

**The Impact of Social Media on Political Influence and Policy Outcomes:
The Nigerian Experience**

**by
Christian Ogwo**

**Claremont Graduate University
2015**

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APPROVAL OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Christian Ogwo as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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**by
Christian Ogwo**

Claremont Graduate University: 2015

The political and policy gains that social movements have had in the past decade by way of revolutions, protests, and strikes have largely been attributed to social media. This includes the unprecedented policy impacts Nigerian labor unions have made within the past decade. Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) has been forwarded as a way to explain the positive impacts of using social media to organize political actions. While the most popular social media are Internet-dependent, the poor condition of the information and communication technology infrastructure of Nigeria has led to the use of texting by the labor unions to organize their strikes and protests. This qualitative study used 60 interviews of union leaders and ordinary members from 10 Nigerian labor unions to test RMT in a different context (labor movement vs. political movement) with respect to a different technology (mobile network vs. the Internet) by identifying the social media used by the unions and to trace how these enabled them to acquire political influence and consequently impact policy.

Findings indicate that the short message system (SMS), also known as texting, is the prominent mobile social medium utilized by Nigerian labor unions. The rise of Nigerian labor union effectiveness coincided with the proliferation of mobile phones in Nigeria, which put the ability to send and receive text messages into the hands of most adults. SMS figures prominently in all stages of acquiring political influence by the unions as it facilitates intra-union coherence, which makes members turn out en masse to participate in union activities such as protests and strikes. SMS also fosters inter-union collaboration and solidarity, which enhances the overall clout of a protesting union. SMS is viewed as efficient and effective by the union leaders and members. The analyzed union leaders' interview data indicate that SMS has made a significant difference in the way Nigerian labor unions perform their activities. The union leaders and members believe that SMS is effective and empowering. Findings further indicate that reports in national newspapers corroborate the accounts of the interviewees regarding protests and strikes.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Auntie Ms. Priscilla Ogwo and Ms. Alice Ogwo who are now with us only in spirit, but whose memories will forever warm my heart. My Aunties Ms. Esther Ogwo and Mrs. Catherine Egbulefu who shower me with blessings on a daily basis. My siblings Eleazar who I fondly refer to as the wind beneath my wings, Susannah, Bertram and Joy who have always been there for me. My brother in-law Mr. Joseph Egbulefu who from my infancy refers to me as having a sterling quality. My wife Julia who I fondly refer to as the architect because each step of the way, 'brick by brick', she helped in very profound ways to build the academic who I have now become. My children Grace, Christian, Michael and Angel whose love and unwavering support gave me the courage and tenacity to complete this dissertation.

I give all glory and adoration to the Almighty God who allowed His words in Psalm 113:7 to be fulfilled in me.

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Acronyms	
Academic Staff Union of Universities	ASUU
Agriculture and Allied Employees Union of Nigeria	AAEUN
Broadcasting Board of Governors	BBG
Community and Voluntary Organization	CVO
Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure	CONTISS 15
Frequency Modulation	FM
Global System for Mobile Communications	GSM
Information and Communication Technology	ICT
Institutional Review Board	IRB
International Labor Organization	ILO
Internetworked Social Movement	ISM
National Union of Hotels and Personal Services Workers	NUHPSW
National Union of Printing, Publishing and Paper Products Workers	NUPPPROW
Nigeria Union of Civil Service Secretariat Stenographic Workers	NUCSSASW
Nigeria Union of Journalists	NUJ
Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees	NULGE
Nigerian Labour Congress	NLC
Non-Academic Staff Union	NASU
Public Service International	PSI
Radio, Television and Theatre Workers Union of Nigeria	RATTAWU
Resource Mobilization Theory	RMT
Short Message Service	SMS
Social Networking Sites	SNS
Steel & Engineering Workers Union of Nigeria	SEWUN
Television	TV

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Recent social movements, including the Arab Spring and the US Occupy Movement, have famously used social media to organize their gatherings. The Arab Spring social movements in Africa were successful in mobilizing Internet-based social media communication resources. Yet some countries in Africa, including Nigeria, do not have the infrastructure that can support this type of organizing using Internet-based social media. However, since 2008, Nigeria’s labor unions have achieved a number of successful actions. As shown in this dissertation, this was accomplished through the use of “texting,” which requires a less sophisticated infrastructure. This dissertation uses a case study to examine this use of texting as a communication resource to bring together union members and sustain strike actions until effective outcomes are achieved. Interviews with leaders and members of 10 Nigerian labor unions, and analysis of newspaper articles to corroborate interview-based information about the outcomes of strikes, were the data sources used for this research. Understanding the effectiveness of even simple social media for social movements contributes to Resource Mobilization Theory (Flynn, 2011) and also has the potential to benefit social movements in other technology constrained countries.

According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011): "New communication technologies—especially social media via the Internet— have become important resources for the

mobilization of collective action and the subsequent creation, organization, and implementation of social movements around the world" (p. 1). They also state that "[r]esource mobilization theory seems to be a reasonable starting point for explaining the usefulness and impact of social media technologies in social movements" (p. 1208), and in the goals which social movements pursue, which essentially are to impact policy (Flynn, 2011). They studied the case of the 2011 Egyptian revolution to explore "the possible utility of resource mobilization theory to enhance this understanding and take a step toward generating a theoretical framework capable of guiding related studies" (p. 1208) and concluded that resource mobilization theory did "aid in understanding the Egyptian revolution ... in terms of the influential contexts and resources" (p. 1218). They encourage scholars to test the theory in future studies.

Labor and trade unions are social movements. Flynn (2011) notes that social movements include institutional change movements "such as the labor movement" (p. 117). A social movement "refers to a deliberate, voluntary effort to organize individuals to act in concert to achieve enough group influence to make or block changes" (Flynn, 2011, p. 111). There is a growing body of literature on social media usage and its impact on contemporary society¹, especially in the area of formation and maintenance of social movements, and organizing of mass protests. In various revolutions and protests around the world where social movements facilitated by social media have toppled regimes, disrupted governments, caused anti-government occupation, and impacted public policy,

¹ A search of the "Web of Science" on July 23, 2015 using the combined topics "Social Movement" and "Social Media" listed 40 publications through 2014: 1 in 2010, 2 in 2011, 7 in 2012, 12 in 2013, and 20 in 2014.

the research literature has been unclear on which social medium was prevalently used in which revolution or protest and the effectiveness of the social media used based on region and political context.

Previous studies focused on social media as a crisis platform (Stepanova, 2011; Dewey, Kaden, Marks, Matsushima, & Beijing, 2012; Skinner, 2011; Khondker, 2011). In other words, previous studies mostly examined the capability of social media as a protest tool to "inspire and motivate individuals to go from the comfort of their homes to the chaos of the streets and face off against the government" (Pacic & Noonan, 2011, p. 2). Hence some previous studies theorized and examined the correlation between the proliferation of mobile phones and the frequency of protests with the hypothesis that ascendance in the proliferation of mobile phones would lead to increases in the frequency of protests and revolutions (Miard, 2008). However, while Miard reports that he found "no significant relationship between mobile teledensity and anti-government protests, riots, or major government crises" (p. 3), the plausible explanation is that social media do not drive protests or strikes, rather repressive government policies do (Adbusters, 2011; Malaki, 2011). Thus, it can be said that social media are resources mobilized by the labor movements to compel government to amend, reverse or withdraw an adverse policy.

In Nigeria, within the past decade, labor unions have carried out protests and strikes that were unprecedented in both magnitude and length. For example, in 2009, with the threat of a strike, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria compelled the Federal Government to enter into an agreement to implement a nine-point

agenda by 2012. On the 3rd of July 2013, ASUU embarked on an indefinite nationwide strike even though the government had implemented some of the items in the agreement (Sunrise Daily, July 3, 2013). The National President of ASUU, Mr. Nasir Issa-Fagee, described the strike action as comprehensive and total, and vowed that members of his union would maintain the course until the government implemented all aspects of the agreement. The union remained on strike for over six months until the agreement was fully implemented (The SUN, February 18, 2014).

Meanwhile, there has been a proliferation in the use of active mobile devices in Nigeria² over the past decade, making it the largest mobile phone market on the continent of Africa (WebAfrica). It has been estimated that some people have two or more mobile phones from different providers (Odunfa, 2012).³ Given that Internet penetration in Nigeria has grown steadily but with only half the teledensity of mobile devices, and that Internet teledensity⁴ is lower in Nigeria than other countries, save for Tunisia, that have experienced significant social movements (see Table 1), the use of SMS/texting by the Nigerian labor unions to organize their members is an interesting and different phenomenon than the revolutionary social movements that have been studied recently. It thus provides a different context for testing resource mobilization theory.

² According to the World Bank, Nigeria's mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people) were 13.3 in 2005 and had increased to 73.3 in 2013. Nigeria's Internet users (per 100 people) in the same time frame increased from 3.5 to 38.0. Similarly, according to the Nigerian Communication Commission, there were 127,246,092 active mobile "lines"; Nigeria's population in 2013 was about 174.5 million (CIA World Factbook), or 72.5 per 100 people.

³ The idea behind the ownership of several mobile phones is to stay connected in the hopes that not all the phones would lose network connectivity at the same time.

⁴ Teledensity is the number of active lines per 100 people.

Table 1. Mobile device and Internet teledensity in various countries

	2005		2010		2013	
	MD*	Internet**	MD	Internet	MD	Internet
Chile	64.7	31.2	115.8	45.0	134.3	66.5
Egypt	19.0	12.8	90.5	31.4	121.5	49.6
Libya	35.7	3.9	180.4	14.0	165.0	16.5
Nigeria	13.3	3.5	54.7	24.0	73.3	38.0
Tunisia	56.5	9.7	104.5	36.8	115.6	43.8
USA	68.3	68.0	91.3	71.7	95.5	84.2

Note: *Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 population, ** Internet users per 100 population

Source: World Bank

This chapter makes the case for studying the use of social media by Nigerian labor unions in order to test resource mobilization theory. Chapter 2 describes the findings from literature that support the claims made in this chapter. Chapter 3 describes the case study methodology used to gather data. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the collected data. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the results, describes limitations, and suggests implications for research and practice.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The purpose of this dissertation is to assess/test the usefulness of Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) in the context of the use of communications resources in actions of Nigerian labor unions. Therefore, this chapter provides definitions of the key terms, describes research that is relevant to answering the research question, and explains the history of Nigerian labor unions to show that they fall within the purview of RMT.

2.2 Social Movements/Collective Action

There are many definitions of the term “social movement” as described in the book by (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009), which addresses social movements in Africa. Other authors have defined them as “a deliberate, voluntary effort to organize individuals to act in concert to achieve enough group influence to make or block changes” (Flynn, 2011, p. 111); social movements (which implement collective actions) have been defined as a subfield of Political Sociology (Walder, 2009); and others state that “traditionally, the social movement sector is conceived of as a conglomerate of movement organizations, such as trade unions, associations, liberation movements or civil-society organizations, that provide the more or less formalized infrastructure from which contentious politics is built” (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009, p. 40). The political opportunities and resources available to social movements are contextual and

varied from country to country and from one geopolitical region to another. However, as a result of globalization and transnational ties, the socio-political reach of social movements, at a nuanced level, has expanded beyond local and national influence to include the supranational context (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009).

According to Flynn (2011, p 130), “[s]ocial movements tend to be most successful in open, democratic societies in which social mobility and social change are accepted concepts.” So, in African states where there are dictatorships and repressive governments, the development and enhancement of social movements are hampered. Also, since an essential element of mobilization is the spread of information through networks, major changes in society can impact contentious politics (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). In such contexts, the extent to which globalization can foster contentious politics that can enable social movements to create social change is largely unknown (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). On the African continent, the struggles of social movements are as diverse and contextual as the resources available to them, which are influenced by socio-political context, economics, and industrialization status (Habib & Opoku-Mensah, 2009).

According to Habib & Opoku-Mensah (2009, p.19), the three fundamental elements on which the current explanations of social movements are built include: “the political structure that defines opportunities and constraints, the human and financial resources that enable a movement’s mobilization and operations, and the identities that provide the impetus for actors to become involved and provide legitimacy for the

movement.” These fundamental elements negate the basic tenets of the socio-psychological theories (relative deprivation, mass society, and collective behavior theories) rooted in deprivation and grievances as the impetus for the formation of social movements. Rather they conform to the institutional structure of resource mobilization theory, which holds that members of social movements are rational, and influenced by political climate, group strategy, and conflicts of interest (Flynn, 2011).

Walder (2009) explores the sociological aspects of social movements and the relationship between social structure and political behavior. Early social movement theories were social-psychological, which “tended to focus on identifying factors that attract individuals to social movements (e.g., personality traits, grievances, disillusionment, and ideology)” (Flynn 2011, p. 117). These social-psychological theories could not overcome the critiques of their core premise: that the behavior of participants in social movements is irrational and unconventional, born out of grievances and disillusionment. So “theorists largely abandoned the social-psychological approach that characterized social movement theories like relative deprivation theory, mass society theory, and collective behavior theory” (Flynn 2011, p. 117), and replaced them with resource mobilization theory (RMT), which holds that, “participation in social movements is a rational behavior, based on an individual’s conclusions about the costs and benefits of participation, rather than one born of a psychological predisposition to marginality and discontent” (Flynn 2011, p. 117).

2.3 Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)

“Resource mobilization scholars sought to understand how rational and often marginalized social actors mobilized effectively to pursue their desired social change goals” (Edwards & Gillham, 2006, p. 1). Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) was founded in the 1970s (Buechler, 1993; Edwards & Gillham, 2006). It explains the ways social movements mobilize resources to achieve their objectives (Jenkins, 1983), and “argues that social movements succeed through the effective mobilization of resources and the development of political opportunities for members” (Flynn, 2011, p. 113). In other words, not only is the effectiveness of the mobilized resource important, equally critical is the expertise of the individuals charged with the responsibility of applying the resource (Eltantawy and Wiest, 2011).

The resources referred to in RMT can be material or non-material. The material resources include: manpower, money, organization, technology (Walder, 2009), mass media and means of communication. Non-material resources include: loyalty, social relationship, personal connections, legitimacy, public attention, solidarity and authority (Fuchs, 2006; Flynn, 2011). The means-of-communication aspect of RMT encompasses all forms of communication including social media (Eltanaway & Wiest, 2011), which is central to this research. According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011, p. 1208), "resource mobilization theory seems to be a reasonable starting point for explaining the usefulness and impact of social media technologies in social movements", and in the goals which social movements pursue, which essentially are to impact policy (Flynn, 2011).

Jenkins (1983) specifies five main principles of RMT. Flynn (2011, p. 112) states them as follows:

1. The actions of social movement's members and participants are rational.
2. A social movement's actions are strongly influenced by institutionalized power imbalances and conflicts of interest.
3. These power imbalances and conflicts of interest are sufficient to generate grievances that lead to the mobilization of social movement's [sic] intent on changing the distribution of resources and organization.
4. Centralized and formally structured social movements more effectively mobilize resources and achieve goals of change than decentralized and informal social movements.
5. The success of social movements is heavily influenced by group strategy and the political climate.

2.3.1 RMT and Social Movements

RMT does not explain all social movements; other theories can apply to other types of collective action; but, RMT works well in situations where there is “prior organization ... dense social networks and a strong collective identity” (Useem, 1998, p. 216). According to Useem (1998), Breakdown Theory flourished as the dominant theory for collective action before it was replaced by Resource Mobilization theory in the 1970s as a result of its inability to explain the routine, organized and institutionalized collective

actions by rational individuals in pursuit of collective interests. However, Useem maintains that breakdown theory is valuable in the “explanation of contentious forms of collective action such as riots, rebellion, and civil violence”, which occur “when the mechanisms of social control lose their restraining power” (Useem 1998, p. 215). Useem (1998) argues that, while RMT analyzes organized and institutionalized collective actions, breakdown theory analyzes contentious, riotous and violent collective actions. As such, both theories are valuable in analyzing the different kinds of collective actions. The crux of Useem’s argument is that resource mobilization and breakdown theories examine disparate phenomena. Therefore one should not replace the other.

Nigerian labor unions have championed the causes of Nigerian workers since 1912 when the labor movement was established by the British. Since then, the unions have undergone various reforms through legislation and self-growth. The unions suffered oppression and subjugation at the hands of a succession of military regimes. Yet the unions thrived. In the current democratic environment, the unions are still fighting to protect their members’ rights by battling against adverse policies. As such, Nigerian labor unions are organized and institutionalized. Therefore, as compared to breakdown theory, RMT is an appropriate theory to examine the actions of the Nigerian labor unions and their mobilization of social media as a means of communication.

The Egyptian revolution in 2011 might have appeared to spectators, news media, and other news outlets, as unorganized, riotous and violent, in which case Eltantawy and Wiest would have chosen the breakdown theory to analyze the events. Instead they chose

RMT because institutional factors, well-orchestrated activities, and the mobilization of social media preceded the 18-day revolution. According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011), Hosni Mubarak's 30 years of dictatorial rule was very repressive. The regime stifled the sociopolitical and economic climate of the country, prevented freedom of expression, and institutionalized corruption. These led to the mobilization of young people and notable citizens of Egypt seeking to change the power and economic imbalances institutionalized by the tyrannical rule of Hosni Mubarak. Accordingly, the Egyptian revolution in 2011 was not a spontaneous riot by aggrieved, economically deprived individuals; rather it was organized and executed by rational Egyptian citizens armed with social media, vying to change the endemic power and economic imbalances in the country. Therefore, the use of RMT by Eltantawy and Wiest to analyze the Egyptian revolution of 2011 was appropriate given the nature of the revolution and the mobilization of social media.

2.4 Communication Media and Social Media

2.4.1 Communication Media

Communication media refers to the means of delivering and receiving data or information.⁵ The two forms of communication media are analog and digital. Analog communication media include: telephone, radio and television. Digital communication media include: telephony and computer networking. Both forms of communication media

⁵Techopedia - <http://www.techopedia.com/definition/14462/communication-media>, last accessed August 7, 2015.

facilitate the dissemination of information and data exchange among large numbers of individuals and networked devices without regard to distance.⁶

2.4.2 Social Media

“Social media [include] the various electronic tools, technologies and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange” (Tinker, McLaughlin, & Dumlao, 2009, p. 113). According to Harris (2009), there are hundreds of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, SMS,⁷ Myspace, and Flickr. “Social Media is the democratization of content and the shift in the role people play in the process of reading and disseminating information (and thus creating and sharing content) ... rooted in a conversational format between authors and peers within their social channels” (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009, p. xvii). “Unlike traditional media that are often cost-prohibitive to many [organizations], a social media strategy does not require astronomical budgeting” (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011, p. 272).

The characteristics of social media include the following:

1. *User-generated content* – Social media users are not just passive recipients of content, they are active participants in content creation (Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden, 2011).

⁶Techopedia, <http://www.techopedia.com/definition/14462/communication-media>

⁷ In this dissertation, the terms SMS (Short Message Service) and “texting” are used interchangeably.

2. *Conversation* – Interaction through social media is not a one-way communication. It is an interaction where messages are sent and responded to synchronously or asynchronously. A conversation can be started by one person and any number of people can join in the conversation with unlimited duration.
3. *Build and maintain relationships* – Social media enable people to reconnect with old friends, make new friends and keep in touch with friends and family.
4. *Information sharing* – Social media enable participants to share interesting information with anybody, anywhere, and at any time without regard to distance and using a variety of networked devices.
5. *Communication* – Social media provide a convenient and efficient means of communication. People now have a myriad of ways to communicate without writing paper-based letters and memos.

According to Pannagiotopoulos (2012, p. 179), “it is widely accepted that social media create noteworthy opportunities for engagement.” The small form factor and the cost effectiveness of mobile phones on which social media applications can be installed (Thurlow & Poff, 2011), and the ability to use social media anywhere with relative ease (Miard, 2008) make social media convenient and appealing to social movements as a means of communication.

2.4.2.1 Types of Social Media

There is a myriad of social media as discussed above. With respect to the research question stated above, the social media discussed in this study include social networking sites (SNS) and texting (SMS).

1. *Social Networking Sites*—These are online social media, which provide a variety of services such as, “users’ own unique ‘space,’ as well as enabling them to share photo and videos, maintain blogs, and encourage group interactions...” (Gangadharbatla, 2008, p. 5). According to Grangadharbatla (2008), social networking sites provide users with the space or platform to fulfill their need for Internet self-efficacy, cognition, collective self-esteem and their need to belong. However, social networking sites typically require relatively high Internet bandwidth.
2. *Texting (SMS)*—This can be defined as “the exchange of brief messages over mobile devices” (Tinker, McLaughlin and Dumlao 2009, p. 113). “Texting takes very little effort and time and can be done anywhere” (Miard 2008, p. 33). As a social medium, SMS has the same characteristics as the social media discussed above.

2.4.3 Relationship to RMT

Breuer, Landman and Farquhar (2014) used a mix of interviews and surveys to examine social media as a “significant resource for protest mobilization in Tunisia” and

to show how social media fit in the resource mobilization theory. Breuer et al. (2014) argue that, “[s]ocial media have multiplied the possibilities of the retrieval and dissemination of political information exponentially” and facilitated “political communication and political participation”, which led to the ouster of the authoritarian regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia. According to Breuer et al. (2014), Tunisia had a robust Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and well-developed Internet connectivity with over 1.7 million users. A majority of the Internet users also became users of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, which made cyber-activism possible. In other words, the Internet and social media facilitated the formation of “a successful social movement that resulted in regime change” (Breuer, Landman, & Farquhar, 2014, p. 30). Therefore, “Tunisia’s early commitment to ICT infrastructure [provided the social media communication platform, which] contributed to the mobilization of anti-government protests” (Breuer, Landman, & Farquhar, 2014). The above examples indicate that social media are a means of communication. Therefore, social media belong within the “means-of-communication component” of resource mobilization theory.

2.4.4 Relationship to Use in Social Movements

Social media have been credited with facilitating social movement revolutions around the world (Skinner, 2011). According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011, p. 1207), social media is an “important resource for collective action and the organization of contemporary social movements.” Therefore, “by studying social media as a tool using

several paradigms, we can more fully understand its influence and use” (Skinner 2011, p. 5). Literature in social media provides deeper understanding of the effectiveness of social media as a resource that can be mobilized by social movements because of the “emphasis on the social, historical, and political contexts of collective action, as well as on the utility and interplay of available resources” (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011, p. 1209).

In today’s global economy, the Internet has not only revolutionized the way people and businesses communicate, it has also “led to the emergence of ‘virtual public spheres’ and in turn, ‘Internetworked Social Movements (ISMs)’” (Langman, 2005, p. 1). Unlike traditional social movements, which are usually localized, where physical participation of members in the movement’s activities such as meetings and protests is indispensable, and regarded as a measure of cohesion, the members of Internetworked social movements are global and online where participation is virtual and fluid. According to Langman (2005, p. 4), “Electronically mediated participation has created conditions for the emergence of new kinds of highly fluid ‘mobilizing structures’ that tend to be far less structured, with fluid networks that are more open and participatory, and are articulated across a wide variety of issues”. The online sphere in which Internetworked Social Movements exist makes them not “easily understood within existing frameworks” (Langman, 2005, p. 4). The ISMs owe their existence to the Internet. Therefore, their actions, such as cyber-activism and cyber-politics, are enabled by information technology (Langman 2005), which facilitates communication without regard to distance and allows the formation of unconventional structures. In other words,

in addition to making global communication easier, the Internet fosters the mobilization of eccentric, heterogeneous movements (Della Porta & Mosca, 2005). According to Della Porta and Mosca (2005, p. 168), “the Internet provides social movements with a cheap and fast means of international communication which simplifies mobilisation and favours highly flexible, loose organisational structures”.

Zorn, Grant and Henderson (2013) introduce the concept of resource mobilization chains. Zorn et al. (2013), focusing on the community and voluntary organizations (CVOs) in New Zealand, posit that social movements such as non-profit organizations could mobilize social media as a collaborative tool to form resource mobilization chains, and tremendously improve their effectiveness. According to Zorn et al. (2013, p. 668), non-profit organizations such as the CVOs could mobilize social media to “increase their effectiveness dramatically by using these tools to collaborate, build community, acquire resources, and deliver services”. However, they found that “resource constraints such as limited financial, staff (volunteer) or technological capacity may impede a CVO’s ability to engage in Internet applications such as social media in the first place” (Zorn, Grant, & Henderson, 2013, p. 686).

Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014) trace the evolution of cyberactivism and posit two stages of development referred to as cyberactivism 1.0 and 2.0. Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014) argue that the mobilization of social media by social movements in order to gain political influence and change the society is not new. According to them, cyberactivism 1.0 refers to “the use of traditional technological tools

such as website hacking, organizational websites, and the use of e-mail and mailing lists to recruit and organize physical demonstrations” (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 367), while cyberactivism 2.0 relies on the Internet and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, etc. for the dissemination of information, recruitment and participation in protests (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). So, unlike cyberactivism 1.0, which requires physical participation in protests, cyberactivism 2.0 “allows regular participation without time or place restrictions and increases the different levels of participation and engagement, allowing an individual to support the protest with a simple link to the others” (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 368).

2.5 Labor/Trade Unions as Social Movements

As discussed earlier, literature shows that labor unions are social movements (Liu, 2015; Flynn, 2011 ; Martin, 2008; Kimeldorf & Stepan-Norris, 1992). According to Flynn (2011, p. 117), “traditional theories of social movements see the category of social movements as including ...institutional change movements such as the labor movement. Resource mobilization theory, however, limits the social movement’s category to institutional change movement’s intent on reshaping the social structure or distribution of power and resources in society.”

Albert (2013, p. 594) uses resource mobilization theory to explain the “variance between labor unions in their patterns of political engagement through the medium of congressional hearings”. He finds that labor unions are social movements and that they

conform to “many of the predictions of the resource mobilization theory” (Albert, 2013, p. 575). According to Albert (2013, p. 574), “labor unions have numerous tools at their disposal to influence public policy with the aim of improving workers’ lives” (Albert, 2013, p. 574). These may include, but are not limited to, campaign contributions and participation in congressional hearings (Albert, 2013). Focusing on participation in congressional hearings, Albert (2013, p. 575) posits that “union membership and having a professional lobbying staff are positively related to participation in congressional hearings.” Therefore, congressional hearing appearances, which are a function of membership and lobbyists, are an indicator of influence. This is because successfully presented testimonies during the hearings can influence the behavior of the policymakers (Burstein & Hirsh, 2007; Dresser, 1999).

Another indication that the size of membership is important in order for a union to have political influence is that the size of membership is directly related to the size of revenue (Albert, 2013). The larger the membership the more the monthly union dues collected (*cet. par.*), which proportionately affects the number and quality of lobbyists that can be hired by a union. According to Albert (2013, p. 577), “[t]here are also indirect benefits to size, including the financial resources that come with a healthy base of dues-paying members.” Albert’s perspective on the process by which the unions acquire political influence to impact public policy is contextual, and refers to the American geopolitical context. However in the Nigerian context, where the unions do not have paid professional lobbyists and congressional hearings are of no consequence, “strike, as a

weapon, is the only part of collective bargaining with [the Nigerian] government that workers brandish. In the present democratic dispensation, it appears to work effectively” (Alalade, 2004, p. 206).

Dibben (2010) draws on exploratory research on Mozambique to examine changes in union membership levels, diversity and renewal. Dibben argues that the survival of trade unions in the industrialized and emerging economies depends on the adoption of appropriate strategies to mobilize core members and attract outside workers. According to Dibben (2010, p. 468), the experience of Mozambique was “marked by particularly harsh fascist Portuguese colonial rule, an advanced experiment in state socialism, a brutal civil war and dramatic neo-liberal policies of restructuring and rapid privatization.” These conditions had a declining effect on the membership level of the trade unions in Mozambique. In order to improve membership levels, unions must adapt to the current political and economic changes, and engage in various renewal strategies, which include membership drives, both within and outside the workplace (Dibben, 2010). Dibben (2010) focuses on understanding the effectiveness of the Mozambican labor movement, especially in the areas of the protection of members’ rights through policy impacts, and community outreach.

Mozambique and Nigeria share certain similarities: both countries have experienced colonial rule and tremendous infrastructural devastation through civil wars. However, both countries are dissimilar in population and workforce. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with a population of over 180 million and a workforce of

over 54 million.⁸ Mozambique has a population of 25 million and a workforce of 12 million. In Nigeria, unlike in Mozambique, union membership is sector-dependent and automatic. For example, employees of the ministry of agriculture in Nigeria are automatically members of Agriculture and Allied Employees Union of Nigeria (AAEUN). Membership is extended only to the workers in the agricultural sector. So there is virtually no membership drive, and the renewal strategy is mainly the assurance that members' rights are protected. Dikken (2010, p. 480) notes that there has been a decline in union membership levels across the emerging economies of the African continent and states that it could be attributed to the “decrease in formal sector work, a growth in contingent work and a large informal sector workforce.”

2.5.1 Relationship to RMT

Earlier, the five main principles of RMT were specified. This section indicates why the Nigerian labor union movement is a relevant case for testing RMT. That is, it shows to what extent this social movement is a relevant case study for testing RMT.

The first principle is: “The actions of social movement’s members and participants are rational.” According to resource mobilization theory, “participation in social movements is a rational behavior, based on an individual’s conclusions about the costs and benefits of participation...” (Flynn, 2011 , p. 112). “Trade Unionism was an

⁸ CIA World Fact-book <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>. Last Access 10-18-2015.

important legacy of colonialism in Nigeria” (Alalade, 2004), and the Nigeria labor unions have come a long way.. The first organized labor group, the Nigerian Civil Service Union (NCSU), was founded in 1912 under the British colonial rule (Fajana, 2006; Imhonopi & Urim, 2011). In 1921 the name of the union was changed to Nigerian Union of Civil Servants (NUCS). The National Union of Teachers and the Nigerian Railways Workers Union followed in 1931 (Fajana, 2004). Although the unions were founded, they were not legal. The Trade Union Ordinance of 1938 legalized trade unionism and resulted in the proliferation of labor unions (Imhonopi & Urim, 2011).

In the years and decades that followed, many more labor unions were founded. In 1978 the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) was constituted to be the umbrella union to which the registered unions in Nigeria are affiliated. So, over the years, the Nigerian unions have gone through various transitions. However, notwithstanding the political ups and downs of Nigeria, the unions have lived up to their reason to exist, which is to protect the interests of the Nigerian workers in both public and private sectors (Marks & McAdam, 1996). The unions interface with the government on behalf of the members. They organize protests and strikes to compel the government to make favorable policies and change adverse ones. In other words, the unions do for the members what they cannot do for themselves. So, union members remain members and participate in union activities based on rational conclusions about the “perceived costs and benefits of participation” (Klandermans, 1984, p. 583).

The second principle is: “A social movement’s actions are strongly influenced by institutionalized power imbalances and conflicts of interest.” The Nigeria labor unions suffered repression and subjugation at the hands of a succession of military juntas that ruled Nigeria—after only seven years of its independence from the British—during most of the period from 1967 to 1999 (Oyelere & Owoyemi, 2011; Ojo, 1997; Nwoko, 2009, Falola and Heaton, 2008). The succession of military juntas was punctuated in 1979 by the election of a civilian president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who was summarily overthrown by a military junta led by General Muhammadu Buhari in 1983 after only four years in office (Falola & Ihonvbere, 1985; Oyelere & Owoyemi, 2011). In the decades of military rule, the Nigerian constitution was suspended and the country was ruled by decrees (Adejumobi, 2001; Ayeomoni, 2011). Some of the decrees were directed at the labor unions for the purpose of repression and oppression; examples are the Trade Disputes Decree No.7 of 1976 that put the fate of unions in the hands of the National Industrial Court; the Trade Disputes Decree No. 23⁹ of 1976, which permitted the President to ban any union; and the Trade Unions Prohibition Order No. 42 of 1976 that banned the Federal Fire Service from unionizing. Also, many of the supposed reforms by the military "directly impinged on the right and ability of [the] labor movement to organize and recruit workers" (Oyelere & Owoyemi, 2011, p. 28). So, as a result of the repressive decrees, during the decades of military rule the Nigeria labor unions seldom exercised their power to strike.

⁹ This is the actual number of the decree or order. In other words, the decree is the 23rd in line.

The third principle is: “These power imbalances and conflicts of interest are sufficient to generate grievances that lead to the mobilization of social movement’s intent on changing the distribution of resources and organization.” Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999 with the election of retired General Olusegu Obasanjo who was the leader of one of the military juntas that ruled Nigeria. Civilian rule was welcomed by the majority of Nigerians (Nwoko, 2009). Labor unions sprang back up to rekindle their primary purpose of existence, which is to "ensure [that] members’ welfare and interests are given priority attention by employers and government" (Imhonopi & Urim 2011, p. 236). However, it did not take long before the military-ruler-turned-civilian-president and his administration engaged in efforts to "frustrate the activities of the movement and treat the NLC with hostility" (Oyelere & Owoyemi, 2011, p. 32), which caused the NLC and its affiliates to agitate.

The fourth principle is: “Centralized and formally structured social movements more effectively mobilize resources and achieve goals of change than decentralized and informal social movements.” Originally, circulars were written, hand-carried messages from the leadership of the unions to the members, which usually contained information regarding meetings, protests, and strikes. Chronologically, the bearers of the circulars first distributed them on foot because that was the main means of movement during the early years of the inception of the unions. The advent of bicycles made the distribution of circulars faster, and even faster on motorcycles, which became available much later. However, circulars were impacted by weather conditions and human weakness. So, using

circulars as a means of communication, the unions had to schedule their meetings, protests and strikes weeks or perhaps months in the future in order to allow the circulars to reach as many members as possible. This gave the government time to co-opt the leaders and water down the intentions of the unions. However, with the proliferation of mobile phones and the advent of social media in Nigeria, the labor unions "organized and participated in protests and strikes of varying magnitude" (Oyelere & Owoyemi, 2011, p. 32) at a much faster pace. They protested and won battle after battle forcing government to abandon adverse policies.

The fifth principle is: "The success of social movements is heavily influenced by group strategy and the political climate." According to Flynn (2011, p 130), "[s]ocial movements tend to be most successful in open, democratic societies in which social mobility and social change are accepted concepts." The succession of military regimes that ruled Nigeria by decrees, as discussed earlier, created a very hostile political climate for the Nigerian labor unions. According to Oyelere and Owoyemi (2011, p. 32), "prolonged and unlawful detention of labour leaders, invasion and disruption of union meetings, seminars and other activities of Congress [NLC] and its components by security forces and a vicious anti-labour campaign by the State generally marked the military era of Nigeria's polity." The harsh political climate caused the labor unions to dwindle. However, the return to civilian rule in 1999 lifted the shackles of the military era, and returned the democratic atmosphere under which unions (social movements) now thrive. So the unions revived and refocused on their reason for existence, which is to

protect the welfare and interests of their members (Imhonopi & Urim, 2011). With the fledgling democracy as the enabling condition, and group strategy, the unions struck and “force[d] the government to revert some of its [repressive] economic decisions” (Oyelere & Owoyemi, 2011, p. 32). So the Nigerian labor movement falls under the purview of the fifth principle of RMT.

2.6 Research Question

Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) used the Egyptian revolution as a case to test resource mobilization theory in social movements and the impact of social media during the Egyptian revolution. Eltantawy and Wiest argue that “social media played an instrumental role in the success of the anti-government protests that led to the resignation of the country’s dictatorial leader [Hosni Mubarak]” (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011, p. 1207). In testing RMT, Eltantawy and Wiest ask the following questions:

1. What conditions and resources sustained the anti-government protests that led to the Egyptian revolution in early 2011?
2. In what ways were social media technologies employed as a resource to support the Egyptian revolution?

According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011), President Mubarak maintained a dictatorial rule in Egypt for 30 years during which there was corruption at the highest level of government, no transparency in presidential and parliamentary elections, citizens were oppressed and detained without formal charge, self-expression was prevented, and protests were squashed. “Mubarak drafted 34 constitutional amendments in 2007 that

increased his control and further stifled the masses. These included powers to try civilians in military courts, revoke judicial supervision of parliamentary elections, and impose restrictions to prevent unaffiliated independents from running for office” (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011, p. 1211). The regime of Hosni Mubarak depicts endemic institutional power imbalances and conflicts of interest, which generated grievances that led the citizens to rationally mobilize and engage in a revolution to change the distribution of resources and the organizational structure. These conform to numbers 1, 2 and 3 of the principles of RMT. Thirty years of stifling and oppressive dictatorial regime led to strong public support for the reformist Mohamed El Baradei, who mobilized the youth and other politicians to start an opposition movement that culminated in the revolution. One of the most significant events that triggered the revolution was the brutal killing of Khaled Said in June 2010 (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011).

The centralized and formally structured social movement that ousted the dictatorial regime of Hosni Mubarak conforms to the 4th principle of RMT. Also, the thirty years of repression which galvanized the politicians and young people into contentious activism and ultimate revolution conforms to the group strategy (5th) principle of the RMT. One of the arguments of RMT is that “social movements succeed through the effective mobilization of resources” (Flynn, 2011 , p. 113). According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011), protesters leveraged the robust Internet infrastructure of Egypt to use social media such as SMS, social-networking sites and blogs to facilitate information dissemination and sustain the protests. Eltantawy and Wiest (2011, p. 1212)

found that “Social media technologies represent an important instrumental resource that contributed to the birth and sustainability of the January 25 protests.” They conclude that “resource mobilization theory can aid in understanding the Egyptian revolution—as well as other political and social movements” (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011, p. 1218).

The work of Eltantawy and Wiest motivated this research, which tests resource mobilization theory in a different location and context, namely the use of social media as communication resources in the actions of the Nigerian labor unions. Similar to Eltantawy and Wiest, the following research questions are used to test RMT:

1. What conditions and resources are utilized by Nigerian labor unions to facilitate successful actions such as protests and strikes?
2. In what ways are social media technologies employed as a resource to support the actions of the Nigerian labor unions?

Chapter 3 – Research Method

A qualitative case study method was chosen for this research because this approach allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth study of a particular instance of a phenomenon (Cavaye, 1996), which in this research is the use of social media by Nigerian labor unions. Ten cases were studied, representing 10 labor unions¹⁰ that are affiliated with the “Nigeria Labour Congress” [NLC], which includes 40 affiliate unions, comprising about 4 million members. NLC’s web site “history” page states that the congress “was formally constituted as the only national federation of trade unions in [Nigeria] in 1978.” Interviews with each union leader and 5 members of each union were conducted; in addition, national daily newspaper articles were consulted to corroborate information about union actions mentioned in the interviews. Interviews are invaluable in case study research as they offer the researcher the opportunity to explore interviewees’ responses for deeper understanding of concepts and perspectives. According to Gerring (2007, p. 48), interviews allow the researcher to “probe into details that would be impossible to delve into, let alone anticipate, in a standard survey”.

3.1 Case Selection

Since the labor union movement in Nigeria has a national body, the NLC, it was determined that NLC affiliates should be the cases studied for this research. Theoretical

¹⁰ According to the NLC web site history page (<http://www.nlcng.org/history.php>, accessed July 28, 2015) there are 40 affiliates, but the NLC web site affiliates page (<http://www.nlcng.org/affiliates.php>, accessed July 28, 2015) lists 44 affiliates.

saturation is the goal for qualitative researchers (Cavaye, 1996), but because of the time and location constraints imposed on this author, the dissertation committee members agreed that collecting data from a convenience sample of leaders and members of 10 unions (around one-quarter of congress unions) would likely lead to meaningful conclusions. This author had a personal contact in the NLC who provided an introduction to 10 union leaders, all of whom agreed to participate in the study. These connections dictated which unions were included in the research. Table 2 shows the 10 unions that participated, including their approximate membership enrollment and a brief description of facts about the unions that are relevant to this study. The total membership of the 10 case unions is approximately 3.77 million. The author was not able to obtain estimates for other unions, but my NLC contact informed him that the unions in this study are among the largest in NLC.

Table 2. Nigerian labor unions participating in the study

Union	Size	Brief Description
Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)	110,000	ASUU was founded in 1978. The members of the academic staff of all the 40 federal universities and all the 39 state universities in Nigeria are automatically members of ASUU.
Agriculture and Allied Employees Union of Nigeria (AAEUN)	500,000	AAEUN was founded in 1981; members include the employees of the federal ministry of agriculture, employees of the ministries of agriculture in all 36 states of Nigeria and the employees of the World Bank assisted Agricultural Development Programs (ADP) in all 36 states of Nigeria.
National Union of Hotels and Personal Services Workers (NUHPSW)	130,000	NUHPSW was founded in 1998. The members of NUHPSW include employees of all government and privately-owned hostels and resorts in Nigeria.
National Union of Printing, Publishing and Paper Products Workers (NUPPPROW)	220,000	NUPPPROW was founded in 1977. The members of the union span the whole printing and publishing industry in Nigeria, both public and privately owned.
Nigeria Union of Civil Service Secretariat Stenographic Workers (NUCSSASW)	400,000	NUCSSASW was founded in 1978. The members include stenographers from all public and private establishments in Nigeria.
Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ)	200,000	NUJ was founded in 1955. Members are drawn from the employees of all the media organizations in Nigeria.
Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE)	1,022,000	NULGE was founded in 1941. Membership includes the employees of all 774 local government areas in Nigeria. It is among the largest in membership size.
Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU)	1,010,000	NASU was founded in 1978. Its membership includes all non-academic staff of all secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
Radio, Television and Theatre Workers Union of Nigeria (RATTAWU)	157,000	RATTAWU was founded in 1977. Members include employees of all the radio and television organizations in Nigeria including the entertainment industry (Nollywood).
Steel & Engineering Workers Union of Nigeria (SEWUN)	622,000	SEWUN was founded in 1973. Steel and engineering employees in the federal ministry of works and in the ministries of works in the 36 states of Nigeria are automatically members of SEWUN,

Note: Sizes are estimates and were obtained from my contact in the NLC. Numbers are rounded to thousands of members.

3.2 Data Collection

The union leaders interviewed were either the chairmen or secretaries of the unions in the state where the data collection took place. During or at the end of an

interview with a union leader, leaders were asked to recommend 5 union members to contact for interviews, all of whom agreed to participate in the study. Of the 50 members interviewed, 9 were women.¹¹ Some of these members had held leadership positions in the past. Once 5 members from each union had been interviewed, this phase of the data collection ended. The other type of data collected was a set of articles published in Nigerian “national dailies” (national daily newspapers¹²) that described the events surrounding actions by the 10 labor unions.

Two different semi-structured interview protocols were developed for each of the two interview groups: union leaders and members.¹³ These protocols had similar components, which were derived from an assessment of the information that would be needed to answer the research question; that is, whether the case study of Nigerian national unions’ use of social media can be explained by resource mobilization theory. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed further exploration of the responses from the two categories of interviewees to gain deeper understanding of the two perspectives.

The interview questions for the union leaders were divided into five categories: organization, communication methods, protests and strikes,¹⁴ inter-union communication,

¹¹ I was not able to obtain information about how many NLC members are female.

¹² Most Nigerian indigenous newspapers are considered regional dailies. However the major ones such as those used in this study are widely read. They are distributed to and read in all states of Nigeria.

¹³ The research was approved by the Claremont Graduate University Institutional Review Board on July 8th 2014 (IRB# 2275).

¹⁴ In the Nigerian context, protests and strikes go hand in hand. When the labor unions are striking, they are also protesting and engaging in demonstrations.

and conclusion (see Table 3). Questions about the organization were designed to learn the mission of the union and whether it included protecting the interests of the members, and if it did, then what actions and activities the union undertook in order to do so. Questions about communication methods were meant to identify the communication methods of the union and how the preferred method had helped to improve attendance and participation in union activities. Questions about protests and strikes were intended to identify the process of negotiation with the government and the outcomes of the negotiations. Questions about inter-union communications were asked in order to determine to what extent unions supported each other's causes, and if so, whether these were supported by methods of communication. Concluding questions were framed in order to learn the effects of the use of communications methods.

The interview questions for union members were divided into three categories: organization, communication methods, and conclusion (see Table 4). Questions about the organization were designed to understand the members' knowledge of the benefits of membership and the activities of the union; and the interviewees' participation in union activities such as meetings, protests and strikes. Questions about communication methods were asked to determine the effects of methods of communication on participation in union activities, as well as whether participation was mandatory. Concluding questions were framed in order to determine the effects of the use of communication methods.

Table 3. Interview protocol for the union leaders

<p>The Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Briefly explain the primary purpose and mission of your union?○ Protection of the union members' rights? [prompt]○ What kinds of actions and activities does your union perform in order to meet its purpose and mission?○ Meetings? [prompt]○ Protests and Strikes? [prompt]
<p>Communication Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In order to hold meetings, protests and strikes, you must inform your members. What communication methods do you use to disseminate information to your members?<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Conventional? [prompts]● Circulars, Phone call● Email? [prompt]● Social Media? [prompts]● Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Texting, Myspace, Flickr● Mass Media? [prompts]● Radio, Television○ On average, what percentage of your members is reached, in every instance, through each method of communication?○ On average, what percentage of your members show up and participate?○ What happens to the members who do not show up and participate?<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sanctions? [prompts]● Fines?○ Impact on membership benefits
<p>Protests and Strikes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How many protests and strikes has your union staged since 2008?○ When did your union stage protest?○ Briefly explain the reason(s) for protest?○ What did you intend to achieve by protest?○ How did government react to protest "A"?○ Negotiation? [prompt]○ Did your union enter into an agreement with the government for the protest?○ Did government fully implement the terms of agreement for the protest?○ On a scale of 1 - 10, how much success did your union have toward the protest?○ On a scale of 1 - 10, how much do you attribute your union's achievements in the protest to your union's preferred communication method?
<p>Inter Union Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Did other unions join in your protests?○ Has your union joined in other unions' protest?○ On a scale of 1 - 10, how much do you rate communication method in fostering the solidarity between your union and other unions?
<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ On a scale of 1 - 10, how much difference has your preferred communication method made in the way your union communicates with members, as well as other unions.○ On a scale of 1 - 10, how do you rate the efficiency and effectiveness of your union's activities using your preferred communication method?○ On a scale of 1 - 10, how much sense of empowerment does your union have using your preferred method of communication?○ Before I conclude this interview, is there anything you would like to add to your responses?○ Also, do you have any questions for me?

Table 4. Interview protocol for union members

<p>The Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Briefly explain the primary purpose and mission of your union. ○ Protection of the union members' rights? [prompt] ○ What kinds of actions and activities does your union perform in order to meet its purpose and mission? ○ Meetings? [prompt] ○ Protests and Strikes? [prompt]
<p>Communication Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In order to hold meetings, protests and strikes, the union must inform the members. How does the union communicate with you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conventional? [prompts] ● Circulars, Phone call ● Email? [prompt] ● Social Media? [prompts] ● Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Texting, Myspace, Flickr ● Mass Media? [prompts] ● Radio, Television ○ Which of the methods of communication you mentioned do you prefer? ○ Why do you prefer this method of communication? ○ To you, which method of communication is most reliable? ○ Why do you think that this method of communication is most reliable? ○ Do you always show up for meetings, protests and strikes? ○ What happens if you do not show up? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sanctions [prompt] ● Fines ● Impact on membership benefits
<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being the least and 10 being the most), how much difference has your preferred method of communication made in the way you attend meetings, and participate in protests and strikes? ○ On a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being the least and 10 being the most), how much sense of empowerment do you have using your preferred method of communication in performing union activities? ○ Before I conclude this interview, is there anything you would like to add to your responses? ○ Also, do you have any questions for me?

After initial contact was made with each of the union leaders who had agreed to participate in the research, they were given an informed consent form (see Appendix A) for their perusal and signature. Upon the receipt of signed copies of the documents, interviews were scheduled and conducted. A similar process of initial contact, signing of documents, and scheduling of interviews was undertaken before the member interviews

were conducted. Interviews lasted between one-half hour and one hour, and were audio-recorded.

Pertinent articles from four major Nigerian national dailies were used to corroborate the responses of the union leaders with respect to the outcomes of union actions. The national dailies used in the research were selected in terms of reach, that is, they are read in all parts of Nigeria.¹⁵ Unlike the regular union members, the union leaders have a holistic understanding of their various unions. They organize and facilitate protests and strikes. So, in this study, union leaders responded to position-appropriate questions, which delved into specific protests and strikes, interactions with government, and outcomes of the protests and strikes. However, human frailties could cause lapses in the interviewees' recollections of the events under discussion (protests, strikes, and outcomes). So the articles of the national dailies were invaluable as corroborative materials. Although the perspectives of the interviewees as insiders might be different from those of the editorials of the national dailies, the articles on the specific events in question with dates brought up by leaders were considered corroborative to the accounts of the interviewees. The absence of fundamental discrepancies between the articles of the national dailies and the accounts of the interviewees were considered as evidence of the validity of the interviewees' responses.

¹⁵ Top 10 Nigerian Newspapers, <http://answersafrica.com/top-10-nigerian-newspapers-most-read-online.html> last accessed on August 2, 2015.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis process followed the procedures for coding qualitative data as suggested by Saldana (2009). Interview recordings were transcribed into individual documents. The documents were coded in a cyclical manner. The first cycle is to apply codes to all documents. The second cycle is to do post-coding/pre-writing (Saldana, 2009). These cycles are explained further below.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 56), “[c]odes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study.” These codes are formulated to be “semantically close to the terms they represent” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). So in this study, codes were carefully assigned to avoid overlaps. For example, similar responses to the question “Briefly explain the primary purpose and mission of your union?” included the following:

- The main purpose of the union is to alleviate the problems faced by workers, that is, taking care of their welfare [AAEUN-C]¹⁶.
- The role of NUJ is to harmonize, articulate and protect and secure the interest and welfare of all journalists in Nigeria [NUJ-C].
- The union was established to take care of the welfare of its members ... the union is there to make sure that the workers are not exploited [RATTAWU-C].

¹⁶ Throughout this document, quotations from interviews are provided along with a reference label to generally identify the speaker. Interviewees are labeled as “union acronym”-C for the “Chairman” of that union, and “union acronym”-Mn (where n = 1-5) for the “Members” of that union. So, the Chairman of the Agriculture and Allied Employees Union of Nigeria (AAEUN) is labeled “AAEUN-C” and the members are labeled “AAEUN-M1” through “AAEUN-M5”.

- The primary objective is to protect the interest of the workers, and to be an umbrella covering the workers [SEWUN-C].

The above responses were categorized as “Protection of members’ rights” because they implicitly mean that the unions principally engage in the protection of members’ rights.

According to Saldana (2009), post-coding/pre-writing is the “transitional analytic process between coding cycles and the final write-up of [the] study” (p. 185). The purpose of post-coding is to integrate the “key code words and phrases into narrative form to see how the puzzle pieces fit together” (Saldana, 2009, p. 187). Thus, post-coding involved the regrouping and restructuring of the codes, and looking for interactions that would allow integration of codes to enable cross-analysis of data (that is, between and across data sources: among union leaders, among union members, between union leaders and union members, and between union leaders) with respect to “protests and strikes” and national dailies. Pre-writing involved using the data analysis to craft and draft the final report while focusing on the research question.

Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of the qualitative analysis of the interview data described above. It follows the order of the questions posed to the union leaders and members. Thus, the chapter begins by discussing the purpose and mission of the unions, and the actions and activities that the unions carry out to meet their purpose and mission. Then it presents a profile of the communications methods used by the unions and the effectiveness of these methods. Next is an analysis of the protests and strikes that have been staged since 2008; this section also presents information from newspaper reports that corroborate the information obtained from union leaders. The penultimate section discusses the inter-union connections. The chapter concludes by presenting an overall assessment of the effects of the preferred communication method, SMS, on union outcomes.

4.2 The Organization

According to Marks and McAdam (1996, p. 16), “All trade unions attempt to increase their members' wages, improve their working conditions, broadly understood, and, in recent decades, create a favorable social and political context for workers.” In other words, the unions “pressure governments to legislate improvements in their members' working lives” (Marks & McAdam, 1996, p. 18). And, indeed, the analyzed

interview data indicate homogeneity in the mission of the unions, which is to protect the members' rights as depicted in the following words of the leader of NASU:

We [the unions] ensure government, as employer, employs within the legal framework. There are rules and regulations guiding employment. People are employed on permanent status, on temporary status, as contract staff and they are guided by rules and regulations. People are employed and not to be arbitrarily dismissed, at the will of the employers or government. People are employed, they are supposed to be motivated, they are supposed to be catered for. We [the unions] ensure that government lives up to its responsibility to the workers. [NASU-C]

4.3 Communication Methods

Table 5 summarizes the communication methods and types that were reported by the union leaders and members. All unions use SMS to communicate with members about union actions; the leaders indicate that this is the preferred communication method partly because of the inadequacies of communication methods such as phone calls and circulars.

We use lavishly text messaging. Lavishly, we use it lavishly, text messages, to reach everybody. So the first thing we do in the union is have a register of all members with their phone numbers and we do bulk messaging.¹⁷ We do bulk messaging. [RATTWU-C]

¹⁷ Bulk SMS organizations provide mass or bulk SMS services to unions, government and private organizations. Unions use them to send messages to their members, government and private organizations use them to send

SMS has so far not disappointed us because if you talk about calling on phone you discover that sometimes the network is bad and once you miss someone you have missed that person. And most people don't call back. But then when you talk about circulars, somebody will have to move from one office to another and if it is raining that becomes a problem. And because human beings are involved sometimes they may end up someplace and claimed they have distributed. So the bulk SMS is so far the best because even if the network is bad, when it is good everybody will get it. [NASU-C]

Table 5. Communication methods used by the unions

Union	Circulars	Email	Facebook	SMS	Radio	TV	Msg Board
ASUU-C	-	-	++	+++	-	-	-
AAEUN-C	-	++	-	+++	++	++	-
NUHPSW-C	-	++	-	+++	++	++	-
NUPPPROW-C	-	-	-	+++	-	-	-
NUJ-C	-	-	-	+++	++	++	-
NULGE-C	+	+	-	+++	-	-	-
NUCSSASW-C	-	-	-	+++	-	-	-
NASU-C	-	+	-	+++	-	-	-
RATTAWU-C	-	-	-	+++	++	++	-
SEWUN-C	-	-	-	+++	-	-	++

Notes:

1. Other methods (phone calls, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr and Myspace) were not used.
2. Key: - = Not used or formerly used, + = Seldom used, ++ = Occasionally used, +++ = Always used (preferred)

Bagchi, Kirs, & Udo (2006) argue that lack of landlines, irregular electricity supply, erratic connections and low bandwidth are among the factors that led to the proliferation of mobile phones in Nigeria. However, complementary to the argument of

messages to their employees and clients. Marketing organizations use the services of bulk SMS organizations to send 'junk SMS' such as plain ads and flyers to any person whose number is in their database.

Bagchi et al., this study finds that the following features and the capabilities of SMS facilitated its appeal and pervasiveness amongst the unions as the preferred method of communication:

1. *Cost* – As a very populous third world country with 70% of its population living below the poverty line, Nigeria became a western-world dumping ground for cheap and outdated cell phones.¹⁸ Although the union members are working, many said that their earnings still leave them in poverty, so the cost-effectiveness of the cell phones is very appealing. Furthermore, most of the union members said they are only interested in the ability to send and receive text messages; they are not interested in superfluous feature-laden smart phones. So they purchase only the most affordable cellphones.
2. *Platform Independence* – Cellphones are platform independent, which means that any holder of a cellphone can participate in texting regardless of make, model, or network provider. This makes SMS easily mobilized by the labor unions as a tool for the dissemination of information.
3. *Ubiquity* – The portability of cellphones, and the ability and freedom to send and receive text messages anywhere, without being tethered to cables and wires (Thurlow & Poff, 2011; Miard, 2008), make mobile phones and texting

¹⁸ Nigeria: Toxic Dumping Ground for Electronic Waste - "Nigeria has become a giant dumping ground for TVs, [mobile phones](#) and other potentially toxic electronic waste. These goods make their way to the country disguised as second-hand items from developed nations" (http://www.redorbit.com/news/technology/1641894/nigeria_toxic_dumping_ground_for_electronic_waste, last accessed on October 15, 2015).

convenient and appealing to Nigerians in general and the labor unions in particular.

Other social media and one-way communications media methods are used by some unions, at most occasionally. Email, radio, and television are sometimes used by four unions. Facebook, but not other social networking applications, is sometimes used by two unions. Circulars and message boards are each sometimes used by two of the unions. Reasons why other media are used by some of the unions on an irregular basis are discussed below.

4.3.1 Radio and Television

A 2014 Gallup poll¹⁹ reported that 77.4% of Nigerians listen to news at least once per week on the radio, and 64% watch news on TV at least once per week. These percentages were about 10% higher in 2012, 83.9% and 73.6%, respectively. Just over 90% of radio listening is done on the FM band, with 37.3% of radio listeners saying they do so using their mobile phones, which have an FM radio application. This means that announcements made over the radio could reach most of the intended public. However, as tools that can be mobilized by the unions for union activities, radio and television are disadvantaged by the following:

1. *Simplex Communication* – Radio and television are one-way communication media; in other words, radio and television are not interactive. As a broadcast

¹⁹ Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) (<http://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2014/05/Nigeria-research-brief.pdf>, last accessed on August 7, 2015).

communication, the message originator does not have a way to ascertain that the intended audience received the message, or even the number of people among the intended audience who received the message. Responding to a question on radio communication, the leader of AAEUN said, “[o]f course you cannot receive a feedback just as you receive a feedback when you send a text message and you receive a message that says 'sent' and you know that the message has been sent, and the person has received it”. So the lack of feedback feature in radio and television communication is a major disadvantage in the use of these communications media by the unions.

2. *Store and Hold* – Unlike text messages, which are stored and held in the cellphone and can be read over and over again at will until they are intentionally deleted, radio broadcasts are fleeting and intermittent. Radio and television messages or announcements require the intended audience to be listening in order to receive them. If a message is missed or not well understood, the intended audience would have to wait until the next round of broadcasts in order to receive the message. While it is possible to buy digital radios and televisions with store and hold capabilities (e.g., TiVo), most Nigerians cannot afford these devices, let alone pay subscription fees to receive digital communications media signals. Many of the interviewees explained that the message retention capability of texting also helps them to remember pending union activities and reference past ones. According to the leader of NUJ, “members prefer SMS because it gets them on target, it comes to them,

- directly to them and specifically for them in their phone and they can read it at their convenience and maybe preserve the message as a reminder”.
3. *Cost* – Radio and television announcements are expensive in Nigeria and it seems that the unions are not willing or capable to purchase many timeslots. And, without store and hold, the few timeslots that the unions might be able to purchase may not be heard or seen by the members who may not be listening or watching at the times of broadcast.
 4. *Legacy Television Sets* – Most Nigerian families are still using legacy analog television sets which cannot receive digital signals without additional equipment. Nigeria was targeted to switch to digital TV broadcasting in June 2015.²⁰ Television requires high bandwidth because it incorporates voice and video. So as a result of the dilapidated Nigerian network infrastructure, the television signals suffer attenuation and propagation problems. This and the other issues already discussed make television inviable as a communication tool for the Nigeria labor unions.

4.3.2 Email and Social Networking

Email is occasionally used by AAEUN, NUHPSW, NULGE and NASU to communicate to certain members of their respective unions. The use of email as a regular

²⁰ Nigeria could not meet the deadline of June 2015 for the switchover (<http://leadership.ng/business/356682/2015-digital-switchover-90-nigerias-tv-sets-will-miss-signals>, last accessed on August 7, 2015).

method of communication within and between unions is hampered by the fact that Internet usage rates are low (about 28% in 2014, up from about 23% in 2012 – BBG, 2014) and most Internet users are in the 15-24 age group (BBG, 2014). These factors also impact the use of other social networking (about 29% reported using one in the previous week – BBG, 2014). Facebook is occasionally used by ASUU and NASU to communicate with a certain cadre of members who, as a result of their job positions and earning power, are able to afford computers and smart phones. Other social media platforms (LinkedIn, Flickr and MySpace) were not reported used.

4.3.3 Message Boards

Message boards are limited to members who are located in one relatively small area. So a message board, which is occasionally used by SEWUN, is not a viable communication tool for the majority of unions studied in this research, which have national membership.

4.3.4 Phone Calls

Phone calls were not used. It would be too expensive and tedious to call members to tell them about union actions since the membership of even the smallest union in the study is more than 100,000 members. Moreover, the communication infrastructure of the country has not yet evolved to include automated phone calls for message delivery.

4.4 Participation

Union leaders were asked to estimate how effective communications methods were in reaching members, and how efficient they were in terms of the subsequent rate of participation in actions. Table 6 depicts the percentage of members reached, and members' participation in activities, by union.

Percentages reported for "members reached" ranged from 80%-100%, with 90% being the mode (4 leaders) and three leaders indicating that they are able to reach 100% of their members using SMS. These numbers are impressive and could only be dreamed about before the advent of SMS. Given the poor Nigerian Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure conditions, none of the other communication methods can achieve these numbers. That is why all the union leaders interviewed affirmed SMS as their preferred communication medium.

Table 6. Members reached by SMS and subsequent participation rates

Union	% of Members Reached	Members' Participation %
ASUU	98	80
AAEUN	85	98
NUHPSW	80	98
NUPPPROW	90	70
NUJ	100	90
NULGE	100	98
NUCSSASW	100	70
NASU	90	90
RATTAWU	90	80
SEWUN	90	95

Percentages reported for "members' participation" ranged from 70% to 98% with the mode being the high value of the range (3 leaders reported this estimate). The percentage of union members reached may not translate directly to the percentage of

attendance and participation. In other words, the receipt of SMS messages to attend meetings, protests and strikes may not be the only motivational factor that makes members attend and participate. Union members have other motivations such as the mission of the union, which is to protect members' rights. These include protection against employee maltreatment, nonpayment of salaries and benefits, etc. So union members believe that it is in their interest to attend and participate in union activities. However, before the advent of SMS, the mission of the unions and their objectives, including rights and benefits, were in place, the union leaders noted that there were low member turnouts to meetings, protests and strikes. This, as revealed by some of the interviewees, was mostly as a result of the ineffectiveness of their method of communication, which was through circulars. The leader of NUCSSASW, who said that the union's communications reached 100% of members, estimated participation to be somewhat lower:

You don't expect 100% turnout. But on average we are sure of 70%. Particularly when the issue to discuss is the issue that concerns them generally there will come out in mass [NUCSSASW-C].

Meantime, the leader of AAEUN, whose estimate of how many members are reached was 85%, stated: "Once the welfare of the people you are working with is concerned almost 99% of members show interest" [AAEUN-C].

The leader of NUJ, who said that he believed that communications reached all members, provided an explanation about why the percentage of members who participate in actions is lower than the percentage of members who receive communications:

I have to say that because of the nature of our job, some of them who would want to attend our meetings and functions may not be able due to other engagements, schedule of work, pressure in the office and needs to meet their timelines, deadlines in putting out their story in their medium. So it is not a matter of the information making them to attend meetings or not it is how free they are to attend meetings. So about 90% [NUJ-C].

Papic and Noonan (2011, p. 2) state that “Social media allow organizers to involve like-minded people in a movement”, such as the union members whose interests are being protected. Unlike circulars, which may reach the intended recipient only in the nick-of-time or even when it is too late, the timeliness of SMS allows members to interact and discuss amongst themselves and prepare for the impending activity ahead of time. This makes for full member turnouts and participation in union activities. According to NUHPSW-M5, “When you send text messages, the person receives it and the ‘phone says that the person received it’²¹. If the person denies receipt you can show him your phone where it shows that the message was sent. It makes our members to attend meetings”.

²¹ This is a feedback that reads, ‘sent’ or ‘delivered’, depending on software application, when a text message is sent.

The answers to the questions on the effectiveness and efficiency of SMS show that it is a galvanizing tool for the Nigerian unions studied in this dissertation.

4.5 SMS as the preferred method of communication

As noted above, all the union leaders interviewed identified SMS as their preferred method of communication. The union leaders rated SMS in the following areas:

- The difference SMS has helped to make in the conduct of union activities such as attendance and participation in meetings, protests and strikes.
- The perceived overall efficiency and effectiveness of SMS.
- The empowerment union members now have as a result of the use of SMS as their preferred method of communication.

Table 7 depicts the ratings of SMS by the union leaders.

Table 7. Overall ratings of SMS by union leaders

Union	% Difference SMS has made	% Increase in effectiveness and efficiency	% Improvement in empowerment
ASUU	70	98	70
AAEUN	95	98	95
NUHPSW	90	90	90
NUPPPROW	80	85	85
NUJ	100	80	90
NULGE	90	90	70
NUCSSASW	70	100	100
NASU	90	80	80
RATTAWU	70	80	80
SEWUN	90	95	95

4.5.1 The Difference Made by SMS

All the union leaders interviewed indicated that SMS has made a significant difference in the way they communicate with the union members for union activities such as meetings, protests and strikes. This comment by the leader of RATTAWU typifies the union leaders' perception of the difference SMS has made in their routine union communication needs:

Without the GSM [Global System for Mobile Communications] a lot of activities by unions wouldn't have been possible. It is a facilitator of union activities. Text messaging has facilitated a lot of union activities. When meetings are postponed at a very short notice, how do you know? You are preparing to go to Abuja for a meeting tomorrow and today you assemble all that you need to board the next flight in the morning, in the night a text message comes that the meeting had been postponed, you would have been in the dark, groping in the dark without this GSM.

The leader of NUJ believes that the adoption of SMS as the union's preferred communication method has made a huge difference, as much as 100%, in the way the union communicates with members. The other union leaders rate the difference made by SMS in the range of 70% to 95%. This means that all the leaders interviewed believe that SMS has made a large difference in the way they disseminate information to their members. The leader of RATTAWU, in this comment, affirmed the difference SMS has made in the communication needs of his union:

We achieved a lot through text messages. I should say 80% of our success should be given to text messaging because when we don't gather to take decisions nothing is done and we gather to take decisions by text messages.

The leader of NULGE was even more explicit:

We send text messages to our members. Assuming we want to call a state executive Council meeting; state executive Council is made up of 27 local governments. Each local government has a branch chairman. If we want the branch chairman alone, we invite them through text messages. Where we want the entire branch executives which means seven individuals per local government, then we need to send text messages to the branch chairman, in turn they will now send text messages to their members. Within a twinkle of an eye they will all gather here.

4.5.2 Efficiency and Effectiveness of SMS

The unions' preference for SMS as their method of communication, and the union leaders' responses to various questions regarding SMS, indicate that they believe that SMS is an efficient and an effective method of communication for their unions (see Table 7). The leader of NUCSSASW and the leaders of ASUU and AAEUN rated the efficiency and effectiveness of SMS at 100% and 98%, respectively. Other union leaders rate the efficiency and effectiveness of SMS from 80% to 95%. According to the leader of NUJ, "the GSM - SMS system of communication has been very effective and very reliable". The leader of NUCSSASW shared an experience he had when he had to go into

hiding for fear of reprisals from the government because of a strike that he initiated and was coordinating:

Through text messages I was coordinating the strike. Through text messages I was writing all that needed to be done and coordinating. People said I was doing perfectly well and people were saying ‘where is this boy operating from’. In fact they were surprised; all the write-ups I was doing them. Sent text messages, telling my people, go so and so place, go and pick materials. If there was nothing like GSM text messaging it would have been a total disaster. My brother I thank God for text messaging, it is very effective, it is the quickest means of communication [NUCSSASW-C].

4.5.3 Empowerment

The ability to instantly reach all the members and convene at very short notice, a feat that could only be dreamed of less than two decades ago, is empowering. According to the leader of RATTAWU, “communication is power. If you are not informed, you are deformed ... Text messaging has been wonderful in all aspects of union activities”. Table 8 depicts how empowered the union leaders feel as a result of the mobilization of SMS as their preferred method of communication.²² The leader of NUCSSASW believes that his

²² The percentages in this table and subsequent tables in this chapter are based on responses to questions in the interview protocol that asked for ratings on a scale from 1-10. Most of the interviewees were more comfortable responding to the interview scale questions in percentages as they were not used to the 1-10 scale. For those answers that were given on the 1-10 scale, a value of 1 was converted to 10%, 2 to 20%, etc. In some cases, responses were given in the form “between X% and Y%” which I interpreted as the midpoint number between the two numbers. Examples: between 80% and 90% = 85%, between 90% and 100% = 95%. In other cases, respondents stated their response as “about X%”, which I interpreted as 2 points shy of X%. Examples: about 90% = 88% and about 100% = 98% etc.

union enjoys 100% empowerment, while the leaders of AAEUN and SEWUN believe that their empowerment is up to 90%. Other union leaders felt that their empowerment as a result of the adoption of SMS ranges from 70% to 90%. These numbers indicate how emboldened the unions have become as a result of the mobilization of SMS. This bolstering enabled by SMS translated into tenacity and unprecedented lengths of strikes.

When asked how long the last strike lasted, the leader of NASU quipped:

It lasted for 11 months. Since November last year we've been on strike, we resumed through the suspension of the strike just two weeks ago. So if you were here two weeks ago you would've found this place empty. No learning, no teaching [NASU-C].

4.6 SMS Effectiveness: Rating of SMS by Union Members

The union members are mostly the target of union leaders' text messages. They are the ones who are usually requested to show up at meetings, and they are the ones who are presumably obligated to participate in protests and strikes because, tacitly, they are the ones whose rights are being protected. So, the union members, having experienced the legacy method of communication by circulars, were asked to rate the difference SMS has made in the way they participate in union activities. The union members were also asked to rate how SMS has empowered them to be more engaged in the performance of union activities (see Table 8).

Table 8. Overall ratings of SMS by union members

Union	% Difference SMS has made	% Improvement in Empowerment
ASUU	88	91
AAEUN	90	88
NUHPSW	84	86
NUPPPROW	80	79
NUJ	87	80
NULGE	87	91
NUCSSASW	82	83
NASU	74	77
RATTAWU	79	84
SEWUN	80	83

4.6.1 Difference Made by SMS

Most of the union members interviewed did not mince words in expressing their enthusiasm about the difference SMS has made in the way they engage in union activities, as well as in their personal lives. The union members indicated that SMS was timely and “God-sent” to save their union from the verge of collapse. They believed that lack of a reliable communication method led to incoherence, which enabled the government to deal blow after blow to their rights. Thus, the union members interviewed could not hold back their elation when discussing the difference SMS made in the way they receive information from the union and participate in union activities. The following comments by some of the union members exemplify the general emotion of the members interviewed when discussing the difference SMS made in their communication requirements within the unions:

It is very awesome, very dependable and it pulls crowds. Text message is fast.

Because you have your phone, you sleep with your phone, you marry a phone.

Anytime you have a message, you read it immediately so that the message will go

right deep in you and remain in your memory. Each time you are with your phone, you'll be meddling with your phone you will recall or read it again [RATTAWU – M1].

I tell you what, the advent of these cellular phones, this thing is so fast, the fastest and assured, as far as your phone number is with us, the convenience and the speed, the quicker means of response and so on, and the confidence attached to it. Text [message] is only meant for the actual person you are giving it. No second person will get the information except those who you authorize [AAEUN-M3].

Text messaging has helped us and lots. The era of writing circulars is gone. The in-thing now is text messages and everybody can read text messages. And it comes to you, there is no hindrance to it. It doesn't require electricity to power your phone. So you can't say that you didn't get the information. At any given time if your set [cell phone] is off when you turn it on the message is there. So we cannot deny the fact that text messaging has helped in a big way [RATTAWU-M2].

Comments like these show that SMS has made a large difference in the communication needs of the unions, and that it is a far cry from the defunct legacy method of distributing circulars. These comments also show the members' appreciation of the advent of SMS, as well as the confidence they have acquired as a result.

4.6.2 Empowerment

Union members felt a sense of empowerment as a result of the unions' adoption of SMS as the preferred method of communication. They felt that information is power, and that as long as they are well and timely informed they would be able to stand against any government incursion and repression. The following are some examples of the union members' expression of empowerment as a result of the adoption of SMS as the preferred method of communication:

Text messaging has given us a lot of empowerment because it is the source of all information we receive and the ones we send. This text messaging has been of great help. So it gives us exceptional sense of empowerment [NUHPSW – M1].

The degree of empowerment is up to 80 and 85% because it is quicker and reaches a lot of audience when you have it you just quickly go, unlike passing information to a second person which may encounter a lot of problems but if it is through text messaging as far as your cellular is there you will see it you will get the feedback. If you want to avoid that meeting because of some reason or set back, you can now text back. It is the quickest most effective and efficient method of communication [AAEUN – M3].

Well, it has empowered us more, because most times, like I said in the years past when the circular thing was going on, most times the president or the executives would get the circular and withhold it. But now the text messaging goes round [NULGE – M4].

The demonstrated sense of empowerment seems to have easily translated into a sense of duty to spread the word, and responsibility to participate in collective actions as may be required by the union. According to NUJ – M1, “with the SMS people tend to come out en masse. Sometimes we say if you get this message please send to your colleague”.

4.6.3 Protests and Strikes

The goals which social movements such as the Nigerian labor unions pursue are mainly to "make or block changes" (Flynn, 2009, p. 111). In order to achieve the desired policy changes or block pending adverse policies, the labor unions employ one or both of their collective bargaining tools, namely protests and strikes. According to Joseph (2012, p. 166), “it is easier to desire change and to be willing to act to effect it if one knows that others feel the same way.” So the participation of the full membership of a striking union and the support of other unions represent a remarkable exhibition of coherence and solidarity, which carry enough clout to influence the policymakers who are self-interested and “focused on the calculation of political opportunities and risks” (Schneider & Ingram, 1997, p. 104). The politicians/policymakers may thus view the striking union and its clout as a coherent and expedient voting constituency to warm up to rather than disregard.

The following comments typify the perceptions of the union leaders regarding the influence their coherence and support from other unions during protests and strikes have on the politicians/government:

The people must gather first and it is the SMS that we use to gather people primarily. And if the people don't gather I'm not sure they'll be anything because there wouldn't be decisions taken. And government would be reacting as they are reacting. Unless they see that you are serious and that you have all your members intact thinking the same thing, they wouldn't bat an eyelid [ASUU-C].

If you are able to disseminate information as quickly as possible you'll get the expected audience, but where you have a poor system of communication it will affect the whole action. When you have scant participation government sees it and your position begins to diminish. So if you effectively communicate you'll have good turnout. So proper texting, proper communication through text messages or through other methods of communication is very germane. Texting is the quickest means of reaching our people [NUSSASW-C].

The Nigerian labor unions studied in this dissertation have recorded many successes in their protests and strikes since the advent of SMS in Nigeria. As noted above, the mobilization of SMS by the Nigerian labor unions enabled them to acquire political influence and consequently impact policy. Table 9 depicts the protests and

strikes that the interviewed unions have carried out between 2008 and 2014, and their success ratings by the union leaders. Some unions staged one strike, others two.

Table 9. Strikes by labor unions from 2008-2014 and outcomes

Union	Strikes	% of success	% of success attributable to SMS
ASUU-C	1. Revitalization of universities	60	60
AAEUN-C	1. Minimum wage 2. Fuel Subsidy	100 75	90 80
NUHPSW-C	1. Nonpayment of salaries	100	90
NUPPPROW-C	1. Minimum wage	95	90
NUJ-C	1. Nonpayment of salaries 2. Minimum wage	50 90	90 100
NULGE-C	1. Minimum wage 2. Fuel subsidy	100 50	90 70
NUCSSASW-C	1. Promotion 2. Minimum wage	100 100	100 90
NASU-C	1. CONTISS 15 2. Funding of the Polytechnics	80 80	70 70
RATTAWU-C	1. Nonpayment of salaries 2. Weigh-in Allowances	80 100	70 60
SEWUN-C	1. Nonpayment of salaries	100	60

Note: For example, this means that for AASU 60% of the estimated 60% success was due to SMS.

The union leaders recounted episodes of government intimidation and manipulation during their strikes. The government threatened to fire all members of ASUU during their eleven-month strike, but the union remained tenacious until the government implemented the agreement. The union leaders attributed this persistence to the high participation rates of the members in protests and strikes as well as the support of other unions, both of which were facilitated by social media communications.

4.7 Inter-Union Communications

Social media, mainly SMS, were used to build inter-union relationships and solidarity. Whenever a union stages a protest or strike, other unions join in to show solidarity and allegiance. Table 10 depicts the impact of social media in building inter-union relationships and solidarity.

Table 10. Impact of social media in fostering solidarity with other unions

Union	% Impact
ASUU	98
AAEUN	85
NUHPSW	100
NUPPPROW	80
NUJ	90
NULGE	90
NUCSSASW	90
NASU	100
RATTAWU	90
SEWUN	70

All the union leaders interviewed affirmed that other unions joined in their protests and strikes. Also all the union leaders interviewed said that they joined other unions in their protests and strikes. According to the leader of NUHPSW, “injury for one is injury for all”. The leaders of NUHPSW and NASU both rate the impact of using SMS to foster solidarity within the NLC-affiliated unions at 100%. The leader of ASUU rated impact at 98%, while the leaders of NUJ, NULGE, NUCSSASW and RATTAWU rate the impact at 90%. Other union leaders interviewed rate impacts at 70% to 85% for an average of 86%.

4.8 Corroborative Materials

In this study, pertinent articles of major Nigerian national dailies²³ were used to corroborate the responses of the union leaders. The national dailies used were selected in terms of reach. The four selected dailies are distributed and read in all states of Nigeria.²⁴

Unlike the regular union members, the union leaders have a holistic understanding of their various unions. They organize and facilitate protests and strikes. So, in this study, union leaders responded to position-appropriate questions, which delved into specific protests and strikes, interactions with government, and outcomes of the protests and strikes. However, human frailties could cause lapses in the interviewees' recollections of the events under discussion (protests, strikes, and outcomes). So, the articles of the national dailies were used as corroborative materials. Although the perspectives of the interviewees as insiders might be different from those of the editorials of the national dailies, the articles on the specific events in question with dates mentioned by leaders were considered corroborative to the accounts of the interviewees. The absence of fundamental discrepancies between the articles of the national dailies and the accounts of the interviewees was considered to be evidence of validity of the interviewees' responses. Appendix B provides the details of this analysis.

²³ Many of the Nigerian indigenous newspapers are considered national dailies. The major ones such as those used in this study are distributed to and widely read in all states of Nigeria.

²⁴ Top 10 Nigerian Newspapers, <http://answersafrica.com/top-10-nigerian-newspapers-most-read-online.html>, last accessed on August 2, 2015.

4.9 Summary of Findings

Findings from the analyzed interview data of the convenience sample of 10 Nigerian labor unions indicate that SMS is the preferred and mobilized social medium for the dissemination of information regarding all union activities including protests and strikes. SMS is viewed as efficient and effective by the union leaders and members. The analyzed union leaders' interview data (see Table 7) indicate that SMS has made a significant difference in the way Nigerian labor unions perform their activities. The union leaders and members believe that SMS is effective and empowering to them (see Tables 7 and 8).

Findings indicate (see Table 9) that the Nigerian labor unions, during the period under study (2008-2014²⁵), were successful in the strikes they engaged in, and that the unions attribute high percentages of their successes to SMS. Findings also indicate that, during the period under study, the Nigerian labor unions successfully impacted policies such as the revitalization of the universities, minimum wage, nonpayment of salaries, fuel subsidies, weigh-in allowances, CONTISS 15 (Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure), and funding of tertiary institutions.

Findings further indicate that the national dailies corroborate the accounts of the interviewees, regarding protests and strikes, without discrepancies. Thus, the accounts of the interviewees are considered valid.

²⁵ 2008 was chosen as the starting point for the study because of two reasons: (1) union actions began to increase significantly at this time, and (2) mobile phones became affordable for most workers.

Chapter 5 – Analysis and Conclusion

The aim of this research was to test Resource Mobilization Theory in the context of the Nigerian labor movement and its use of social media, in this case “texting”. Similar to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011), the following research questions were used to test RMT:

1. What conditions and resources are utilized by Nigerian labor unions to facilitate successful actions such as protests and strikes?
2. In what ways are social media technologies employed as a resource to support the actions of the Nigerian labor unions?

The data for this dissertation study show that RMT explains the process that 10 selected Nigerian labor unions use in their actions—that is, protests and strikes. It mirrors the findings of a study by Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) that tested RMT with respect to the Egyptian uprising in 2011. As stated in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Eltantawy and Wiest (2011, p. 1212) found that “Social media technologies represent an important instrumental resource that contributed to the birth and sustainability of the January 25 protests.” The differences are that in the Egyptian case the social movement arose in part due to the presence of social media, and protests were aimed at an authoritarian regime using Internet-based social media; whereas in the current case the unions were well established even before the current democratic regime, and the protests were focused on changing government policies using the mobile-phone-based SMS.

Stepanova (2011, p. 6) suggests that social media are effective tools for grassroots organizing to “bring down an authoritarian regime.” However, social media have been

used in many other ways than to bring down the regimes of dictators, such as to force the government to make, withdraw or modify policy. In Chile, the President, Mr. Sebastián Piñera, was forced to withdraw a policy to build a power plant near a marine reserve by citizens who used Facebook and Twitter to organize themselves (Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2012). Also, in the United States, the mayor of Oakland was compelled to change his decision to dismantle a campsite of occupiers who organized themselves using social media. These are examples of how social media have been used to change regimes, as well as the attitude of governments, around the world.

To most people, especially in the Western World, social media include only the most well-known companies such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. However, in a developing country such as Nigeria, where electricity supply is not constant or reliable, not many people have a computer or the skills to operate one, and Internet connectivity is mainly slow and unreliable, participation in the major social media is as yet limited. These factors notwithstanding, many social movements in Nigeria, such as the labor unions, use social media to accomplish their ultimate objectives, which include efforts to “make or block changes” (Flynn, 2011 , p. 111). This study used interview data from 10 Nigerian labor unions to identify the specific social media mobilized by the unions and provide insight into the process by which they acquire political influence to impact policy.

In order to impact policy, the labor unions must exert political influence. In other words, the labor unions must find a way to impress upon the politicians who make the

policies that it is in their political interest to change adverse policies or to refrain from making adverse policies. So an important aspect of this study is to understand the process by which the Nigerian labor unions acquire political influence in order to impact policy. The interviews with union leaders and members revealed that the labor unions acquire political influence through the process shown in Figure 1. The process is further detailed in the following sub-sections.

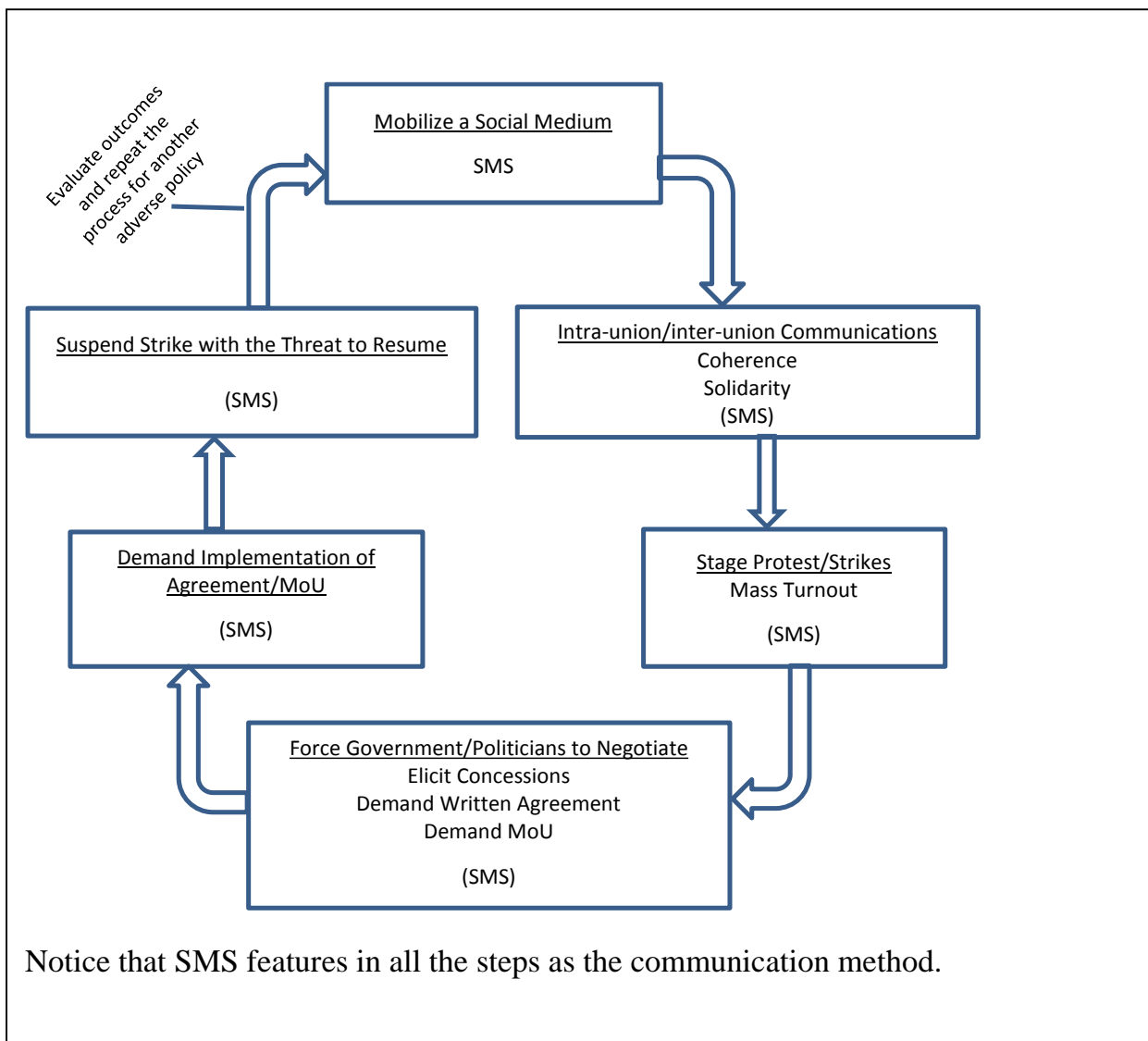


Figure 1. The Process of Acquiring Political Influence and Impacting Policy

5.1 Mobilize a Social Medium That Best Suits the Circumstances

Research findings discussed in Chapter 4 reveal that SMS is the only social medium always mobilized by each of the 10 unions studied; some other social media are used occasionally by some unions. Findings also reveal the impact of SMS in facilitating the process of acquiring political influence and subsequently impacting policy outcomes as discussed in Chapter 4. Fuchs (2006, p. 106) lists two kinds of resources that can be mobilized: (1) “material: money, organizations, manpower, technology, means of communication, mass media; [(2)] non-material: legitimacy, loyalty, social relationships, networks, personal connections, public attention, authority, moral commitment, solidarity”. It is important to note that the Nigerian labor unions began to mobilize SMS as their preferred method of communication in 2004, which coincided with the beginning of a rapid rise in the number of cellphone subscribers over the next decade (see Figure 2). Thus, the technology (and, in effect, the means of communication) were available to the unions. It became imperative for every union member to own a cellphone in order to be in the information loop of the union. Moreover, as it is throughout the world, the cost of texting is very low relative to the cost of making calls or using other Internet-enabled communication.

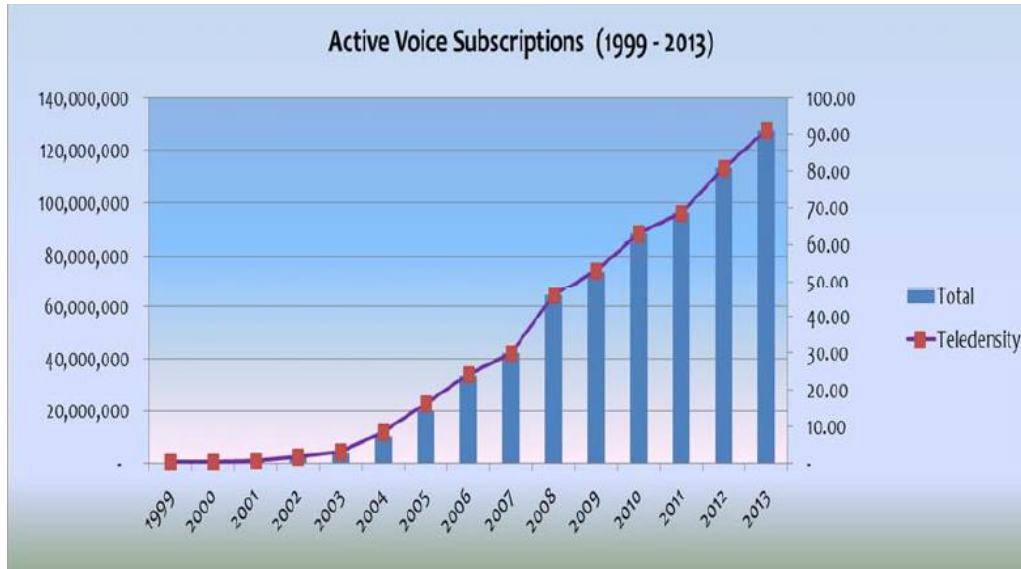


Figure 2. Evolutionary Trend in Nigeria Cellphone Subscription (1999-2013)

According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011, p. 1209), “the availability of applicable resources, and of actors’ abilities to use them effectively, are critical.” In other words, the availability of the mobilized social medium (SMS) is important, but equally important are the capabilities of the actors (union leaders) to use SMS effectively. The unions overcame this critical hurdle, especially during the early stages of the mobilization of SMS, by contracting the services of the bulk SMS organizations. According to RATTAWU-C, “the first thing we do in the union is have a register of all members with their phone numbers and we do bulk messaging. We do bulk messaging.” Today there are many bulk SMS companies providing bulk SMS services to the unions, as well as to government and private organizations.

Based on the conducted interviews , the author came to the conclusion that union members, at least for the unions studied, as a result of frequent texting, have become proficient at using SMS. They are familiar with the operations and features of cellphones.

They have basic understanding of storage and applications management to optimize performance. In other words, they have overcome the enigma of digital technology.

Before texting, one of the ways by which the politicians and policymakers controlled the unions was by co-opting the union leaders through personal favors. This made the co-opted union leaders work subtly against the union and render the threats to strike futile. In other words, the co-opted union leaders would not make good the threats to strike by actually commencing a strike. Where a strike was commenced, the co-opted leaders would call off the strike prematurely. So, the unions were denigrated by the politicians and policymakers as the proverbial barking dog that has no bite. According to NULGE-M4, “in the years past when the circular thing was going on, most times the president or the executives would get the circular and withhold it. But now the text messaging goes round.” The advent and mobilization of SMS wrested the power of information from the clutches of the policymakers and the union leaders. Policymakers and union leaders know that any act of malfeasance on their part in conducting union affairs such as negotiations will spread like wildfire through text messaging. So, findings indicate that the mobilization of SMS by the unions has led to an unprecedented levels of transparency which may help to curb corruption in the leadership of the unions.

The political influence the labor unions now wield as a result of the mobilization of SMS has boosted their morale. This was made clear during the interviews when the union leaders and members talked about the empowerment that they now have because of SMS. They now believe with great conviction that their voices count. Gone are the days

when military juntas used various repressive decrees such as decrees number 9,²⁶ 24,²⁷ and 29²⁸ to denigrate and subjugate the unions. Civilian governments also used repressive policies, cooptation, and the threat of mass firings to stifle the unions. The boost in morale which the unions now have as a result of SMS use has dissipated their fears of government reprisals. So, they now brandish their power to strike at the slightest perception of repression.

The successes that the unions have had in impacting policy outcomes have given them the confidence to aim higher. The NLC is now an affiliate of world labor organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and Public Service International (PSI). The Nigerian labor unions send delegates to yearly conferences of the international organizations to learn what obtains in the labor circles of other countries in order to implement the same in their respective unions to improve their bargaining power and overall outlook.

There is pride in public service and in trade unionism. However, when repressive policies interfere with either of these the sense of pride wanes. The sense of pride in the union leaders and members could be seen from the way they comported themselves during the interviews as well as the prefix “comrade” which they proudly exhibited on their nametags.

The policy gains and impacts the unions made within the period under study (2008-2014) can be measured by both the number of policies that they compelled the

²⁶ Dissolved the National Executive Council (NEC) of NLC

²⁷ Permitted the minister of labor to revoke unions

²⁸ Prevented unions from affiliating with international labor organizations

government to make, revise, or withdraw and the specific policies that have been changed. Policy gains such as reversing the effects of the nonpayment of salaries and establishing a fair minimum wage, helped to improve the wellbeing of the union leaders and members impacted. When union members were owed several months of salaries they felt downtrodden and weary. According to NUHPSW-M1, “we all felt dejected, they did not care about the welfare of our families.” So, the salary arrears paid to the union members following their successes in the nonpayment of salaries and in the minimum wage strikes helped to improve the wellbeing of the union members.

According to NASU-C, “it is sad to work hard and at the end of the month you receive pittance in the form of a salary. You know you worked more than you are paid. It is very frustrating.” So the policy gains, such as the minimum wage, helped to stabilize their financial planning of the union members and consequently boost their self-esteem. Also, policy gains such as the revitalization of universities and the funding of tertiary institutions, which renovated and remodeled the universities and other institutions of higher learning, including the offices of the union members, enhanced their appreciation for their jobs and boosted their self-esteem. This statement by the leader of NASU shows how the funding of tertiary institutions policy gain and its implementation helped to boost his self-esteem as well as the self-esteem of other union members.

When you come into this place you will see there is quantum development in this institution. If you were here three years ago you will notice there's difference. If you were here last month you will see what the tech fund is doing to this institution because of our agitations. They are now pumping money through tech

funds and other financing agencies. You can see how conducive and congenial the place I am staying is. I must tell you that last 10 years it was difficult for an officer of my status to enjoy this kind of place. There's room for improvement, [but we are] at a stage if it is improved further I wouldn't like to go home. I would like to sleep here. I have all the conveniences and so on here. As you can see if this place weren't conducive we would be looking for somewhere else to stay [NASU-C].

According to the union members interviewed, the policy gains that put money into the pockets of the union membersl such as correction of nonpayment of salaries, introduction of minimum wage, and CONTISS 15 allowed the union members to be more responsive to the needs of their families, and consequently to improve the overall outlook of their families.

5.2 Implications of Findings

5.2.1 Limitations and Challenges

The purpose of this research was to test Resource Mobilization Theory by studying the use of social media by the labor unions in Nigeria and how social media helped them to impact policy through the acquisition of political influence. Semi-structured interviews were the main source of data for this research. Interviews have inherent limitations as a source of research data. Therefore, the process of data collection presented the primary challenges in this study. The other limitation was generalizability.

5.2.2 Data Collection

There were challenges experienced during data collection. First, union leaders who were potential interviewees residing in the northeastern part of Nigeria could not be reached because the region was under sporadic insurgency attacks during the interview period²⁹. Although equally viable alternative leaders were interviewed, it would have been interesting to interview union leaders from that part of Nigeria as well. Second, in some cases interviewees were apprehensive. The challenges of interviewees' apprehension were mainly related to the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses. As government employees, the interviewees were genuinely apprehensive that they might face reprisals if their employers found out that they had been talking to a researcher about union activities. However, their fears were allayed after learning more by reading the confidentiality clause of the IRB participation agreement. Unlike the union leaders, who asked many questions regarding confidentiality which prompted lengthy explanations about the strict adherence to the confidentiality clause in the IRB participation agreement, the regular union members were more amenable. They signed the consent agreement form and responded to the interview questions without further ado after receiving a brief explanation of the confidentiality and anonymity clause of the IRB.

There were challenges in the retrieval of archived articles of the Nigerian national dailies—used to corroborate the protest and strike accounts of the interviewed union leaders—due to the fact that Nigerian national dailies have minimal presence on the

²⁹ The interviews commenced in July 2014 and ended in August 2014.

Internet. While every effort was made to ensure a thorough analysis of thousands of newspaper issues that had to be processed manually, it is possible that some relevant articles were missed.

5.2.3 Generalizability

This study relied mainly on the data collected by the researcher from particular unions in a particular country and applied within a particular political context to answer the research question. Therefore, there are limitations in the generalizability of the findings to other unions and social movements as well as other countries and regions since Nigeria's labor unions may operate differently than those in other parts of the world, labor unions are social movements but differ from other types of social movements.

5.3 Contribution

This study demonstrates that Resource Mobilization Theory has value in explaining how actions of social movements occur and can be effective. Specifically, it shows how RMT helps understand how leaders of 10 Nigerian labor unions (members of the Nigeria Labour Congress) use social media, mainly texting, for intra-union/inter-union communications, to facilitate coherence, and to build solidarity. This mobilization supports protests and strikes, which lead to implementation of agreements with the government that lead to changing conditions for union members. Thus, the study makes a contribution to theory by providing evidence of RMT's usefulness in a new location,

context, and medium. The study also makes a contribution by opening the door to other researchers to continue the exploration of the different types of social media mobilized by different social movements in different regions and political contexts, which will continue to inform and enrich resource mobilization theory.

5.4 Future Research Directions

According to Skinner (2011, p. 3), “It is important to research and understand how revolution and technology interact.” This is because the understanding of the “role social media plays in shaping revolution is a key to discovering how future movements might best learn from today’s protesters” (Skinner, 2011, p. 3). This research identified SMS as the consensus mobilized social medium used by the sample of 10 Nigerian labor unions, and examined how the interaction between SMS and the unions led to the acquisition of political influence and consequently impacted policy outcomes. These results imply that SMS may be an excellent medium for other social movements, especially in low-resource countries. However, according to Stepanova (2011, p. 3), “identical tools may function quite differently in developed and developing countries.” Therefore, it is important to explore the social media mobilized by social movements in other regions and political contexts to learn what political gains they may have been able to make as a result.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

 Claremont GRADUATE UNIVERSITY	Institutional Review Board
June 24, 2014	
RE: Expedited Approval of IRB# 2275 Title of Study: The Impact of Social Media on Political Influence and Policy Outcomes: the Nigerian Experience	
Dear Christian Ogwo:	
Thank you for submitting your research protocol to the IRB at Claremont Graduate University. Your protocol has been approved as indicated on the coversheet that you provided when you submitted the protocol. Your signed cover sheet is being returned with this letter.	
Your protocol is approved for a period of one year from the stamped date on this letter. At that time you must send a brief report on your progress-to-date to the IRB and have your protocol renewed if necessary. Be sure to submit your report in time for a renewal to be issued before this one expires. Include in your report any changes that should be made to the originally approved protocol for the renewal. <u>The IRB number must be on the all consent forms and a completed consent form must be submitted with the renewal or closure documentation.</u>	
If your research is completed before this protocol expires you must notify the IRB that your research has been completed and identify any problems encountered that will assist the Board in approving future research of the type you conducted. <u>Please note that you are responsible for keeping all consent forms for 3 years after your protocol has been closed.</u>	
If any injuries or unanticipated problems are encountered in the conduct of your research that are related to risks to participants or others it is your responsibility to notify the Chair of the IRB and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs as soon as practical but in no more than five days of the occurrence (phone: 909-607-9406 or via email to irb@cgu.edu).	
If, during the conduct of your research, you discover <u>any changes</u> that should be made to the sponsorship, recruitment, consent forms and processes, compensation, experimental interventions, survey elements, observational procedures, or other features of the approved protocol you must promptly report the proposed changes to the IRB. The proposed changes must not be implemented without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to participants.	
The entire Institutional Review Board of Claremont Graduate University wishes you well in the conduct of your research project.	
Sincerely,	
	
Joshua Tasoff, IRB Representative Institutional Review Board	APPROVED JUL 08 2014 CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY IRB
135 East Twelfth Street • Claremont, California 91711-6160 Tel: 909.607.9406 • Fax: 909.607.9655	

Appendix B: National Dailies – Corroborative Materials

The corroborative data analyzed in this study include relevant articles published by the Nigerian national dailies (see Table B-1 for a summary and the end of this appendix for copies of the articles). The areas of corroboration include: strike name and reason for strike, strike date and outcomes.

Table B-1. Articles of the national dailies at a glance

National Dailies	Publications	Subject Unions	Strike Action
The Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASUU: FG releases N200bn to varsities - February 18, 2014 ASUU strike: An avoidable impasse - December 6, 2013 Suspension of ASUU strike - December 23, 2013 Enough is enough, FG tells ASUU - November 29, 2013 Ending the ASUU strike - November 12, 2013 ASUU strike: Senate wades in - October 24, 2013 	ASUU	Revitalization of Universities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Assembly and the National Minimum Wage - November 5, 2014 Wage deregulation: ASCSN mobilises members for national strike - October 27, 2014 Imo judiciary workers begin indefinite strike... Over minimum wage - February 4, 2013 	NULGE NUPPPROW	Minimum Wage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polytechnic lecturers suspend 9-month strike, give FG 3 months grace - JULY 13, 2014 ASUP NEC resolves to continue strike - JUNE 29, 2014 ASUP continues strike, defies 'no work, no pay' policy - APRIL 24, 2014 FG Urges Polytechnic Union to Call Off Faculty Strike - FEBRUARY 28, 2014 	NASU	CONTISS 15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uduaghan approves weigh-in allowance for media workers - December 26, 2014 RATTAWU Suspends Strike - December 19, 2014 	RATTAWU	Weigh-In Allowances
Vanguard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSANU, NASU, NAAT threaten strike - December 15, 2011 Workers' strike: Mr. President must honour agreements - October 06, 2011 	NASU	Funding of Tertiary Institutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nigeria: Crisis Over Contiss 15 Arrears Extends ASUP Strike to 352 Days - 10 July 2014 331 days on: ASUP strike lapses into another session - June 19, 2014 All demands must be met before we suspend strike — ASUP President - March 06, 2014 Non-academic staff strike 'll paralyse polytechnics- YABATECH NASU - August 19, 2009 	NASU	CONTISS 15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-Implementation Of Minimum Wage: Labour declares indefinite strike in Benue - July 31, 2014 Minimum Wage protest turns violent in Bauchi - April 10, 2013 No new minimum wage, no election - March 03, 2011 	AAEUN NUJ NULGE NUCSSASW NUPPPROW SEWUN	Minimum Wage

	Unpaid salaries: Labour petitions Imo govt - May 16, 2013	NUCSSASW RATTAWU	Nonpayment of salaries
The Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Govt didn't release N1.3tr intervention fund, says ASUU - March 23, 2015 • ASUU Strike: Never Again - October 24, 2009 	ASUU	Revitalization of Universities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria restores fuel subsidy to quell nationwide protests - Monday 16 January 2012 • Nigeria fuel protests: two killed and dozens wounded as police open fire - Monday 9 January 2012 • Nigeria faces mass strike and protests over discontinued state fuel subsidy - Sunday 8 January 2012 • Nigerian police fire teargas on fuel subsidy protesters - Thursday 5 January 2012 	NULGE AAEUN	Fuel subsidy withdrawal

The articles are organized into four categories: revitalization of universities, minimum wage, CONTISS 15, and weigh-in allowance.

Revitalization of Universities

The 9 articles in this category chronicle the progression of a protracted strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), which lasted almost one year before it was suspended in 2014. ASUU suspended the strike after the government had implemented substantial aspects of an agreement it made with the union in 2009. The Nigerian government entered into an agreement with ASUU, followed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to infuse two hundred billion Naira (N200b) into the universities annually for five consecutive years toward the revitalization of the universities. The agreement and MoU also included the payment of arrears of salaries owed to the striking lecturers. However, when the government reneged on its promises, ASUU struck again in 2013. These articles corroborate the Universities Revitalization strike account of the ASUU union leader ASUU-C.

Minimum Wage

In 2014, the Nigerian federal legislature voted to devolve minimum wage determination to the states by removing it from the Exclusive Legislative List to the Concurrent List, which meant that the states were free to set their own minimum wage which could be different from state to state. The NLC came out against the legislation. When the legislature did not reverse the policy following an ultimatum by the NLC, the NLC and its affiliates struck. The NLC and its affiliates also struck against any state of the federation which did not implement the federal minimum wage of eighteen thousand Naira per month (N18000). The articles in this category touch all NLC affiliated unions, but they particularly corroborate the minimum wage strike account of the leader of AAEUN, NUJ, NULGE, NUCSSASW, NUPPPROW and SEWUN.

CONTISS 15

The articles in this category refer to the Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure (CONTISS) 15 grade-level dispute between the government and the polytechnics (lecturers and staff). CONTISS 15 was intended to end the discrimination in salary grade level between the universities and polytechnics staff. It was also intended to migrate senior staff of polytechnics stagnated in lower salary grade levels as a result of the discrimination to salary grade level 15 so as to compare with their counterparts in the universities. Although these articles refer to the plights of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Non-Academic Staff Union of Education and Associated Institutions (NASU) and Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Polytechnics (SSANIP),

they particularly corroborate the CONTISS 15 strike reference in the interview questions responses of the union leader of NASU.

Weigh-in Allowances

The two articles in this category refer to the allowances that accrue to the workers' unions in various media houses such as RATTAWU, NUJ and NUPPPROW for working odd and long hours. The members of the affected unions insist that the news cycle is 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and that they are on call at all times, chasing and publishing news. They also claim that they work under hazardous conditions such as known areas of political and social unrest. Therefore, they felt that they deserve to be paid weigh-in allowances, which is a form of compensation "for working during odd hours" (RATTAWU-C). These articles corroborate the weigh-in allowances strike account by the union leader of RATTAWU.

Funding of Tertiary Institutions

The government entered into an agreement with NASU in 2009 to allocate 26 percent of the annual budget to the funding of tertiary institutions. Although the amount was budgeted yearly it was not disbursed to the institutions. So, after waiting patiently for the government to implement the terms of agreement, NASU and other related unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), and National Association of Academic Technologists, (NAAT) staged a massive strike in 2013. These articles corroborate the strike account by the NASU union leader.

Nonpayment of Salaries

The article in this category depicts the plight of workers of various arms of government and belonging to various labor unions. Some of the workers were owed up to six months of salaries. This led to a labor strike in various parts of Nigeria. The article in this category corroborates the nonpayment of workers strike account by the leaders of NUCSSASW and RATTAWU.

Fuel Subsidy

The articles in this category refer to the actions taken by the labor unions and regular citizens to persuade the Nigerian government to reverse the fuel subsidy removal policy, which led to an astronomical jump in gasoline price, from \$1.70 to \$3.50 in one day. This caused untold hardship to the Nigerian public. So, NLC and its affiliates protested and forced government to back down.

Articles from the Sun

Revitalization of Universities

ASUU: FG releases N200bn to varsities

BY OUR REPORTER ON FEBRUARY 18, 2014 NATIONAL

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From KEMI YESUFU, Abuja

To douse rising tension over the implementation of its agreement with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Federal Government on Monday presented letters of allocation of N200 billion as part of its intervention fund to universities.

Part of the final agreement between ASUU and the Federal Government was the N200 billion increase in university funding in the 2014 budget and the allocation of the same amount annually for the next four years to fund and overhaul infrastructure in the universities.

Supervising Minister of Education, Nyesom Wike, who presented the letters at a meeting with the vice-chancellors of universities in Abuja, reiterated government's commitment to improving university education, just as he urged the vice-chancellors to ensure that the funds were channeled to improving infrastructure in their schools.

The minister explained that all the tertiary institutions are expected to render account of funds allocated to them, adding that accountability would give the public an insight into the government's investment in the education sector. Speaking on the ongoing strike by the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), the minister assured that the Federal Government has made progress with its negotiations with the striking lecturers.

He, however, declined to give exact details of issues discussed with the union.

He said: "I know that Nigerians are worried. Certainly, government is doing something about ending the strike as we don't want our polytechnics to be locked up. But I won't let the cat out of the bag."

Meanwhile, the minister who presented the maiden annual report of the Federal Ministry of Education, immediately after his meeting with the vice chancellors, expressed disappointment over the continued inability of states and universities to access funding at the federal level.

He decried the fact that a little over N80 billion provided by the Federal Government to boost the provision of quality education, domiciled in the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), was left lying fallow in both agencies.

Wike identified the politicisation of educational projects by certain state governments and the non-committal posture of universities as the major causes for the non-assessment of these funds.

ASUU strike: An avoidable impasse

By Our Reporter on December 6, 2013 Editorial

It is quite unfortunate that Nigerian public universities have remained shut for over five months now following the strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) over Federal Government's failure to honour past agreements on funding and staff welfare. The crux of the matter is that the government has failed to fully implement its 2009 agreement with ASUU, citing some difficulties the implementation would engender.

In the bid to broker peace between ASUU and government, President Goodluck Jonathan held a 13-hour meeting with the leadership of the union last month and reached an agreement that was expected to lead to the calling off of the strike. Unfortunately, the National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting of ASUU scheduled for Kano to deliberate on the parley with the president did not hold as a result of the death of former ASUU president, Professor Festus Iyayi, in a road crash along Lokoja-Abuja road on his way to the meeting. It had been expected that the strike would be called off after the NEC meeting, but the death of Iyayi altered the situation.

After the ASUU NEC meeting finally held, it demanded that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) be signed on the agreement reached with government. It also requested that four months arrears of salaries of its members should be paid, and that no member of ASUU should be victimized on account of the strike. Government regarded these requests as fresh demands and ordered the lecturers to resume work on December 4 or be sacked. But, ASUU called government's bluff.

Before the expiration of the ultimatum, government announced that it has deposited the sum of N200 billion in a special account with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in fulfillment of its recent agreement to adequately fund universities in the next five years. It also extended the earlier ultimatum issued to lecturers to resume work to December 9 to enable them bury their deceased leader, Iyayi. Government agreed to pay the outstanding salary arrears and promised that no member of the union would be victimized.

We decry the situation that led to this strike and the face-off between the government and ASUU over reopening of public universities. The ultimatum issued to the lecturers by the government is not the best approach to resolving trade disputes. The grandstanding of ASUU on this matter is quite understandable. The union is apparently being careful not to be taken for a ride by the government again, hence it insisted on extracting documented evidence on the new agreement and the N200 billion the government claimed to have paid into a dedicated account in the Central Bank of Nigeria. Government has reneged severally on agreements with the union in the past.

The ASUU matter should not have escalated to this level if it was well managed by the government. The strike has dragged on for so long to the detriment of university education the union says it wants to protect. Unfortunately, the university students are at the receiving end of this unfortunate development.

Be that as it may, both parties to the dispute should put ego aside and settle this problem amicably. This unending altercation cannot resolve the issues at stake.

The threat of a mass sack smacks of military authoritarianism. It is uncalled for. The issuing of ultimatum by a democratic regime is in bad taste. Replacing all the lecturers in Nigerian universities at a time is not feasible.

Even the extension of the ultimatum to December 9, after the burial of Iyayi, is also unrealistic. It is only through dialogue that this matter can be settled. ASUU should, therefore, consider the interest of the students and the university system and shift ground. It should call off the lingering strike now that government has demonstrated willingness to fulfill the agreement through the N200 billion deposited for university funding with the CBN. Government, on its part, should show proof to ASUU that it has really paid the amount.

Once it is determined that government has paid the N200 billion in question, ASUU should reciprocate the gesture by calling off the strike immediately, in the spirit of give and take. The union should do this quickly before it loses public sympathy and goodwill. The union should desist from these perennial strikes and come out with novel and non-disruptive ways of demanding for the rights of its members and improved funding of universities. Use of industrial action to settle trade disputes in universities should be done away with.

ASUU members should also improve university education through quality teaching and research. The culture of sexual harassment of female students, money-for-marks regime, 'sorting,' selling of handouts and poor quality text books, and other exploitative practices inimical to learning should be eradicated.

Suspension of ASUU strike

By Our Reporter on December 23, 2013 Editorial

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) called off its over five months strike on December 17, following an agreement it reached with the Federal Government. Highlights of the agreement include the payment of annual subvention of N200 billion to the universities for the next five years, payment of arrears of lecturers' salaries, non-victimization of lecturers on account of the strike and formation of a committee that will monitor the implementation of the new agreement. Life has now returned to public universities as many lecturers resumed work last week and faculty offices were opened to staff and students. Some of the universities have also announced resumption dates.

We applaud the government and ASUU leadership for the agreement that led to the suspension of the industrial action. Now that normalcy is returning to the universities, we urge the union and the government to ensure that the university calendar is not disrupted again for any reason. Let a moratorium be placed on industrial action for some years so that the nation's universities can regain their lost glory.

Government should be mindful to fulfill all agreements reached with the lecturers. It should not renege, as had been the practice in the past. Let this new agreement not be like election promises that are never fulfilled by the government. Government should continue to give the agreed annual subvention for the upgrade of facilities in the universities. The lecturers, however, should not see the outcome of the strike as a victory for them alone, but for the entire university system. Other unions in the universities should, therefore, not disrupt the university system with more strikes.

We urge ASUU leadership to use government's largesse to improve the quality of teaching in the nation's universities. The culture of handouts, sale of poor quality textbooks, sex for marks regime and "sorting", which are antithetical to quality education, should be discarded. These have contributed to the production of half-baked graduates by the universities.

It is sad that courses that normally run for four years in universities now go beyond that period due to frequent strikes by university teachers. Therefore, there is the need for more commitment on the part of the lecturers. Unfortunately, strikes have been perennial, self-serving and detrimental to the improvement of academic standards. Lecturers should be more serious with teaching and research, which constitute their primary duties. Strike, as an instrument of negotiation, has been abused in Nigeria, particularly by university lecturers. It ought to be the weapon of last resort, but sadly, it is applied indiscriminately in utter disregard of extant labour laws.

Lecturers should not make strikes a perennial feature of the nation's university system. Besides contributing to the lowering of academic standards and general decay in the university system, they also lead to disruption of the academic calendar. Nigerian students now troop abroad, including countries in the West African sub-region like Togo and Ghana, for university education because their school calendar is predictable unlike ours. Strikes have led to education tourism by Nigerian students. Government and ASUU should work together to stabilise and improve our universities.

We also urge ASUU to think of other non-disruptive mechanisms to get the government to attend to its legitimate demands. Industrial action as a means of settling trade disputes is fast becoming dated and unimaginative. Lecturers should put their best foot forward and teach the students well to compensate for the lost grounds before embarking on examinations. Government should also not wait for ASUU to go on strike before it attends to the needs of the universities in terms of funding and staff welfare. It should do all these without being prompted or arm-twisted to do so. The problems of inadequate staffing and obsolete laboratories should also be addressed to improve the quality of our university graduates.

Enough is enough, FG tells ASUU

BY OUR REPORTER ON NOVEMBER 29, 2013 COVER

* Go back to work Dec 4 or risk sack –Minister

From KEMI YESUFU, Abuja

Barely 24 hours after pro-chancellors of federal universities ordered vice-chancellors to re-open the institutions, the Federal Government yesterday took a definitive stand on the five months old strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) giving similar directive to the latter. In fact, they had up till December 4 to comply.

The government also directed that all vice-chancellors to ensure a conducive atmosphere for returning staff, just as it warned that lecturers that failed to resume on or before December 4 automatically cease to be employees of the institutions.

Government's directive is coming days after fresh demands issued by ASUU which the union said have to be met before it calls off its five months old strike.

The new demands following its National Executive Council (NEC) meeting held last Friday include that the government within two weeks begin the release and distribution of the N200billion it pledged to inject into the system.

ASUU also demanded that the government renegotiates the 2009 agreement by 2014 and that the Attorney-General of the Federation be made a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

But the supervising Minister of Education, Nyesom Wike, yesterday accused ASUU of taking the entire country for granted. The minister who spoke while announcing government's new position at a press briefing held at the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja said government has reviewed the entire situation and concluded that the continuation of the strike was an attempt by the union to make a mess of all efforts to settle the dispute.

The minister who equally directed vice-chancellors to advertise for vacancies (internal and external) in their institutions for recalcitrant lecturers who will not yield to the directive, noted that government could no longer tolerate the continuous closure of its universities, after five months.

He said: "It was becoming obvious that the union is taking the Presidency and Nigerians for a ride. We have met with ASUU and if you engage in dispute and then we engage with you on dialogue, government has fulfilled its own part and you should also comply and go back to resume your normal activities.

"You would notice that it is only in this country where Mr. President will sit with you for over 13 hours and all issues have been resolved and you promised that within one week you will get back to us only to see a letter now giving new conditions outside what we have discussed. So, if anybody thinks that it is against the labour laws, well, they have a right to challenge government at the industrial court.

"Government will not fold its arms to continue to see the closure of universities, no responsible government will do that", he said.

According to Wike, the continued closure of universities was detrimental to the educational sector and the future of youths and national development. He also directed the National Universities Commission (NUC) to monitor the compliance of the directive by the various universities.

His said: "Government has reviewed the entire situation and come to the conclusion that the continuation of the strike is an attempt by ASUU to sabotage all the efforts to address the issues.

"As a responsible government, we cannot allow the continuous closure of our public universities for this length of time (five months), as this poses danger to the education system, the future of our youths and national development.

"Consequently, the Federal Government has directed that all Vice Chancellors of Federal Universities that are currently on strike should immediately re-open for academic and allied activities as directed by the Pro-chancellors.

"Vice-Chancellors should ensure that staff who resume for work are provided with the enabling environment for academic and allied activities, any academic staff who fails to resume on or before December 4, 2013 automatically ceases to be a staff of the institution. Vice-Chancellors are also directed to advertise vacancies (internal and external) in their institutions," Wike said.

ASUU said it asked Jonathan to facilitate the endorsement of resolutions reached with him and signed by high ranking government official preferably the Attorney-General of the Federation, but not a permanent secretary.

... Threat won't work –Striking

From GBENGA ADESUYI, Ibadan

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) said yesterday it has been vindicated that the Federal Government was not committed to implementing the resolutions it reached with the union. It was the union's reaction to the Federal Government's order asking the vice chancellors to re-open the institutions by December 4.

ASUU said Federal Government is wasting the time of youths and Nigerians by failing to perfect the resolutions and get the strike suspended.

While saying strike is a legal action, ASUU said the threat would fail, noting that public universities still need to employ 60,000 lecturers.

The lecturers said they have every reasons to be wary following the failure of government to honour their promises to Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), resident doctors, and health workers who have suspended their strikes.

ASUU further said the threat is an insult to the sense and sensibilities of Nigerians who were waiting on the Federal Government for positive reaction.

Presenting the reaction, National Treasurer, Dr Ademola Aremu said that the threat does not hold water as it has confirmed the fears that the Federal Government cannot be trusted.

“With the latest action, the Federal Government has shown that they are not committed to all they have been saying. We are saying that since we agreed at the meeting that the sum of 200billion is for 2012 and 2013 revitalisation, the Federal Government should deposit same in the Central Bank of Nigeria. We are already in November and December is around the corner. If they don't do that now, when do they want to do it?. We are saying the non-victimisation clause should be included as agreed while the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement should be included as agreed with the presidents”.

“It is a pity if the Federal Government is not willing to perfect the resolutions reached with the union. This is why we find it difficult to trust our leaders by their words. How can someone be threatening to sack lecturers when universities are already short-staffed by almost 60,000. We are not in military era. The military tried it and failed. This one will fail again. They can re-open the school. ASUU did not shut down the universities. It was the school management that ordered the students to go back home.”

Aremu said it is only when ASUU proceeds on strike that funds get into universities which are then presided over by political appointees tagged: “Committee of Pro-chancellors”.

Aremu lambasted the supervising Minister for Education, Mr. Nyesom Wike saying, the government's threat borders on irresponsibility if it could wait for four months to make any steps and scuttle it through military orders.”

Ending the ASUU strike

By Our Reporter on November 12, 2013 COVER, Education Review, Specials

■ **Details of the presidential discussion they wanted to hide from you**

BY CHIKA ABANOBI, aND IHEANACHO NWOSU, Abuja

You could say it again: the negotiations over the last Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike, were perhaps, the most arduous in the history of strikes in Nigeria. Initially, the President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, did not want to be involved directly. He only wanted to do so through proxies.

It started with Governor Gabriel Suswam-led universities Needs Assessment Implementation Committee and later Namadi Sambo-led mediation committee, none of which succeeded in brokering agreements that could bring an end to the strike.

Much later, the Senate led by its President, David Mark, dismissed the 2009 agreement between the Federal Government and the striking union as unrealistic, while the House of Representatives offered to approve a budgetary intervention to enable ASUU end the strike.

The Speaker, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, who was briefed by the Aminu Suleiman-led House Committee on Education asked to investigate and recommend solution appealed to the warring parties to resolve the issues involved in the interest of the students and the educational future of the nation. None of the arguments cut an ice with ASUU.

Crisis of confidence occasioned by unguarded remarks on the part of government negotiators, and suspicion, on the part of ASUU national officials led by the President, Dr. Nasir Isa Fagge, leading to prolonged impasse, eventually made Jonathan to personally wade into the matter, after ASUU had refused to call off the strike despite his pleas to it to do so, in many a public forum.

Setting the stage for a fruitful discussion

Whereas the Federal Government delegation led by Jonathan had on its team, the Vice President, Namadi Sambo, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Anyim Pius Anyim, Chief of Staff to the President, Mike Oghiomhe, Coordinating Minister and Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, supervising Minister of Education, Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, Minister of Labour and Productivity, Emeka Wogu; National Universities Commission (NUC), Executive Secretary, Prof. Julius Okojie and other presidential aides, including Dr. Reuben Abati, Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, the ASUU nine-man team led by Dr. Fagge, included former ASUU Presidents like Prof. Dipo Fashina and Prof. Festus Iyayi, President, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Abduwaheed Omar; President, Trade Union

Congress (TUC), Boboyi Kaigama, Prof. Abdullahi Sule-Kano and Suleiman Abdul, among others.

Earlier while entering the conference room, Jonathan had said, in the course of exchanging pleasantries with Dr. Fagge: “My President, I am sure the problem will be over today. Our children must go back to school.” And, when he got to where Omar was seated, he said: “My President, with you here, it is signed and sealed.”

So, what was it that was discussed afterward that brought us to the stage where we are now? Both officials of ASUU and government representatives had kept sealed lips on the details of discussion and outcome of the 13-hour marathon meeting which started at 2.40 pm last Monday, and was adjourned about 7pm for a 15-minute break before being reconvened later in the evening and continuing into about 3am of the following day.

But *Education Review* understands from source close to the Presidency that after more banter inside the conference room, the meeting kicked off on a more earnest note with the President expressing his wish to see the end of the strike and to do anything within his power, to make whatever concessions he can to break the deadlock so that universities can be re-opened.

Reminding the audience of the various efforts he’d made and committees he set up to resolve the crisis, including the Suswam and Namadi Sambo-led committees, the President was said to have argued that they showed his earnest desire to have the issues involved resolved amicably so that students and staff can go back to school. But he had to personally take it upon himself, to come in, he said, when stalemates ensued. Reiterating the commitment of his administration to adequately fund the universities and provide the necessary infrastructures to aid the education sector, he added that that was why he was anxious to see the matter resolved by inviting stakeholders present to the meeting at the State House. He noted that his administration is as concerned as ASUU, about the state of infrastructures in our universities and is determined to see that something is done about the situation within the limited resources available. It was because of this, he said, that he approved the setting up of the Needs Assessment Implementation Committee as well as the creation of TETFund (Tertiary Education Trust Fund) from the former ETF (Education Trust Fund).

Government has also increased the budget of education progressively from N234.8 billion in 2010 to N426.5 billion in 2013 with N55.74 billion allocated to the university sub-sector alone, he said.

Responding, Fagge while thanking the President for the gestures, was said to have, however, expressed his misgivings over what he calls the efforts of Federal government’s functionaries/representatives to blackmail the union by misrepresenting the facts of the case to the Nigerian public on the government’s inability to honour and implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) reached with the union in 2009.

Meeting points

It will be recalled that the agreements ASUU signed with the Federal government in 2009 included funding requirements for revitalisation of the Nigerian universities; Federal government

assistance to state universities; establishment of NUPEMCO and progressive increase in annual budgetary allocation to education to 26 per cent between 2009 and 2020; and earned allowances.

In the agreement, ASUU had demanded for N1.5 trillion within a space of three years from the federal government for the funding of universities outside the normal yearly budgetary allocation.

Aside the N1.5 trillion funds for universities from 2009-2011, ASUU equally demanded for 'Earned Allowance' outside its conventional monthly emoluments. They include allowances for the following: postgraduate supervision allowance, teaching practice/ industrial supervision/field trip allowance and honoraria for external / internal examiner. Others are honoraria for external moderation of undergraduate and postgraduate examination, post-graduate study grant, external assessment of readers or professors, call duty/clinical duty / clinic hazard, responsibility allowance and excess workload allowance.

But during last Monday's talks with the President, sources privy to the meeting said that Fagge reportedly recalled that an Implementation Monitoring Committee for the 2009 agreement, made up of two members representing the Committee of Pro-Chancellors, The Chairman, Committee of Vice-Chancellors, one member representing the NUC Secretary, one member representing the Federal Ministry of Education, five members representing ASUU, NAAT, SSANU, NASU, one representative of the Senate Committee on Education, one representative of the House of Committee on Education, Chairman, Pro-Chancellor of State Universities, and Chairman, Committee of Vice-Chancellors of State Universities was set up and wondered why ASUU was being demonized over its reference to the state universities in the course of its agitation over the implementation of the 2009 agreement.

In addition, he was said to have politely begged to disagree with the President's remarks during the his media chat in October that the major reason for the strike which he (the President) said, has been politicised, is the N79 billion Earned Allowance arrears. He argued that contrary to the government propaganda and misinformation, the strike was for the betterment of university education in the country, which he noted was in shambles.

Following apologies, assurances and corrections over misrepresentations and misconceptions of public speeches, the meeting reportedly went into a prolonged negotiation over the main agenda: the contentious 2009 Govt/ ASUU agreement. It was after exhaustive deliberations and negotiations that ran into hours that Jonathan offered N220 billion per annum over the next five years. He was also said to have withdrawn the no-work, no-pay threat, even as he assured the union that his administration was not thinking of forcefully reopening the universities, contrary to the rumours making the rounds in the media. The President also promised to personally sign the new MoU that will be reached, after the meeting of ASUU's NEC (National Executive Council).

ASUU strike: Senate wades in

By Our Reporter on October 24, 2013 COVER

• **Mandates Mark to lead negotiation team**

FROM ADETUTU FOLASADE-KOYI, ABUJA

Senate yesterday passed a resolution asking Senate President David Mark to engage President Goodluck Jonathan and officials of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to end the four months strike that has shut Nigerian universities since July.

Senate also appealed to the striking university lecturers to suspend the industrial action to allow room for negotiations, in order to resolve the stalemate.

Senate resolution to empower Mark to lead the negotiation team with government and ASUU was based on a motion sponsored by a record 108 members, who fervently appealed to ASUU to call off the strike.

After an exhaustive debate of the motion, during which senators agreed that the agreement ASUU signed with government in 2009 was not implementable because of the cost implication, directed its committee on education to liaise with the Ministry of Education, National Universities Commission (NUC), ASUU and other stakeholders on how to proffer solutions and stem further strikes.

Mark blamed government officials, who represented government to sign the agreement with ASUU. His words: “It showed the level of people the executive sends to go and negotiate with ASUU.

“The Federal Government should call those it sent to sign the agreement because it was obvious those sent did not know their right from their left and ASUU took advantage of that to sign the agreement. It is obvious that it would be difficult to implement the agreement.”

Mark also took a swipe at the acting Minister of Education, Nysom Wike, for saying that the strike would soon come to an end in a few months, adding: “The statement of the minister was totally uncalled for and insensitive to the situation on ground.”

He, however, pleaded with ASUU to shift grounds on its demands and noted: “There is no winner and no loser as long as the strike continues and nobody will win; all of us will lose.”

Earlier, Senate Education Committee Chairman, Uche Chukwumerije, in the motion informed his colleagues that the major demands of ASUU, as contained in the agreement, included payment of post-graduate allowance; teaching practice and industrial training allowances and honorarium.

Other allowances being demanded by the striking lecturers were post-graduate grants; external excess workload allowances; housing allowance; sabbatical allowance; sick leave allowance; injury allowance; provision of office accommodation; car allowance and funding of universities.

Senator Olusola Adeyeye, who is also a former lecturer, kicked against the demands of ASUU and explained that majority of the allowances being demanded were frivolous and not applicable anywhere in the world.

He said the economy of the country could not support the number of universities currently in operation and advocated for the introduction of education tax for all workers to fund education, adding: “But we must not allow the money to be consumed by bureaucracy.”

Minimum Wage

National Assembly and the National Minimum Wage

BY OUR REPORTER ON NOVEMBER 5, 2014 EDITORIAL

Recent reports of a plan to remove the National Minimum Wage from the Exclusive Legislative List to the Concurrent Legislative List in keeping with the country’s federal structure have been generating diverse reactions from Nigerians. The National Assembly had last week reportedly approved the removal of wages from the Exclusive Legislative List which, in effect, would have scrapped the N18,000 National Minimum Wage, as part of its amendments to the extant 1999 Constitution.

The movement of the wages issue to the Concurrent Legislative List would have meant that each state government would have the power to fix its own Minimum Wage. The Deputy Senate President and Chairman of the Senate Constitution Review Committee, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, who had earlier justified the bid by the Senate to move the power to fix the Minimum Wage to the states, explained that it was not proper to fix equal Minimum Wage for all the states, when some could afford to pay higher than that.

Clarifying the matter, The Deputy Speaker of the House and Chairman, House Committee on Constitution Review, Chief Emeka Ihedioha, said that the National Assembly did not eventually remove the minimum wage from the Exclusive List. He explained that both the Senate and the House later retained labour on the Exclusive List when they passed the new amendments to the 1999 Constitution. According to him, it was the Senate that initially moved labour to the Concurrent List, while the House retained it on the Exclusive List, but a conference meeting of the two chambers ended in the adoption and passage of the House version, with the result that the National Minimum Wage will remain on the Exclusive List and be centrally determined by the Federal Government.

We welcome the decision to retain National Minimum Wage matters on the Exclusive List. It is the right position to take, in order to protect Nigerian workers from poor wages that would be their lot if individual states are to determine the minimum wages for their workers. This is, in fact, the practice in many developed countries where Minimum Wage is determined at the national level. This, of course, does not stop the constituent states or federating units from paying higher than the minimum wage set by the central government to their workers. The United Kingdom, for instance, not only has the compulsory National Minimum Wage, it also has a voluntary National Living Wage based on the amount needed to cover the basic costs of living. There is also a higher minimum wage for its capital city, London.

The decision by the National Assembly to leave the wages issue on the Exclusive List has saved Nigeria from labour unrest. This is because, based on the earlier report on the move to shift the responsibility to the states, organised labour, including the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), had strongly condemned the resolution and vowed that their members would resist the move by embarking on nationwide industrial action. It is good that the matter has been resolved. A national industrial strike will not be in the best interest of the country.

The Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA), which represents the private sector, had however applauded the move. NECA argued that since the country was operating a federal constitution, it should cede significant power and responsibilities to the federating states, including the right and power of the component units to determine the minimum wage of their workers.

We support the final decision to retain Labour matters and the National Minimum Wage on the Exclusive Legislative List. The Federal Government's power to fix the Minimum Wage should, however, be exercised in consultation with the states on the ideal national minimum salary, to avoid the confusion that trailed its last review in the country. Allowing state governments to fix their own Minimum Wage will likely lead to confusion and industrial unrest because not all states can be relied on to fix a reasonable sum as Minimum Wage for their workers. Some may choose to pay slave wages, to the detriment of their employees. That is the danger of having the Minimum Wage on the Concurrent List.

The arbitrariness it will lead to will not augur well for industrial peace in the country. To avoid such industrial disharmony, there is the need to have a national minimum wage benchmark which every state should endeavour to pay. However, any state that thinks that it can pay its workers above the fixed N18,000 monthly is free to do so. But, on no account should any state pay lower than that sum that cannot even provide the basic necessities of life for any worker, in the first place.

Instead of tinkering with moving the responsibility for fixing the Minimum Wage to the states, the National Assembly should rather be thinking of extending the implementation of the law to the private sector, to make private sector employers adhere to the stipulated minimum salary for their workers. Workers in the private sector also need to be protected from their employers. All companies operating in the country should have a Minimum Wage benchmark to stop the undue exploitation of private sector workers by both indigenous and expatriate employers of labour operating in the country.

Let the Minimum Wage be binding on the private sector operators to end the slave wage regime among some operators in the sector. Indeed, workers' welfare should concern the government and the Minimum Wage should be used to address the poor wages paid to Nigerian workers. Fixing of a National Minimum Wage that is binding on all employers, private or public, is the accepted practice in many parts of the developed world. Nigeria should not be different.

Wage deregulation: ASCSN mobilises members for national strike

BY OUR REPORTER ON OCTOBER 27, 2014 BUSINESSWEEK

The Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) has vowed to join other affiliates of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to down tools following the decision of the National Assembly to remove wage and other labour issues from the Exclusive Legislative List to the Concurrent list.

In a statement by the union's National President, Bobboi Bala Kaigama, and the Secretary-General, Alade Bashir Lawal, the union called for a total resistance of the move by the federal lawmakers to further impoverish Nigerian workers by outlawing the meagre national minimum wage through the back door.

"We urge the trade union movement, the civil society groups, religious leaders, royal fathers and other well-meaning Nigerians to prevail on the National Assembly to reverse its decision to deregulate wages in the interest of peace in the country.

"It is surprising that the National Assembly wants to complicate the security challenges in the country by inviting millions of Nigerian workers to take to the streets by its insensitive decision to deregulate wage," the union regretted.

The ASCSN chieftains lamented that the monthly take home pay of each federal lawmaker is about N30 million, yet, they are pained that Nigerian workers receive N18,000 monthly minimum wages, which is about \$109 per month. It added that the lawmakers are entitled to innumerable allowances such as hardship, furniture, wardrobe, recess, accommodation, utilities, domestic, entertainment, personal assistant, vehicle maintenance, leave, severance allowance, among others.

"It is also on record that the Nigerian federal lawmakers are the highest paid in the world earning more than the President of the United States of America.

"We urge the states assemblies not to join the National Assembly in its war against Nigerian workers. They should, therefore, retain wage and other related labour issues in the Exclusive Legislative List," the statement added.

The ASCSN labour leaders added that apart from jumbo pay packets, a Nigerian senator receives N45 million constituency allowance while a member of the House of Representatives gets N27 million quarterly allocation.

"It is important to note that Nigeria does not belong to political office holders alone but to all Nigerians, including workers," the union emphasised.

The ASCSN pointed out that while the salaries of the federal lawmakers are centrally fixed by the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), they are insisting that state governments should fix minimum wage so that the governors can pay as low as N5,000 monthly to helpless workers or no salary at all.

“It must be emphasised that all countries of the world have national minimum wage, which must be paid by all employers to their workers. Indeed, the ILO Convention 131 of 1970, of which Nigeria is a signatory, requires member countries to institute a national minimum wage below which no employer should pay,” the statement added.

Imo judiciary workers begin indefinite strike... Over minimum wage

BY OUR REPORTER ON FEBRUARY 4, 2013 NATIONAL

From VAL OKARA, Owerri

Staffers of Imo State judiciary will today commence an indefinite strike to press home their grievances over alleged selective implementation of the minimum wage at the expense of the workers in the state judiciary by the Governor Rochas Okorocha administration. This was contained in a communiqué issued after a general meeting of the state chapter of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN).

The communiqué, signed by the state Chairman, Aloka Kenneth; Secretary, Elder Rufus Abanobi and the Public Relations Officer, Christian Nwachukwu, also enumerated efforts by the union to amicably settle the dispute with the state government without resorting to industrial action. It was also noted that JUSUN national headquarters had also written to the state government on four occasions on the matter without any response from the state. According to the communiqué, the union had already exhausted the 21-day and 14-day statutory notices for industrial action without any reasonable response from the state government.

Daily Sun gathered that national officers of the union, Habila J. Dacep, National Legal Adviser; Mrs Victoria Folake Lanro, National Vice President, North Central and Mr. Celestine Chukwu national organizing secretary were consequently dispatched to the state to officially declare the commencement of the industrial action. Dacep, who spoke on behalf of the national officers, said the strike was endorsed by the national headquarters of the union in accordance with the provisions of Article 29 of the JUSUN constitution. Not too long ago, the Body of Chief Judges in Nigeria met and reviewed the conditions of service of staff in the nation’s judiciary.

In its communiqué, Body of Chief Judges recommended a Consolidated Salary Structure for Judiciary Staff (CONJUSS) in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory. However, state chapters of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) were given the privilege to go to their different states and territories to negotiate the implementation of the CONJUSS. “After series of negotiations, the Ohakim administration agreed to pay Imo judiciary staff what was called Enhanced Welfare Conditions of Service for all staff of Imo State judiciary which amounted to 50 per cent of the benchmark nationally provided by CONJUSS.

“Consequently, it brought the minimum wage of judiciary staff in Imo to N17, 736.25k. Government, however, agreed to upgrade this Enhanced Condition of Service as time and economic convenience would permit. The agreement was signed and implemented in 2010.” However, when the Okorocha administration implemented the N20, 000 minimum wage, the emoluments of the judiciary staff were not reconciled to reflect the minimum wage and as such

were excluded from the improved minimum wage. Efforts by the union to get government to respect the agreement signed with it in 2010 had not been fruitful till date.

CONTISS 15

Polytechnic lecturers suspend 9-month strike, give FG 3 months grace

BY OUR REPORTER ON JULY 13, 2014COVER

***COEASU may call off 7-month industrial action, Thursday**

The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) on Saturday suspended its nine-month old strike and directed members to resume work on Tuesday when the suspension would take effect.

ASUP's decision to suspend its industrial action was taken at an emergency meeting of its National Executive Council held in Abuja early Saturday morning. In the same vein, the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) may do likewise next week after its meeting with the education minister.

One of ASUP's zonal coordinators told our correspondent in a phone interview from Abuja that the decision to suspend their strike was based on the passionate appeal made by the new Minister of Education, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, when he met ASUP leadership on Thursday last week.

He said in arriving at the decision to suspend their industrial action, NEC also gave the education minister three months to address the issues in contention.

He said specifically, "ASU NEC would want the new minister to address two vital issues. The release of the visitation panel report to federal polytechnics and the implementation of CONTISS 15 migration for the lower cadres in polytechnics.

"The suspension of the strike takes effect from July 15 and our members are expected to resume work same day. One of the main reasons we decided to suspend the strike was that the official assignment of the minister after his appointment was a meeting with ASUP leadership. We met him and he appealed for time which NEC considered".

The General Secretary of COEASU, Comrade Nuhu Origima, told Sunday Sun on phone that the leadership of the union would meet with the new education minister after which NEC would take a decision. In a swift reaction to the development, the President, National Association of Polytechnic Students (NAPS), Comrade Lukman Salahudeen, said polytechnic students are disappointed to hear that the protracted strike by ASUP was suspended rather than called off. He said it's a disgrace and a slight on the Transformation Agenda Team of President Goodluck Jonathan noting "we are convinced now that the government has no respect for our future nor the technological advancement of our dear nation and as such we have lost confidence in the transformation agenda".

Salahudeen lauded ASUP and the commitment of the new Minister for Education, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau who convinced ASUP to suspend the strike adding “We implore him to work as promised.”

ASUP embarked on the strike because of government’s failure to kick start the renegotiation of the FG/ASUP agreement which was due in July 2012, refusal of government to implement the CONTISS 15 migration for the lower cadres in polytechnics, the withholding of the White Paper on the visitations to federal polytechnics more than one year after the exercise was concluded and the reluctance of government to address the lingering bias against polytechnic graduates.

ASUP NEC resolves to continue strike

BY OUR REPORTER ON JUNE 29, 2014COVER

The National Executive Council of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) has resolved to continue its nine-month-old strike pending the outcome of its meeting with the Senate Committee on Education on July 1.

The President of the union, Mr Chibuzor Asumogha, made the statement in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the end of it’s 77th National Executive Council (NEC) meeting in Lagos.

He said a meeting of the committee and some education stakeholders scheduled for June 24 did not hold because no government official came.

“That meeting was supposed to be held, resolution reached and agreement signed. It was against the backdrop that we fixed the NEC meeting so that if we had the resolutions, we would come here and suspend the strike. Incidentally, none of the government officials came for the meeting and because of that the meeting did not hold,” he told NAN.

The official said that the committee deferred the meeting to July 1. Asumogha said that the union resolved to continue the strike until the parties are able to arrive at a mutual understanding.

“This is the position of the NEC. We are meeting again next Tuesday. We have been compromising since 2013. We have continued to agree to suspend the strike but at each point government always breach the agreement,” he added.

He appealed to parents and students to continue to be patient and support the union to achieve its goals.

“The thing we are saying is that government should be committed. When is it going to pay off the arrears of the salary scale CONTISS 15 it has been owing since 2009?” he asked.

ASUP embarked on an indefinite strike in October 2013 to press its demand for improvement in the condition of service and infrastructure in government-owned polytechnics, and colleges of technology. It also demanded that the Federal Government should remove the dichotomy over HND and degree holders.

Other demands include the release of the White Paper on the needs assessment of polytechnics and review of the Polytechnics Act by the National Assembly. The government has met some of the demands, including inauguration of governing councils and setting up of the needs assessment committees.

ASUP continues strike, defies ‘no work, no pay’ policy

BY OUR REPORTER ON APRIL 24, 2014 EDUCATION REVIEW, SPECIALS

Accuses FG of robbing education sector

Despite the ‘no work’, ‘no pay policy’ adopted by the federal government against the striking lecturers in polytechnics, members of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) has vowed never to surrender, as they accused the federal government of robbing and neglecting the education sector, especially the Polytechnic education, for years.

The group said the government has deliberately frustrated the collective yearning for a better and improved structure for polytechnic education in the country, thereby making polytechnic graduates lame dogs in the labour market.

At a congress of ASUP, Yaba College of Technology chapter, Yaba, Lagos, held recently, aggrieved lecturers stood their ground, as they lambasted government’s appalling failure to reverse the dwindling fortunes of the polytechnic education system in the country. They vociferously protested the failure of the government to address their agitations that culminated in a nationwide strike, now in its sixth month.

Recall that Yabatech joined Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic national strike on February 12, 2014, following government’s continued apathy towards the polytechnic education. Since then, the ASUP chapter of the college has remained strategic and vibrant in the agitation for the full implementation of the 13 point demands of the ASUP.

In a congress held at Yusuf Grillo Hall, Art Complex, YABATECH, the chairman of ASUP chapter of the college, Prince Adeyemi Aromolaran, said demands by ASUP were not new to the government, as he accused the federal government of being insensitive in addressing issues that would change the polytechnic system.

“It is not about money as some have viewed it. Our 13-points demands from government which they are fully aware before we embarked on the strike, were the establishment of the National Polytechnic Commission (NPC). It will alarm you to know that it is only the polytechnic sector that does not have education supervising commission unlike the NUC, NCCE. The second issue is the total removal of discrimination against polytechnic graduates with HND in comparison with their university graduates with B.Sc by government policy, release of government white paper from the visitation panel of 2011 to various federal polytechnics, review of obsolete polytechnics Act by the National Assembly, release of funds towards the implementation of CONTISS 15 immigration and payment of its arrears, office of the accountant general to single

out polytechnic among other tiers of tertiary education sector (as experiment specie) for implementation of IPPIS, a new salary payment scheme, refusal of government to commence the re-negotiation of FGN/ASUP agreement as contained in the previous signed agreement, constitution of Polytechnic NEEDs Assessment Committee to evaluate the needs of all public polytechnics in order to reposition it in line with international standards. Others are refusal of state government to implement the approved salary package (CONCPASS) and the retirement age of 65 years, continuous appointment of unqualified persons as Rectors, mostly without the knowledge and experience of polytechnic education system, gross underfunding of polytechnics and lopsidedness in the disbursement of TETFUND grants and other interventions, and lastly, the constitution of Governing Council of the six Ploytechnics left out,” he said.

He said ASUP would continue the ongoing strike unless the federal governments implements all the issues raised by the union. He stressed that Nigerians must grasp their future in their hands, stressing that others have fought this battle before them, and they triumphed.

“Therefore ASUP must win this struggle so that our children and the generation to come would not suffer this system of education in polytechnics. It is clear that this strike would continue until government show serious concern otherwise I don’t see us going back to the lecture room, and that was the resolutions we reached at the just concluded NEC meeting. Government has been robbing the polytechnic system, so this time we want to defend ourselves in a just manner,” he added. In a related development, Adekola Olawola, a legal practitioner and lecturer in the college, berated the government, saying that ASUP has taken the right steps to save the polytechnic sector from total collapse. He warned that if government decides to be tagged “unreasonable and irresponsible’ because of their failed obligation to heed to the request and demand of ASUP, then this generation would not forgive them.

“ASUP is also calling on well- meaning Nigerians to intercede in the ongoing strike that commenced five months ago. Let Nigerians come out and pressurize federal and state governments, just like what they did during the ASUU strike. It is a known fact that Nigerians do not have access to quality education. So if government kills the polytechnic education, it then means that the government is denying children of the less-privileged ones access to quality education. I appeal to government to take proactive measures in meeting up ASUP’s demands so that students can return to school,” he pleaded.

Also speaking, the Dean, Students’ Affairs of the College, Mr O.T Raheem and the General Secretary of ASUP, Yabatech chapter, Jeremiah Awofodu, jointly decried poor media attention towards the strike, and stressed that the strike would continue if government remains deaf to the demands of the aggrieved workers.

FG Urges Polytechnic Union to Call Off Faculty Strike

BY OUR REPORTER ON FEBRUARY 28, 2014 COVER, UNCATEGORIZED

(Abuja)

The Federal Government has urged the Governing Councils of Federal Polytechnics to prevail on striking lecturers of the institutions to accept the offer made them.

The Federal Government had offered N40 billion for the payment of CONTISS 15 arrears in two installments. The Supervising Minister of Education, Chief Nyesom Wike, made the call on Friday at a meeting with the chairmen of the Governing Councils of Federal Polytechnics in Abuja on Friday.

He said the government was determined and remained committed to the payment of CONTISS 15 in two instalments, with the first in March and the second in November. He said that the Federal Government's offer also applied to striking members of staff of Federal Colleges of Education.

The two installments of the payment of the arrears to both polytechnics and colleges of education was put at N40 billion. "At an exhaustive meeting with the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics, ASUP, we agreed on the two installment payment of the CONTISS 15. We have since raised a memo to the President to this effect. I took the risk of committing government because we are deeply worried over the prolonged strike. Thereafter, ASUP wrote to inform us that they have rejected this offer.

"As chairmen of Polytechnic Governing Councils, we ask that you communicate our commitment to adhering to the schedule of payment. All the processes are on and we are committed to resolving the strike action."

Wike called on the chairmen of Governing Councils of Federal Polytechnics to prevail on striking Polytechnic staff to accept the offer to pay outstanding CONTISS 15 arrears in two installments. He said that their acceptance would lead to the immediate resolution of the ongoing strike and stressed that the Federal Government was unhappy that polytechnic students were at home.

The Office of the Secretary to Government of the Federation is said be concluding work on the release of the white paper on the report of visitation panels to the institutions.

The minister added that work on the Needs Assessment for polytechnics and colleges of education were about being concluded. According to him, the Jonathan administration will tackle the rot in the institutions the way it is implementing the Needs Assessment report on universities. He, however, appealed to unions of polytechnics and colleges of education to focus on the welfare of their members and not on the appointment of rectors and provosts.

Chief Ebenezer Babatope, Chairman of the Committee of Chairmen of the Governing Councils of Federal Polytechnics, commended the determined efforts of the minister to resolve the strike by polytechnic staff. Babatope said that with the detailed briefing by the minister, the governing

councils would inform staff of their respective polytechnics on the commitment of the Federal Government to pay CONTISS 15 in two instalments.

He said Nigerian polytechnic staff needed to return to their jobs so that further progress could be made.

Weigh-In Allowances

Uduaghan approves weigh-in allowance for media workers

BY OUR REPORTER ON DECEMBER 26, 2014 NATIONAL

Governor of Delta State, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, has approved the payment of weigh-in allowance for staff of parastatals in the Ministry of Information, including the Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS) and The Pointer Newspaper.

The approval effectively meets the key demand of the three unions in the Ministry of Information which had embarked on industrial action to press for the payment of the allowance.

Earlier on Monday, the Commissioner for Information, Chike Ogeah Esq, alongside the Head of Service, Mr. Patrick Origho, had met the leaders of the three unions, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Radio, Television and Theatre Workers' Union (RATTAWU) and the National Union of Printing, Publishing and Paper Products Workers (NUPPPROW), where they were assured of the governor's readiness to approve the payment of the allowance.

Dr. Uduaghan, who was out of the state when the unions began their industrial action on December 18 promptly approved the payment of the allowance on returning to Asaba. In effect, Delta State becomes the first state to approve the payment of the weigh-in allowance. Until now, only workers at the federal level had been earning the allowance.

Reacting to the approval for the payment of the allowance by the governor, Ogeah said the unions were expected to immediately call off their action in line with the agreement reached at Monday's meeting.

Ogeah expressed appreciation of the government with the unions for the maturity displayed in the meeting and urged them to redouble their commitment to increasing productivity. He said the upgrade of the two arms of the DBS with world class broadcast equipment in readiness for the digitisation deadline would be completed within two weeks and called on the workers to brace up for new challenges.

me of their support, so that we can continue the work we have been doing. I feel humbled and thankful to God Almighty.”

In his speech, the coordinator of the scheme, Kadilo Kabari, said the annual event, which is the second in the series begun during the first year of Senator Abe in the National Assembly, stressing that the Senator had kept his promise of providing incentives and support to students, youths, women, and men in the seven local government areas that make up the district.

Among those at the event were the Presidents of student unions drawn from the seven local government areas of the senatorial district, who in their separate solidarity messages, commended Senator Magnus Abe for keeping his promises.

RATTAWU Suspends Strike (Leadership)

Michael Oche— *Dec 19, 2014*

The Radio, Television and Theatre Arts Workers Union of Nigeria (RATTAWU) yesterday suspended a strike action it embarked upon on Wednesday after it signed a memorandum of understanding with the federal government on how to implement its demands.

The government, in the pact signed on its behalf by the Federal Ministry of Information, agreed to set up an expanded committee which starts work today to address the workers' demands.

The workers are protesting “poor funding and decaying infrastructure in public electronic media outfits, poor state of preparedness for transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria by June, 2015 and low patronage of public media outfits by government agencies”, amongst others.

RATTAWU president, Comrade Yemisi Bamgbose who spoke to our reporter said that the strike action will continue in states where the new weigh-in allowance has not been implemented.

Bamgbose said after elaborate consultations, the meeting agreed that failure to upgrade infrastructure in the Federal Radio Corporation, Nigerian Television Authority, News Agency of Nigeria and Voice of Nigeria because of dwindling funding is increasingly making the outfits unable to favourably compete with the private media in spite of the wealth of experience and committed staff that abound in these outfits.

It also agreed that remunerations in public media and cultural outfits which were the “lowest” in the country should be addressed, and “negotiations be reopened and the earlier proposals for the approval of the Media and Culture Salary Structure which the president referred to the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission be followed up to its logical conclusion.”

He said a follow-up team for the implementation of the resolutions of the pact signed yesterday was constituted with members drawn from the ministries of information and labour, RATTAWU and the Nigeria Union of Journalists.

Our reporter observed that activities in government broadcasting agencies, including newscasting were carried out by management staff during the period of the strike.

Articles from Vanguard

Funding of Tertiary Institutions

SSANU, NASU, NAAT threaten strike

December 15, 2011 / in Education 12:40 am / Comments

By Ikenna Asomba & Joy Osuji

LAGOS- Following the two-day joint meeting held by the National executives of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, SSANU, Non-academic Staff Union, NASU and National Association of Academic Technologists, NAAT, with the Federal Government, the unions have threatened to embark on a comprehensive strike, if the government fails to meet core areas of their demands in 30 days.

According to the Chairman, NASU-UNILAG, Comrade Adesina Adelagun, he said that the National arm of NASU has directed them to hold their peace pending the 30 days deadline requested by government to implement core areas of their 2009 NASU/FG Agreement.

Adeshina lamented: “As I am speaking with you, the agreement the Federal government religiously entered with us in 2009 is yet to be implemented. The agreement would elapse in 2012, and we have to sit for another discussion, which ought to be an improvement of the last one.

“If nothing has been done with the last agreement, how do you think we would be happy to go and sit for another discussion? He asked, adding, “we are surprised with the way and manner our leaders show disinterest in Nigeria’s education system. Going by UNESCO recommendation, they are supposed to accrue 26 per cent of the country’s budget to education, but they do far lesser than that.

Speaking further, the comrade affirmed that the core areas of their demands which they want the government to meet with are the 65 years retirement age of NASU members; adequate funding of Nigerian universities; the #18,000 minimum wage for members which FG is yet to commence payment among other things.

“Having met with them (FG) on several occasions, we know that strike is the last thing they understand. We may down our tools if they fail to meet our demands come January 9, 2012. Although, it’s not in our interest, because they (FG) don’t feel it, they don’t have their children in Nigerian public universities, as most of them school abroad and even in Ghana.

“Let us do the right thing at the right time to move this nation forward”, he enthused.

Also lending a voice, Comrade Olusegun Odusanwo, Chairman, SSANU-UNILAG said that the major agitations of SSANU in the last joint meeting of SSANU, NASU, NAAT, with the FG on December 7-8 are adequate funding of Nigerian universities, university autonomy, earned allowances among other core issues.

“Although, the FG has met with the issue of our salary allowances, but other core aspects of our 2009 agreement is yet to be implemented. We only pray God to touch the minds of our leaders so that they can do what is right at the right time”, he hoped.

Also, in the Lagos State University, LASU, the Chairman, SSANU, Comrade Funke Sessi affirmed that they have been directed by the National body not to down their tools yet, until the January 9, 2012, deadline requested by FG to implement core areas of their demands.

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/12/ssanu-nasu-naat-threaten-strike/#sthash.U0w1Zdoz.dpuf>

Workers’ strike: Mr. President must honour agreements

October 06, 2011 / in Viewpoint 2:00 pm / Comments

It has been said that no nation can develop beyond the level of its education. In other words, education is the live-wire of any serious nation which aspires to attain the highest level of development.

In Nigeria, one might not be too wrong in saying that the policy of successive governments in the country is that the goose that lays the developmental golden egg must be killed so that it does not turn around to criticize the misappropriation and looting of its resources.

Or how else does one explain the continuous neglect of the education sector whereby students, who are the nation’s assets and bridge to the future, are made to bear the brunt of our government’s insensitivity while the lecturers and other workers, who train the future wealth of the country, are made to wallow in abject poverty.

This situation which began in 1978 under the Olusegun Obasanjo’s military regime has taken a very critical turn with detrimental implications on the lives of workers, youths and peasants as well as the quality of education. Since 1978 when the tuition and feeding fees were introduced and government got ensnared in crippling IMF/World Bank loans, the lots of education have gone from bad to worse. As a result of non-funding, all Nigerian schools lack adequate and well-equipped facilities like modern libraries, laboratories, classrooms, hostels, potable water, constant power supply, etc. Schools are under-staffed, while morale is low among the existing staff due to poor welfare package and lack of necessary working tools.

In their bid to reverse this, the ASUU, SSANU, NASU and NAAT succeeded in forcing the Federal Government to sign an agreement with them in October 2009. The agreement basically centres on funding, the allocation of a minimum of 26% of the annual budget to education. But unfortunately since that time, the Federal Government has not deemed it fit to implement the agreement. It was this government’s blatant refusal to implement the agreement that led ASUU into declaring a one-week lecture boycott last week. As I write, other staff unions are also on strike. And if care is not taken, the crisis may soon degenerate into a full blown industrial strike.

I call on governments at all levels to accede to the demands of the striking universities workers and honour the agreement it willingly reached with the unions in 2009. The government’s refusal

to adequately fund education has created basis for the authorities of institutions to impose various obnoxious charges and fees on the students. This has been making education the exclusive preserve of children of the few rich, the privileged and treasury looters. Moreover, the declining state of our institutions, from the primary to tertiary, is not a concern to the governments since members of the capitalist ruling class can afford to send their wards to private schools or abroad to acquire sound education.

This is further buttressed by the fact that while government claims there is no money and the universities are left to decay, public officials (elected/un-elected) live fabulous ostentatious lifestyles with fat salaries and allowances with a coterie of aides, special advisers, special assistants, and hangers-on, while billions of naira are daily looted, squandered and wasted on frivolous activities that do not fundamentally affect the living conditions of the working people for the better. Apparently, it is not a case of non-affordability but lack of sincerity, political will, charismatic drives and sensitivity to the welfare of the people.

However, as ASUU and other staff unions, along with the students, are fighting for the proper funding of education, the sight must not be lost on the fact that corruption and mismanagement is another phenomenon that compounded the crisis of the education sector. Therefore, we must equally demand for democratic management of our institutions with the elected representatives of the students and academic and non-academic staff.

And while it is instructive to state that the struggle of ASUU is necessary and commendable, the task of revamping education must be shouldered by every staff union in the sector (that is ASUU, ASUP, COEASU, SSANU, NASU, SSATHURAI, NUT, NAAT, etc.), along with the Nigerian students. There should be joint action among the staff unions and the students.

This will lead to the formation of a formidable force that can give the required strength to the struggle. In the meantime, ASUU and other unions should take the struggle beyond the four walls of campuses by organizing public rallies and symposiums in order to enlist physical participation of the working people and to mount pressure on the government.

The need to form a united front is highlighted in the fact that university workers and students have become victims of state repression as a result of their genuine campaigning and demands for better wages and enabling academic environment. In fact, most institutions have not only found it difficult to increase their school fees astronomically but have also elected to suspend and victimize those students activist who make any meaningful attempt to criticize them.

This prevalence among others is not accidental but a historically premeditated and calculated attempt at breaking the defenses of any vibrant structure that can possibly protect the interest of the working class. This experience is not limited to the schools alone. The governments at all level of the public service have refused to implement the #18,000 minimum wage which only amount to a meager #600 per day while the disconcerted workers are being threatened with massive retrenchment!

The only lesson inherent in these present quagmires is the need for all working class to unite under a common ground and with the knowledge that nothing can be given freely by the state. It has to be fought for. That is how the capitalist state has always been and that is the way it will remain.

History has made it so and there appears to be nothing any mortal can arguably do about that. The state will remain the state just as a leopard cannot change its spot.

As the University workers continue their campaign for adequate funding of education, I maintain that students and workers must not just realize in theory the need to fight for political change as a basis of improving the condition of education and better living condition, they must realize this necessity in practice by taking the bold steps of creating, joining, and building a pro-masses' political party alongside with the labour and civil society with the sole aim of chasing away these anti-education capitalist government and putting in their place a political party and government that recognizes the principle of provision of functional education not just as a fashionable phrase but a cardinal principle of governance which can be realized on the basis of radical re-arrangement of the economy to suit the majority and not the minority.

It is only when these programmes are executed and accomplished that we can boldly peep back into this dark moment in history of our nation and say that after all "the struggles and campaign for the better funding of education were never in vain".

Mr Adewale Stephen, a student of History, wrote from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/10/workers%e2%80%99-strike-mr-president-must-honour-agreements/#sthash.yjL5GB7V.dpuf>

CONTISS 15

Nigeria: Crisis Over Contiss 15 Arrears Extends ASUP Strike to 352 Days

10 July 2014

By Laju Arenyeka

The Academic Staff Union of Poly-technics, ASUP, has now been on strike for a total of 352 days. Several mitigating factors have contributed to this, but the most contentious is the payment of workers' salary arrears on the Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure, CONTISS, 15 to the tune of N40bn.

Recall that during a meeting with the chairmen of Governing Councils of federal polytechnics in March, the Supervising Minister of Education, Chief Nyesom Wike, said government was committed to paying CONTISS 15 in two installments in March and November 2014.

"At our exhaustive meeting with ASUP,' Wike said, "we agreed on two installmental payments of the CONTISS 15. We have since raised a memo to the President to this effect. I took the risk of committing government because we are deeply worried over the prolonged strike. Thereafter, ASUP wrote to inform us that they have rejected this offer. Please, as chairmen of Polytechnic Governing Councils, we ask that you communicate our commitment to adhering to the schedule of payment. All the processes are on and we are committed to resolving the strike action."

That was three months ago. Wike's spokesperson, Simeon Nwakaudu told Vanguard Learning earlier this week: "The only issue left is the payment of the CONTISS 15 arrears and ASUP is mostly to blame for that. ASUP missed the opportunity in January when government said that it would pay the money in two installments. I think the ASUP president should take responsibility and be bold enough to accept the fact that he made an error. He wrote to the government saying that ASUP would only accept one installment. Then, by the time ASUP changed its mind and agreed to pay in installments, the budget had already been passed, and it was not included in the budget."

The ASUP Chairman, Dr. Chibuzor Asomugha, however, told Vanguard Learning that the union did not at any time refuse the Government's offer to pay the money in two installments. "ASUP never refused it," he said, "we never rejected it at any point; we had our own options for installments, and the Government had its own. We proposed that the first installment be made in February, and the second in May. Government wanted to pay in March and September, and later said it would pay in March and November. In March, at the meeting, we agreed that the payments will be made in April and July. We had that meeting with Wogu on the directive of the President, but up until now, not a kobo has been paid."

Asomugha argued that the Minister is simply "just trying to buy time with this argument. The money is not in the budget. If they have the money, they would not even ask about installments, they will just pay what they have. It doesn't even make any sense. We have been owed since 2009; even if they were going to pay it in 10 installments, wouldn't it have been included in the budget? The argument that it was not included in the budget because of difference over installments does not hold water at all."

Other issues

When ASUP first embarked on the strike on April 29, it tried to press home a 13-point agenda based on the union's agreement with the Federal Government in 2009, ASUP suspended the strike in July 2013 as a result of Government's promise to fulfill four of the 13 issues in the contentious 2009 agreement between both parties.

These four issues include release of the White paper on Visitation to Federal Polytechnics, the completion of the constitution of the governing councils for federal polytechnics, the migration of the lower cadre on CONTISS 15 salary scale, and the commencement of the Needs Assessment of Nigerian Polytechnics. Three of these, apart from the CONTISS were settled after the union resumed its strike in September. A committee has also been set up to look into the issue of dichotomy between university and polytechnic graduates in job placements and career progression.

Nwakaudu told Vanguard Learning that 90 per cent of ASUP's demands have been met. He said: "Concerning the other issues, they are extraneous. They are issues that will require a long process because they involve different sectors of government. The essence of negotiation in unionism is that you should be willing to make compromises; that is why, about seven polytechnics have pulled out of the strike."

These other, less popular issues first postulated by ASUP include: the worrisome state of state-owned polytechnics in the country; the continued appointment of unqualified persons as Rectors

and Provosts of Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Technologies by some state governments; refusal of most state governments to implement the approved salary packages (CONPCASS) for their Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Technologies and the 65-year retirement age in some state polytechnics; among others.

Wike's absence at Senate intervention meeting

Recall that the Supervising Minister of Education last week was absent at a meeting scheduled to hold with delegates of the Senate Committee on Education, ASUP, and its striking counterpart, the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union. Wike's spokesperson, Simeon Nwakaudu told Vanguard Learning that Wike "wrote officially to the Senate about a week before the meeting with the Senate; we were even surprised that the meeting held. He took permission because he was in a policy meeting with JAMB, vice-chancellors of universities, and rectors of polytechnics to place cut off marks for admission into tertiary institutions."

The ASUP boss, however, contradicted this saying that "there were two meetings with the Senate that he missed. The first time, we were told that he had taken permission not to be around, but the second one which held last week, the Senate told us that he did not have the courtesy to take permission."

Asomugha also spoke on the issue of some chapters pulling out of the protracted strike. "Which Polytechnics are pulling out?" he asked our reporter, "Oko Poly for example is not pulling out. The management decided to call students back to school. It is the prerogative of management to decide whether to send students home or to ask them to come back to school. That was never ASUP's call. ASUP decided not to give our services, and at Oko Poly, we are still not giving our services. Of course, there are a few ASUP chapters that have pulled out of the strike because of external pressure, but Oko Poly is not one of them."

331 days on: ASUP strike lapses into another session

On June 19, 2014 / in [Education](#) 12:25 am / [Comments](#)

BY LAJU ARENYEKA

Three hundred and thirty-one days-longer than an entire academic session; this is how long the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics, ASUP has been on strike.

The journey:

After a seven-day warning strike, the union embarked on a full-fledged strike on April 29, 2013, protesting Government's refusal to honour a 13-point agreement made with the union in 2009. The Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, also embarked on its own strike on July 1, 2013 for similar reasons. The ASUU strike would go on for six months before a truce would be reached with the government.

ASUP on the other hand, seemed to have reached a compromise, as on July 10, 2013, the strike was suspended. Polytechnic lecturers went back to their classrooms as a result of the Federal Government's promise to handle four of the 13 issues in the agreement within two weeks.

These include: release of the White Paper on Visitation to Federal Polytechnics; the completion of the constitution of the Governing Councils for Federal Polytechnics; migration of the lower cadre on the CONTISS 15 salary scale; and the commencement of the needs assessment of Nigerian Polytechnics. ASUP gave the Government a month. Nothing was done. This eventually elapsed into three months, culminating in the union's continuation of the strike on October 4, 2013.

When ASUP held its National Executive Council (NEC) meeting last week, hopes were up that the issues will soon be resolved in view of the intervention of the National Assembly. However, that was not the case as ASUP-NEC, refused to call off the strike just yet. The Coordinator of ASUP Zone D, Mr. Anderson Ezeibe told Vanguard Learning that the different ASUP chapters will carry out a referendum this week, and convene for another NEC at Yaba College of Technology next week.

The NEC meeting will also take into consideration, the results of what stakeholders believe might be the 'final intervention meeting' with the National Assembly to hold on Tuesday, June 24, 2014. The June 24 meeting will also include the demands of the striking Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union, COEASU, whose members are also expected to attend. Relevant stakeholders such as the ministers of Education, Labour and Finance, as well as representatives from the salaries and wages commission are also expected to attend.

"We hope that the issues will finally be resolved at that meeting," Ezeibe said. "What we are looking out for now is for the ministerial committee involving the release of the White paper to be set up, as well as a definite proposal as to payment in respect to the CONTISS 15 migration. We would also like to draw up an agreement including the non-victimization clause so that the salaries being owed will be paid. We are not even saying that the moneys must be paid before the strike is called off, but let Government tell us when the money will be paid. We are being very liberal about this; it is not a difficult situation, but a test of Government's commitment. Let it be put in writing, and let the relevant parties sign."

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/331-days-asup-strike-lapses-another-session/#sthash.8SKleZzv.dpuf>

All demands must be met before we suspend strike — ASUP President

on March 06, 2014 / in [News](#) 12:59 am / [Comments](#)

By Amaka Abayomi & Laju Arenyeka

DESPITE the Federal Government's plea to chairmen of Governing Councils of Federal polytechnics to prevail on striking polytechnic staff to accept government's offer to pay the outstanding CONTISS 15 arrears in two installments for the immediate resolution of the ongoing strike, students in the over 20 federal polytechnics and several other state polytechnics would

have to remain at home a little longer as the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics, ASUP, has remained resolute, saying it would not call off the strike till its demands are met.

Recall that during a recent meeting with the chairmen of Governing Councils of Federal Polytechnics in Abuja, the Supervising Minister of Education, Mr. Nyesom Wike, said government is committed to paying CONTISS 15 in two installments in March and November 2014 which stands at over N40 billion.

“At our exhaustive meeting with ASUP, we agreed on the two installmental payment of the CONTISS 15. We have since raised a memo to the President to this effect. I took the risk of committing government because we are deeply worried over the prolonged strike.

“Thereafter, ASUP wrote to inform us that they have rejected this offer. Please, as chairmen of Polytechnic Governing Councils, we ask that you communicate our commitment to adhering to the schedule of payment. All the processes are on and we are committed to resolving the strike action.”

Giving reasons for their rejection of government’s offer, the Chairman, ASUP, Mr. Chibuzor Asomugha, said government reneged on an earlier agreement by both parties.

“Of the 13 issues we raised, government selected four which it promised to treat as urgent. The four issues include release of the White paper on Visitation to Federal Polytechnics; the completion of the constitution of the Governing Councils for federal polytechnics; the migration of the lower cadre on CONTISS 15 salary scale; and the commencement of the Needs Assessment of Nigerian polytechnics.

“We suspended the strike and gave government one month to resolve these issues, but it was not until we resumed strike again in January that government commenced the Needs Assessment and completed the constitution of the Governing Councils for federal polytechnics.

“On the CONTISS 15 salary scale, we agreed with government for it to be paid in two installments in the months of March and September, but government reneged on our agreement and changed the date to November without consulting us.

“We convened an emergency NEC meeting and members agreed we reject the offer because the Minister is trying to reduce our demands to just one issue without considering the fact that we had tabled these issues before government since February 2012.

“It is so unfair that government has settled universities but has neglected polytechnics which I attribute to government’s general disregard for polytechnics. We were supposed to have open discussions with government on the remaining issues since July 2013 but government is not bringing that up.”

Meanwhile, ASUP has directed its different chapters to start mass protests in their different locations so as to press home their demands.

Pressing home ASUP’s demands

The root of the strike is an agreement ASUP had with the Federal Government in 2001, which was reviewed in 2009 with an agreement that it should be re-negotiated after three years.

In December 2012, as a result of government's failure to address any of the demands, ASUP issued government a 30-day ultimatum which expired on January 31, 2013.

Though ASUP had reasons to embark on strike in view of government's repeated failure to address its demands, it decided to give government more time to respond; a response that never came. This compelled the union to issue another 21-day ultimatum on March 25, 2013 which expired on April 22, 2013 and was followed by the declaration of a one-week warning strike which dovetailed into an indefinite strike beginning Monday, April, 29, 2013.

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/03/demands-must-met-suspend-strike-asup-president/#sthash.XV1Fxlko.dpuf>

Non-academic staff strike 'll paralyse polytechnics- YABATECH NASU

On August 19, 2009 / in [Education](#) 6:58 pm / [Comments](#)

By Olubusuyi Adenipekun

Beginning from Monday this week, members of the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) in both state and federal polytechnics, began a one-week warning strike. This is to be followed by a full scale nationwide strike if government fails to accede to their demands.

Comrade Adesakin Owolabi, the Yaba College of Technology branch Chairman of the union, in this exclusive interview, speaks on the devastating effects of a full blown strike on the polytechnic sector, and sheds more light on the demands of the union. Excerpts:

How does Polytechnics NASU relate with NASU of other sectors like Universities, Colleges of Education and so on?

The Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) is a union involving members in Universities, State and Federal Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Research Institutes, ICAN, WAEC and so forth.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) cut across universities and polytechnics respectively. But NASU members in these various institutions are controlled by one body.

The union is broken into segments because of the wide number of institutions it encompasses.

What have been the activities of the parent body of NASU since the crisis commenced in educational institutions in the last two months?

NASU for universities has been on strike for some time now. It first gave a warning strike and thereafter declared a total strike and since then, the union has been on strike and it is still on strike up till now.

Why has Polytechnics' NASU just embarking on strike since its university counterpart has been on strike for some time now?

Our members have been eager to go on strike. They have been saying: What are we waiting for? But we have all along been telling them that NASU is a very wide union. That Universities' NASU can do their strike while Polytechnic's NASU can also do its own.

Colleges of Education NASU has just ended their three-week warning strike and they will now assemble to assess the situation report before the national body can now ask them to go on a full scale strike.

Does NASU in these different institutions negotiate with government individually or as a body?

We negotiated jointly with the Federal Government in 2001 for minimum wage. Now, the Nigeria Labour Congress is now asking for N52,200 minimum wage. Why can government pay this wage when a senator is receiving a minimum of N13 million per month, when a House of Representatives member is receiving a minimum of N5 million.

And government cannot pay N52,200 as minimum wage for workers.

Is your union, NASU demanding for a minimum wage of N52,200 per month?

Yes, that is the minimum wage we are asking for.

So, apart from the demand for this minimum wage, what are the other reasons for your on-going one-week warning strike?

The one-week warning strike which began on Monday can this week is the first time in the last two months that our union, Polytechnics' NASU will be going on strike. The first thing we are demanding is the cancellation of the policy of deregulation of oil sector.

The policy of deregulation is unacceptable because it will affect our members. The policy will give free hand to fuel dealers to increase the prices of their products.

It will affect us badly because we cannot do without these products. So, deregulation of the oil sector should be abolished. The second issue is the NASU-FG 2001 agreement which has to do with minimum wage. But up till now, the agreement has not been signed by the Federal Government.

And we are saying that an unsigned agreement can be thrown out at any time. The other demand is the issue of monetisation. We are supposed to be paid 100%. But the Federal Government only paid us 50% through e-payment, about two weeks ago. We are saying that the remaining 50% should be paid to us without further delay. Another issue is CONTISS 15 which Rectors of Polytechnics have been collecting.

How are you sure that Rectors have collected the Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure (CONTISS) 15?

I have evidence. The Rectors are not denying it. They collected about N1.4m each, that is arrears of CONTISS 15. No matter how small, government should also pay our members. What they are

saying presently is that CONTISS 15 is meant for workers from Salary Grade Level 11 or 12 upward.

And we are saying that it is a wrong-headed policy, making the rich to get richer and the poor to become poorer. Apart from NASU, even some senior members of the Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Polytechnics (SSANIP) have neither collected the arrears of CONTISS nor been collecting CONTISS 15 salary.

We have evidence pertaining to a letter written by the Registrar of YABATECH to Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) where it is said that CONTISS 15 is meant for those on Salary Grade 1 to Grade Level 14. Although some are saying that CONTISS 15 is for Salary Grade Level 12 and above. What of those on Grade Level 1 to 11? We are also protesting the disparity in retirement age of 60 and 65 for University professors and Chief Lecturers in the Polytechnic sectors, respectively.

They hold the same certificates from the university. For us, our position is that the retirement age should be pegged at 60 or 65 for everybody, whether academic or non-academic staff. We also want furniture allowance paid to our members. Why should government be paying senior staff this furniture allowance and refuse to pay our members?

Specifically, what cadre of staff are not receiving the furniture allowance presently?

Those on Grade Level 1 to Grade Level 5 or 6 are not getting the allowance right now.

How is your union going to enforce the one-week warning strike in state and federal polytechnics throughout the country?

All our members throughout the country are in full support of the strike. We have set up a monitoring committee and all the executive members of the union will be on ground throughout the week.

Our fight is against the federal and state governments.

If your union goes on nationwide strike after the warning strike, how will it affect academic activities in polytechnics?

If we go on nationwide strike, security staff, who are our members, will also join us. We have locked the Potters' Lodge already.

Our members sort out results of students either on the request of students or Heads of Department. Admissions is on-going presently and our members are involved in it.

If we go on nationwide strike, admissions exercise and other academic activities will be jeopardised.

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/non-academic-staff-strike-ll-paralyse-polytechnics-yabatech-nasu/#sthash.JF3FJdpy.dpuf>

Minimum Wage

NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF MINIMUM WAGE: Labour declares indefinite strike in Benue

On July 31, 2014 / in News 12:00 am / Comments

By Peter Duru

MAKURDI—ORGANISED labour yesterday declared an indefinite strike in Benue State to protest alleged illegal deductions of workers' salaries and the non- implementation of minimum wage for teachers and pensioners by the state government.

In a seven paragraph resolution in Makurdi, the state capital, by the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, TUC, the state government was given up to the close of work yesterday to meet the demands of the aggrieved workers or face an indefinite action.

The resolution signed by Ordue Tartenger and Simon Anchaver, state chairmen of TUC and NLC respectively, read, "the NLC/ TUC after its joint meeting in-session resolved that government should refund the excess tax deductions from our members' salaries since 2011.

"The joint session observed with dismay, the decision of government to unilaterally deduct workers salaries despite the position of the organised labour that it will resist any attempt to tamper with our salaries and we demand an immediate refund.

"We also demand that the three years Leave Transport Grant arrears owed our members by the state government should be paid forthwith. The session also observed with dismay the non-payment of minimum wage to pensioners, and the non implementation of 15 per cent and 21 per cent increment to pensioners; we demand that it is paid forthwith.

"Primary school teachers are also yet to enjoy the full implementation of the minimum wage, we demand that they should also be paid the minimum wage along with others workers.

"Furthermore, we also resolved that government should immediately refund all deductions made in respect of the National Housing Fund to our members. The joint session resolved that government should address all of these issues before the close of work today, (Wednesday) failing the organised labour will have no option than to call all her members to embark on an indefinite strike action commencing Thursday, 31 July 2014."

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/07/non-implementation-minimum-wage-labour-declares-indefinite-strike-benue/#sthash.wjvYJiw1.dpuf>

Minimum Wage protest turns violent in Bauchi

On April 10, 2013 / in News 4:27 pm / Comments

BY PETER DURU

MAKURDI – A protest march by aggrieved primary school teachers drawn from the 23 local government areas of Benue state, Tuesday, went awry at the main entrance of the State Government House where many including women were allegedly beaten by security personnel who also fired teargas canisters at the protesters.

The action of the security operatives created a stampede which left many of the aggrieved teachers sustaining varying degrees of injuries.

The teachers had converged in their numbers as early as 9am at the State Secretariat of the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, from where they mobilized for the peaceful march which was to terminate at the Government House where they expected Governor Gabriel Suswam to address them.

Some of them carried placards which had inscriptions like: “Suswam don’t kill primary school education in Benue, No minimum wage, no work, no teacher no education and we are tired of this government’s fake promises”

However, tempers rose among the protesters at the entrance of the government house, when the State Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade Simon Anchaver, addressed them and pleaded that he and other representatives be delegated to meet and discuss their grievances with the governor who was said to be already waiting.

At this point, the angry teachers started raining abuses on the NLC chairman, while some were charging at him. This we gathered prompted security personnel to intervene by firing teargas canisters to disperse them.

The resultant stampede left some of the teachers injured, while those who passed out after inhaling the smoke were revived by their colleagues.

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/04/minimum-wage-protest-turns-violent-in-bauchi/#sthash.5Pobio5.dpuf>

Nonpayment of Salaries

Unpaid salaries: Labour petitions Imo govt

On May 16, 2013 / in News 12:14 am / Comments

BY VICTOR AHIUMA-YOUNG

ORGANISED labour in public service has petitioned Governor Rochas Okorocha of Imo State, urging him to positively engage labour leaders in the state to resolve ongoing industrial dispute over non-payment of six months salaries .

Acting under the umbrella of Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees, AUPCTRE, labour listed other grievances to include

alleged unconstitutional creation of an amorphous body designated as Community Government Council, CGC, which contraction or structure entailed the migration of most public servants to their respective communities, embargo on promotions and advancements.

Others include outright sale of some public agencies to vested interests in disregard to existing legislation and Articles of Association and unilateral deduction of one percent from salaries of public servants to assist government fund its free education programme.

In the petition by the General Secretary of the union, Phillip Agbonkonkon, AUPCTRE said it was disturbed by the ongoing industrial action in Imo State which it argued was avoidable, but for alleged disregard to the fundamental trade union rights and industrial relations practice.

According to the union, the specific issues that informed the ongoing action included “nonpayment of salaries for over six months to some workers employed in parastatals in the state, including those rendering social services.

“Unconstitutional creation of an amorphous body designated as Community Government Council (CGC). The contraction or structure entails the migration of most public servants to their respective communities. Embargo on promotions and advancements.

“Outright sale of some public agencies to vested interests in total disregard to existing legislation and Articles of Association.

“Unilateral deduction of 1 % from the salaries of all Public Servants ostensibly to assist government und it’s so called free education programme without regards to the provisions of the Labour Act on the Protection of Wages and Salaries. Manipulation of key leadership of the State Councils of Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, and Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, TUC, to subvert the right of unions in Imo State Public Service to negotiate with the state government.”

The union called on the governor “to adapt to the imperatives of democratic governance and meaningfully engage the leaders of the Trade Unions that constitute the Joint State Public Service Negotiating Council with a view to resolving the issues in dispute in the interest of the citizens of the state.”

- See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/unpaid-salaries-labour-petitions-imo-govt/#sthash.Flyj9xbN.dpuf>

Articles from The Guardian

Revitalization of Universities

Govt didn’t release N1.3tr intervention fund, says ASUU

- By Iyabo Lawal, Ibadan on March 23, 2015

APART from the initial N200 billion released in 2013, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) disclosed yesterday that the Federal Government has not released the N1.3 trillion NEEDS intervention fund it promised the union.

National Chairman of ASUU, Dr. Nasir Fagge, and Chairman, University of Ibadan (UI) chapter, Prof. Segun Ajiboye, said that government failed to release any fund in 2014 just as the first quarter of 2015 has ended without anything.

Speaking at the UI 63rd Interdisciplinary Discourse, ASUU noted that the reasons for the union's 21-day strike have remained, while government has failed to honour the agreement it freely signed with the union.

According to Fagge, universities are microcosms of the Nigerian society, and government policies have ensured that the university system can only produce poor leaders, who lack empathy and are disconnected from current realities due to the irrelevant curriculum.

While the Federal Government continues to cripple the operation of public universities through under funding, he observed, the effects of such deliberate action is the attendant unemployable graduates, who are "lacking in basic social, emotional and literacy skills."

Speaking on the topic, "ASUU Struggles and the Revitalisation of Public University Education in Nigeria," Fagge, who was represented by ASUU's vice chairman, Prof. Biodun Ogunyemi, said the condition fuelling the union's strikes included poor funding, inadequate remuneration, inadequate capacity, brain drain, poor infrastructure, violation of university autonomy and academic freedom.

The others, he noted, include failure of government to implement recommendations of its own review panels, violation of agreements it freely enters into, inconsistent policies and poor planning, corruption and poor management of funds by university administrators.

Rather than funding public education, he lamented, the Federal Government is preaching internal generation of funds by universities, a condition that now "drives the numerous awards given by universities at convocations, lecture for hire practice by departments who provide intellectual laundry for politicians to present lectures for donations, and unending distinguished personality lectures by individuals who ought to be in jail."

Therefore, "its failure to implement its own reports as well as the repetitive nature of the grounds for strike corroborate the view that the crisis in the university is a systematic if not a carefully designed agenda to paralyse public university education in order to make way for a market-based privatisation of university education.

UI's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Isaac Adewole, who disclosed that the institution has benefited so much from ASUU struggles, urged the union to keep university administrators on their toes and monitor their operations.

ASUU Strike: Never Again

By Kyari Tijani on October 24, 2009

When we say “Never Again”! what is being stated here is that it is not that the tiger called ASUU Strike has been tamed once and for all, by whatever agreement that has been reached by the contending forces. But we say that the entire matter of strike had to be rethought and reworked by all those concerned, as it is our view that nobody is a winner, in this instance – or, as far as the Universities are concerned, as a special case.

The university is an enigma. It is difficult to understand. For instance, the University is not like a textile factory, dealing with inanimate objects producing cloths, basically for profit for the factory owner. With no wish for bragging, or for exaggeration, I can say that the University is the soul of the nation, if a nation has any soul at all. Bad University system may perhaps not harm a nation, for such a University can be ignored, at worst. But a good university system can certainly lift the soul of the nation. A nation that toys with its universities mortgages itself, perhaps irredeemably, if it goes for too long.

The above account does not intend to glorify the university nor also does it state that the country must pamper the university before the university gives its best to society. But it does say that the university is an entirely human organisation in both its composition and in the objectives it is set to achieve. It cannot therefore be treated as a factory producing goods for private profit. For instance, the main elements in the university industry are the teachers. Teachers are human beings – perhaps, special kind of human beings, as teaching is not the most popular job in the world – certainly not in Nigeria. Yet, teachers choose to teach – a clear case of self – sacrifice. Some may say they are fools. I say they are just different kind of people!

Teachers obviously and principally deal with students. Perhaps students too must be regarded as a special kind of people as they are usually humans in a transitional stage; transitting from immaturity to maturity. This is in every respect – socially, economically, and also in terms of political development. Those in such a critical stage of growing up require careful handling by specialists. Teachers are the specialists who not only by profession but also by inclination chose to undertake this onerous responsibility for the good of society; and indeed for the good of humanity as a whole. Without the teacher society would unravel completely and pack up. For this reason, we can say good teachers are therefore not making any extraordinary or unreasonable demand on society, if they press their case for better pay as much as they are doing today in Nigeria. However, strike is not the best option, or even a first instance option, if it can be helped.

Strike by wage earners in a capitalist production system is inevitable. Production in such a system is for profit. Labour which is vital element in the production process has a cost that must be kept at the minimum, if profit is the premium objective. Strike, that is withdrawal of labour service as a means of pressing for higher wages is an indispensable means the wage earner must resort to, if he must.. But what we are saying is that strike is as obnoxious a means of negotiation as “no work; no pay” is also obnoxious as a counter-measure. Both should be avoided if labour relations are to be optimally operated for the benefit of society, which is the wish of both labour

and employer of labour, in this case, the government. This is obvious even in the very odious confrontation that has just been doused; but certainly, not on “never’ never” basis, I dare say!

If any organization contrived by man can be called enigmatic the university is one. It is an industry – just like any other. Its intended, desired outcome is ultimately profit-making by whatever definition; but certainly, not entirely material profit, as in the case of the textile factory we have mentioned. The university produces skilled human beings as citizens, upright in moral values, from whose service society would profit, for the good of everybody. Thus, the university is the barometer of the health and progress of the society and the teachers that teach the young ones to be worthy citizens are, so to say, the guardian angels of society! Ignore them; you harm society. Abuse them; you kill society!

It is a truism to say that Nigerian teachers suffer, and University teachers suffer most, especially the Professors! First of all, in purely sociological terms, imagine being expected to act the god in a godless society like Nigeria – which is the fate of the university teachers in Nigeria, especially the Professors! Infact, the professors are the most pecked; and the most fragile. This exposition is made not necessarily to complain of the poor pay of our Professors and other categories of teachers in our universities, but indeed to celebrate their dedication to service – despite the poor level of pay. Indeed, I am hereunder proposing a never again strike- free scenario for my colleagues in ASUU, which I believe will be a “win – win” scenario for everybody. But a warning. “Man no be wood”, as is said in Nigerian jargon; and teaching in our universities is not and cannot be for charity. That is one big enigma we all have to deeply appreciate – and positively help facilitate it. Much as teaching is a calling, it is also not a charity!

It is certainly cheeky to be talking of the next ASUU Strike while the one that was just suspended has not even quite cooled off. But this is done with all sense of sincerity and seriousness, if only because strikes are germane to the capitalist mode of production. The Nigerian system definitely is capitalist – in fact, an unfair one. Strike cannot be avoided, or wished away. It could however be made to be less disruptive and less destructive.

Indefinite strike, ala the one ASUU has embarked upon and has just suspended, after lasting for 3 months, can only be noted for its dysfunctionality as it is cost -extreme, and its outcome never satisfactory to any of the contenders. As it relates to the university, I can confidently say the students are the main losers. But the lecturers, even if they eventually get their awards, are losers. At the macro level of the society and nation the loss is even more horrendous. There is already the chilling realisation that Nigeria today is breeding “a generation without a future” as education authorities are mulling over mass failure in the all-important West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) examinations, credit passes in which form basic minimum qualification to enter into any tertiary institution in Nigeria. In turn good grades in examinations are only what assure any reasonable future to young Nigerians. This population category reportedly constitutes 40m in a population estimated to be 140m. Of this, a good 23 m have already missed the boat, and are ultimately said to be unemployable. Incessant and interminable ASUU Strikes would eventually send Nigeria to pre-historic level of development and as such strikes, especially in the form called Indefinite Strike by ASUU, must be completely eradicated.

To achieve an ASUU objective; which, believe it or not, begins with the desire and determination to give the best University-level education to our students, I prescribe two

approaches – a modified strike approach and/or “none release of marks” approach. Here I will argue that giving marks is definitely the right of the teachers! They can therefore mark and grade the scripts of examinations they themselves have taught and set. They can withhold the result after fulfilling all their teaching and examining their students.

A modified strike approach will run like this: A Semester is usually some 15 weeks (3 (three) months). A class year is made up of 2 (two) semesters. In each semester, in the Course System of curriculum control, teachers teach and examine and grade their students, who then proceed to the next class on year – to – year basis, up to the year of graduation.

In the modified Strike approach, I suggest ASUU may go on strike – but only on continual; not continuous (Indefinite!) strike. For instance; every month ASUU will offer service for 3 (three) weeks; and hold service for 1 (one) week – until the syllabus is covered and students are examined and graded. This will enable students to get their due right of adequate teaching and knowledge content, as per set curriculum. But to ultimately graduate, students will take longer time.

Thus, parents will have much more to pay; and society has have to wait longer before it can benefit the service of its succeeding generation. Society not government, must ultimately make the choice it considers best for itself. ASUU, instead of confronting and battling with recalcitrant governments, should shift gear to teaching and mobilising society to punish governments that disregard education as policy, and rubbish ASUU – as Nigerian governments are won’t to do, from ASUU experience, so far.

Marking examination scripts and awarding marks is an indispensable part of graduating and, certification of students, and it is eminently the teachers’ responsibility. Even more significantly, the mark a student gets is organically the teachers’ property, as what mark he gives is absolutely his right! He taught the course. He imparted what according to the best of his ability and understanding, he regards as best knowledge; and what marks he gives, according to universal standard and judgment, is fair mark and grade on each particular question. In fact, in each case and at each stage a teacher agonises interminably before he commits himself to a mark. And, given the low standard of candidates we usually admit into the university, the lecturer will more likely mark on the side of generosity, than otherwise. But what does he get for this if students fail! Cries of foul! Hang him!

For this reason, I believe it is our natural right to withhold our marks, even if we must fulfill our obligation of imparting knowledge to the best of our ability, and grade them fairly with due regard to universally acceptable standard of excellence.

With these approaches, ASUU can kick the ball back into the court of the government and of the public for general discussion and due determination. ASUU, rather than suffering the opprobrium of being called greedy for more pay only, rather than praises for offering due service, with this approach, ASUU can afford to sit back in comparative ease, and see who would blink first – government; parents, students or ASUU! I am sure, considering all the given imponderables, conceding to ASUU’s demand would be found more profitable to all concerned than the hard – line alternatives of Ministers of Education!

Let us try this – after the 2 weeks of respite now gained, and spare ourselves all the heartaches an indefinite Strike, which would guarantee us perhaps only one sure outcome – collapse of education and destruction of our beloved country. For, that is the only predictable consequence if we choose to deny the best possible education to our younger generation. Denying teachers the best place on earth is to deny them same even in the next world, as the next world is entirely in the purview of the AlMighty. He does, as He alone wishes, and no human, is qualified to bind reward for any other in the next world! This is Cray hypocrisy! Give me my reward here and now! That is justice!

Tijani is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Maiduguri and a Consultant to The Guardian Editorial Board

FUEL SUBSIDY Withdrawal

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/16/nigeria-restores-fuel-subsidy-protests>

Nigeria restores fuel subsidy to quell nationwide protests

President Goodluck Jonathan says government will lower oil cost to about \$2.75 a gallon after series of strikes paralyses country



Nigerians protest against the 1 January removal of the fuel subsidy, which caused prices to spike from \$1.70 per gallon to at least \$3.50 per gallon. Photograph: Str/EPA

Associated Press in Lagos

Monday 16 January 2012 02.43 EST Last modified on Wednesday 18 June 2014 15.30 EDT

Nigeria's president has announced the government will subsidise fuel prices to immediately reduce the price to about \$2.75 (£1.80) a gallon amid a crippling nationwide strike over the removal of the oil subsidy.

President Goodluck Jonathan also claimed provocateurs have hijacked the protests and demonstrations, which have seen tens of thousands march in cities across the country. Jonathan offered no other details on his claim, but his address on the state-run Nigerian Television Authority showed how worried his government had become by the demonstrations.

"It has become clear to government and all well-meaning Nigerians that other interests beyond the implementation of the deregulation policy have hijacked the protest," Jonathan said. "This has prevented an objective assessment and consideration of all the contending issues for which dialogue was initiated by government. These same interests seek to promote discord, anarchy, and insecurity to the detriment of public peace."

Jonathan's speech came after his attempt to negotiate with labour unions failed late on Sunday night to avert the strike entering a sixth day. The president of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Abdulwaheed Omar, said early on Monday morning he had ordered workers to stay at home over Jonathan's fears about security, but that might not keep people away from attending mass demonstrations like one in which more than 20,000 people show up in the country's commercial capital of Lagos.

The strike began on 9 January, paralysing the country of more than 160 million people. The root cause remains fuel prices: Jonathan's government abandoned subsidies that kept prices low on 1 January, causing prices to spike from \$1.70 a gallon (45 cents a litre) to at least \$3.50 a gallon (94 cents a litre). The costs of food and transportation also largely doubled in a country where most people live on less than \$2 a day.

Anger over losing one of the few benefits average Nigerians see from living in an oil-rich state led to demonstrations across the country and violence that has killed at least 10 people. Red Cross volunteers have treated more than 600 people injured in protests since the strike began, officials said.

Jonathan and other government officials have argued that removing the subsidies, which are estimated to cost \$8bn a year, would allow the government to spend money on badly needed public projects across Nigeria, with its cratered roads, little electricity and a lack of clean drinking water for its inhabitants. However, many remain suspicious of government as military rulers and politicians have plundered government budgets since independence from Britain in 1960.

The strike also could cut into oil production in Nigeria, which produces about 2.4m barrels of crude a day and remains a top energy supplier to the US. A major oil workers association threatened on Thursday to stop all oil production in Nigeria at midnight on Saturday over the continued impasse in negotiations. However, the Nigeria Labour Congress said the association had held off on the threatened production halt.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/09/nigeria-fuel-protests-one-killed>

Nigeria fuel protests: two killed and dozens wounded as police open fire

Police use live ammunition and teargas to disperse crowds taking part in national strike in protest against fuel subsidy cuts



The protests against soaring petrol prices follow government's decision to abolish decades-old fuel subsidies. Photograph: Pius Utomi Ekpei/AFP/Getty Images

Monica Mark in Lagos

Monday 9 January 2012 11.55 EST
Last modified on Tuesday 3 June 2014 20.20 EDT

Two people were killed and swathes of Nigeria ground to a halt on Monday as thousands of protesters took to the streets at the start of an indefinite strike against soaring fuel prices.

According to reports, one person was killed in the commercial hub of Lagos and another in the northern city of Kano, while dozens more were wounded as strikes spread out across the country. Police used live ammunition and teargas in attempts to disperse the crowds.

The usually packed markets and business district of Lagos, with its population of 11 million, emptied out. On the long stretches of highway that span the city's lagoons, only rare police headlamps pierced the rush-hour fog.

Not everywhere was deserted. Burning tyres lit the way to rallies across the city where thousands massed in protest at the government's decision to remove state subsidies on fuel as the new year began. That sent fuel prices in Africa's largest oil-producing country to about 65p a litre, and trade unions urged more than 2 million members to stage an indefinite strike that threatens to paralyse the country.

While much of the anger focused on the timing and manner of the subsidy removal, announced without warning barely a week after a string of attacks by the violent Islamist group Boko Haram, some analysts said it was a deliberate – and risky – gamble.

"It deflects attention from the Boko Haram violence and unites Nigerians, Muslims and Christians, against what is the lesser evil. But it means the president is battling on many fronts: radical militants and millions of Nigerians at the same time," said activist Shehu Sani.

In a small Lagos park, Seun Kutu, the son of Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kutu, addressed thousands, many waving branches and sporting T-shirts with the slogan "Remove corruption, not subsidy".

"Does the government think we are *ummu* [fools?]" he asked a cheering crowd, mixing pidgin English and Yoruba. "Food cost go rise, housing cost go rise, meanwhile ordinary Nigerian's salary no go rise."

Every previous government's attempt to remove the subsidy, which funnels a quarter of the £15.5bn annual government budget to a well-connected cartel of fuel importers, has floundered amid mass protests. Many see the subsidy as a rare opportunity to share in the nation's oil riches, whose 2m barrels per day industry has failed to lift the vast majority of citizens out of extreme poverty. In 2003, there were eight days of strikes when the government attempted to increase fuel prices.

Flanked by union leaders and Nigerian film stars and musicians, Kuti said the strikes would last until the government erased corruption. "There must be no compromise this time. When it comes to doing something that inflicts pain on ordinary Nigerians, the president is quick to do it. But members of his own cabinet have been indicted for corruption, yet they are rewarded by promotions in the government," he said.

A Lagos lawyer, Yewande Aina, 29, said this was her first anti-government demonstration. "Normally we are afraid of the police. But we have to take a stand this time – before they removed the subsidy, they should have consulted us if it's in our interests."

With an economic agenda to renew Nigeria's crumbling infrastructure and haul Africa's largest country into middle-income status, President Goodluck Jonathan appears determined to see through the cuts – even facing down opposition within his government.

He faces an uphill battle convincing citizens as decades of top-level mismanagement and corruption have left the country incapable of refining its own fuel. "Is it because the president has a PhD in zoology he wants to treat us like animals? The only way thousands of us could have come into the streets is because we are not happy with what our government is offering us," said Umar Afolabi in the northern town of Kaduna.

The country's stability appeared menaced as the president claimed some government and security officials were secretly backing Boko Haram. The shadowy organisation claimed responsibility for Nigeria's first suicide bombing, which killed 24 people in the UN building in the capital, Abuja, in August and has killed at least 30 in the last week. A wave of attacks that began with four church bombings on Christmas Day threatens to push Nigeria to the brink of sectarian civil conflict.

In the north, where several states are under a state of emergency after sectarian attacks, witnesses said one person died of gunshot wounds after demonstrators clashed with police in Kano. In Abuja, protesters chanted at dozens of police to "arrest Goodluck", but the crowds began to thin out in the midday sun.

"Many people are not quarrelling with the fact the subsidy isn't affordable or sustainable," former presidential economic adviser Bismarke Rewane said. "But we're already dealing with a looming sectarian crisis. On top of that, you're asking people to go through pain and sacrifice. So the real issue in contention is that there is no track record of credibility from this or the previous administration."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/08/nigeria-fuel-strike-seun-kuti>

Nigeria faces mass strike and protests over discontinued state fuel subsidy

Thousands expected to march through streets of Lagos and Abuja after petrol pump prices more than double overnight



Nigerian petrol attendants serve customers ahead of a nationwide strike over cuts in state fuel subsidy. Photograph: Sunday Alamba/AP

Monica Mark in Lagos

Sunday 8 January 2012 15.58 EST Last modified on Tuesday 3 June 2014 20.20 EDT

The timing could hardly have been worse. Already grappling with a string of attacks by a

violent Islamist group in recent weeks, Nigeria's government now faces an indefinite mass strike and protests that threaten to shut down the country.

Thousands in Africa's most populous nation have poured onto the streets since the government announced on 1 January that it would discontinue a state fuel subsidy programme, which has kept fuel cheap for decades – but diverted valuable funds needed to invest in infrastructure for Nigeria's booming population.

Overnight, petrol pump prices in Africa's largest oil-producing country more than doubled to about \$1 per litre.

With the fuel subsidy eating into a quarter of the annual budget, the government says it will save £4.2bn annually to invest in underperforming refineries that have forced Nigeria to import its own oil once it has been refined.

Seun Kutu, the son of afrobeat musician and vocal anti-government critic Fela Kutu, said he would lead supporters through the choked streets of Lagos on Monday.

"I'm not talking economics here, I'm just talking common sense," he said, as he handed out flyers to students, labourers and market workers who planned to attend the rally. "You cannot charge \$1 a litre when the [majority of the] population lives on less than a dollar a day."

Defying a court injunction that banned the strikes because they are unrelated to a labour dispute, leaders of the country's largest trade union asked more than 2 million members to begin an "indefinite" strike on Monday, which could paralyse road and air traffic and shut down power grids.

Armoured police vehicles – many already in place after sectarian bombings killed dozens across the country in recent weeks – fanned out across the capital, Abuja, and other major cities ahead of the strikes.

Security sources say 15,000 police will be deployed in the capital, Abuja, on Monday.

President Goodluck Jonathan attempted to quell the growing public discontent in a special televised address late on Saturday. "I personally feel pained to see the sharp increase in transport fares and the prices of goods and services. If I were in your shoes at this moment, I probably would have reacted in the same way," he said, before announcing a 25% pay cut for cabinet ministers.

His administration argues that the subsidy hands over billions of dollars annually to a cartel of fuel importers, while dampening appetite for private investment in Nigeria's under-performing refineries.

"I understand fully well that deregulation is not a magic formula that will address every economic challenge, but it provides a good entry point for transforming the economy," the president said.

Jonathan, who took office in May last year, has struggled to win over weary Nigerians who have rarely benefited from the nation's two million barrel-per-day oil industry. The president's belated address to the nation has been largely drowned out by a storm of debate across radio and TV shows.

Calls from Nigerians with access to Facebook and Twitter accounts – a minority in a country where 70% live on less than \$2 a day — for sit-in movements similar to the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States have gained steady momentum in major urban centres.

But the debate has spawned vocal critics on either side of the divide. Student Onyewu Ahubi asked: "Where were these protestors when education funding was being cut? Is it only because they can't fill up their big cars now they are protesting?" He said protests were lacklustre in the largely rural state of Benue, where pump prices routinely outstrip those in urban centres.

The planned shutdown comes amid a state of emergency declared in the several northern states after the violent Islamist group Boko Haram stepped up a long-simmering insurgency when it attacked four churches simultaneously on Christmas day. The group has killed at least 40 people in the past two weeks, threatening to ignite a sectarian civil conflict.

Bismarke Rewane, a former economic advisor to the President said, the government lacked credibility among Nigerians. "We have a political and sectarian crisis both looming at the same time. Even if the strike is called off by labour unions, I don't think the protests will go away. Right now people are united because of the common pain," he added.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/05/nigerian-police-teargas-fuel-subsidy-protesters>

Nigerian police fire teargas on fuel subsidy protesters

Police move in to break up overnight demonstration at roundabout in Kano



A protester holds up a placard in Lagos to protest against the removal of the fuel subsidy. Photograph: Akintunde Akinleye/Reuters

David Smith in Johannesburg

Thursday 5 January 2012 12.08 EST Last modified on Tuesday 20 May 2014 16.41 EDT

Police in Nigeria fired teargas to break up a sit-in demonstration as massive fuel price protests

threatened to bring the country to a standstill.

Amnesty International warned against excessive use of force by the police after one protester was killed in a separate incident.

Thousands of people across Nigeria have taken part in marches against the removal of a state fuel subsidy, which caused petrol prices and transport fares to double overnight. The angry backlash poses a challenge to president Goodluck Jonathan's radical economic reforms.

Protesters said police had detained dozens of people in Kano, the main city of Nigeria's Muslim north. Unrest there began on Monday and peaked on Wednesday as demonstrators camped out at a roundabout in the city, stalling traffic, chanting slogans and calling for the government to resign.

They planned to remain at the roundabout overnight, sleeping on donated mattresses. But they said that at about 1am on Thursday, police moved in, firing teargas to disperse the crowd.

One protester, Audu Bulama Bukarti, sent a text message from inside a police station to the Associated Press saying police had threatened "to kill us inside the cell". Other protesters had been taken to hospital after being injured as police moved in, he added. Bukarti said he was released on Thursday morning by police.

Magaji Musa Majiya, a police spokesman, acknowledged police broke up the protest but denied anyone had been detained. "It was late in the night. Drug addicts and hoodlums took advantage ... to burn tyres," Majiya told AP.

The Nigerian government announced on Sunday that it would immediately stop paying a subsidy to gas importers and invest part of the \$8bn (£5.2bn) savings for long-awaited infrastructure upgrades and social programmes.

Advertisement

But the subsidy had kept fuel affordable for the Nigerians, most of whom subsist on less than \$2 a day. The subsidy removal saw petrol prices soar from \$1.70 a gallon to at least \$3.50 a gallon.

It rubbed salt in the wounds of citizens, who see little benefit from the country's immense natural resources. Nigeria produces about 2.4m barrels of crude oil a day, and is a top supplier to the US, but nearly all its petrol products are imported after decades of graft, mismanagement and violence at refineries. An estimated \$440bn was lost to corruption between 1960 and 1999.

Jonathan's government is under pressure over its response to the growing dissent, with the police's chequered record under intense scrutiny. Witnesses say a student, 23-year-old Muyideen Mustapha, was shot by police attempting to disperse protesters in Ilorin, Kwara state, on Tuesday. Police officials claim he was stabbed to death by other protesters, and that an investigation into the killing has been launched.

Paule Rigaud, Amnesty's deputy Africa director, said: "The police have a duty to protect lives and property and uphold the rule of law. It is therefore completely unacceptable for them to use live ammunition against protesters."

Amnesty said that under a controversial regulation known as Police Force Order 237, officers can shoot at rioters or protesters whether or not they pose a threat to life. The regulation directs officers to fire "at the knees of the rioters" and explicitly prohibits firing in the air.

Rigaud added: "With more protests coming up, it's essential that the Nigerian police publicly announce that the use of lethal force is only allowed when strictly unavoidable to protect life. This simple step could make a big difference to the number of unlawful police killings we are seeing in Nigeria."

Criticism of the policy change is raging on Twitter and trade unions have called for an indefinite national strike that will paralyse large parts of the country's oil industry from Monday. "All offices, oil production centres, air and sea ports, fuel stations, markets, banks, among others will be shut down," the National Labour Congress and Trades Union Congress said.

But the reforms are a flagship policy of Jonathan and his economic team. The government estimates it will save 1tn naira (£4 bn) this year with the elimination of the subsidy.

The information minister, Labaran Maku, said: "Mr President is deeply touched by the pains people are going through as a result of the removal of fuel subsidy. He said I should let Nigerians know that it's a painful decision that has to be taken to save the country from total collapse.

"To go back will cripple the economy. That is why we are calling on our citizens to bear with us."

The International Monetary Fund, which has long urged Nigeria to remove the subsidy, supports the move. Economists say the subsidy encouraged corruption and waste and handed over billions of dollars of government cash to a cartel of wealthy fuel importers.

"Nigeria's government has made its boldest move yet by abolishing the fuel subsidy," Renaissance Capital said. "The subsidy is widely believed to have benefited the wealthier (who own cars), encouraged corruption, discouraged investment in refineries and encouraged smuggling abroad."

Articles from Nigerian Tribune

Revitalization of Universities

ASUU STRIKE: LECTURERS DEFY FG'S ORDER

•Fracas as ASUU officials clash with lecturer in UNIBEN

MOST of the lecturers across the universities in the country, on Monday, defied the directive of the Federal Government to resume academic activities at various campuses in the country.

The Federal Government had directed all federal universities to end the six-month-old strike embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and resume work on Monday.

This came as there was a division among lecturers at the University of Benin (UNIBEN), over whether to resume work or not.

The near free-for-all was avoided when members of the institution's chapter of ASUU attempted to stop a lecturer in the Department of Computer Science, Dr Godspower Ekhobase, from lecturing on Monday.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that trouble started after Dr Ekhobase refused to listen to the directive given by the institution's ASUU chapter, leading to a fracas.

The UNIBEN ASUU officials, led by its chairman, Dr Tony Emina-Monye, were said to have retreated after the lecturer was joined by the few students in class.

Dr Monye, however, said on phone that the lecturer behaved violently, adding that he broke his eye-glasses and ruffled his cloth.

He also said Dr Godspower also gripped the shirt of a former UNIBEN ASUU chairman.

The ASUU chairman, however, said they would not be deterred by the sack threat, as none of them would teach the students, who resumed for academic activities.

The ASUU officials also clashed with some policemen, who were reportedly invited to the institution by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Osayuki Godwin Oshodin, to keep peace.

Meanwhile, at least 30 lecturers in the Faculty of Law of the institution have already indicated interest to commence lectures as they had signed the register opened for them.

Most of the lecturers refused comments, but one of them, who pleaded anonymity, said they decided to resume because they were unhappy with the approach to the strike by ASUU.

He said ASUU should have called off the strike after the intervention by President Goodluck Jonathan.

When contacted on phone, the public relations officer of the institution, Mr Harris Osarenren, could not be reached for comments.

Meanwhile, lecturers in Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola, Adamawa State, resolved to continue with the ongoing nationwide strike embarked upon by members of ASUU.

ASUU chairman, Mr Augustine Ndaghu, made the disclosure in Yola, on Monday, in a telephone interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

Ndaghu said majority of the more than 300 members of the union in the university, who attended the latest meeting, voted overwhelmingly for continuation of the strike.

ASUU Chairman of Adamawa State University (ADSU), Mubi, Mr Molem Ishaku, on Monday, said lecturers in the institution had also agreed to continue the strike.

He said “in the first place, it was not the government that told us to go on strike and, therefore, it should not insist that we must go back to work.”

Commenting on the development, the Protocol and Information Officer of MAUTECH, Malam Mustafa Migawa, said based on the directive of the government, forms had been sent to various departments of the school to be filled by lecturers who wished to resume work.

When NAN visited MAUTECH and ADSU, the campuses were empty, as students boycotted the campuses.

At the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, lecturers also resolved to continue with the six-month-old strike.

ASUU chairman in the institution, Dr Faruk Tambuwal, told NAN in Sokoto, on Monday, that “our position on the strike remains the same and the strike continues.”

This came as the university management opened registers in the two campuses of the institution, as contained in a statement issued by the registrar, Alhaji Kakale Jabo.

In Kano, lecturers of Bayero University, Kano (BUK), on Monday, refused to return to work.

NAN reported that none of the lecturers resumed work at both the old and new site of the university and most offices remained locked.

A security guard at the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, who spoke on condition of anonymity at the new site, said none of the lecturers reported to work as of 11.00 a.m.

When contacted on phone, the ASUU chairman, Dr Mahmoud Lawal, said the lecturers would not return to work until their demands were met.

Also, a visit by the Nigerian Tribune to the institution showed that all classrooms and hostels were shut, while non-academic staff were running skeletal services at the new site of the institution.

At Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, the story was the same, as lecturers also defied Federal Government's directive to return to class.

NAN reported that all the lecture halls and offices remained closed on Monday, as no lecturer was seen at the Samaru and Kongo campuses.

When contacted, Dr Mohammed Kabir-Aliyu, the chairman of ASUU, ABU chapter, said the union did not call off the ongoing strike.

It was the same story at University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), as lecturers there also stayed away from school, with lecture theatres remained closed.

A visit by NAN to the university campus in Maiduguri on Monday showed that academic halls were empty.

Dr Musa Abdullahi, the university's ASUU chairman, in a statement in Maiduguri, said the strike would continue until the demands of the union were met.

However, Malam Ahmed Mohammed, the institution's chief information officer, told NAN that the authorities were waiting to hear from ASUU before taking a decision.

Lecturers at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, also refused to resume to work on Monday.

Alhaji Zailani Bappa, the Principal Public Relations Officer of the university, however, said the lecturers were expected to resume tomorrow and not Monday.

He said the decision to ask the lecturers to resume tomorrow came up after the Senate held a meeting on December 5.

He added that by the end of Wednesday, the council would decide on the next line of action.

Lecturers at the University of Ibadan (UI) also defied government's directive on Monday, as the resumption register was not even opened.

Although some members of the academic staff union were seen in their offices, claiming to be working on some researches, most of them said they were not going to sign any register.

The ASUU branch, in a message to its members, said "dear member, stay calm and remain resolute. There is nothing wrong in asking government to do what it says it will do immediately. ASUU is not making any new demands.

"Government is only repeating a one act play scripted by the IBB dictatorship in early 90s. It didn't work then and it won't work now! All branches are intact. We cannot be intimidated!! Do not sign any register. United we bargain, divided we beg!!!"

Investigations around some faculties of Social Sciences, Education, Agriculture, Technology, and Sciences indicated the resolve of the lecturers not to sign any register, as no resumption register was opened.

Speaking on the strike, the national treasurer of ASUU, Dr Ademola Aremu, said lecturers were not labourers that could be humiliated by government.

Aremu, who noted that the strike was still fully on course nationwide, added that Information Minister, Mr Labaran Maku, lied that it had released N45 billion to universities as earned allowances.

The ASUU national officer noted that it was a lie that lecturers had started lecturing at FUTA, saying that the vice chancellor of the institution reportedly went to class with security around him.

Lecturers and students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNNAB) and the state-owned Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye, shunned the directive to resume on Monday.

When the visited FUNNAB on Monday, only non-academic staff were seen at their duty posts, while classrooms and library were empty.

The ASUU chairman, FUNNAB branch, Dr Abiodun Badmus, said the union could not be caged, while he described the directive as “empty threat and of no effect.”

Badmus insisted that the Federal Government must do the needful, saying that the union remained committed to the struggle.

It was the same situation at OOU campus, as the students and the lecturers failed to resume.

There was no end in sight to the strike at Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka, as the institution chapter of ASUU enjoined the Federal Government to halt the continued blackmail and subterfuge and sign the memorandum of understanding before the strike could be called off.

The union, in a press release issued and signed by its chairman, Dr Emmanuel Mordi, on Monday, enjoined students to disregard all radio, television, and newspaper announcements inviting them back to class, saying no lecturer worth his or her onions would return to class at gunpoint.

According to ASUU-DELSU, members, as lecturers of integrity, would not teach until all issues in dispute in the current industrial crisis were amicably resolved.

The union reiterated that lectures would only resume when the Federal Government demonstrated good faith, transparency and integrity.

The Lagos State University (LASU) and University of Lagos (UNILAG) called the Federal Government’s bluff, threatening to sack lecturers who failed to resume their jobs before or on Monday.

Visiting lecture halls on the two campuses, Nigerian Tribune gathered that no lecture had commenced, as classrooms remained locked and empty.

LASU was virtually void of students and the few lecturers found on the campus were there for personal reasons.

UNILAG had more presence of students but, when asked, none of them were on campus to receive lectures, with a few admitting that they came to pack their things and resume school next year.

It was gathered that the Unilag management has posted a resumption date for all students and lecturers on its website, scheduled for January 6.

Speaking with Dr Micheal Ogbeide of UNILAG on Monday, he confirmed that the school management had released a revised school year calendar, with all students expected to resume by January 6.

“Students are required to finish up on their registration, course forms and all order things in readiness for commencement of lectures, after which, the university goes on a break from Decemeber 22 and resumes January 6,” he said.

According to a reliable source, who pleaded anonymity, even if lecturers in UNILAG had not resumed classroom work, several lecturers in the school had signed the register as directed by the Federal Government.

The source added that although lecturers were claiming not to resume work until ASUU called of the strike nationally, they were, in truth, scared of losing their jobs.

The amended timetable on UNILAG website indicated that December 2 to 15 was for completion of registration for old and new students; December 23 to January 5 for Christmas and New Year break; January 6 to 24, conclusion of lectures; January 25 to February 8, examination in all faculties , while the session ends February 15.

Efforts to reach both the UNILAG and LASU ASUU chairmen, Drs Karo Ogbinaka and Adekunle Idris, failed, as both did not pick up calls put through to their phones.

The striking academic staff of Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUTMinna), on Monday, refused to comply with the December 9 ultimatum given by the Federal Government to return to work.

At the close of work on Monday, none of the members of the union in the university had appended signature on the register opened by the registrar of the institution since December 2.

Visits to the two campuses of the university by the Nigerian Tribune further indicated that classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops and studios at Bosso and Gidan Kwano areas of Minna were under lock and key.

It was further gathered that unlike the previous weeks that some lecturers were seen in their offices, most offices were locked on Monday, in compliance with congress decision to keep away from the campuses from December 9.

Efforts to get the registrar to speak on the matter as of the time of filing the report failed,as she was said to be in a meeting.

The branch chairperson of ASUU, Dr Abdulfatai Jimoh, said that the union was determined in its decision not to sign the register or return to work until the Federal Government met its demands.

Meanwhile, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA), on Monday, continued normal academic activities, in compliance with the Federal Government's directive.

At AAUA, the public relations officer, Mr Victor Akinpelumi, said both students and lecturers had resumed in the school since the last two weeks.

Authorities of the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) fixed January 5 as resumption date.

The statement by the institution, signed by the registrar, Dr Modupe Ajayi, said the date was chosen after considering the Christmas and New Year holidays.

But the leadership of the ASUU in the university could not be reached, as calls put to the phone of the chairman were not picked.

ASUU strike: NLC threatens protest against FG

- Written by Soji-Eze Fagbemi - Abuja
- Thursday, 24 October 2013 03:52

THE Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) warned the Federal Government on Wednesday that if it allows the strike by ASUU and its (Federal Government) alleged sponsorship of protest groups against ASUU to persist, it will mobilise its members to stage counter protests across the country.

The congress, which made the declaration after its National Executive Council (NEC) meeting in Kaduna last night, stated that it will not hesitate to mobilise against the Federal Government. It said that it has the will and the capacity to do it.

The congress, therefore, advised that the government should not test its will by resolving the issues involve on time.

Addressing a press conference after the NEC meeting late last night, the NLC President, Comrade Abdulwahed Omar regretted that the government allowed the strike by ASUU to drag on for so long with incalculable consequences.

Comrade Omar said: "NEC-In-Session expresses its deep concern for the near total collapse of the education sector. It is a sad commentary that government has allowed the strike by ASUU to drag on for so long with incalculable consequences. Rather than resolve these issues, government is busy sponsoring protest groups against ASUU.

"NEC cautions that if government persists with this line of action, it will mobilize its members to stage counter protests across the country. It has the will and the capacity and it advises that government should not test that will.

“In spite of government’s underhand tactics, NEC resolves to step up its intervention initiative by reaching out to the government at the highest level as well as dialogue with ASUU to achieve the needed breakthrough and save the students further trauma.”

<http://tribune.com.ng/news2013/index.php/en/news/news-headlines/item/15802-asuu-strike-paralyses-varsities.html>

ASUU strike paralyses varsities

- Written by Clement Idoko-Abuja
- Wednesday, 03 July 2013 00:00

Strike unreasonable –FG

THE Federal Government on Tuesday said the decision of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to embark on an indefinite strike on Monday was unreasonable unwarranted.

Minister of Education, Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa’i, while responding to questions on the ASUU strike, shortly after declaring open the annual meeting of West and Central African Research and Education Network holding in Abuja, said the Federal Government is in talks with ASUU leadership and that there was no basis for the strike.

According to her, the Federal Government has made an offer to ASUU leadership about three weeks ago and has been waiting to hear from them in order to enable government take next line of action.

She said: “I don’t have anything to say right now as regard the ASSU strike because we know that they are our colleagues. We discussed and had meetings with them and made an offer as government. We are expecting to hear from ASUU. Up till now, we are yet to hear from them”.

When asked that one of the complaints of the Union was that that their issues with Federal Government were not captured in the 2013 budget, the minister said: “You can’t ask me that question now.”

Reps probe strikes

Jacob Segun Olatunji And Kolawole Daniel-Abuja

The House of Representatives, on Tuesday, set machinery in motion to probe the current warning strikes embarked on by both the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), as it mandated its committees on Education and Petroleum downstream respectively to investigate the issues raised by both unions and report to the House.

The House equally appealed to ASUU and NUPENG to call off the present strike actions embarked upon in the interest of the nation, students, parents and teeming Nigerian masses.

It also urged the Federal government and all relevant ministries, departments and agencies to immediately open discussions with ASUU and NUPENG so as to come up with a lasting

solution that would adequately address the issues raised by both unions and forestall any further breakdown of academic and socio-economic activities in the universities and the oil industry.

The House resolution was sequel to a motion brought under matter of urgent public importance moved by Honourable Kingsley Chinda entitled, “Urgent need by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) to call off the recent strike action embarked upon by them.”

When the motion was put to vote by the Deputy Speaker, Honourable Emeka Ihedioha who presided over the session it was unanimously supported by members.

Union lacks decorum —NUC

But the Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Julius Okojie, said the Commission is yet to be officially communicated on the strike by the Union.

He noted that ASUU did not apply decorum in declaration of the indefinite strike, since they have been meeting regularly with the government and an offer was made to them.

Okojie specifically explained that during the meeting with the leadership of the Union about three weeks ago, an offer was made to them with a promise that they were going to present the offer to National Executive Council (NEC) of the Union and get back to the government.

He said what was reasonable was for the leadership of the union to bring back the result of their NEC meeting to the government.

He said: “ASUU strike? I’m not aware of any strike. About three weeks ago, there was an offer made to them, they said they were going to their NEC.

“What we expect from them is to come back to us and tell us what the result is. So, as far as I’m concern, if they are on strike, I don’t know, they should write to us officially.”

Senate committee wades in

Taiwo Adisa-Abuja

The Senate Committee on Education headed by Senator Uche Chuwumerije is set to wade into the strike action embarked upon by members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) on Monday.

Sources in the Senate said that the Chukwumerije-led committee which had scheduled a meeting with members of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics(ASUP) in respect of their indefinite strike had also reached out to ASUU for a meeting on its grievances.

It was gathered that the meeting could take place next week.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of ASUU had embarked on strike over the failure of the Federal Government to meet the funding requirements for revitalisation of Nigerian universities; progressive increase of annual budgetary allocation to education to 26 per cent between 2009 and 2020, earned allowances, and setting up of research and development units by companies operating in Nigeria as well as teaching and research equipment provision to laboratories and classrooms.

The academic union stated that its decided to embark on the strike to press home its demands after “observing all possible means of making government to implement the agreement yielded no results.”

Strike paralyses activities at UI

Academic activities were paralysed at the University of Ibadan yesterday following the strike action declared by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

Students who tried their luck for early morning lectures were stunned when none of their lecturers showed up.

Although all lecture rooms were opened, they were, however, empty as students soon left the lecture rooms and retired to their halls.

Our man who went round the institution reported that the strike was total as instructed as lecturers went to their offices but shunned lecture rooms.

Students were seen patrolling their supervisors’ offices but were reportedly instructed to wait until the end of the strike.