

**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.

---

**Muttaqa Yusha'u Abdulra'uf**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost I'm grateful to almighty Allah that made it possible to accomplish this one year masters at the Witwatersrand University, South Africa. My sincere gratitude is to my employer the Nigeria Labour Congress under the able stewardship of Comrade Abdulwaheed Ibrahim Omar and NLC NAC members, who approved this one year study leave.

Secondly, I remained grateful to the fellowship given to me by the Global Labour University Project, South Africa under the leadership of Professor Michelle Williams. Worthy to mention is the guidance and inputs I received from my supervisor, Prof Karl von Holdt without whom this research report may not come to fruition.

My profound appreciation also goes to GLU lectures namely, Prof. Devan Pillay, Prof. Lucien van der Walt, Dr. Sarah Mosoetsa and Dr Seeraj Muhammad whose academic devotion shape my understanding of Labour and development as well as economic policies that shape labour both in history and in the current time of neoliberalism. I will also not forget the concern and support of M.S Pulane Dithake the GLU Coordinator South Africa.

Comrade Najeem Usman Yasin and Comrade Kiri Mohammed deserved commendation for their financial support during my departure from Nigeria to South Africa. I equally, appreciate the academic support received from Malam M.M Yusif of Bayero University Kano, and Eng. Y.Z. Yau Director Centre for Information Technology (CITAD), Kano Nigeria. I will also not forget the advises and moral supports of Comrade John Ejoha Odah *nni* and Barrister Ghazali Abdullahi, of Mallam Ghazali and Co. Chambers, Kano.

I acknowledged the support, encouragement and concern of Comrade Owei Lakemfa one time Ag. General Secretary of the NLC, Comrade Chris Uyot current Ag. General Secretary of the NLC and Comrade Emma Ugboaja the head of Admin & Establishment and all staffs of the NLC whose prayers and well wishes cannot be quantified. Tahir Hashim of the NLC also deserved special commendation for encouraging me to opt for this one year study in South Africa while I sincerely Thanked Anas Yusha'u for transcribing the research interviews.

Kudos to my respondent during the course of interviews for this research in Kano, namely, Comrade Nasiru Kura, Comrade Abioudun Aremu JAF Secretary, Dr. Nasiru Isa Fagge now ASUU President, Comrade Sani Fagge of COESU, Barrister Aikawa of NBA, Kano, Comrade Isa Yunusa Danguguwa Chairman NLC Kano, comrade Sani Ayagi Chairman Kano Voice of NGOs, Comrade Nura Ma'aji an activist in Kano, comrade Bala of Kano Network for Justice.

I sincerely, cherished and valued the concern and prayers of my family members whom I miss terribly during this one year study. Appreciation to my father, Alh. Yusha'u Yusuf, my

Mother, Hajiya Sa'adatu Anas Yusha'u, my Uncle, Malam Idris Yusuf, my wife Zainab Abdullahi Gero, my Father in-law Alh. Abdullahi Gero and my mother in-law Hajiya Maimuna Gero, and my elder brother Jameel Yusha'u and his wife Hauwa Sarkina Shehu.

I thanked Abbas Yusha'u, Mujahid Yusha'u, Anas Yusha'u, Summaiya Yusha'u, Abdurrahman Yusha'u, Hafsat Yusha'u and Ruqayya Yusha'u all for their prayers.

Finally to my course work mate whom we shared the ordeal of carrying out the research together and comforting each other in difficulties. Worthy of mentioning is Libanus Qunson from Ghana, Silvia from Zambia, Tsetsana from Botswana, Margo from Barbados, Qnobile from South Africa and Sandra also from South Africa. I finally acknowledged the brotherhood of Nigerian Students at Wits, namely, Sa'ad Mustapha, Imam Abdulgafar, Muslim, Moshood, Taofeeq, Abdul-jami'a, Mutiu, Mamoud, Abdullahi Danchua, and Lawal Abdulhamid. Worthy of mentioning is brother Sulaiman from Sudan and Sa'id Sima from Tanzania. May Allah reward all abundantly.

**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.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

<b>Abstract</b>		<b>i</b>
<b>Declaration</b>		<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>		<b>iii-iv</b>
<b>Dedication</b>		<b>v</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>		<b>vii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: General Introduction</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	Background	1
<b>1.2</b>	Rationale of the Study	3
<b>1.3</b>	Research questions	4
<b>1.4</b>	Research design and planning	5
<b>1.4.1</b>	Kano Case Study	8
<b>1.4.2</b>	Researcher as participant observer	9
<b>1.4.3</b>	Method of data collection	9
<b>1.4.4</b>	Sample method	10
<b>1.4.5</b>	Sample size	11
<b>1.4.6</b>	Data analysis	11
<b>1.5</b>	Ethical consideration	11
<b>1.6</b>	Organisation of the study	12
<b>1.7</b>	Conclusion	12
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	Introduction	14
<b>2.2</b>	Labour and Politics in South Africa	15
	Trade Unions, Community and political alliance 1970-1985	
<b>2.2.1</b>	Trade Unions and community relations in South Africa	17
<b>2.2.2</b>	Fragmentation of solidarity: Unions Vs. community relations	19
<b>2.3</b>	Social Movement Unionism: Contesting perspectives	24
<b>2.3.1</b>	Tension within Social Movement Unionism: Assessing the Literature	29
<b>2.4</b>	Corruption and Rentier State: A source of SMU Mobilisation in Nigeria	33
<b>2.5</b>	Conceptual Framework	36
<b>2.5.1</b>	Class and Organisational Structure of SMU	36
<b>2.5.2</b>	Political Orientation of SMU	38
<b>2.6</b>	Conclusion	39
<b>Chapter 3: ‘We are not negotiating price’ Social Movement Unionism: Mobilising against corruption</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	Introduction	41
<b>3.2</b>	Background to Trade Unions and political alliance in Nigeria	41
<b>3.3</b>	Labour and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO), organisation & mobilisation	46
<b>3.3.1</b>	Overall Goal of LASCO	48

<b>3.3.2</b>	LASCO structure	49
<b>3.4</b>	Fuel Subsidy removal Strike/Protest organisation and mobilisation in Kano	49
<b>3.4.1</b>	Structure of LASCO alliance in Kano	51
<b>3.4.2</b>	Leadership Question in Nigeria: ‘we are for regime change’	57
<b>3.4.3</b>	Submergence of primordial identities: ‘we are against corruption’	64
<b>3.5</b>	conclusion	67
<b>Chapter 4: ‘we started together, but marched out separately’ Social Movement Unionism: Suspension of strike and erosion of union democracy</b>		<b>69</b>
<b>4.1</b>	Introduction	69
<b>4.2</b>	The pitfall of Union Democracy	69
<b>4.2.1</b>	The 14 <sup>th</sup> January, 2012 NLC NEC Meeting	70
<b>4.3</b>	Strike suspension and breakdown of the alliance: Unions negotiate order	73
<b>4.3.1</b>	Suspending the strike: ‘we were disappointed’	78
<b>4.3.2</b>	Mutual suspicion and distrust within LASCO	81
<b>4.3.3</b>	Forging alliance beyond Trade unions platform	83
<b>4.4</b>	Conclusion	85
<b>Chapter 5: General Conclusion: Implication of the research findings</b>		<b>89</b>
5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	Implication of the research findings	90
5.3	Conclusion	95
	<b>Bibliography</b>	97

**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 NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ICFTU	INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS
LASCO	LABOUR AND CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION
JAF	JOINT ACTION FRONT
NAC	NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE 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