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# Solidarity and fragmentation between trade unions and civil societies during fuel subsidy mass-protest in Nigeria : a study of social movement unionism.

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**ABSTRACT:**

This study examines solidarity and fragmentations between trade unions and civil society organisations under the Labour and Civil Society Coalition LASCO, during the fuel subsidy mass-protest in Nigeria. To understand the basis of LASCO's mobilisation during the strike/ mass-protest and the tension that follows the suspension of the strike within the alliance, the study utilises the literature on Social Movement Unionism especially in South Africa, with emphasise on trade unions community and political alliances. The classical SMU literature especially applied in South Africa and Brazil revealed that authoritarian industrialisation and repressive Apartheid work-place regime prompted unions to use innovative strategies of using their bargaining power to challenge the state, by rendering themselves ungovernable both in the work-place and in the society through linkages with communities. This study, relying on a case study method and participant observation of the strike and mass-protest in Kano, revealed that SMU mobilisation in Nigeria was triggered by predatory and weak state, whose rent seeking permeates the administration of subsidy in the oil industry. Secondly, the study argued that the tensions and divisions within LASCO alliance following the suspension of the perceived unilateral suspension of the strike by the Trade Unions explains the political and class orientation of both trade unions and civil society organisations. The study argues that Trade Unions behaviour in the context of the strike lean towards Hyman pessimist view of trade unions or what Beiler et'al called accommodatory strategy, a view that see unions as negotiators of order both in the work-place and in the larger society. On the other hand the civil society organisations typified multi-level organisations with different orientations that always seek for transformation of the social order or what Beiler et'al called transformatory strategy.

**KEY WORDS:**

Social Movement Unionism, Trade Unions, LASCO, Counter-movement, Solidarity, Fragmentation.

## DECLARATION:

I Muttaqa Yusha'u Abdulra'uf declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Labour Policy and Globalisation at University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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**Muttaqa Yusha'u Abdulra'uf**

**Date: 29th November, 2012.**

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## DEDICATION:

This Research report is dedicated to the working class globally whose sweat of wealth creation is been accumulated by the global one percent exacerbated by the unequal system of neo-liberalism and self centred elites in power.

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**ABBREVIATION:**

| | |
|---|---|
| ANC | AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS |
| BUK | BAYERO UNIVERSITY KANO |
| CPC | CONGRESS FOR PROGRESSIVE CHANGE |
| ASUU | ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES |
| CWC | CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE |
| COESU | COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ACADEMIC STAFF UNION |
| COSATU | CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS |
| CSO'S | CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS |
| EFCC | ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION |
| F.G | FEDERAL GOVERNMENT |
| FCWU | FOOD AND CANNING WORKERS UNION |
| FOSATU | FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS |
| INEC | INDEPENDENT NATIOANAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION |
| ICFTU | INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS |
| LASCO | LABOUR AND CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION |
| JAF | JOINT ACTION FRONT |
| NAC | NATIONAL ADMINSTRATIVE COUNCIL |
| NEC | NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL |
| NLC | NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS |
| NWC | NIGERIAN WORKERS COUNCIL |
| NBA | NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION |
| NGOS | NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS |
| NIETI | NIGERIA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY TRANSPERENCY INITIATIVE |
| NTUC | NIGERIAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS |
| NCNC | NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIAN CITIZENS |
| NNPC | NIGERIA NATIONALPETROLEUM COMPANY |
| NMA | NIGERIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION |
| PPPRA | PETROLIEUM PRODUCT PRICES REGULATORY AGENCY |
| PMS | PETROLEUM MOTOR SPIRIT |
| RMAFC | REVENUE MOBILISATION ALLOCATION & FISCAL COMM. |
| SMU | SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM |
| SNG | SAVE NIGERIA GROUP |
| SURE | SUBSIDY RE-INVESTMENT STRATEGY |
| SAP | STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME |
| SALB | SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN |
| SEC | STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL |
| TUC | TRADE UNION CONGRESS |
| TUCN | TRADE UNION CONGRESS OF NIGERIA |
| UAD | UNITED ACTION FOR DEMOCRACY |
| UDF | UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT |
| ULC | UNITED LABOUR CONGRESS |

WFTU WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS