Communicative Action* , Cambridge: Polity

Heller, P (2001) 'Moving the State: the Politics of Democratic Decentralization in Kerela, South Africa and Porto Alegre'. *Politics & Society,* 29, 131-163

Hellman, J. (1992) "The Study of New Social Movements in Latin America and the Question of Autonomy." In The Making of Social Movements in Latin America, edited by A. Escobar and S. Alvarez, 52-61. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Hirschsohn, P. (2007) 'Union Democracy and Shop floor Mobilization: Social Movement Unionism in South African Auto mobile and Clothing Plants'. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*

Hyman, R. (2001) *Understanding European Trade Unionism: Between Market, Class and Society*. London: Sage

Joffe, A. Maller, J. And Webster, E. (1995) "South Africa's Industrialization: The Challenge Facing Labour" in Frankel, S. And Harrod, J. (eds) *Changing Labour relations in Industrializing Countries*. New York: Cornell University Indusrial and Labour Relations Press

Johnston, P. (2001) 'Organize for What?', in Turner, L., Katz, H. and Hurd, R. (eds) *Rethinking the Labour Movement: Quest for 21st Century Relevance.* Itharca : ILRPress

Kelly, J. (1996) 'Union Militancy and Social Partnership', pp. 77–109 in P. Ackers, C. Smith and P. Smith (eds) The New Workplace and Trade Unionism. London: Routledge.

Kelly, J. (1988) *Trade Union and Socialist Politics*. London: Verso.pp.333

Kidder, H. (1981) *Research Methods in Social Relatons.* New York: Holt-Saunders

Lambert, R (1988) Political Unionism in South Africa: The Congress of South African Trade Unions. PhD thesis, University of Witwatersrand, SA

Lowry, D. (1999) 20 years in the Labour Movement: The Urban Training Project and Change in South Africa, 1971-1991. Johannesburg:Wadmore

Mathers, A. (2007) *Struggling for a Social Europe: Neoliberal Globalization and the Birth of a European Social Movement* Aldershot: Ashgate

Maree, J. 1987. *The independent trade unions, 1974-1984* (Johannesburg, Ravan).

McAdam, D.(1986) 'Recruitment to High Risk Activism: the Case of Freedom Summer.' *American Journal of Sociology* 92, 64–90.

Melucci, A. (1989) *Nomads of the Present,* London: Hutchinson Radius.

Munck, R. 1999. "Labour dilemmas and labour futures", in Munck, R.; Waterman, P.

Labour worldwide in the era of globalization: Alternative union models in the New World Order (London, MacMillan).

Lopez, S. (2004) *Reorganizing the Rust Belt: an Inside Story of the American Labor Movement.* Berkeley: University of Califonia

Luckhardt, K. And Wall, B. (1980) *Organize... or Stave! The History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions.* London: Lawrence and Wishart

Murray, G. (1992) ' Union Culture and Organizational change in Ontario and Quebec' in Leys, C. and Mendell, M. (eds) Culture and Social Change. Montreal, 47

Nyameko, R. (1985) "SACTU Celebrates its 30th Birthday: The Role of Trade Unions in the Liberation Struggle". *African Communists* 100: 44-64

Ocheje, P. (2005) 'Memo to Symposium participants' Conference on Human rights and Developoment: the Challenge of Dual Transition, University of Windsor, Canada

O'Donnell, G. and Schmitter, P. (1986) 'Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies', pp. 48–56 in G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter and L. Whitehead (eds)

Passy, F. (2003) 'Social Networks Matter: But How?' in M. Diani and D. McAdam (eds.) *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action,* Oxford: OUP.

Pillay, D. (1996) 'Social Movements, Developments and Democracy in Post – Apartheid South Africa' in Coetzee, J. and Graaff, J. (eds) *Reconstruction, Development and People.* Johannesburg: Innternational Thompson

Pillay, D. (2006) 'Cosatu, Alliances and Working-class Politics' in Buhlungu, S. (ed) *Trade Unions and Democracy: Cosatu workers' political attitudes in South* Africa. Cape town: HSRC

Pillay, D. (2008) 'Holding the Centre, Workers' and ''Popular- Democratic'' Politics in SA' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol 43 (3), LA: Sage

Pillay, D. (2008) 'COASTU,the SACP and the ANC Post- Polokwane: Looking left but does it feel right', *Labour, Capital and Society*, 41, 2

Scipes, Kim (1992) 'Social Movement Unionism and the Kilusang Mayo Uno',

Seidman, G. (1994) *Manufacturing Militance: Workers' movements in Brazil and South Africa, 1970-1985*. California: Univ. press

Scott, A. (1990) *Ideology and the New Social Movement*. London

Sherman, B. (1994) "Doing Sociology That Counts: Research Methods" in Straus, R. (ed) *Using Sociology: An Introduction from the Applied and Clinical Perspectives*. New York: General Hall, Inc.

Southall, R and Tangri, R (2006) Cosatu and Black Economic Empowerment' in Buhlungu, S. (ed) *Trade Unions and Democracy: Cosatu workers' political attitudes in South* Africa. Cape town: HSRC

Southall, R. and Webster, E. (2010) ' Unions and Parties in South Africa: COSATU and the ANC in the wake of Polokwane in (eds) Beckman, B. ,Buhlungu, S and Sachikonye, L Trade Unions and Party Politics: Labour Movement in Africa

Stark, D. and Bruszt, L. 1998. *Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Straus, A. And Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research.* Califonia: Sage

Suarez, S. (2001) "Political and Economic Motivations for Labour Control: A Comparison of Ireland, Puerto Rico, and Singapore" Studies in Comparative International Development, Summer, 2, 2, pp54-81

Tarrow, S. (1998) *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, 2nd. Edition, Cambridge: CUP.

Tilly, C. (1978) *From Mobilization to Revolution,* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Weslemy)

Touraine, A. (1974) *Post-Industrial Society,* London: Wildwood House

Turow, B. (2008) *From Freedom Charter to Polokwane: The Evolution of ANC Economic Policy.* Cape Town: Picasso

Valenzuela, J. (1989) 'Labor Movements in Transitions to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis', Comparative Politics 21(4): 445–71.

Von Holdt, K. (2002) "Social Movement Unionism: The *Case* Of South Africa", *Work Employment Society,* 16,283

Von Holdt, K. (2000) "From the Politics of Resistance to the Politics of Reconstruction? The Union and Ungovernability in the Workplace" in Adler, G. and Webster, E. (eds) *Trade Union and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997.* Johannesburg: WITS

Voss, K. and Sherman, R (2000) '*Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Union Revitalization in the American Labor Movement'* American Journal of Sociology, 106(2)

Waterman, P. (1991) " Social Movement Unionism: A New Model for a New World". Amsterdam: International Institute for Research and Education, working Paper Series No 110

Webster, E. (1994) The Rise of Social Movement Unionism: The Two Faces of the Black Trade Unionism in South Africa" in Frankel, P. Pines, N. And Swillings (eds) State Resistance and Change in South Africa London: Croom Helm

Webster, E. Fairbrother, P. (2008) ' Social movement Unionism: Questions and possibilities' *Employ Respons Rights* J, 20,309-313

Webster, E. (1994) ' The Rise of Social Movement Unionism: The two faces of the black trade union movement in South Africa' in Webster, E.; Alfred, L.; Bethlehem, L.; Joffe, A.; and Selikow, T in *Work and Industrialisation in South Africa: An introductory Reader* . Randburg: Ravan

Weiss, R. (1994) Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: Free Press

Others Sources

A. Interviews

1 Cedric Gina- NUMSA President (01/9/2009)

2 Silumko Nondwangu- Former NUMSA General Secretary (25/8/2009)

3 Hlokoza Motau- Head, NUMSA international office (4/11/2009)

4 Jenny Grice- Head of office, NUMSA Secretariat (24/11/2009)

5 Dinga Sekwebo- NUMSA,National Education Officer (1/9/2009)

6 Basil Cele- Chair, NUMSA Eastern Cape Regional Office 928/8/2009)

7 Zanoxoli Wayile- Regional Secretary, East Cape (27/9/2009)

8 Phutase Tseki- Chair, NUMSA Shop Steward Committee,Wits Central Area (24/8/2009)

9 Comrade Vusi, NUMSA Organiser (10/12/2009)

10 George Chosane, Regional Secretary, Ekhurleni (20/112009)

B. COSATU Resolutions

- Resolutions of COSATU's 8th National Congress, 2002

- Political Resolution of COSATU's 9th National Congress, 2006

- Political Resolutions of COSATU's 10th National Congress, 2009

C NUMSA Resolutions

- Resolutions of NUMSA's 6th National Congress, 2000

- Secretariat Report of NUMSA's 7th National Congress, 2004

- Secretariat Report of NUMSA's 8th National Congress, 2008

- Declaration of NUMSA's Central Committee Meeting, 2008

- Secretariat Report NUMSA's Mini Congress, 2009

D. NUMSA News

- May 2006 Edition

ANNEX 1

NATIONAL UNION OF METALWORKERS OF SOUTH AFRICA
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

153 Bree Street
corner Gerard Sekoto Street
Newtown
Johannesburg 2001
E-mail: Karlc@numsa.org.za

P.O. Box 260483
Excom 2023
Tel: 011-6891700
Fax: 011-8336408
011-8336330

22 June 2009

To whom it may concern.

Dear Madam/Sir

Re: Access to Edwin Anisha in respect of academic research to be conducted in the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)

NUMSA received access request for academic research from Edwin Anisha, who is a student at the University of Witwatersrand and currently undertaking a Global Labour University Masters Programme in Labour and Development. Anisha's research is entitled *'Trade unions, political unionism and social movement unionism; a case study of NUMSA in the context of the Polokwane Conference'*.

This serves as confirmation that NUMSA has granted Anisha the access he requested in order to carryout his study.

Yours faithfully,

Karl Cloete
NUMSA Deputy General Secretary

ANNEX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Research on 'Trade Unions, Political Unionism and Social Movement Unionism: A case study of NUMSA in context of the ANC's 2007 Polokwane Conference'

Date of interview

Name of interviewer

Language of interview

Prior Activity: Explain Interview Format and Objectives; Guarantee Confidentiality

Questions:

1. Briefly comment on your background and experience (profile)
2. Describe the organisational structure of NUMSA
3. How seriously does NUMSA take the participation of its members in decision making within the union?
4. What are the existing platforms or structures for members to contribution to decisions making, and how regularly are such arrangements convened or exercised?
5. What are the major issues that have pre-occupied the union in the last five years?
6. In this period, what do you consider NUMSA's important achievements?
7. How concerned is NUMSA with social and political issues outside the workplace?
8. Do you consider NUMSA's involvement in issues outside the workplace part of mandate as a union?
9. What is the relationship between NUMSA and community base associations
10. How important is it for trade unions to be able to influence the political process in South Africa?
11. What institutional space(s) exits for the labour movement's intervention in the political process, and how has NUMSA utilised same?
12. Is it possible to be involved in political issues and still maintain the union's independence and focus on representing its members?
13. What is your view on labour's alliance with the ANC and COSATU?
14. Has this arrangement benefitted the labour movement and workers?
15. How possible is it to hegemonize workers' issues within alliance and government?
16. How important is it for workers to determine the leadership of the ANC and other elected officers of the party?
17. In what ways will determining elected officers of the party affect workers' interests in terms of government decisions?
18. How deliberate a strategy was this on the part of the labour movement at the ANC's 2007 National Conference at Polokwane?

19. What were NUMSA's specific position(s) and arguments in respect of the Conference?
20. What were the major factors within and outside the union that influenced NUMSA's position?
21. How consistent was the official position of NUMSA with those of its members?
22. What was the level of involvement of NUMSA in shaping labour's overall position for the Conference?
23. Do you consider the outcome of the Conference favourable in terms of NUMSA's estimations?
24. What do you consider as important lessons for labour in respect of the outcome of Polokwane
25. How do you envisage the events at Polokwane evolving?

ANNEX 3

CONSENT FORM

Project Title

Trade Unions, Political Unions and Social Movement Unionism: A case study of NUMSA in context of the ANC's 2007 Polokwane Conference

Information

This research is purely an academic exercise. You have been selected to participate in the study as a result of your experience and strategic position in respect of the issues that the study is concerned with. The results of the research will be communicated in the form of a research report to be submitted to the Sociology Department of the University of Witwatersrand, with the possibility of reference to participants. Please note however that the researcher acknowledges and respect your right to voluntarily decide on whether or not to participate in the study, and to decline answering specific questions. The interview will be tape recorded for the purpose of accurate documenting, while access to tape will be restricted to the researcher. Be assured that your responses will be treated with strict confidence. Your consent is hereby requested.

Participant's Consent

I confirm that I have read and understand the section on information. I also state that l fully understand my role and rights in respect of participating in the research. I therefore render freely my consent to participate in the study ƒ

Name, signature and date (person consenting):

Name, signature and date (person receiving consent):

Name, signature and date (Researcher):

ANNEX 4

CONSENT TO TAPE RECORD INTERVIEW

Project Title

Trade Unions, Political Unions and Social Movement Unionism: A case study of NUMSA in context of the ANC's 2007 Polokwane Conference

Information

This research is purely an academic exercise. You have been selected to participate in the study as a result of your experience and strategic position in respect of the issues that the study is concerned with. The interview will be recorded for the purpose of accurate documenting. Please be assured that your responses will be treated with strict confidence. Your consent is hereby specifically requested in respect of tape recording.

Participant's Consent for Tape Recording of Interview

I confirm that I am apprised of the purpose of this study and appreciate the need for tape recording of my interview with the researcher

Name, signature and date (person consenting):

Name, signature and date (person receiving consent):

Name, signature and date (Researcher):