

**The participation and influence of teacher unions on
education reforms in an independent Namibia**

by

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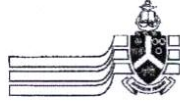
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ABSTRACT

This study explores the shifting roles of teacher unions in pre-and post-independence Namibia, against the backdrop of a changing political context. My aim was to understand the roles of teacher unions both before and after independence in Namibia, and to explain how they changed in the different political contexts. To do so, I examined the teacher union roles in three distinct phases, namely pre-independence, immediately post-independence, taking in the period from 1990 to 1999, and the last decade, from 2000 up until today.

In approaching the research questions, I worked on the assumption that understanding and explaining the roles of teacher unions in pre- and post-independence Namibia could best be achieved by interacting with participants who were or had been involved in education and the teacher unions in Namibia. I argued that their experiences would be important in constructing knowledge on the unions, particularly regarding their roles before and after independence.

I chose a narrative design for the study, because it allowed me to interact with the participants to gain deeper meanings from their individual perspectives. Narrative design was appropriate to this research, because it also allowed me to trace the way events in education mirrored those in the national political arena, and to explain why particular tendencies emerged. I used the information collected during the interviews and document analysis as the data for the study.

Four themes emerged regarding the roles of teacher unions in the contexts of pre- and post-independence Namibia, around which I conceptualized the study. These were the shifting historic roles of these unions in Namibia, the institutional frameworks and modalities for union participation, the contextual factors relating to the roles of the unions, and the changed roles of the unions in contemporary Namibia.

The findings of the study suggested, firstly, that teacher unions play different roles in different political contexts, and that these roles are shaped by contextual factors. Secondly, the research established that the unions in the post-independence contexts

did not necessarily have a vision of a labour-driven process of radical strategic change, as postulated by the theory of strategic unionism. Instead, the findings suggest that teacher unions in contemporary Namibia are influenced and shaped by the broader political and social factors of a new hierarchical political culture, by political and economic middle-class aspirations, and by undefined party-government-teacher union relationships. I conclude the study by suggesting an expansion of the concept of strategic unionism to include the nuances of political and economic contexts and aspirations.

Key words: teacher union, teacher union participation, shifting roles, teacher union influence, education reforms, pre-independence Namibia, post-independence Namibia, institutional frameworks and modalities, changed political context, contextual factors.



DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original work, except where otherwise acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria. I further declare that this thesis has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marius Kudumo'.

Marius Kudumo

Date

27/06/2011



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my late father, and my mother, for all their teachings about life, and for instilling the values and principles of self-discipline and self-reliance in me during my formative years.

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5. John Kench for editing the thesis.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AATO	All Africa Teachers' Organization
ACHSR	Advisory Committee for Human Sciences Research
ACN	Action Christian National
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AG	Administrator-General
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTF	Canadian Teachers' Federation
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
HIGCSE	Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
LaRRI	Labour Resource and Research Institute
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NAMOV	Namibia Onderwysersvereniging
NANSO	Namibia National Students' Organization
NANTU	Namibia National Teachers' Union
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organization of South Africa
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
NUNW	National Union of Namibian Workers
OTA	Owambo Teachers' Association
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SWA	South West Africa
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
TELSIP	Teachers' English Language Skills Improvement Programme
TUN	Teachers' Union of Namibia
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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