# AFRICA DIALOGUE

## Monograph Series No. 1/2018

# COMPLEXITIES OF COALITION POLITICS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

**The rise and fall of Lesotho's coalition governments**

**The Intricacies and Pitfalls of the Politics of Coalition in Mozambique**

**The Politics of Dominance and Survival: Coalition Politics in South Africa 1994–2018**

# Complexities of Coalition Politics in Southern Africa

Monograph Series No. 1/2018

Edited By: Senzo Ngubane

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABC | All Basotho Convention |
| ACDP | African Christian Democratic Party |
| AD | Alliance for Democrats |
| ADACD | Coalition Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development |
| ADACD | Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development |
| AIC | African Independent Congress |
| ALIMO | Independent Alliance Party of Mozambique |
| AMP | African Muslim Party AMP |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| AP | Patriotic Front |
| AZAPO | Azanian People's Organisation |
| BCP | Basutoland Congress Party |
| BNP | Basutoland National Party |
| CCL | Christian Council of Lesotho |
| CDU | Democratic Congress Party |
| CNE | National Electoral Commission |
| CODESA | Convention for a Democratic South Africa |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions |
| DA | Democratic Alliance |
| DC | Democratic Congress |
| DCEO | Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences |
| DP | Democratic Party |
| EFF | Economic Freedom Fighters |
| EU | European Union |
| FA | Federal Alliance |
| FAO | Broad Opposition Front |
| FAP | Patriotic Action Front |
| FF | Freedom Front |
| FF-Plus | Freedom Front Plus |
| FL | Liberal Left |
| FPTP | First-Past-The-Post |
| FRELIMO | Front for the Liberation of Mozambique |
| FUMO-PCD | Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party |

| | |
|---|---|
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| ICOSA | Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa |
| ID | Independent Democrats |
| IEC | Independent Electoral Commission |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| IPA | Interim Political Authority |
| LCD | Lesotho Congress for Democracy |
| LDF | Lesotho Defence Force |
| LHWP | Lesotho Highlands Water Project |
| MCO | Ministerial Committee of the Organ |
| MDM | Mozambique Democratic Movement |
| MF | Minority Front |
| MFP | Marematlou Freedom Part |
| MGB | United Front for Change and Good Governance |
| MMM | Mixed-Member majority |
| MMP | Mixed Member Proportional |
| MNC | Minimal Number Coalitions |
| MONAMO-PMSD | Mozambican National Democratic Movement-Social Democratic Party |
| MPs | Members of Parliament |
| MWC | Minimum Winning Coalition |
| NCA | National Co-operation Agreement |
| NIP | National Independent Party |
| NNP | New National Party |
| NP | National Party |
| OPDSC | Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation |
| PAC | African Conservative Party |
| PAC | Pan African Congress |
| PACODE | Democratic Congress Party |
| PALMO | Liberal and Democratic Party of Mozambique |
| PANADE | National Democratic Party |
| PANAMO | National Party of Mozambique |
| PAREDE | Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration |
| PARENA | National Reconciliation Party |
| PATRONAMO | Party of all Mozambican Nationalists |
| PASOMO | Social Broadening Party of Mozambique |
| PAZS | Party of Freedom and Solidarity |

| | |
|---|---|
| PCN | National Convention Party |
| PDD-AD | Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance |
| PDNM | Democratic Party of Mozambique |
| PEMO | Ecological Party of Mozambique |
| PFD | Popular Front for Democracy |
| PIMO | Independent Party of Mozambique |
| PLDM | Partido Liberal e Democrático de Moçambique |
| PPPM | Mozambique People's Progress Party |
| PR | Proportional Representation |
| PRD | Democratic Renewal Party |
| PRDM | Democratic Reconciliation Party of Mozambique |
| PSM | Socialist Party of Mozambique |
| PT | Labour Party |
| PUN | National Unity Party |
| PUR | Union for Reconciliation Party |
| RCL | Reformed Congress of Lesotho |
| RENAMO | Mozambican National Resistance |
| RENAMO-UE | Mozambican National Resistance-Electoral Union |
| SACU | Southern African Customs Union |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SAPS | South African Police Services |
| SOPA | Socialist Party of Azania |
| UD | Democratic Union |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| UDM | United Democratic Movement |
| UF | United Front |
| UIF | United Independent Front |
| UM | Union for Change |
| UMO | Mozambican Opposition Union |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAMO | Mozambique National Union |
| UP | Universal Party |
| USAMO | Union for Salvation of Mozambique |

# Coalition Politics in Southern Africa

*Senzwesihle Ngubane*

## Introduction

When this publication was first conceived, it was meant to provide answers to three different, albeit inter-connected questions. Firstly, the question of what are the political conditions that lead to the formation of coalitions, either at the level of political parties and/or within governments. Embedded within this question were several assumptions, especially the one that when countries coming out of conflicts form coalition governments they do it as an attempt to ensure collective action towards addressing issues of broader social, political and economic transformation, in other words, peacebuilding. Secondly, the question about how to offer a deeper understanding of the decisions that inspire some of the political actors to enter into a coalition. Thirdly, and related to the second, the question whether coalitions, at the level of political parties or government, have any positive contribution towards issues of effective governance, and sustainability of governments, thus enabling them to fulfil their mandates.

The questions posed above are unpacked by means of three articles, each of which focuses on a specific country case study, namely Lesotho, Mozambique and South Africa. The articles deal with the experiences, challenges, and intricacies of forming coalitions within these three countries, as well as the context under which such coalitions were created or attempted. Interestingly, while the contexts in these three countries may appear to be completely different, there are similar and related challenges that have been experienced by those political actors

who have attempted to forge coalitions. With regard to the outcomes in the three countries, however, the articles reflect differences on the basis of the choices made by the political actors.

The first article is entitled *The rise and fall of Lesotho's coalition governments*. It provides a contextual account of the processes that Lesotho has gone through in order to try and ensure that there is long-term stability, and effective governance when it comes to an elected government. What the article clearly demonstrates, is that certain decisions were made in the late 1990s to transform the country's electoral laws with the aim of solving what was then perceived to be the cause of government instability, that is, the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system. At that time, the political party contestations which negatively affected the stability of government, were perceived to be rooted in the country's electoral system. The amendments to the electoral laws gave hope that what was identified as a challenge would be confined to history. However, experience since then has proven otherwise. It should be recalled that the electoral law amendments created the possibility to prevent one party from wiping the electoral slate clean, by codifying into law, a need to have a coalition government, after each and every election. The hopes that these amendments would bring about stability, as the article shows, were dashed, given that most of the coalition governments that have been formed have in fact experienced instabilities in spite of these amendments to the country's electoral laws. The question posed by this article is, therefore, whether the challenges in Lesotho rested within the electoral laws or whether they were perhaps embedded in the country's political parties. Secondly, whether the cause of coalition government instability may be the political strategies and tactics deployed by competing parties which end up undermining the spirit and the letter of the amendments that were instituted back in the late 1990s.

The second article is entitled *Intricacies and Pitfalls of the Politics of Coalition in Mozambique*. It is an interesting reminder of the fact that in Mozambique several political actors have attempted to forge coalitions with the aim of obtaining political power. What is unique about

Mozambique, compared with the other two case studies, is that the efforts to forge coalitions were concentrated mostly within opposition parties, and primarily revolving around the main opposition party, the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). Also of interest, and clearly detailed in the article, is the varying degrees of success and failure of these efforts by opposition parties to forge coalitions. For instance, the article provides an account of the many and varied efforts by opposition political parties to forge coalitions in order to contest an election, only to collapse even prior to these actors actually participating in the intended elections.

The third and last article is entitled *The Politics of Dominance and Survival: Coalition Politics in South Africa 1994–2018*. It traces and presents a solid overview of the various efforts by different political actors in South Africa to forge coalitions. In the context of a country coming out of a long period of apartheid rule, the negotiations in the early 1990s provided for the creation of a Government of National Unity (GNU). This article is able to craftily trace South Africa's foray into coalitions from that time. It is a fine reminder that the South African politics have always experienced some type of a coalition at all levels of government (national, provincial and local), from as early as 1994. This reminder is most relevant, given that the conversations that emerged in South Africa after the 2016 local government elections may have been mistakenly perceived to mean that it was for the first time that the country had to face up to a possible reality of having coalition governments. Concomitant to this, the outcomes of the same 2016 elections brought to the fore lively discussions and debates by different political parties in terms of who they would enter into a coalition or 'partner' with. Such debates occurred, for instance, when the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) decided to support the 'winning' opposition, in this case, the Democratic Alliance (DA) in all contested Metropolitan Councils. In these debates there were either criticism levelled at the EFF or support for the decision. However, this lively debate seems to have forgotten that it was not for the first time that two possibly ideologically and pragmatically opposed parties had entered into a coalition and/or partnership. As the article reminds us, the

death knell of the National Party (NP) was sounded when it entered into a coalition with its erstwhile enemy, the African National Congress (ANC) back in 2004. Additionally, the article makes an important contribution regarding how considerations for political survival of different political actors, seem to have driven some of the decisions made to forge coalitions in South Africa, as compared to, for instance, a common political agenda and/or programme.

# The rise and fall of Lesotho's coalition governments

*Dimpho Deleglise*

## Abstract

There is an ongoing debate in Lesotho about the factors undermining the stability of its coalition governments and how these could be ameliorated. Stability is understood here as a government's ability to fulfil its electoral mandate. In the space of five years – between 2012 and 2017 – Lesotho held three elections and experienced the collapse of two coalition governments. This was a consequence of fierce internal political quarrels and a compromised security environment. This article analyses the processes of coalition formation, their performance and dissolution during this period, and the wider political context in which they unfolded. It examines the hypothesis that unresolved political issues and institutional factors had a greater impact on coalition behaviour and government stability than legal considerations. The findings largely support this hypothesis, and the conclusion is that all three of Lesotho's coalition governments were beset by the same political and institutional challenges that confronted their predecessors. Consequently, the negative effects of recurrent political conflicts, including around the politicisation of the state apparatus, perceived impunity, patronage and political polarisation, have prevented the formation of durable and well-functioning governing coalitions.

# 1. Introduction

Lesotho is a small, landlocked country marked by unstable governance and periodic state dysfunction. With a population of 2.2 million and total land area of about 30 355 square kilometres, it is one of the smallest countries in southern Africa.[1] It is surrounded by South Africa, its one and only neighbour. Established by King Moshoeshoe I about 200 years ago, it remains one of few constitutional monarchies in the world and the only one in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. This monarchy was institutionalised in the 1993 constitution, and embraces Lesotho's traditional system of governance along with the modern system of governance adopted after gaining its independence from the United Kingdom in 1966.[2] In terms of the 1993 constitution, the king is the head of state and the prime minister the head of government. The arrangement is guided by section 87(2) stipulates that 'the King appoints as Prime Minister, the member of the National Assembly who appears to the Council of State to be the leader of the political party or coalition of political parties that will command the support of the majority of the members of the National Assembly'. Section 82 (1) (b) further states that parliament must be convened within 14 days after an election. The latter has had a major bearing on the formation of coalition governments in Lesotho, because of the limited timeframe for constituting a government, in the event of a hung parliament.

The Lesotho legislature consists of two houses: a National Assembly and a Senate. The National Assembly comprises 120 elected members, of whom 80 are elected in constituencies, and 40 in terms of a proportional representation (PR) system. The Senate comprises 33 members, of whom 22 are hereditary principal chiefs. The other 11 members are appointed by the king on the advice of the Council of State (National Assembly of

1 See, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Lesotho National Human Development Report 2016.

2 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Kingdom of Lesotho Country Review Report No 12, APRM Secretariat, Midrand, South Africa, 2010, p 32.

Lesotho, 2018).[3] The Council of State is a powerful advisory body linking the monarchy to the government. It comprises top officials from the executive, legislative and judicial branches, a principal chief, and four non-state stakeholders appointed by virtue of their skills and expertise. Its role is to advise and assist the king in the performance of his duties.[4]

As a constitutional monarchy, Lesotho has a dual legal system founded on traditional and Roman Dutch law. The formal system is headed by a Chief Justice and consists of a Court of Appeal, a High Court, magistrates' courts, and local courts, which utilise Roman Dutch law. In addition to this, chiefs maintain traditional courts based on customary law.[5] The King's position is hereditary, and the Office of the King Order No. 14 of 1990 regulates accession to the throne.[6] The monarch has been regarded as the unifier of the Basotho nation and is largely a ceremonial figure, playing a minimal role in the day-to-day politics and governance of the country. This also includes instances when governing coalitions collapse, where the custom has been that the King follows the advice of the sitting prime minister on what political action should be taken, rather than acting discretionarily.[7]

The inhabitants of the country – Basotho – are quite homogeneous in ethnic-linguistic terms and the major religion is Christianity. As such, Lesotho's conflicts are not about identity or ethnicity, but about political power. The country's economy is predominantly rural, with 76 per cent of its people living outside the cities and towns. However, those areas only

3 For a profile of Lesotho's National Assembly. Available from: http://www.parliament.ls/assembly/

4 The significance of the composition of the Council of State when it comes to political crises is discussed in Motsamai, D. Elections in a Time of Instability: Challenges for Lesotho beyond the 2015 Poll, Southern Africa Report Issue 3, Institute for Security Studies, 2015. Available from: https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/SAReport-Issue3.pdf.

5 Commonwealth Governance, Judicial system in Lesotho, 2018. Available from: http://www.commonwealthgovernance.org/countries/africa/lesotho/judicialsystem/

6 See, the Constitution of Lesotho, 1993, Sections 44–53.

7 This was the general consensus among respondents, including politicians, analysts and academics interviewed by the author in Maseru, Lesotho, in May 2018.

account for about 7 per cent of GDP, which partly explains the high levels of income inequality in the country.[8] Poverty is widespread, with more than 57 per cent of the population living below the poverty line.[9] Lesotho also has poor levels of human development, and is ranked 160th out of 188 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index, along with Comoros – a habitually unstable small island state.[10] The civil service is the biggest employer in the country and private sector activity mostly circulates among those with political connections and the ruling elite. Given this, Lesotho's ruling class uses the country's narrow economic base as an instrument of political power.

Economically, Lesotho is both dependent on and tied to South Africa. It has limited agricultural and grazing land but is richly endowed with water and to a lesser extent, diamonds and other minerals.[11] Water is its most significant natural and economic resource. South Africa exploits this through the multi-billion-dollar Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), which is crucial for South Africa's industrial heartland in its province of Gauteng. Given its poor economic endowment and spatial exclusion, Lesotho depends overwhelmingly on external assistance and investments for its development, including foreign aid from the United States, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), and revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), controlled by the South African Treasury. Besides economic ties, Lesotho and South Africa are bound together by socio-cultural and political links and many Basotho live and work in South Africa.[12]

8 As profiled in UNDP, Lesotho National Human Development Report 2016.

9 UNDP, Lesotho National Human Development Report 2017, p 7.

10 UNDP, Lesotho National Human Development Report 2016, p 5.

11 For a historical discussion of Lesotho's dependence on South Africa post independence, see Cobbe, J. 'The changing nature of dependence: economic problems in Lesotho', Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol 21 no 2, 1983, pp 293–310.

12 Cobbe, J. 'Lesotho: From labour reserve to depopulating periphery', 2 May 2012. Available from: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/lesotho-labor-reservedepopulating-periphery.

Despite its small size, the country's politics are complex and political instability is recurrent. This was particularly marked between 2012 and 2017 where political tensions induced frequent government turnovers. This relatively short period saw the collapse of two governing coalitions and the installation of another governing coalition in June 2017. While, at the time of writing, this coalition remained in power, its future stability was hanging in the balance.[13] This article sets out a framework for explaining the short-lived character of coalition governments in Lesotho. It is arranged in five sections. The first provides an overview of Lesotho's recent political history that has been punctuated by periods of political instability in which the legitimacy, legality and exercise of political power have been key conflict-inducing factors. The second provides an overview of post-independence politics and party formation in Lesotho. The third discusses the formation and collapse of the coalition governments, emphasising the wider political context in which these events occurred. The fourth discusses some variations and similarities among the three coalition governments and challenges concerning their functioning. The concluding section sets out the main factors behind the instability of Lesotho's coalition governments and recommendations on how their viability could be strengthened.

## 2. Conceptual framework

The first point to make is that no single concept or theory adequately explains the viability of governing coalitions in Lesotho mainly because of the contextual variations of politics over time. Conceptualising coalition politics in Lesotho is complex because of the fluid nature of party-political alliances and the environment in which governing coalitions operate. At the same time, existing research about coalition behaviour in Lesotho has progressed considerably. Numerous scholars have theorised the formal characteristics of governing coalitions, including the processes of coalition formation, the number and nature of the parties involved and the duration and termination of these coalitions. Others, as discussed below,

13 See Muzofa, N. 'Elections: the biggest winners and losers', Lesotho Times, 26 May 2017.

have focused on the endogenous relationship between the behaviour of governing coalitions and external political events, including party formation and change, and patterns of governance. Most of the literature approaches the politics of governing coalitions in Lesotho through three overlapping schools or traditions: game theory, election systems theory and conflict transformation theory.

Game theory, pioneered by Neumann and Morgenstern, presumes that political actors adopt rational strategies to maximise their returns or interests in a given situation.[14] Political actors have specific resources, goals and defined sets of rules of the game. They calculate the best way to achieve their goals and move accordingly after considering all relevant factors, including the countermoves of the other players.[15] This analogy has been extended to coalition politics in Lesotho by various scholars, including Motseme, who discuss the 'zero-sum' nature of coalition governments in Lesotho and the extent to which coalition governments are power or policy-oriented.[16]

The second scholarly lens follows the electoral systems theory, as reflected in research by Letsie (2015), Kapa and Shale (2014), to explain how parties in a governing coalition relate in a multiparty system.[17] Variables they have applied to their analysis include the strength and position of parties, the political history of their relationship and the role of elections in influencing coalition behaviour.

There is emerging research that ties Lesotho's political instability and the collapse of its governing coalitions to conflict transformation theories. This includes Malebang (2014) and Motsamai (2018) who emphasise the

14 As discussed in Leiserson, M. 'Game theory and the study of coalition behavior', in Groenning, S. (eds), The Study of Coalition Behavior New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, p 5.

15 Ibid.

16 Motseme, T. 2017. 'The Rise and Fall of the First Coalition Government in Lesotho: 2012–2014', Masters Dissertation, University of the Free State.

17 See Letsie, T. 'Lesotho's February 2015 snap elections: a prescription that never cured the sickness', Journal of African Elections, 14 (2), 2015; Kapa, M. and Shale, V. 'Alliances, coalitions and the political system in Lesotho, 2007–2012', Journal of African Elections, 13 (2), 2014.

need for changing relationships and power structures between parties and the wider society, in addressing the structural causes that lead to Lesotho's political conflicts.[18] The studies are informed by peace research including work by Johan Galtung (1967, 1969) and John Lederach, strongly identified with the conflict transformation thesis. Lederach (2003) defines conflict transformation as a process of changing relationships between parties in a political and social system in ways that address the structural causes that led to conflict in the first place.[19] He argues that this goes beyond conflict management, as it is not solely about addressing surface issues in a conflict, but the underlying social structures and relationship patterns in the context as well.[20] Applied to Lesotho, it means that there is a need to understand and change adversarial relationships between political parties and actors for any type of stable and long-term political cooperation to ensue. This approach is useful for ascertaining the nature of issues that most affect the viability of governing coalitions – whether they are relational or systemic. It is for this reason, that this study is based on the hypothesis that the protracted and unresolved conflicts that mark Lesotho's political history have a greater impact on the stability of its coalition governments than legal considerations. This hypothesis does not underestimate the importance of legal measures in safeguarding the durability of governing coalitions. It considers them as moderating factors which-for the most part, depend on the relationships between coalition parties and political actors, and the political context in which they evolve. The following five sections serve to illuminate this perspective.

18 Malebang, G. 2018. 'A Critical Assessment of Conflict Transformation Capacity in the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Deepening the Search for a Self-sustainable and Effective Regional Infrastructure for Peace'. Doctoral Dissertation, Graduate School of International Development and Cooperation, Hiroshima University, 2014. Available from: https://ir.lib.hiroshimauac.jp/files/public/3/36463/20141203092107141604/k6532_3.pdf; Motsamai, D. 'Evaluating the Peacemaking Effectiveness of SADC', Doctoral Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

19 Lederach, J. P. 2003. The little book of conflict transformation. Intercourse: GoodBooks.

20 Lederach, P. & Maiese, M. 'Conflict transformation: A circular journey with a Purpose', New Routes, 14 (2), The Life & Peace Institute, 2009, pp 7–10. Available from: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ConfictTransformation_NewRoutes2009.pdf

## 3. Post-independence politics and party formation

Lesotho's incessant political crises and the collapse of its governing coalitions between 2012 and 2017 have to be understood within their historical context, particularly how the political environment became polarised and parties splintered. As a former British colony, the country started off with a First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system, which led to intense contestations for power during and after elections. It resulted in one-party dominance that lasted for decades, induced periodic military intervention in political processes, and created a system that supported political impunity.[21] Two main political strands or groupings developed before independence: the 'Nationalists', embodied in the Basutoland National Party (BNP) led by Leabua Jonathan, who served as prime minister from 1965 until the coup of 1986; and the 'Congress' parties, the first being the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) led by Ntsu Mokhehle, who served as prime minister from 1993, when his party won all the parliamentary seats, to 1998. Today, most nationalists are still members or sympathisers of the BNP, which was founded in 1959 as a BCP splinter and most 'Congress' supporters are members or sympathisers of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD).

The relevance of this dichotomy in shaping political alliances and coalitions is apparent because of the history of interaction between these parties. For instance, fragmentation between political groups is provoked by entrenched opinions about each party's alleged complicity in activities that undermined the rule of law and reflected gross abuse of state power in the past. The LCD for instance feels victimised by the BNP because its leadership (of the then BCP) was incarcerated in the 1970s, and BCP members were persecuted.[22] The LCD also believes that the BNP

21 This is covered by various scholars, including Matlosa, K., 'The 2007 general election in Lesotho: Managing the post-election conflict', Journal of African Elections, 7 (1), 2008; Fox R. and Southall R., 'Adapting to electoral system change: Voters in Lesotho, 2002', Journal of African Elections, 2(2), 2003; Kapa M. A., 'Lesotho Political Participation and Democracy: A Review by AfriMAP and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA)', 2013.

22 Author's interviews in Maseru, Lesotho, 2–8 May 2018.

was complicit in actions that destabilised the BCP and LCD governments between 1993 and 1998, including the palace coup of August 1994.

Parties that claim to be neither congress nor nationalist include the All Basotho Convention (ABC), which leads the current coalition government. But it is a 'Congress product' itself, having split from the BCP splinter, the LCD in 2006. Pakalitha Mosisili, who succeeded Mokhehle as prime minister in 1998 and governed until 2012, led the LCD. Due to splits and defections, 'Congress' parties have steadily lost their previous political hegemony and have been abandoned by voters such that by 2012 they could not form a government on their own. The nationalist movement has also gradually been decimated.

The country's political and electoral history can be divided into six distinct periods. The first is the post-independence period from 1966 to 1970. The BNP won the first elections in 1966. This period was fraught with tensions and violent confrontations between the BNP and its rival, the BCP.[23] The country was an authoritarian, one-party state at the time. When the opposition BCP won the 1970 elections, the BNP refused to give up power, declared a state of emergency and abolished the constitution. The BCP leadership went into exile and mass repression, political killings, and imprisonment of its members followed. A military junta overthrew the BNP in 1986 and for the next seven years Lesotho was ruled by a military dictatorship.[24]

The period from 1993 to 1998 could be considered a time of democratic consolidation: in 1993 the country held the first democratic elections since 1970, which were won by the BCP. However, the party faced hostility from the army, as the BNP had stuffed the military with its supporters. The army, the BNP and another opposition party, the Marematlou Freedom

23 As discussed in Likoti, F. J. Intra-Party Democracy in Lesotho: Focus on Basutoland Congress Party and Basotho National Party, EISA Occasional Paper No. 39, 2005, pp 1–11; Matlosa, K., 'Lesotho', In Cawthra, G., Du Pisani, A. and Omari, A. (eds), 2007. Security and Democracy in Southern Africa, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

24 See Matlosa, K. 2017. 'The meaning of elections: A review of Lesotho's democratisation process, 1966–2016', in Thabane, M. (ed) *Towards an anatomy of political instability in Lesotho*, 1966–2016, National University of Lesotho, pp 164–166.

Party, backed the dismissal of the BCP government by King Letsie in August 1994, in what was referred to as a palace coup.[25] This ushered in SADC's first involvement in Lesotho with South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe facilitating the return of the BCP to office through an agreement accepted by the conflicting parties. BCP's reign lasted until 1997.[26] The period between 1998 – when the LCD won a sweeping victory – and 2007 was more stable, although it was characterised by protracted post-election disputes.

Up until 1998, all of Lesotho's elections were based on the FPTP system. Also referred as the 'winner-takes-all' system, it led to one-party dominance and severe under-representation of other contenders in the legislature and in government generally. The LCD's win of 79 out of 80 seats in the 1998 elections is a case in point. The opposition, particularly the BCP and the BNP, argued that the results were fraudulent. While these parties historically had antagonistic relations, they forged an alliance of convenience to contest the outcome of the 1998 election, mobilising their supporters to occupy Maseru and inhibiting the LCD from governing. They demanded that the LCD stand down to allow for a government of national unity to be formed.[27] The LCD remained defiant and continually insisted on its right to rule. This triggered violent protests, clashes with the opposition that had armed itself, leading to weeks of political instability.

The 1998 crisis initiated a SADC-led mediation with a South African judge, Pius Langa, leading investigations into the credibility of the results. His findings were controversial, as the opposition challenged their veracity.[28] Dissidents alleged that his report had been doctored, because an interim one had stated that the election was invalid. The final

25 Ibid.

26 South African Department of Foreign Affairs, Internal briefing on Lesotho, 1998.

27 Southall, R. and Fox, R. 'Lesotho's general election of 1998: Rigged or de rigueur?', Journal of Modern African Studies, 37 (4), 1999, p 675.

28 Selinyane, N. 'Lost between stability and democracy: South Africa and Lesotho's constitutional crisis of the 1990s', in Southall R. (ed), South Africa's Role in Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Africa: Conference Proceedings, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006, pp 69–90.

official version concluded that while there were some irregularities, there was no clear evidence of electoral malpractice and fraud.[29] Reactions to the report and the king's refusal to dissolve parliament became volatile. Military mutineers seized arms and ammunition and expelled or imprisoned their commanding officers, while the police lost control of public security. When the Langa report failed to break the impasse, SADC intervened militarily and stabilised the situation.[30] SADC then brokered an agreement that restored the LCD to power on condition that a new election be held within 18 months. Under SADC's supervision, a multiparty Interim Political Authority (IPA) was established to propose constitutional, legislative, and other changes aimed at ending the impasse ahead of scheduled elections in 2000. While the IPA consisted of two members from each of the 12 political parties that had participated in the 1998 elections, the parties had unequal bargaining power. The LCD still had a 79:1 majority in parliament, and all IPA proposals would eventually have to be formalised by the incumbent government, in terms of existing legislative and constitutional requirements.

According to Professor Jørgen Elklit, a Danish political scientist (who was consulted by the Lesotho government at the time), complications arose when 22 opposition representatives – some from very small parties – proposed a solution first suggested by a German political scientist. This was to introduce an electoral system similar to the German Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system, which combines single-member constituencies with a proportional representation (PR) component.[31] The two members of the ruling LCD objected strongly to the MMP and instead proposed a system that they thought more likely to increase their parliamentary representation. This was a mixed-member parallel or mixed-member majority (MMM) system, under which only a fraction of the seats would be allocated in terms of PR, and which Elklit therefore

29 Ibid.

30 Neethling, T. 'Military intervention in Lesotho: Perspectives on Operation Boleas and beyond', Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2 (2), 1999.

31 Elklit, J. 'The 2007 general election in Lesotho: Abuse of the MMP system?' Journal of African Elections, 7 (1), 2007, pp 11–12.

argues would not be a genuine PR system.[32] A compromise was only reached in 2001 when the majority of parties represented at IPA preferred the MMP. The argument was that it could limit post-electoral contestations and make parliament more inclusive by allocating compensatory seats to weak election performers and often to smaller parties.[33] This would give the smaller parties a presence in parliament that they otherwise would not have. The seat combination agreed to, reflected the LCD's initial proposal for a parallel system (80 single-member constituency seats, and 40 PR seats).[34] The new changes were implemented through a constitutional amendment that specifically mentions MMP as the new electoral model. The amendment also explicitly stated that the principle of PR should be applied in respect of the National Assembly as a whole, meaning that parties could not circumvent it before an election.

The MMP was applied to the 2002 general elections and its potential contribution to the country's political stability was laudable. First, it changed the configuration of politics from a one-party state to a multiparty parliament.[35] Second, it reduced the frequency and intensity of post-election disputes. But these gains were short-lived mainly because of a prevailing politically competitive and polarised context. In the build-up to the 2007 elections, the political climate became polarised, incensed by unregulated floor crossing. Some LCD MPs defected to form the ABC, which effectively reduced the LCD's majority. The LCD's counterstrategy was to exploit the allocation of seats under the MMP electoral system to improve its electoral prospects. It formed a partnership with the National Independent Party (NIP), which had won five compensatory or PR seats in 2002, and had signed a memorandum of understanding

32 Interview with Mr Lekhetho Rakuoane, former Minister of Home Affairs in the second coalition government, and leader of the PFD, Maseru, May 2018.

33 Ibid.

34 In this system, 80 out of the 120 members of parliament are elected in terms of simple majorities in single-member constituencies, and 40 members are elected from nationwide party lists. In order to achieve overall PR, party list seats are allocated in accordance with the number of constituency seats won by each party as well as the total number of votes obtained by each party.

35 Interview with Professor Kapa, National University of Lesotho, Maseru, 6 May 2018.

(MoU) with it on 'strategic partnership and cooperation' for the 2007 general elections. The agreement treated the two parties like a single political entity. For instance, it was agreed that the first five positions on the NIP party list would be allocated to NIP candidates, the next six to LCD candidates (who would also run in single-member constituencies), the next four to the LCD, the next five to the NIP, and the next ten to the LCD candidates, followed by alternating members of both parties.[36] The LCD would only contest the single-member constituencies, while the NIP would only contest the compensatory seats. Pre-election party alliances, of this nature had the effect of changing the MMP system into a parallel or mixed-member majority one, ironically the model initially proposed by the LCD during the IPA negotiations.[37]

The arrangement worked for the LCD as it won 61 of the 80 constituencies in the 2007 general election. Opposition parties cried foul, arguing that by creating the NIP alliance, the party had manipulated the MMP as the alliance distorted the MMP's compensatory mechanism. The opposition's rebuff turned into a tense post electoral environment and months of political instability, with reports of alleged political assassination attempts on politicians from the ruling party.[38] SADC mediated the impasse from 2007 to 2009 and sent a fact-finding mission to Lesotho comprising members of its Ministerial Committee drawn from countries serving in the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC).[39] The mission identified seven factors that had triggered the post-election conflict, namely: the manipulation of the MMP electoral system; the unfair allocation of parliamentary seats; the uncertain legality of party alliances; a lack of respect for the electoral

36 Elklit, J. 'The 2007 general election in Lesotho: Abuse of the MMP system?' Journal of African Elections, 7 (1), 2007, p 14.

37 Interview with Mr Lekhetho Rakuoane, Maseru, May 2018.

38 Interview with Tlohang Sekhamane, Secretary General of the Democratic Congress and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations in the second coalition government, Maseru, May 2018.

39 Southern African Development Community (SADC), Communiqué of the Extra-Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, Dar-es-Salaam, 28–29 March 2007. Available from: http://www.sadc.int/files/7513/5292/8388/SADC_Extraordinary_Summit_Communique_March_2007.pdf

code of conduct; a lack of communication among political leaders; the appointment of new ministers from the NIP party list; and the unruly behaviour of youth supporters of parties.[40]

SADC recommended that the Lesotho government initiate a dialogue with opposition parties to resolve these problems. It appointed Botswana's former president Quett Masire to facilitate and submit a report on its outcome to the SADC Chair.[41] But the dialogue reached an impasse because the political parties involved in it were litigating over the election results and the allocation of parliamentary seats at the same time, creating a deeply polarised environment for mediation. Problems surrounding the dialogue deepened when Mosisili accused Masire of favouring the opposition parties, leading the latter to abort the mission in July 2009.[42] Masire's subsequent report to SADC stated that the MMP electoral model had been improperly applied during the 2007 elections; alliances between the LCD and the NIP and between the ABC and the Lesotho Workers Party had undermined the spirit of the MMP's compensatory mechanism; the allocation of parliamentary seats was distorted; legal reform was required to ensure that election petitions were handled expeditiously in court; and the dispute over who should be the leader of the opposition in parliament should be resolved legally.[43] After Masire's departure, the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) finalised the dialogue, supported by a UN-funded technical team of local NGO leaders. They initially registered modest results due to the poor attendance of parties and the dwindling commitment of the facilitators.[44] A breakthrough came in March 2011 when the government and opposition parties reached an agreement on reinvigorating the MMP ahead of the 2012 general elections.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Interview with the former President of Botswana, Dr Quett Masire, July 2015.

43 SADC, Communiqué of the Summit of the SADC Organ Troika, Maputo, Mozambique, 2009, p 2. Available from: http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/SADCSummit061109.pdf.

44 As discussed in UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Lesotho Consensus and Electoral Reform Program', 2013, p 36.

While the MMP issue was somewhat resolved, the contention over its application and the difficulties in resolving them demonstrated three important things. Firstly, that the MMP could be manipulated to usurp power. Parties were not committed to a common vision of sharing power and making government more multiparty in character. They remained deeply hostile to and mutually distrustful of one another.[45] Secondly that beyond the problems of manipulating the MMP, party splits and defections, particularly staged before elections, were encouraging an unstable political party system in the country. This was a longstanding trend. For instance, the LCD splintered from the BCP a year before elections in 1997; Thomas Thabane and others broke away from the LCD to form the ABC in September 2006, barely four months before the 2007 general election; Lesotho's former Prime Minister Mosisili broke away from the LCD to form the Democratic Congress (DC) before the 2012 elections; and Monyane Moleleki broke away from the DC to create the Alliance for Democrats (AD) before the 2017 elections. These had been encouraged by unrestrained floor-crossing; unrestrained because there is no legislation preventing or regulating it. Thirdly and related to the latter is that multiple party splits and defections were driven by struggles for power within parties themselves; and that a culture of conflict resolution within parties was simply lacking. It became more convenient for politicians to find alternative political homes and position themselves better in relation to their adversaries through pre-election alliances.[46]

45 Makoa, F. 'Beyond the electoral triumphalism: reflections on Lesotho's coalition government and challenges', Strategic Review for Southern Africa, 36 (1), 2012. Available from: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=F9615451BD447CC4F682AC975DDD1C22?doi=10.1.1.491.1818&rep=rep1&type=pdf, p 11.

46 Interview with Professor Nqosa Mahao, National University of Lesotho, Maseru, 4 May 2018.

# 4. The formation and dynamics of the three coalition governments

## *4.1. The 2012 government coalition*

Lesotho's first coalition government was made up of five political parties, previously in the opposition. It was formed after the 2012 elections produced a hung parliament and was led by the leader of the ABC, Thomas Thabane.[47] The context to the ABC's success lies in what took place prior to the elections. Before the polls, Mosisili and 44 other members resigned from the LCD to form the DC. The split followed a bitter two-year internal tussle for the LCD's control between Mothetjoa Metsing, secretary general of the LCD at the time, and Mosisili. Metsing led an anti-Mosisili faction within the LCD that controlled the party's national executive committee. The faction orchestrated a motion of no confidence in the Mosisili government, which was supported by opposition MPs in parliament. Mosisili's rival faction within the LCD that created the DC was led by the then Minister of Natural Resources, Monyane Moleleki. The DC immediately took over the administration of the country until parliament was dissolved to pave the way for elections.

In the May 2012 general election, Mosisili's DC won 48 seats, the ABC 30, the LCD 26, and the BNP 5. Although Mosisili had in fact led the newly created DC to a significant win of 48 parliamentary seats, the numbers fell short of an outright parliamentary majority.[48] The three opposition parties that came closest to the DC's tally agreed to form a coalition government. Thus Thabane succeeded Mosisili as prime minister not by winning the election outright but by building a coalition government with the support of smaller opposition parties.

47 Section 87 (2) of the Lesotho constitution and the electoral law states that electoral victory no longer goes to the party with the largest number of votes but to the party that secures more than 50 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly.

48 Motsamai, D. Lesotho after the May 2012 General Elections: Making the Coalition Work, 2012. Available from: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/lesotho-after-may-2012-general-elections-making-the-coalition-work.

The outcome of the 2012 general election was significant for three main reasons. First, the country moved from a single-party majority government in place for 14 years under the LCD, to a multiparty government. The electoral outcome led to the birth of Lesotho's first coalition government. Second, the governing coalition was made up of parties previously in the opposition. Plus, all the parties in the governing coalition were breakaways.[49] But they held a simple parliamentary majority of 61 seats out of 120, meaning that the governing coalition was inherently unstable. A single defection could collapse it. As unstable as it was, it reflected what was possible and negotiated at the time. These negotiations were done in haste. On the eve of the announcement of the election results, it was clear that no party had amassed the requisite number of parliamentary seats to form government. The ABC opened coalition negotiations on the same day, and by the next day it had sealed a coalition deal with the LCD, the BNP, the PFD, and the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP). The negotiations were conducted under pressure and involved intense political bargaining, especially between the ABC and the LCD as the main parties with the most parliamentary seats in the arrangement. While the LCD had four seats less than the ABC, it was emboldened to negotiate extensive rewards for itself having calculated that Thabane wanted to assume premiership – something that he could not achieve under an alliance with the DC. It would have made the ABC a junior partner in the coalition and disqualified him from leading the coalition. The LCD thus came into negotiations with a list of strategic ministries it wanted to preside over, were it to join government. It gave the ABC an ultimatum to negotiate with the DC if its demands were not met.[50] Prior to the 2012 elections, the same party had ruled out the possibility of a coalition with the DC. Yet it used its leverage to fashion a favourable outcome for itself, especially with respect to the ministries it wanted to run. Also key to highlight is that a group referred to as 'the Bloc' attempted to

49 Marematlou Freedom Party and the LCD are BCP breakaways, the ABC comes from the LCD, while the PFD is a breakaway from the BNP.

50 Interview with Chief Thesele Maseribane, leader of the BNP, Maseru, May 2018.

negotiate a coalition with the ABC, but it was rejected. [51] Bloc parties held 10 parliamentary seats and would have increased the coalition's simple majority to 71.

These negotiations culminated into an agreement entitled 'ABC, LCD, BNP – Agreement to form a coalition government of political parties, subsequent to the May 26, 2012 elections'. The document itself is not a legal document per se. It served as a guiding document that outlined power sharing and how internal affairs of the coalition should be managed. It entailed a general division of ministries among parties, a process of political appointments; and a broad policy program to be implemented by the new government. But whether the agreement was conceived to regulate coalition governance is doubtful. Parties only signed it nine months into government. Part of the delay were wide differences among themselves over various aspects of the agreement. For instance, the ABC had refused to sign it because of a clause that stipulated that changes in the numbers of parliamentary seats be reflected in the leadership positions of the governing coalition. The LCD expressed dissatisfaction with the decision-making procedures and insisted that it be explicitly stated that the prime minister consults with coalition parties on 'serious decisions'. These were listed to include political appointments and dismissals. Other parties suggested additional provisions concerning open communication and dispute resolution. By the time the agreement was signed, coalition partners were already jostling for power and uncompromising on their different interpretations of the agreement. To illustrate, two ABC MPs defected after the agreement was signed and the ABC stood to lose its leadership of the coalition. This complicated the interpretation of 'proportionality' by the coalition parties, with regards to the allocation of key portfolios. The signed agreement stipulated that positions of high seniority including ministerial positions, heads of foreign missions, senators, and district administrators be allocated in line with each party's seats in parliament, provided that proportionality did not deprive any of

51 Interview with Professor Motlamelle Kapa and Justice Mahapela Lehohla, Chairman of Lesotho's Independent Electoral Comission, Maseru, 6–7 May 2018.

the parties of a share of these allocations across the board.[52] It also stated that principal secretaries, in line with the principle of proportionality, be appointed on the recommendation of the minister concerned. This was not the case.

Consequently, the 2012 coalition government crumbled in acrimony in June 2014 having lasted almost two years. The LCD, which was a major partner in the coalition government, announced its withdrawal and signed a coalition alliance with the DC. This was regardless of its existing agreement with the ABC. The move implied that the agreement lacked legal enforcement and that it could not commit parties in office. It also implied that serious problems existed between the coalition parties that could not be resolved internally. The study points to three: contention about the powers of the prime minister, the modalities of the parties' working relationship, and a lack of effective dispute resolution mechanisms. Contention over the powers of the prime minster characterised the entire short term of the coalition government. The issue was whether a prime minister leading a coalition government could exercise his powers in the same way as one leading a one-party government. Central to this were disagreements between the ABC and the LCD over whether, in terms of the coalition agreement, the prime minister should consult his coalition partners about the appointment and removal of key government officials. The agreement also stipulated that parties should consult each other about key decisions of government, suggesting a reduction in the prime minister's constitutional and legal powers.[53] At the same time, the prime minister argued that he was guided by the constitution as far as the exercise of executive powers was concerned.

The tensions, especially between Metsing and Thabane, related to changes Thabane had made to key institutions and positions, including the Independent Electoral Commission, justice portfolios and various other government departments, allegedly without consulting

52 As outlined in the ABC, LCD, and BNP agreement to form a coalition government, 2012.

53 See, Kapa, M. A. 'Keynote address to the Government of Lesotho and the United Nations High-Level Round Table', Lesotho Avani Hotel, 15 July, 2016.

his coalition partners. The LCD was often aggrieved by the firing of its officials in the ministries it presided over without being consulted. In fact, they argued that Thabane did not have the power to fire senior officials in ministries controlled by the LCD. Thabane's attempt to reorganise portfolios previously controlled by the LCD further eroded the ABC-LCD relationship. For example, in 2013, Thabane attempted to take control of the highly strategic LHWP, and transfer it to his office. The LHWP fell under the Energy, Meteorology and Water Affairs Ministry, an LCD portfolio. The LCD protested, and the parties eventually agreed to a joint ministerial monitoring committee. But this remained a bone of contention. Next, Thabane reorganised the security portfolios. The police portfolio, previously under Home Affairs, was moved to Defence under the prime minister's command, and a new Commissioner of Police, Khothatso Tšooana, was appointed in 2013. The last divisive decision was Thabane's firing of the Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), General Tlali Kamoli, who was known to have strong ties to Metsing.

By March 2014, tensions within the coalition had escalated.[54] Opposition MPs, with tacit support from the LCD, proposed a motion of no confidence in Thabane's government. Thabane responded by proroguing parliament – a constitutional prerogative – but his dissidents, which now included the LCD, saw it as an attempt to forestall his removal. SADC tried to rescue the governing coalition from collapse through diplomacy and dialogue. The first of these were consultations undertaken by the Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) headed by the Namibian minister of foreign affairs, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, on 22 and 23 May 2014. The following month, SADC recommended that inter-party peace talks be initiated to resolve tensions between the LCD and the ABC. The objective of the talks was to review and amend the original June 2012 Coalition Agreement to the satisfaction of the parties and for Thabane to rescind parliament's prorogation. The CCL, with Pohamba presiding, initially mediated the talks. But these collapsed mainly

54 On 8 August 2017, Metsing was summoned to answer to corruption allegations before the DCEO, which had been suspended without any due process. At the time of writing, he was still in exile in South Africa.

because they were not conducted in good faith and both parties were strategizing to remain in power one way or another. For example, while the consultations were in progress, leaders of the DC and LCD entered into a new alliance agreement. Signed on 11 June, a day after Thabane's decision to prorogue parliament, it proposed Mosisili as prime minister and Metsing as his deputy. It also allocated ministerial posts to smaller parties in the opposition – the 'Congress' parties, namely the Basotho Batho Democratic Congress, the Basotho Congress for Democracy, and the Lesotho People's Congress.[55] Meanwhile, the ABC backtracked on its agreement with the LCD to rescind the nine-month suspension of parliament, and the LCD refused to terminate its newly signed alliance with the DC.

In July 2014, following the deadlock in negotiations, Pohamba invited a delegation of the coalition government to Windhoek, Namibia, as a follow-up to the SADC inter-party meetings in Maseru. This resulted in a compromise agreement between the parties (referred to as the Windhoek Declaration), which they all disregarded once back in Lesotho.[56] The South African president, Jacob Zuma, also convened a number of working visits to Lesotho in the same period, to encourage the parties to maintain the coalition in line with the Windhoek Declaration. Barely days later, Thabane fled to South Africa, reporting that the country's army chief General Tlali Kamoli had attempted to stage a coup and that he feared for his life. The ABC and BNP leadership fingered the LCD for compliance in the coup attempt on the basis that its leadership and many DC parliamentarians had failed to publicly denounce it.

On 1 September 2014, the SADC Organ Troika convened an emergency meeting in Pretoria attended by the coalition leaders to consider the situation in Lesotho. At this meeting, Thabane requested SADC military

55 As discussed in Motsamai, D. Elections in a time of instability: challenges for Lesotho beyond the 2015 poll. Southern Africa Report, No 3. April, 2015. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies. Available from: https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/SAReport-Issue3.pdf

56 The Herald, 'A historical perspective of Lesotho's political crisis', 10 September 2014. Available from: https://www.herald.co.zw/a-historical-perspective-of-lesothos-political-crisis/

intervention in order to restore order.[57] This was rejected. Instead, SADC opted for political dialogue and bilateral measures (undertaken by South Africa) to support public security. There was also a lack of consensus among the coalition leaders on the causes of the political turmoil, and the LCD's underplaying of Thabane's coup claims.

In the end, South Africa, representing SADC, took charge of the security situation, deploying, in collaboration with the Lesotho police, a contingent of the South African Police Services (SAPS) to Maseru in September to reinforce public security in the capital. The SAPS also provided Thabane and several other leaders with full-time security. SADC mandated South Africa's Deputy President, Cyril Ramaphosa, as a special envoy 'to assist the country to return to constitutional normalcy, political stability, and restoration of peace and security'.[58] SADC deployed an observer team comprising police officers and military personnel from various regional states to Maseru. It was also agreed that Lesotho would hold fresh elections in February 2015. Political parties went into these polls in a very fragmented state. There was also deep polarisation within and among key security agencies, especially the army and the police.

## 5. The 2015 coalition government

A new seven-party coalition government was formed after 28 February 2015 polls, which, like the previous elections, produced a hung parliament. Thabane and his coalition relinquished power to Mosisili. But Metsing stayed on after his party, the LCD, joined the new coalition government. The makeup of the coalition was unsurprising since these parties had agreed to an alliance before the elections, and concretised the agreement after the results were announced. Shortly thereafter, legal representatives of the different parties conferred to produce a 'more formal and elaborate' coalition agreement called 'The Coalition Agreement for

57 South African Presidency, 'Joint statement by the SADC Troika and the leaders of the coalition of the Kingdom of Lesotho', 1 September 2014. Available from: www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=17939

58 Ramaphosa, C. 'Maseru Facilitation Declaration', 2 October 2014. Available from: www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2014/leso1003.html.

stability and reform: Lesotho's second coalition government agreement, April 2015'. Among others, it set out the broad objectives of the coalition and a policy programme, with key priority areas including the reform of the constitution and the public service.[59] Part of the agreement dealt with how the coalition would be managed, stating that the parties would work on the basis of 'good faith and no surprises'.[60] The agreement also stated that parties should hold monthly meetings chaired by the prime minister to discuss government programmes and progress; monthly joint parliamentary caucus meetings chaired by the prime minister and his deputy to discuss government business; and that a 'coalition monitoring group' of representatives of the parties and other experts would meet as and when necessary to review and evaluate the implementation of the agreement. These instruments were to be set up within three months of signing the coalition agreement.

A month after the seven-party coalition was sworn in, SADC closed down its Facilitation Mission in Maseru and handed its recommendations of reforms to be undertaken to the government. Two months later, Thabane, leader of the official opposition, fled the country for South Africa, alleging an attempt on his life. Maseribane, the BNP leader, several military officers, and other opposition leaders followed him. An apparent political witch-hunt ensued. In the following months, the new government backtracked on the majority of SADC decisions agreed to prior to the elections, including reforms in the security sector. According to analysts like Sejanamane, the Mosisili government largely rejected the reforms because they perceived them to be externally driven

59 Government of Lesotho, The Coalition Agreement for Stability and Reform: Lesotho's Second Coalition Government Agreement, 2015. Available from: http://www.gov.ls/gov_webportal/important%20documents/the%20coalition%20agreement%20for%20stability%20and%20reform%2031%20march%202015/the%20coalition%20agreement%20for%20stability%20and%20reform%2031%20march%202015.pdf

60 See Government of Lesotho, Coalition Agreement for Reform and stability, p 8.

and imposed.[61] They also stood to erode Mosisili's power base within the governing coalition.[62]

As soon as it got into power, the Mosisili government staged a witch-hunt for opponents and dissidents.[63] This included arresting some military officials for an alleged mutiny at the same time as Thabane's prior allegation of a coup attempt in 2014. As part of these developments, the government terminated the contract of the country's former military chief appointed by Thabane in 2014, Lieutenant-General Maaparankoe Mahao, and reinstated Kamoli. The new Minister of Defence and National Security, Tšeliso Mokhosi, then reported to parliament that the government had uncovered a mutiny plot in the LDF, at the same time as the coup alleged by Thabane. The following month, Kamoli ordered the LDF to press charges of mutiny against some 50 LDF members, related to events at the time of the alleged coup. They were detained at Maseru Maximum Security Prison, and allegedly tortured.[64] Mahao was reported to be under investigation for the alleged mutiny, but was never charged or detained. Instead, his LDF peers killed him during an operation to arrest him.[65] Meanwhile Mosisili's government recalled a number of officials from the country's diplomatic missions who had been appointed by Thabane, including Lesotho's High Commissioner to South Africa, Malejaka Letooane; and the Johannesburg and Durban-based Consul-Generals, Mophethe Sekamane and Lerato Tšosane.[66]

61 See Sejanamane, M. 'An approach to constitutional and institutional reforms in Lesotho', 2016. Available from: https://lesothoanalysis.com/2016/06/08/an-approachto-constitutional-and-institutional-reforms-in-lesotho/

62 Ibid.

63 See Lesotho Government Gazette 2015 on the reinstatement of Kamoli.

64 See SADC Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Brigadier Maaparankoe Mahao, Final Report, Addis Ababa, 2015, p 57. Available from http://lestimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SADCReport.pdf

65 Vollgraaff, R. and Ralengau, M. 'SADC leaders to probe Lesotho killing', Mail & Guardian, 4 September 2017. Available from: http://mgafrica.com/author/renevollgraaff-and-mathabiso-ralengau

66 Mohloboli, K. 'More diplomats recalled', Lesotho Times, 27 August 2015. Available from: http://www.lestimes.com/more-diplomats-recalled/

Mahao's killing sparked outrage in and outside the country. Mosisili's government initially failed to condemn Mahao's murder and order the immediate arrest of the perpetrators, a move interpreted as a tacit endorsement of the killing.[67] It was only after pressure from civil society organisations and donors, including the UN, EU and US, which called for a comprehensive international investigation into the security developments in Lesotho, that the government's public position changed.[68]

The AU and SADC also took exception to the developments, and inferred that the killing reflected political intolerance and polarisation.[69] South Africa, the SADC Organ Chair at the time, convened an extraordinary SADC Double Troika Summit in Pretoria that decided, among others, to extend Ramaphosa's facilitation mandate in Lesotho, and to order the deployment of a 10-member Commission of Inquiry led by a Botswana High Court judge, Mpaphi Phumaphi, to investigate the full scope of Lesotho's instability and recommend how its political stability should be restored.[70] The commission's specific tasks were to investigate the fatal shooting of Mahao; review the investigation into the alleged mutiny plot in 2014; examine the alleged kidnappings of former LDF members and the killings of opposition members; scrutinise the allegations by the opposition and civil society that Kamoli's reappointment had led to political and security instability; and inspect the legality of the removal and appointment processes around the LDF's top tier.

67 Ntsukunyane, L. 'Mahao family breathes fire', Lesotho Times, 2 July 2015. Available from: http://www.lestimes.com/mahao-family-breathes-fire/

68 See European Union, 'Statement by the EU delegation to the Kingdom of Lesotho on the killing of Lt. Gen. Maaparankoe Mahao'. Available from: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/lesotho/documents/press_corner/20150630_en.pdf; United Nations Secretary General, 'Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the killing of former Lesotho Defence Force Commander Lt. Gen. Maaparankoe Mahao', 26 June 2015.

69 African Union, 'The African Union condemns the killing of the former Commander of Lesotho's Defence Force (LDF), Lt General Mahao Maaparankoe', 26 June 2015. Available from: http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-pressrelease-lesotho-26-6-2015-1-.pdf.

70 See SADC, Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Brigadier Maaparankoe Mahao.

Opposition MPs who remained in the country embarked on an indefinite boycott of parliament, demanding Kamoli's removal – a significant move at the time, as they held a total number of 55 seats in the 120-member legislature, while the governing coalition held 65. The commission began its work and summoned military personnel and politicians to its hearings. Opposition figures and some military officials remained in exile. While most could not participate in the commission's hearings, arrangements were made for them, including Thabane, to testify in camera from South Africa. While the commission hearings continued, the Mosisili government gave opposition MPs an ultimatum to return to parliament, arguing that their continued boycott of parliament was illegal, and that it planned to hold by-elections in their constituencies A law restricts the period in which MPs can be absent from parliament without written permission from the Speaker to one third of the total number of parliamentary sessions. While this was not pursued further, the opposition stood to lose 41 of their 55 seats, as those were directly elected parliamentary seats. The remaining 14 were awarded through PR.

The governing coalition initially presented a united front during the Commission's processes, lending support to Mosisili's rebuff of its work. This included questioning the commission's mandate, terms of reference, and jurisdiction.[71] Moreover, despite a SADC recommendation that all mutiny cases be halted since they were effectively sub judice, the government proceeded with the court martial process involving 23 LDF officers accused of mutiny, and the accused remained incarcerated in the Maseru Maximum Security Prison.

The SADC Commission finalised its work in October 2015, stating that the government and the LDF had been uncooperative and had frustrated its attempts to establish the facts on the ground. Once the report was finalised, Mosisili refused to accept it. This was unsurprising since he had made it clear on several public occasions that the commission's recommendations would not be prosecutable in Lesotho, or legally

71 See Konopo, J. 'Inside Lesotho's dirty battles with SADC'. Available from: http://inkjournalism.org/61/inside-lesotho-dirty-battles-with-sadc/

binding on government. This was partly based on fears that the recommendations would implicate members of his party and governing coalition partners in the resurgent violence and instability, thereby loosening his grip on power. These recommendations also included security-related ones that challenged the official narrative of the 2014 coup, the 2015 charges of mutiny under Mosisili, and his reinstatement of Kamoli. The commission described Kamoli as a 'polarising character' within the LDF, and recommended his removal as army chief. It also found no basis for the allegations of a mutiny, and recommended the immediate release of the incarcerated soldiers. Furthermore, SADC instructed Mosisili's government to facilitate the return of exiles, including leaders of the opposition as well as military figures.

Following months of impasse between the Lesotho government and SADC, Mosisili accepted the commission's recommendations on condition that his government would develop its own reforms, compatible with Lesotho's laws. Part of those it accepted were reforms to its electoral system, the constitution, security structures and public service, aimed at depoliticising government administration. On the security front, the government announced Kamoli's retirement, and later abandoned the court martial process. Essentially, however, the Mosisili government implemented the reforms in a discretionary way, in order to avoid upsetting its political allies within the coalition and in the country's security structures. It had to maintain a careful balancing act between appeasing SADC and donors on the one hand, and the coalition alliance on the other.

But the strategy failed to maintain the DC-led coalition, and it began to haemorrhage at the end of 2016.[72] This was spurred by disagreements among coalition parties about the implementation of SADC recommendations.[73] In late 2016, a faction of the DC's National Executive Committee (NEC), led by Mosisili's deputy, Monyane Moleleki, announced its withdrawal from the country's second coalition government.

72 Interviews with government officials, Maseru, 5 May 2018.

73 Interviews with government officials and political experts, Maseru, 6–8 May 2018.

They resigned from the DC and announced that they had formed the AD, and that the new party had already signed an agreement with the opposition ABC to form a new government.[74]

Given that the current government was due to remain in power for another 36 months, the agreement proposed that a new government be reconfigured without going for elections. Moleleki's faction would give Thabane a majority in parliament, and the premiership would be divided into two periods, with Moleleki serving as prime minister for the first 18 months and Thabane for the remaining 18. In response, Mosisili took Moleleki and his faction to court to test the legality of his withdrawal from the DC coalition, and push for their suspension from the party. The court endorsed Mosisili's decision that Mosisili and the NEC members be suspended from the DC. The splintering of the DC was a foregone conclusion. In March 2017, with substantial support from the opposition, the AD led a successful motion of no confidence in Mosisili's administration. Instead of handing over power to the opposition as proposed in the AD-ABC agreement, he responded by dissolving parliament and calling fresh elections.[75]

## 6. The 2017 coalition government

The country was compelled to hold another snap election in June 2017. The results placed Thabane and his party in a pivotal position to negotiate the formation of a new government, since it had the most seats. With 48 seats, the ABC formed a governing coalition with three other parties, namely its previous partner, the BNP; the Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL); and the AD. Once again, the coalition agreement drawn up entailed dividing government portfolios and ministries proportionally among the partners, with Thabane becoming prime minister and Moleleki his deputy. Maseribane got the title of senior minister and the RCL was assigned to run the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

74 Leisanyane, L. 'Mosisili's fate in judges' hands', 2 December 2016, The Post. Available from: https://www.thepost.co.ls/local-news/mosisilis-fate-in-judges-hands/

75 Interviews with government officials and political experts, Maseru, 6—9 May 2018.

At the time of writing, a number of potentially divisive issues among parties in the governing coalition were apparent. Commonly expressed is a lack of consultation among the parties on key government appointments, a situation that mirrored the ABC-LCD fallout in 2014. Thabane's coalition partners, notably the AD and BNP, recently claimed that he had resorted to appointing public servants without consulting them. In turn, members of Thabane's party have accused members of the AD, of knowingly nominating and appointing corrupt people to key government positions.[76]

The current governing coalition could be further eroded by internal disputes within the individual parties. All four were experiencing internal strife in one form or another. Within the ABC, there was a power struggle between Thabane and the party chairperson, Motlohi Maliehe, who was challenging Thabane for the ABC's leadership. The latter has alleged that Thabane had allowed the first lady to exert undue influence over the party and government affairs- an issue also flagged by the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) in its latest report on Lesotho.[77] Another power struggle had developed between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lesego Makgothi, and the Minister of Finance, Moeketsi Majoro, who were also vying to succeed Thabane. Thabane was yet to name his successor. The BNP faced similar challenges with the term of its incumbent leader due to end in 2018. The AD's internal feuds also involve power struggles between its youth faction and its leadership. Meanwhile, the opposition bloc comprising the DC, the LCD, the PFD and NIP remained in parliament, but refused to cooperate with the Thabane government in its implementation of SADC reforms.

Significantly, Metsing, the LCD's leader has gone into a self-imposed exile in South Africa, alleging political persecution. This is after the current government reinstated his corruption charges. The LCD, along

76 Author interviews in Maseru, May 2018

77 See Lesotho Times, 'Thabane admits party problems', 9 May 2018, at http://www.lestimes.com/?p=34549.; and 'ABC infighting threatens reforms', (nd). Available from: http://www.lestimes.com/abc-infighting-threatens-reforms/

with the opposition bloc, has demanded his unconditional return. Metsing further insists that the current government be dissolved to make way for a government of national unity, and that in the meantime it releases the country's former army chief Kamoli from prison. The impasse around these issues reflected two important features of contemporary politics in Lesotho: the form of political bargaining entrenched in Lesotho's opportunistic coalition arrangements since 2012 and the negative effects of coalition politics on the country's governance.

## 7. Key findings

There are five key findings from this study. The first is that coalition governments have probably become a permanent feature of politics in Lesotho and there is little to suggest that this will change. Following the MMP's adoption in 2001, no single party has reached the 50% + 1 constitutional threshold to form a government on its own. All government formation processes especially from 2012 after the pre-election alliance fiasco was resolved, have resulted in coalition governments. Secondly, and partly because a government has to be formed within 14 days of an election, governing coalitions are a constitutional imperative, notwithstanding how they are formed. Unfortunately for Lesotho, these often are hastily cobbled together. This may be attributed to a reading of Section 82(1)(b) of the Lesotho Constitution, which stipulates that the National Assembly shall hold its first meeting not later than 14 days after the holding of a general election. It goes on to state that '... the speaker of the House is elected during the first sitting of the National Assembly, and other processes of government formation begin'. This accounts for the different and often conflicting preferences that flow from coalition agreements, because deliberation on these issues is not given immediate priority.

Thirdly, the collapse of Lesotho's coalition governments cannot be prevented by having coalition agreements in place. These documents are not legally binding and cannot be enforced by courts of law. Relatedly, the issue of the constitutionality of coalition agreements remains

unresolved. While Lesotho's constitution recognises the existence of coalition governments, it does not stipulate the powers of the prime minister under it. This is why all governing coalitions have been mired in conflicting interpretations of the powers of the prime minister under coalition arrangements.

The fourth deduction is that all coalition agreements in the past failed to establish effective coordinating, decision-making and dispute resolution mechanisms and structures. Aside from cabinet meetings and interactions in parliament, there was little evidence that other mechanisms existed to mitigate implosion if a conflict arises over a policy or procedural intention included in the coalition agreement. But the existence and effectiveness of such mechanisms often depends on the political clout of the role players, as well as entrenched practices of political cooperation and tolerance between parties. In Lesotho, a prevailing culture of political intolerance and fierce contestations for power exists, both across and within parties.

Previous coalition governments have collapsed due to parties' refusal to compromise, and their desire to access state power. This mimics the factionalism that became entrenched in Lesotho's political culture from the 1970s onwards due to party splits and endemic power struggles.[78] All the major parties in Lesotho coalition governments have been breakaway parties, led by older politicians who come from a culture of military activism and violent politics. Thus, Maundeni has aptly observed that ruling parties in Lesotho have engineered defections, and opposition parties have suffered from them.[79] Defectors, and victims of defections, have ruled Lesotho for most of its political history. Parties – defectors, and victims of defections – enter into fresh alliances in order to reclaim their political power. The propensity for party splits and defections is further bolstered by the fact that Lesotho's system allows unregulated floor-

78 See Maundeni, Z. 'Political culture as a source of political instability', African Journal of Political Science and International Relations Vol. 4(4), 2010. Available from: http://ubrisa.ub.bw/jspui/retrieve/1688 p. 130.

79 Ibid.

crossing. This practice has worked to destabilise parliament and distort parliamentary representation. As soon as MPs become disgruntled with their current parties, they simply cross the floor.

The last major cause of the country's endemic political crises and the fall of the two coalition governments is the systematic politicisation of the public service. This long-standing trend has affected the entire public service, especially heads of government departments known locally as principal secretaries; the heads of the security agencies, namely the army, the police, the national intelligence service, and correctional services; the judiciary; and other statutory posts, like the Director-General of the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO).[80] This trend deepened after the 2012 elections when Thabane invoked various legal provisions to remove some of these public officers from office. Following the assumption of power of the post-2015 coalition government of seven parties, this process of politicisation has been exacerbated. Sejanamane (2015) observes that when Mosisili's coalition government assumed power, people did not realise that it had agreed to a 'semi-feudal' arrangement in which coalition partners shared government departments as opposed to merely sharing ministerial positions.[81] Rather than forming a proper coalition government, they tried to share the spoils, which created the basis for its collapse. The power struggles that eventually collapsed the government had its roots in this arrangement.[82]

80 This is discussed in depth in Kapa, M. 'Governance issues paper prepared for the UNDP Lesotho Office', 2018 (Unpublished).

81 See Sejanamane, M. 2016. 'An approach to constitutional and institutional reforms in Lesotho'. Available from: https://lesothoanalysis.com/2016/06/08/an-approach-to-constitutional-and-institutional-reforms-in-lesotho/

82 Ibid.

# 8. Conclusion

This study has confirmed the hypothesis that unresolved political issues and institutional factors, such as a lack of strong and accountable public institutions, have played a decisive role in undermining the stability of Lesotho's governing coalitions. However, legal factors such as the constitutional status of coalition agreements have also had an impact on the survival of coalition governments and the formation of new ones. Without underestimating the complexity of Lesotho's political environment, the difficulties of managing governing coalitions arise from three factors: political uncertainty, sheer opportunism and the absence of strong and independent governance institutions. The following measures are recommended to improve the longevity and stability of Lesotho's governing coalitions:

1. Development partners should be encouraged to help develop and diversify Lesotho's economy, grow and support new entrants in Lesotho's private sector, and encourage the participation of a younger generation of Basotho in economic and social activities.
2. Coalition agreements should be harmonised with the constitution, particularly in respect of the exercise of executive authority.
3. Institutionalize the management of coalitions through such steps as establishing mechanisms for inter-party cooperation and conflict resolution.
4. Regulate floor-crossing to ensure that MPs do not trade their seats for short-term or uncertain political gains. One way in which this could be done is to declare the seats of defectors vacant, and hold by-elections to fill them.
5. Initiate processes for fostering national reconciliation and political tolerance to help address the animosity between political actors and society at large.

# The intricacies and pitfalls of the politics of coalition in Mozambique

*Hermenegildo Mulhovo*

## Abstract

Ever since the advent of multiparty democracy in the early 1990s, coalitions have been formed to contest in all the general elections that have taken place up to today in Mozambique. In fact, dozens of party coalitions emerged during the period from the first elections in 1994 to the last elections of 2014. Yet, nearly all of them collapsed before getting seats in Parliament, with only two managing to survive to serve between one or two terms before eventually collasping.

The highly bipolarized environment of Mozambican politics influences the dynamics and nature of coalition. Almost all coalitions on their functioning are perceived as either pro-the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) or pro-the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), although between the two only the latter has engaged in various attempts to forge coalitions.

From the emergence, collapse and longevity of some coalitions there are three key elements highlighted in this article as determinats: the power dynamics inside the coalition; the party funding mechanisms; and internal democracy.

# 1. Introduction

Party coalitions are a seemingly common feature within Mozambique's landscape of multiparty democracy. However, there have been very few attempts to understand this phenomenon, as well as the dynamics surrounding it.

This article sets out to describe the complexities around forging coalitions in Mozambique. It is informed by information gathered largely through literature review as well as key informant interviews (KIIs) with individuals, some of whom are associated with the different political parties.

However, it is not the intention of this article to cover all aspects of knowledge relating to this topic, but it will endeavor to broaden the understanding on and contribute to further debate on the consolidation of multiparty democracy.

# 2. Multiparty Landscape

After a protracted and intensely violent civil war between RENAMO and FRELIMO government, a new Constitution was drafted in 1990 which introduced multiparty democracy in Mozambique. In the same context, a Peace Agreement was signed in 1992, bringing an end to the civil war, and allowing for the realization of regular multi-party elections in the country.

Guided by the need to ensure citizens' rights to political participation in matters of governance, the Constitution defines political pluralism as the guiding principle of Mozambican democracy. The Constitution's commands are concretized by the Political Party Act 7/91 of 23 January 1991, which establishes the legal framework for the formation of political parties. According to Act 2 (1) of the same law, citizens enjoy the right of freedom of association and to voluntarily join any political party.

Operating within the parameters of the above-mentioned provisions, the multiparty landscape today includes about 100 registered political

parties, with around 74 of them considered to be active.[1] According to one leader of a political party, "many of the parties are actually splits from RENAMO and FRELIMO, led by individuals who have become frustrated with these two dominant parties".[2]

However, regardless of the number of parties that have contested elections or are currently registered, only FRELIMO and RENAMO have dominated the political arena in Mozambique, with the former consistently holding a majority of seats in Parliament. The first real change to the dominant position of these two parties was in 2009, when the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) entered the political scene and presented itself as a new political force.

As demonstrated in table 1 below, while some party coalitions such as the Democratic Union (UD) and RENAMO-Election Union (RENAMO-UE) succeeded in getting into Parliament in the first elections (1994), no party coalition has succeeded in gaining parliamentary representation in the last two elections. This failure was mainly due to RENAMO's decision to discontinue it's participation in RENAMO-UE after the 2004 elections.

In general, "the type of democracy being implemented in Mozambique looks quite adversarial and close to a model of 'competitive elitism'[3] whereby only a few dominant political parties, in this case FRELIMO and RENAMO, can afford to participate effectively in any electoral process. Therefore, it is correct to observe that: "the political landscape in Mozambique is undoubtedly dominated by FRELIMO and RENAMO, both of which have military backgrounds. They are the only parties in Mozambique with clear organizational structures and a broad presence in all districts of the country".[4]

1 Instituto Para a Democracia Multipartidária (AIMD), 2017. 'Base de dados dos Partidos Politicos Moçambicanos', Maputo.

2 Interview with Massango, J. PEC Representative, 19 June 2018, Maputo, Mozambique.

3 Sitoe, E.J., Matsimbe, Z. & Pereira, A.F. 2005. 'Parties and Political Development in Mozambique', Issue 22 of EISA research report. Electoral Institute of Southern Africa.

4 Ibid.

# 3. The Mozambican Electoral System

## *3.1. Electoral system*

Since the introduction of multiparty democracy in the early 1990s, Mozambique has adopted a proportional representation system with closed party lists for the election of Members of Parliament (MPs). The parliamentary representation of each party is calculated using the d'Hondts method for the vote's conversion.[5] The country's president is elected by a simple majority, with a possibility for a second round of elections if no candidate achieves more than 50% of the votes.

For the first three general elections (1994, 1999 and 2004) the law had established a threshold of 5% as a precondition for the parties to create a caucus in parliament. Subsequently, during the 2006 electoral reform this threshold was abolished as a result of pressures from smaller parties, thus resulting in a decision that allowed parties with less than 5% of seats to form a caucus in Parliament. This amendment to the electoral threshold for representation is what assisted the MDM to have a caucus in the 2009 national elections.

To this day, the d'Hondt method prevails, creating obstacles for most parties to reach the required proportion to gain parliamentary representation. According to some authors,[6] if the d'Hondt system had been abolished, the proportion of votes achieved by small parties such as Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance (PDD-AD), National Reconciliation Party (PARENA), Independent Party of Mozambique (PIMO), Social Broadening Party of Mozambique (PASOMO), Broad Opposition Front (FAO), Labour Party (PT), Party of Freedom and Solidarity (PAZS) and Liberal and Democratic Party of Mozambique (PALMO) would have enabled them entry into the Parliament.

5 De Brito, L. 2005. 'Sobre a barreira dos 5% e do método de conversão dos votos em Mandatos', EISA Electoral Institute of Southern África, Maputo.

6 Ibid. and Nuvunga, A., 2007. 'Experiências com Partidos Políticos em Novas Democracias, O 'Deixa Andar' no quadro Institucional em Moçambique'; In: Fundação Konrad Adeneur, Cadernos Adenauer VIII, n 3; Partidos Politicos, Quatro Continentes: Rio de Janeiro, pp 53–73.

### *3.2. Parliamentary Elections Results background*

***Table 1: Electoral Results***

| Political Party | Election Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1994 | 1999 | 2004 | 2009 | 2014 |
| Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) | 129 | 133 | 160 | 191 | 144 |
| Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) | 112 | - | - | 51 | 89 |
| Mozambican National Resistance-Electoral Union (RENAMO-UE) | - | 117 | 90 | - | - |
| Democratic Union (UD) | 9 | - | - | - | - |
| Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) | - | - | - | 8 | 17 |
| Total | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |

Two years after the signing of the General Peace Agreement, in 1994, the country held the first multiparty general elections, which were won by FRELIMO. The Presidential election was won by the FRELIMO candidate Alberto Joaquim Chissano. RENAMO became the main opposition after garnering the second highest number of votes, followed by the UD coalition.

The next elections, in 1999, were conducted in a very competitive yet balanced environment. While RENAMO, which had entered under a coalition named RENAMO-UE, significantly increased its number of seats in parliament, it was unable to secure victory for its presidential candidate Afonso Dlhakama. Instead, FRELIMO and its candidate (Chissano) secured both the majority in the parliament and the presidency. These victories were repeated in the subsequent elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014, with the party remaining dominant in Parliament and securing the presidencies of Armando Guebuza, in 2004 and 2009 and Filipe Nyusi, in 2014.

RENAMO lost support over the past three electoral cycles, achieving its worst results in the 2009 elections. It recovered significantly in 2014, but these results were still below those of the first three elections. The great innovation in the political scenario was undoubtedly the emergence of the MDM party, formed by former members expelled from RENAMO, and led by Davis Simango, mayor of Beira. The MDM won seats in parliament in the very first elections it contested in 2009 and has increased its number of seats in parliament in the 2014 elections.

## 4. The Emergence of Coalitions in Mozambique

Although the Constitution itself does not clearly stipulate the rules for alliances between parties, it sets the parameters for ordinary laws to regulate the coalition of parties. Article 75 of the Mozambican Constitution makes legal provisions for the Political Party Law in 7/91 of 23 January on the formation of coalitions. The Political Party Law in its article 26(1) defines the basis for the creation of a coalition for electoral proposes. Similarly, article 26(2) determines that these coalitions will be regulated according to specific terms in the electoral law 4/93. This law was later replaced by Electoral Law 7/2004 of 17 June which establishes the legal basis for the creation of coalitions. Article 26(3) of the same law defines coalitions as entities, which are independent from political parties.

In line with these legal provisions, Mozambique has seen the registration of more than fifteen (15) party coalitions, especially during pre-election times (see Table 2), with parties attempting to use these coalitions to overcome the d'Hondt method and the 5% threshold.

From these 15 coalitions, only 10 have managed to contest in the general elections.[7] While the law allows all political parties to form coalitions, it has mainly been opposition parties that have made use of this opportunity.

7 Comissão Nacional de Eleições. 2014. Deliberação. 82/CNE/2014. Centralização Nacional e Apuramento Geral dos resultados eleitorais presidenciais, legislativas, e das Assembleia as provinciais de 15 de Outubro de 2014. Available from: http://macua.blogs.com/files/cne_deliberacao-en.pdf [2014, 30 de Outubro].

*Table 2: Mozambican Coalitions and the Election Contested*

| Elections year | Coalitions | Coalitions' member parties |
|---|---|---|
| 1994 | Democratic Union (UD) | Liberal and Democratic Party of Mozambique (PALMO), National Democratic Party (PANADE), and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO). |
| | Patriotic Alliance (AP) | Patriotic Action Front (FAP) and Mozambican National Movement-Social Democratic Party (MONAMO-PMSD). |
| 1999 | Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD) | National Democratic Party (PANADE) and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO). |
| | Mozambique National Resistance-Electoral Union (RENAMO-UE) | The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), The Independent Alliance Party of Mozambique (ALIMO), Patriotic Action Front (FAP), Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party (FUMO-PCD), Mozambican National Democratic Movement-Social Democratic Party (MONAMO-PMSD), National Convention Party (PCN), Mozambique People's Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), National Unity Party (PUN), United Democratic Front (UDF), and Mozambique National Union (UNAMO); |
| | Mozambican Opposition Union (UMO) | The Mozambique Democratic Party (PADEMO) and Democratic Reconciliation Party of Mozambique (PRDM). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2004 | Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD) | National Democratic Party (PANADE) and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO). |
| | Mozambique National Resistance-Electoral Union (RENAMO-UE | The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), the Independent Alliance Party of Mozambique (ALIMO), Patriotic Action Front (FAP), Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party (FUMO-PCD), Mozambican National Democratic Movement-Social Democratic Party (MONAMO-PMSD), National Convention Party (PCN), Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO), Mozambique People's Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), National Unity Party (PUN), and the United Democratic Front (UDF) |
| | United Front for Change and Good Governance (MBG) | The Mozambique National Union (UNAMO) and the Party of All Mozambican Nationalists (PARTONAMO). |
| | Broad Opposition Front (FAO) | The Liberal Front (FL) and African Conservative Party (PAC). |
| | Union for the Salvation of Mozambique (USAMO) | The Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration (PAREDE), and Union for Change (UM). |
| 2009 | Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD) | The Mozambique People's Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Congress Party (PACODE), Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), and the Union for Reconciliation Party (PUR). |
| | Electoral Union Coalition (UE) | The Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO) and the National Unity Party (PUN). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2014 | Electoral Union Coalition (UE) | The Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO) and the National Unity Party (PUN). |
| | Party for Peace, demo-cracy and development/democratic alliance (PDD-AD) | Democratic Party of Mozambique (PDNM), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), Democratic Congress Party (PACODE), Democratic Congress Party (CDU), Partido Liberal e Democrático de Moçambique (PLDM), Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO), National Convention Party (PCN), Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration (PAREDE), Mozambique National Union (UNAMO), Party of all Mozambican Nationalists (PATRONAMO) and Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance (PDD-AD). |

The 1994 election registered the first two coalitions formed to contest for legislative elections. The UD coalition won 9 seats, the AP was the other coalition to contest in the 1994 elections, but failed to gain any seats.

During the 1999 national elections, three new coalitions emerged, namely RENAMO-UE, ADACD and UMO; whereas the two coalitions formed during the 1994 elections failed to compete in the 1999 elections. However, some of the parties which were part of the FAP migrated to the new and strongest coalition, in terms of the number of seats it obtained in parliament, RENAMO-UE. RENAMO-UE was formed to contest the 1999 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, and absorbed eleven political alliances[8]. Whereas the ADACD Coalition composed of PANADE and PANAMO; the UMO coalition composed of the lesser known PADEMO and the PRDM were formed to only contest in the legislative elections.

8 The parties that constituted this alliance were: ALIMO, FAP, FUMO-PCD, MONAMO-PMSD, PCN, PPPM, PRD, PUN, UDF and UNAMO.

Furthermore, it was the 2004 elections that registered the highest number of coalitions ever seen in Mozambique[9]. Five coalition parties were registered by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) to contest the elections. Besides RENAMO-UE, four new coalitions emerged – mainly to contest for the legislative elections (and one presidential election) namely: ADACD, MBG, FAO and USAMO.

For the 2009 elections, the number of coalitions registered to contest the Legislative election was reduced to two, that is, ADACD and UE. The other coalitions that had emerged in the previous 2004 elections had collapsed just after the elections, and therefore could not contest in the 2009 elections. The elections of 2014 maintained the same number of coalitions that contested the 2009 elections, namely: the UE and the Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance (PDD-AD) composed of PDNM, PRD, PACOD, CDU, PLDM, PSM, PEMU, PCM, PAREDE, UNAMO, PATRONAMO and PDD.

## 5. Coalitions and challenges

Coalitions in Mozambique can be divided into two categories, namely: those with representation in parliament and extra-parliamentarian coalitions.

### *5.1. Coalitions that had representation in Mozambican Parliament*

In the history of coalitions in Mozambique only two have managed to gain representation in the Mozambican parliament. The UD Coalition[10] had nine (9) seats in Parliament during the period of 1994–1999; and RENAMO-UE had 117 seats in 1999–2004 and 90 seats in 2004–2009.

9 African election Database. 2012. Elections in Mozambique. Available from: http://africanelections.tripod.com/mz.html & European Union, 2014. *Mozambique Final Report General Elections*. Available from: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eueom_mozambique_2014_finalreport_en.pdf.

10 The UD Coalition, was one of the first coalitions created since the establishment of multiparty democracy in the country.

### 5.1.1 Democratic Union (UD) Coalition

The UD Coalition was one of the first coalitions created since the dawn of multiparty democracy in the country. According to Kadima,[11] quoting Brito, there are two hypotheses to explain the UD's surprisingly good performance in the 1994 general elections. The first is that of the "symbol effect", as the UD chose as its symbol the cashew nuts which are well known in the rural areas. The second relates to the party's position on the ballot paper suggesting that because of FRELIMO's presidential candidate, many of its voters had marked and chosen the bottom square on the parliamentary ballot paper, thus voting accidentally for the UD.

Although the UD had successfully won some seats in parliament, parliamentary debates were largely dominated by FRELIMO and RENAMO. The low number of seats and lack of decision-making authority in the parliamentary plenary debates, combined with internal disputes are regarded as the major reasons for the failure of the UD. The coalition disintegrated after the first parliamentary term and did not contest in the elections of 2009. As one informant noted, the UD coalition began to disintegrate after the departure of PANAMO, which was the strongest party, due to intra- coalition conflicts ".[12]

### 5.1.2 RENAMO-UE Coalition

RENAMO-UE was the strongest coalition and garnered the largest number of parliamentary seats that any coalition has over the past 28 years. The coalition was formed on the eve of the second elections in 1999 and managed to stay in parliament for two consecutive terms. Considering the results of the first elections of 1994, the rationale for the coalition was that RENAMO would have a better chance of winning a majority in parliament if it worked together with other political parties. On the other hand, the extra-parliamentary parties perceived that a coalition

11 Kadima, D. & Matsimbe, Z. 2006. RENAMO União Eleitoral: Understanding the Longevity and Challenges of an Opposition Party Coalition in Mozambique, in Kadima, D. (ed). *The Politics of Party Coalitions in Africa*. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. pp 111–146.

12 Interview with Nicopola, Paulino, PALMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

would be a good strategy to overcome the obstacle of the 5% threshold and the d'Hondt model for seat allocation in parliament.[13]

In light of this, the coalition was formed with the understanding that RENAMO would lead and also obtain a majority of the seats in parliament; whereas the other 11 political parties representing UE would have two seats each for the President and General Secretary positions. In the 1999 elections, RENAMO increased its seats from 112 in the 1994 elections to 117. These numbers created expectations that the coalition would do better in the next elections of 2004. In fact, the President of RENAMO complained that he won the 1999 elections and FRELIMO rigged the results, implying that the coalition would have worked if the elections were free and fair.

However, against all expectations, the 2004 election results were worse than the previous results, with the coalition winning only 29.7% of the votes which translated into 90 seats. The 2004 electoral outcome marked the beginning of a political crisis inside the coalition where RENAMO blamed the other parties and argued that even before the coalition they had never performed so poorly in an election. With reduced seats which still had to be shared with the other partners, the concept of the coalition became an unacceptable constraint for the party. As a consequence, the parliamentary mandate of 2004 was marked by internal crises within the coalition. For example, the UE side were accused of taking "a free ride" with RENAMO, and they were not given time during the plenary sessions to participate and debate their views. Conversely, RENAMO was accused by the other members of the coalition of not managing the financial resources received from parliament properly and without an equitable share amongst the members of the UE, thus raising further discontent inside the coalition.

The discontent among the members of the coalition were further exacerbated when the parties composing the UE disagreed with the RENAMO leader for boycotting the parliamentary sessions when he claimed that the electoral results of 2009 were rigged. The UE, against Dhlakama's advice, took their seats in the parliament – which was

13 Ibid.

equivalent to betrayal according to RENAMO. The consequence of these divisions was that RENAMO declared that it would contest the upcoming local elections without the coalition. Conversely, from the UE side, the loss of interest in remaining within the coalition after the 2004 elections was also due to the excessively centralized leadership style within the leadership of RENAMO. According to a former member of the coalition, '*it was unacceptable that RENAMO wanted to rule the coalition in a very dominant way. Taking all decisions about the coalition's life and destiny.*'[14]

### 5.1.2 1. Impacts of Coalitions on the Broader Peace Process: the case of RENAMO-UE

The coalition provided RENAMO with a peaceful strategy for overcoming post-election tensions in the 1990s, and to improve its performance in the elections. Just after the 1994 elections, RENAMO engaged in alliances with other opposition parties and used them to strengthen its campaign for electoral reforms. This campaign by RENAMO was a result of discontentment over the performance of the electoral management body which had been accused of rigging the 1994 elections in favour of FRELIMO. The campaign sought to force the government to engage in a dialogue for reforms on such issues as the structure and composition of the electoral management body.

Therefore, RENAMO created an alliance with 18 parties and boycotted the local elections of 1998. This position was articulated in Dhlakama's interview conducted just before the 1998 local elections, when he stated that: '*Ah Yes, RENAMO will not participate in the next elections on 30 June, and RENAMO is not isolated in this position, because there are 18 opposition parties that won't go to the elections. And this position will remain, in the absence of a real change of attitude of the Mozambican government.*'[15]

The loyalty shown by the extra-parliamentary parties towards RENAMO on the boycott of the elections created a conducive environment for the

14 Interview with Couto, Hipólito, PUN Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

15 Valot, H. 1998. A Renamo nao vai participar...: Entrevista de Afonso M. Dhlakama, 15 de Maio de 1998. *Lusotopie*, pp. 39–43.

foundation of the coalition RENAMO-UE later in 1999. When the coalition was formed, RENAMO benefited from the new leaders emerging from civil society such as academia, church and professionals. The addition of new members to the coalition, who were not linked to the civil war, boosted the image of RENAMO as a party that was open, democratic and committed to peacebuilding.

The coalition added to the creation of a positive political environment that greatly contributed to the reduction of post-election tension and a re-launch of RENAMO's efforts to obtain political power through the ballot. RENAMO accepted the opportunity to run for the 1999 elections and managed to get its highest number of seats in the parliament to date. The result of the 1999 election meant that power was more evenly shared between the FRELIMO and RENAMO. In the plenary debates, the opposition's performance was characterized by more structured positions reflecting the influence of the new entrants from civil society inside the coalition.

In an interview conducted for this paper, the former vice-chair of RENAMO-UE, stated that 'the UE members would bring balanced and not militarized discourse inside the coalition; allowing for peaceful and moderate parliamentary debates.'[16] Although the coalition faced a lot of challenges and internal tensions, eventually leading to its collapse, it made important contributions to sustaining peace in key moments of democratic transition and reconciliation. The coalition was viewed by RENAMO as a viable and strategic means to mobilise around its struggle for democratic processes and peacebuilding. Today, 10 years after the collapse of the coalition RENAMO-UE, the party still sees the coalition as strategic means to obtain power through the ballot box. In fact, after the 2018 peace agreement with the government that mitigated the political crisis and which arguably gave space to RENAMO to relaunch itself for electoral contestation, there are indications that the party is considering alliances with other political formations for the next elections.

16 Interview with Manecas, Daniel, PRD Representative. Interview, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

This possibility was reinforced by media which pointed out some interest and attempts by the MDM leadership to engage in a coalition with RENAMO for the 2018 local government elections.

#### 5.1.2.2. The Dynamics of Interaction Between RENAMO and Other Opposition Parties: The Tango Dancing?

It would appear that "repulsion and attraction" shape the RENAMO politics towards other opposition parties, with the party balancing between viewing other opposition parties as either obstacles or vehicles to its own political interests to win elections.

Other opposition parties are indeed competitors within the opposition electorate. The more the opposition parties grow in number, the more competitors RENAMO has to beat in order to win the elections. RENAMO's antagonistic attitude towards other opposition parties is revealed in its position on the electoral reform of 2006 where it defended the maintenance of the 5% threshold and the d'Hondt method for the allocation of seats, even in the face of pressure from other opposition parties for the elimination of the same.

Still, RENAMO needed the coalition with extra-parliamentary parties to secure all the opposition votes and to strengthen its pressure for electoral reform. In the first elections of 1994, there was a perception that the other opposition parties contributed to the defeat of RENAMO by splitting the opposition votes. Therefore, the coalition was only a useful tactic aimed at winning elections. This perception explains the paradox of RENAMO's attitude vis-a-vis the opposition parties: defending measures that create obstacles to the multiplication of number of parties, while on the other hand engaging with them in coalitions.

The municipal by-elections in Nampula held in February 2018 for the replacement of the late Mayor Mahamude Amurane, who died in the middle of his term, created the basis for possible coalition between RENAMO and MDM. In the second round of the elections, MDM and other opposition parties, who lost in the first round, decided to support the RENAMO candidate who was the second most successful after

the FRELIMO candidate in the first round. The victory of the RENAMO candidate in the second round brought positive perspectives for the possibility of a future coalition. According to a SAPO 2018 interview; '*RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama does not rule out the possibility of his party joining with other opposition political formations to secure victories in the next (2018) elections*'.[17]

## *5.2. Extra-parliamentary Coalitions:*

In Mozambique, the designation 'extra parliamentary parties' is used to refer to parties that are not represented in parliament. Accordingly, in reference to coalition politics in Mozambique, this section is divided into: i) coalitions formed by extra parliamentary parties that contested elections but failed to get seats; ii) and parties who collapsed without or before contesting any election.

### 5.2.1. Coalitions that Contested Elections and Failed to Get Seats in parliament

*Table 3: Coalition Parties that failed to get Seats in Parliament*

| Coalitions | Coalitions' member parties |
|---|---|
| Patriotic Alliance (AP) | Leadership - MONAMO-PMSD). |
| Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD) | National Democratic Party (PANADE) and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO). |
| Mozambican Opposition Union (UMO) | The Mozambique Democratic Party (PADEMO) and Democratic Reconciliation Party of Mozambique (PRDM). |
| United Front for Change and Good Governance (MBG) | The Mozambique National Union (UNAMO) and the Party of All Mozambican Nationalists (PATRONAMO). |
| Broad Opposition Front (FAO) | The Liberal Front (FL) and African Conservative Party (PAC). |

17 SAPO. 2010. *Moçambique: Deputados da RENAMO criticam liderança, mais um quadro abandona partido.* Available from: http://noticias.sapo.pt/lusa/artigo/10635779.html.

| | |
|---|---|
| Union for the Salvation of Mozambique (USAMO) | The Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration (PAREDE), and Union for Change (UM). |
| Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD) | The Mozambique People's Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Congress Party (PACODE), Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), and the Union for Reconciliation Party (PUR). |
| Electoral Union Coalition (UE) | The Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO) and the National Unity Party (PUN). |
| Party for Peace, democracy and development/ democratic alliance | PDNM, PRD, PACOD, CDU, PLDM, PSM, PEMU, PCM, PAREDE, UNAMO, PATRONAMO and PDD-AD. |

As already noted, since the dawn of multiparty democracy in Mozambique, there have been several parties which joined and formed coalitions to contest elections. The coalitions AP[18] and UD were among the first to contest the 1994 Mozambican elections, thus paving the way for other coalitions to be formed in subsequent elections.[19]

Other coalitions, as mentioned in Table three, managed to contest the elections but failed to remain in existence for the subsequent elections, due in part to the lack of resources to sustain the coalition as well as intra-coalition fights, according to a key informant from an extra parliamentary party[20]. Additionally, at times conflicts between the members emerge immediately after the elections, especially over issues of sustainability, as elaborated further below.

18 The AP was comprised of the *Movimento Nacionalista Moçambicano* (Monamo) and *Frente de Acção Patriótica* (FAP); and it was led by Monamo president Maximo Dias, a lawyer and veteran who was exiled in Portugal after independence in 1975.

19 This is the case for political parties such as the MBG, FAO, USAMO and UMO which have been formed and contested the next elections.

20 Interview with Massango, João, PEC Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

### 5.2.2. Coalition That Collapsed Before Contesting Any Election

From the coalitions that were formed, there were some that collapsed even before being able to contest any elections. This list would include coalitions of extra-parliamentary parties such as FUSA, CMM, G16, FUSAD, CPDM, PIMO-Constructive Opposition, Opposition Hand in Hand and others. It is important to highlight that the G18 was a coalition formed under the leadership of PIMO to support the complaints of RENAMO relating to election irregularities, resulting in the latter boycotting the local government elections in 1998.

These attempted coalitions did not succeed in their goals for reasons already alluded to such as, internal leadership squabbles; lack of statutes; lack of registration; lack of resources; mutual accusations of betrayal of the coalition principles among the members; lack of clear ideology and commitments to internal agreements; low trust and an unclear support base etc.

Additionally, these coalition were vulnerable to the influence of the ruling party and other stronger opposition parties. For example, in the 2009 election, the chair of the Constructive Opposition declared support to the ruling party, thereby creating strained relations inside the coalition.[21] In the 2014 election the leader of Opposition Hand In Hand was included on the list of RENAMO's candidates and became and MP. These two cases resulted in the failure of the coalition and the reduction of trust amongst the parties that constituted it.

## 6. Coalitions Dynamics in a highly bipartisan political environment

In its short but intense process of democratization, Mozambique's bipartisan political environment has been an important determinant for the politics of coalition in the country. Although many coalitions have

21 Verdade. 2009. *PIMO declara apoio incondicional à Frelimo e Guebuza* [Online]. Available from: http://www.verdade.co.mz/opiniao/94-eleicoes-2009/6056-pimo-declara-apoio-incondicional-a-FRELIMO-e-guebuza [2018, September 18].

been formed independently from FRELIMO and RENAMO, the two parties have been very influential to the functioning and dynamics of these coalitions. Despite the fact that FRELIMO has never been engaged in coalitions, there have been strategic interactions between the party and some of the coalitions. In fact, after the results obtained by the RENAMO coalition in 1999, FRELIMO began to realize the threat that opposition coalitions could represent. The fear of RENAMO increasing their seats in parliament made FRELIMO invest in strong campaign strategies, which included interactions and cooperation with opposition parties to divide or split the potential vote for RENAMO.

For RENAMO, the lessons from the victory of the UD coalition, which won 9 seats in parliament during the first elections, might had led them to engage in a coalition for the first time in the 1999 elections – winning them an additional 5 seats in parliament. This experience made RENAMO believe that coalitions could be a solution for winning a majority of seats in parliament. However, as mentioned before, due to the internal conflicts and the poor performance in the third election of 2004, where the coalition lost 27 seats in parliament, RENAMO abandoned the coalition in the fourth elections of 2009, and contested alone. Staying in the coalition was no longer seen as strategic, and small parties were in their view taking a free ride. Part of RENAMO's members abandoned the party because of internal conflicts and formed a new party: the MDM.

However, although convinced that they would do better without the opposition, RENAMO got its worst results ever, winning only 51 seats in parliament. The great irony being that part of the seats that they lost, went to the newly formed political party, the MDM, which had split from RENAMO. In the elections that followed neither FRELIMO nor RENAMO engaged in coalitions, but the two parties sought instead to influence the coalitions in their favour. Indeed, the coalitions that were formed by extra-parliamentary parties were seen as Pro-FRELIMO or Pro-RENAMO, publicly assuring their electoral support to the President of FRELIMO or RENAMO respectively. This was the case of the Coalition Constructive Opposition that was perceived as pro-FRELIMO, while the opposition

Hand in Hand was pro-RENAMO. In the opinion of the President of PIMO: *'the coalitions are important and necessary, but in my opinion, we have to have a representative of FRELIMO or RENAMO. If this does not happen the possibilities of success for the coalitions are small.'*[22]

## 7. Coalition and citizens representation

In the 28 years of multiparty democracy in Mozambique, there is no doubt that attempts at forming and sustaining coalitions have contributed to more parties being represented in parliament. For the first election, the coalition UD was a vehicle for four parties to be in parliament. In the second and third election, the coalition RENAMO-UE transported eleven political parties in to parliament.

Although some academics have been sceptical about the political base of the smaller parties, it can be argued that the votes won by those parties demonstrates that an additional group of citizens feel represented. RENAMO's best electoral results were achieved, with exception of the first election, during the Coalition RENAMO-UE. While according to Brito 2005, some parties such as PIMO and PDD would have won some seats in the parliament if the obstacles created by the d'Hondt method were not there, it is still a fact that the RENAMO-UE coalition provided an opportunity for many more small parties to get into Parliament. It can therefore be said that a group of parties in coalition are more likely to represent a diversity of groups, thereby creating an opportunity for (political) minorities to be represented. Therefore, the importance of the votes gathered by the opposition cannot be taken for granted when it comes to people's political representation.

22 Interview with Sibindi, Yakub, PIMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

# 8. Coalition sustainability

The sustainability of coalitions in Mozambique is undermined by many challenges. The lessons from the emergence, collapse and longevity of some coalitions highlights three key elements as determinants: the power relations inside the coalition; the party funding mechanisms; and internal democracy.

## *8.1. Intra-Coalition Power relations*

The intra-coalition power relations between parties took two different shapes. For the coalitions represented in the parliament, power was concentrated in one dominant party; while in extra-parliamentary coalitions the lack of a dominant party resulted in endless conflicts between the leaders of the party members.

### 8.1.1 Coalitions with parliamentary representation

In the UD and RENAMO-UE coalitions the power relations among the members of the coalition were characterized by the existence of one strong party dominating and coordinating others. In the case of UD, it was led by PALMO, while in the case of RENAMO-UE, RENAMO was the leader. In those cases, the coalition is extremely dependent on the strength and interests of the leading member, which poses a huge risk of failure. According to one key informant interview, '*the UD coalition, began to disintegrate with the departure of PALMO from the coalition, which was the strongest party. This was due to internal conflicts within the coalition which led to its collapse.*'[23]

Similarly, the coalition RENAMO-UE, which was held together by the main political party RENAMO, immediately collapsed when this party decided to abandon the coalition in 2009. There had been many attempts from the UE members to down-play their overall reliance on RENAMO for the existence of this coalition. For example, the President of Monamo was quoted as having said: '*There is no free ride here... we are connected, and we will work together... that is at least my purpose... I do not think*

23 Interview with Nicopola, Paulino, PALMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

*about marginalizing myself, but if I am marginalized, I can also work alone, I can present bills, I have no problem, even if I cannot speak*.'[24] However, the later collapse of the coalition proved that it was just political rhetoric to deny the existence of a real problem: being overly dependent on RENAMO. Accordingly, the coalition disintegrated after RENAMO left, and each party contested the elections independently.

### 8.1.2 Extra-parliamentary Parties

The power relation within the coalitions formed by extra-parliamentary parties is characterized by lack of a consensual leadership. The fight between parties for the leadership has been the common malady of these types of coalitions.

There were several coalitions that emerged but collapsed immediately, such as the coalitions Opposition Hand in Hand and Constructive Opposition which did not even contest for the elections. According to a representative of one of the political parties 'coalitions of political parties that do not have political, financial and human resources have no power.'[25] Other representatives were of the view that 'the biggest problem of those coalitions is linked to the leadership. During the formation of coalitions, all representatives of political parties want to be leaders, which is not possible.'[26] These views clearly demonstrate that the coalitions formed by the extra-parliamentary parties that collapse even before running in the elections do so because of the power dynamics between the members. According to Programme Coordinator of IMD[27] 'There were many circumstances where parties came to IMD presenting themselves as coalitions and the next day they disintegrate because of the leadership problems.'

24 Chitula, J. 2005. *Não há "crise" na coligação parlamentar da Oposição na AR* [Online]. Available from: http://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/2005/01/no_h_crise_na_c.html [2018, September 18].

25 Interview with Sibindi, Yakub, PIMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

26 Interview with Massango, João, PEC Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

27 Interview with Alfazema, Dercio, Program Coordinator of AIMD, Maputo, Mozambique, 14 June 2018.

## *8.2. Financial Sustainability*

According to article 17 of the political party law, the source of funds for political parties can be membership fees; donations and legacy; state budget; and other sources of funds. In addition, article 20 establishes that the funding from the state budget is channelled proportionally to parties represented in parliament according to their number of seats. Although the Political Party Law does not refer directly to coalitions, the same stipulations apply for funding coalitions.

Among the sources appointed by the law, the state funds are the most important. However, only coalitions with parliamentary representation are eligible for these funds. Thus far, only RENAMO-UE and UD have benefited from state funding, while other coalitions have never benefitted from state funding - which could have been used to build and strengthen their parties. It is this lack of funding that is identified to be one of the major reasons for the lack of longevity experienced by extra-parliamentary coalitions.

It was further observed by one party representative that "another challenge faced by coalitions is the lack of resources and strong disagreements within the coalition motivated by unfair division of the few existing resources."[28] However, while lack of funds is a problem for the extra-parliamentary coalitions, the coalitions represented in parliament which enjoyed such financial support also experienced problems due to mismanagement, limited accountability and internal conflicts over the available resources.

Another representative stated that "Political parties go into coalitions to have financial benefits. And once in parliament the representatives of political parties do not maximize the benefit of the funds they receive. They mismanage all the funds."[29] "The organizations that lead the coalitions have managed the funds without any transparency and this creates a situation of discontent among the members."[30]

28 Interview with Sibindi, Yakub, PIMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

29 Interview with Nicopola, Paulino, PALMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

30 Interview with Massango, João, PEC Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

In summary, the availability of public funds is pointed out as a necessary, but not in itself a sufficient condition for institutional development of the parties. There are other necessities such as the need for transparency and competent management of resources.

### *8.3. Intra-coalition Democracy (Internal Democracy)*

Although internal functioning of political parties is legally regulated by the Mozambican Law, Number 7/91, of 23 of January especially in articles 6 and 11, the culture of intra-party democracy is weak, which has negatively affected political coalitions.

The practices of internal democracy within the leading party is a chief determinant for the existence of democratic space within the coalitions. The centralized leadership by the president of RENAMO strongly influenced the internal democracy of the coalition RENAMO-UE. Key decisions were taken by the President of RENAMO without prior consultation with the rest of the members of the coalition. This occurred in 2004, when the leader of RENAMO decided not to take up his seat in parliament as a sign of protest against the alleged electoral irregularities.

However, this decision by the opposition leader was not supported and followed through by all members of the coalition, as some proceeded with attending parliamentary sessions. These differences in approach were considered to be signs of a lack of political cohesion inside these coalitions. Additionally, other members of the coalition argued that a lack of democratic culture and space to openly discuss issues contributed to a failure to build unity and cohesion. Complaints included the imposing of candidates, a lack of criteria for appointments to key organs, and constant in-fighting for leadership[31] In short, a lack of internal coalition democracy as well as inter-coalition engagements are considered to be factors that prevented the formation of effective coalitions, able to contest elections.

31 In Diario Independente. 2008. A Longa Lista das Vítimas do Ditador Dlhakama. Available from: https://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/pics/d100061.pdf.

# 9. Conclusion

According to Jennifer Nicoll Victor 'Political parties play an important role in healthy democracies. Parties engage in a natural and constant competition that is meant to produce useful outcomes for voters and candidates. In order to achieve their goals, parties also form coalitions with interests, organizations, and segments of the population. The make-up of a party coalition can tell us a lot about the party's goals and priorities, but the process by which this occurs may seem mysterious or opaque.'[32]

This article has demonstrated that since the first democratic elections in 1994, Mozambique has seen both the emergence and collapse of many party coalitions. Amongst the dozens that emerged, only two succeeded to be in parliament and the government; others either contested the elections and didn't get sufficient votes or collapsed before elections were held. The 5% threshold (abolished in 2007) and the d'Hondt method for conversion of the votes into parliament seats have been some of the key legal reasons which promoted the formation of coalitions in Mozambique. Out of all the coalitions, only RENAMO-UE has managed some form of longevity, with two consecutive terms in parliament, while others collapsed after one term in parliament, e.g. UD. However, the majority of coalitions which actively contested elections ceased to exist after a poor showing at the polls.

The key reasons for failure of coalitions can be found in a lack of clear and shared visions among the coalition members; a lack of strong democratic leadership; poor internal democracy; bitter fights for leadership positions; a lack of transparency in the management of resources; negative results at election time; and poor levels of trust amongst members. Despite these failures, there are important lessons for multiparty democracy in Mozambique as coalitions have been important vehicles, especially for opposition parties, to overcome the constraints of the electoral law and system in order to obtain seats in parliament. The practice of coalitions has actively stimulated and supported inclusivity and diversification in the parliament and government of Mozambique.

32 Victor, J. N. 2017. *Parties are more likely to form coalitions with groups that are like them and show loyalty, but not those that are rich*. Available from: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/03/13/parties-are-more-likely-to-form-coalitions-with-groups-that-are-like-them-and-show-loyalty-but-not-those-that-are-rich/

# The politics of dominance and survival: Coalition politics in South Africa 1994–2018

*Zwelethu Jolobe*

## Abstract

This article examines the factors that account for the survivability of political coalitions in South Africa. It argues that coalition survivability in South Africa is determined by the characteristics of coalition cabinets, the party distribution in the legislature that supports the cabinet, and the extent to which parties politically approach their coalition condition. The article further points out that ideological differences between political parties in coalitions, operationalised on a left-right ordering of parties, do not have a significant bearing on their duration. All the major coalitions illustrate this point. South Africa's coalition models have primarily been comprised of minimal winning types, and the composition of all have comprised of parties with different orientations and constituencies. This demonstrates that political parties in South Africa are willing and able to rise above ideological differences to form governments, while at times these have been characterised by opportunism. The cases also reveal that political coalitions at one level often have negative implications for party relations across levels and polities. This shows that at the heart of political coalitions are the individual political leaders and the specific local context through which they approach them. Survivability is thus also a function of the ability of leaders to mobilise their constituencies in support of such coalitions.

# 1. Introduction

Since the dawn of the post-apartheid period, political alliance and coalition-building has become a significant feature of South Africa's political landscape. Despite this distinctive feature, the study of political coalitions has received little attention. While most of this small literature examines the causes of alliances and coalitions, and the building of various coalitions on the eve of an election[1], few have tried to explain what accounts for their varied duration, that is, their survivability, and flowing from this, their consequences for South Africa's democratic system. This article examines the factors that account for the survivability of political coalitions in South Africa. It will argue that two factors account for the varying durability experienced by coalition governments in South Africa: coalition characteristics and the party distribution in the legislature that supports the coalition. These factors have been in turn shaped by the characteristics of the party system.

# 2. The Dynamics of Political Coalitions

This article defines a political coalition as an alliance of political parties formed to achieve a common purpose or to engage in joint political activity. In this regard, building a political coalition involves a process in which different political parties come together, form a partnership and collectively pursue a common objective. This process can include the mobilisation of resources in pursuit of a common goal, the formation of binding decisions and commitments concerning a common objective,

1 Karume, S. 2003. 'Conceptual Understanding of Political Coalitions in South Africa: An Integration of Concepts and Practices'. Paper presented at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa EISA Roundtable on 'Political Party Coalitions: Strengthening Democracy through Party Coalition Building', Cape Town; Booysen, S. 2014. 'Causes and Impact of Party Alliances and Coalitions on The Party System and National Cohesion in South Africa' *Journal of African Elections Special Issue Understanding the Causes and Consequences of Political Party Alliances and Coalitions in Africa* 13 (1) June.

and agreements on the distribution of political resources and patronage that emerge from the realisation of the objective.[2]

Political coalitions take a variety of forms, and operate in different political, legal or constitutional environments. One can distinguish six general types of political coalition that have existed in the post-apartheid period.[3]

## *2.1. Cabinet coalitions*

A cabinet or executive coalition refers to a cabinet in a parliamentary government in which several parties come together and are allocated portfolios in a government.[4] The reasons for the co-operation vary, but it is usually because no party on its own has a majority in the legislature. Where the winning party after an election only achieves plurality, so producing a hung parliament, parties can come together to form a collective majority in the legislature and consequently a majority government.[5]

A majority coalition cabinet i.e. a cabinet based on a coalition that forms an absolute majority in a legislature (50 per cent plus one), is ideally more stable and long-lived than a minority coalition cabinet i.e. a cabinet formed by the leading party that has simply won plurality but not most seats in the legislature. This is because it does not need the political support of opposition parties to pass through legislation. While a majority coalition can be prone to internal party-political struggles, it is less prone to votes of no confidence from opposition party blocs than minority coalitions. Thus a minority coalition government is potentially more unstable than a majority one.[6]

2 Jolobe, Z. 2007. 'Things fall apart, can the centre hold?' The state of coalition politics in the Cape Metropolitan Council' in S Buhlungu, J Daniel, R Southall and J Lutchman (eds.) *State of the Nation: South Africa 2007.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

3 For a detailed discussion see Jolobe, 2007.

4 Karume, 2003.

5 Jolobe, 2007.

6 Ibid., 79.

Another probable reason for cabinet coalitions are in response to major political crises. In this regard, parties may form a 'grand coalition', i.e. a coalition government where "those political parties that represent substantial constituencies in the legislature (and collectively a clear majority) unite in a coalition."[7] This refers to a scenario where political parties with divergent interests overcome their political differences in the interests of stability. Parties may also form national unity governments, which are "broad coalition governments that include all parties (or all major parties) represented in [a] legislature."[8]

Following from the above, a cabinet coalition can also be constitutionally enshrined and consist of only the major parties that gain the most number of seats in a legislature. South Africa's Interim Constitution of 1993, for instance, provided for a power-sharing Government of National Unity (GNU) that worked on the basis of consensus and was made up of the three most powerful parties in South Africa at the time – the African National Congress (ANC), National Party (NP), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).[9] According to this coalition, every party with at least 80 seats (20%) in the National Assembly could delegate from among the Members of Parliament (MPs) an executive deputy president, and cabinet portfolios were allocated in proportion to their seats in the National Assembly. And finally, cabinet coalitions can also form as a response to co-operation agreements between parties inside or outside Parliament.

## *2.2. Legislative coalitions*

A legislative coalition is a political alliance that does not necessarily share executive or cabinet functions but rather consists of political parties that support parties represented in cabinet during the parliamentary or legislative processes of voting and debates. These are policy alliances involving co-operation agreements between parties with similar interests. Such coalitions need not include the same parties on all issues as parties

7 Ibid

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

may shift political alliances depending on the issue at hand and the principles they hold on such issues.[10] Such coalitions therefore, are not as comprehensive and binding as cabinet coalitions, and consequently do not pose a threat to political stability when they collapse.

### *2.3. Electoral coalitions*

An electoral coalition is a political alliance between different parties, formed in the process of engaging in competitive multiparty elections. The objective of such coalitions is to 'pool votes', that is, to mobilise and collect votes across different constituencies to gain an electoral majority.[11] These can be highly effective means of gaining electoral majorities, particularly if political party agents play on common themes, grievances and issues.[12] Their main challenge concerns their ability to consolidate political power after an electoral success; they are pre-selection alliances between parties with, at times, very different ideological orientations and political cultures, but at the same time, formed with the sole purpose of winning an electoral majority.[13] They thus have a great potential to result in a crises, particularly when the policy co-ordination mechanisms and internal management structures of the different parties in the pre-election phase are ill-defined.

It follows then that the ability of parties to maintain political coalitions in part depends on whether coalition partners are able to construct effective internal structures, procedures and mechanisms to manage internal coalition issues, resolve internal conflict and discipline coalition members.[14] These internal structures and mechanisms include consensus-seeking procedures aimed at achieving amicable decision-making, dispute resolution committees to adjudicate disputes among coalition members,

10 Ibid.

11 Horowitz, D. 1991. *A democratic South Africa? Constitutional engineering in a divided society.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

12 Jolobe, 2007.

13 Karume, 2003.

14 Jolobe, 2007.

and joint task teams and working committees that manage the day-to-day functioning of the coalition.[15] All these formal and informal institutions need to be enshrined in the initial coalition agreement, binding all the relevant members. Following from these types, there are at least three possible coalition permutations: *minimum winning coalitions, surplus majority coalitions*, and *minority governments*.

## *2.4. Minimum Winning Coalition (MWC)*

A coalition is minimal winning if most of the seats in a legislature are secured and "none of the coalition partners is (mathematically) superfluous" i.e. there are no excess parties, and the withdrawal of one party would bring down the government.[16] A party is superfluous if removing it from the coalition does not lead to the loss of the coalition's majority status in the legislature.[17] This does not mean that the party, once in the coalition, is irrelevant; ignoring it for a given decision may lead to retaliation in later decisions or even, when this is institutionally possible, the fall of the government.[18] Consider the following percentage seat distribution in a 100 seat legislature put forward by Geys et al: A = 40; B = 30; C = 18 and D = 12. Although this arrangement can lead to eight coalitions that obtain a majority position, only four do not include excess parties (MWC are AB, AC, AD and BCD).[19]

Leiseron points out that the costs of negotiations and bargaining in a coalition increase with the number of parties involved in the bargaining

15 Karume, 2003.

16 Geys, B, Heyndels, B and Vermeir, J. 2006. 'Explaining the formation of minimal coalitions: Anti-system parties and anti-pact rules' *European Journal of Political Research* 45(6): 959.

17 Ibid.

18 See Laver, M. and Schofield, N. 1991. *Multiparty government: The politics of coalition in Europe.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; Tsebelis, G. 1995. 'Decision-making in political systems: Veto players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism' *British Journal of Political Science* 25(3): 289–325.

19 Geys et al, 959.

process.[20] Consequently, to manage the risks associated with the number of parties, political parties tend to minimize the number of parties in a coalition. This leads to the hypothesis of minimal number coalitions (MNC) i.e. the minimal number of parties that can form a majority government.[21] Such coalitions are also MWC, though the reverse is not necessarily the case.

## *2.5. Surplus Majority Coalitions*

A surplus majority coalition is a coalition government whose cabinet is oversized i.e. it includes parties that are not essential to a parliamentary majority. This type is a regular occurrence in modern Europe.[22] Majority parties sometimes enter a coalition cabinet with several smaller parties as a precaution to avert the problems associated with a MWC, or as a means of co-option to increase dominance over a legislature or political system.[23] This doesn't come without risks; the concern is that once a government takes office, a seemingly insignificant coalition member could become disproportionally powerful because it can threaten to withdraw its support and thus block a parliamentary majority. Consequently, in a surplus majority government small coalition partners can cease to be crucial for a majority and thereby lose their leverage or their influence over policy outcomes. Policy-oriented politicians thus use surplus majority cabinets as a strategic tool to not have to make too many concessions to other parties.

20 Leiserson, M. 1966. *Coalitions in Politics*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University.

21 Geys et al, 959.

22 Gallagher, M., Laver, M. & Mair, P. 2011. *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. London: McGraw Hill.

23 Carrubba, C. J. and Volden, C. 2001. 'Coalitional politics and logrolling in legislative institutions' *American Journal of Political Science*, 44 (2): 261–277.

## *2.6. Minority Government*

Minority governments are a puzzle; they seem incompatible with a foundational principle of parliamentary democracy, that is the rule that the executive is selected from and responsible to the majority in the national legislature.[24] Because the opposition parties in this context collectively constitute a parliamentary majority, minority governments have traditionally been thought of as less stable, since they can be removed at any time through a vote of no confidence. Gallagher et al write: "At first sight the idea of a minority government, made up of parties whose members do not themselves control a majority of seats in parliament, seems at best a paradox and at worst downright undemocratic."[25] The main reason such governments are a paradox is because the opposition controls enough seats in parliament to be able to prevent such governments from coming into power in the first place. The matter can further be complicated if no party controls enough seats.

However, the most important puzzle is not why minority governments come to power, since this can happen by accident; rather, it is why and how minority governments manage to maintain themselves in power and pass important legislation.[26] For the opposition should be able to bring down the incumbents at any time through a no-confidence motion.

The first clue to this dilemma is that removing any incumbent government requires motive as well as opportunity. Motive means that most legislators must expect larger gains from the fall of the government than the reaped rewards from its continued existence. Motive seems obvious; parties are in the business of contesting elections because they want to gain office.[27] These goods could of course come in a variety of forms valued by politicians, including most notably office spoils

24 Strøm, K and McClean, C. 2015. 'Minority Governments and Coalition Management. Prepared for presentation at the Conference on Institutional Determinants of Legislative Coalition Management', Tel Aviv, November 16–19, 2015: 2.

25 Gallagher et al, 425.

26 Strøm and McClean, 2015.

27 Ibid.

and policy influence.[28] Yet, the attractions of office may be less than compelling for coalitions that do not expect that they can find a way to use the advantages of office to their mutual benefits.[29]

Opportunity refers to the existence of a majority block of legislators with no partisan allegiance to the incumbent government. However, even if overt opportunities do exist, as they often do in many parliamentary democracies with Proportional Representation (PR) elections and multiparty systems, minority governments can find innovative ways to survive. The point is that minority governments benefit from having agenda control which entails access to a variety of governance mechanisms, some of which are constitutionally entrenched, and others of which are purely "private" and at the discretion of the party leaders.[30] The story of the survival of minority governments is therefore a story of creative political management and manipulation.

Two factors account for the varying durations experienced by coalitions governments in South Africa: a) the composition and duration of the coalition cabinets in the respective coalitions; and b) the party distribution in the parliaments that supported the cabinets. The ideological positions of the parties are not a significant variable in the South African case.

The determination of cabinet durability is a two-stage process: the "direct cause of duration is located within the characteristics of the governing coalition, which in turn is influenced by the party system." Several properties of a governing coalition affect cabinet durability. These concepts can be divided into two classes: "those that posit pure game theoretical rationales, and those that introduce ideological considerations into the causal framework."[31] Concerning the first class, coalition durability is increased when cabinets are minimum winning,

28 Strøm, K 1990. *Minority Government and Majority Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

29 See Strøm, 1990 for a detailed analysis of this point.

30 See Strøm, 1990 for an excellent analysis.

31 Warwick, P. 1979. 'The Durability of Coalition Governments in Parliamentary Democracies' *Comparative Political Studies* 11 (4): 469.

and to the extent that they approach this condition.[32] The number of parties in the cabinet also affects durability. Regarding ideological differences between parties, these can be represented and measured from an ordinal continuum of parties. The crucial question is whether a coalition's ideological differences, operationalized on a left-right ordering of parties, has a significant bearing on its duration. I argue that this is not the case in South Africa; the key variable in this case is the extent to which the parties politically approach their coalition condition.

Based on these conceptual issues, the remainder of the article will examine the politics of coalition building and governance in South Africa since 1994, with reference to the survivability of coalitions.

## 3. Political Coalitions in Post-Apartheid South Africa

As discussed, the formation of political coalitions has become a regular feature in South Africa's political landscape. As Table 1 demonstrates, extracted from Susan Booysen's excellent analysis on political coalitions and alliances in South Africa, this has become commonplace particularly since 1999, when parties increasingly came together at all levels to pursue common political goals. Some coalitions were formed to strengthen the governing party after the collapse of the GNU, others to create a stronger political opposition in response to the former. While some made important contributions to democratic consolidation in South Africa, others were mere political opportunism with the aims of short-term gain. Overall, there have been over 20 instances of alliance and coalition-building in South Africa. However, this article will focus only on those political parties involved that have parliamentary representation. As will be seen, the three political parties central to the negotiation process have been instrumental in shaping the new South Africa after 1994.

32 Laver, M. 1974. 'Dynamic factors in government coalition formation.' *European Journal of Political Research* 2 (September): 259–270.

## Table 1: Timeline of Party Alliances and Coalitions: Parties with Parliamentary Representation

| Date | Parties | Political Formation | Rationale | Durability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994 | ANC, NP and IFP | GNU: Surplus coalition government | Constitutional settlement | Two years (NP); 10 years, 5 of which non-mandatory (IFP) |
| 1997/8 | ANC and NNP splits create new political party | National Consultative Forum (Holomisa) and New Movement Process (Meyer) | New non-racial entity | UDM becomes more social democratic with Eastern Cape base; Meyer component exits |
| 1999 | ANC and IFP | Minimum Winning Coalition (Provincially) | Hung parliament | 1999–2004 |
| 2000 | DP, NNP and FA | Party merger and provincial government | Imagined convergence of ideology and power | Until 2001 |
| 2000 | ANC and NNP | Minimum Winning Coalition (Provincially) | NNP disintegration | 2000–2004 |
| 2003 | ID splits off PAC | | | |
| 2003 | Freedom Front, Conservative Party, AUM | Freedom Front Plus | Convergence of identity and ideology | 2014– |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2006 | DA, ACDP, FF+, AMP, UDM, UIF, UP, ID | Minimum Willing Coalition (Municipal council) | Hung municipal council | 2006–2011 |
| 2008 | COPE splits from ANC | | | |
| 2009/10 | DA and ID | Phased integration into DA | Convergence: ID decline | Consolidated by 2013 |
| 2012 | DA and Agang (aborted) | Unsuccessful | Build political opposition | Aborted |
| 2013 | Sopa and Azapo | Attempted merger ongoing | Restore former unity | Azapo fails to win seats in 2014 election |
| 2013 | EFF splits from ANC | | | |
| 2016 | DA and EFF | Minority government (municipal council) | Prevent ANC dominance | 2016– |

Source: Booysen, 2014: 78–79[33]

### *3.1. Surplus Majority Government: The Government of National Unity, 1994*

The post-apartheid period was ushered in by a surplus majority coalition government: the GNU. The GNU was a constitutionally enshrined executive coalition that emerged as a surplus majority government after the ANC victory in the 1994 general election. The GNU was thus a multiparty government entrenched in the transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1993 and based on the electoral performance of parties in the 1994 national and provincial elections. South Africa' transitional

33 Booysen, S. 2014. 'Causes and Impact of Party Alliances and Coalitions on The Party System and National Cohesion in South Africa' *Journal of African Elections Special Issue Understanding the Causes and Consequences of Political Party Alliances and Coalitions in Africa* 13 (1) June.

Constitution of 1993, negotiated at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), provided that any party which secured a minimum of 5 per cent of the national vote (20 seats) was entitled to be part of the GNU, which would govern the country in the first five years of democracy. This mechanism, given the history of the conflict in the country, was intended to ensure, inter alia, continuity, political inclusiveness, and racial and ethnic reconciliation.[34]

The transitional Constitution provided that a party that held a minimum of 80 seats in the 400-member National Assembly (20%) be entitled to designate an executive deputy president from among the members of the National Assembly, and that a party holding at least 20 seats (5%) should be entitled to be allocated one or more Cabinet portfolios in proportion to the number of seats it held relative to the number of seats held by the other parties. Similarly, the Constitution stated that "a party holding at least 10% of the seats in a provincial legislature shall be entitled to be allocated one or more of the provincial government portfolios in proportion to the number of seats held by it in the provincial legislature relative to the number of seats held by the other participating parties."[35]

**Table 2: 1994 General Election Results: National Assembly**

| Party | % votes | No. of votes | No. of seats |
|---|---|---|---|
| African National Congress (ANC) | 62.65 | 12 237 655 | 252 |
| National Party (NP) | 20.39 | 3 983 690 | 82 |
| Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) | 10.54 | 2 058 294 | 43 |
| Freedom Front | 2.17 | 424 555 | 9 |
| Democratic Party (DP) | 1.73 | 338 426 | 7 |
| Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) | 1.25 | 243 478 | 5 |
| African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) | 0.45 | 88 104 | 2 |

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

34 Kadima, D. 2006. 'Party Coalitions in Post-Apartheid South Africa and their Impact on National Cohesion and Ideological Rapprochement', in D Kadima (ed.) *Politics of Party Coalitions in Africa*. Johannesburg: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 27.

35 Ibid.

Accordingly, the ANC, the NP and the IFP formed the first democratic GNU in 1994 at both national and provincial levels. Parliament elected Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic assisted by two Executive Deputy Presidents, Thabo Mbeki and former President Frederik de Klerk in the GNU. The IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi was appointed Minister of Home Affairs. In addition, each of the government partners held many ministerial positions calculated pro rata to the number of seats won in the 1994 elections.[36] As can be seen from Table 2, the GNU was a surplus majority coalition, and the NP and IFP were excess parties as the ANC alone achieved an absolute majority.

In addition, various political parties participated in provincial government in several provinces based on their performance in the elections for the provincial legislatures. Accordingly, 'governments of provincial unity' were formed in several provinces, including the Free State, Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Northern Cape, essentially between the ANC and the NP. In KwaZulu-Natal, the government included the IFP, the ANC and the NP.[37]

Tensions emerged from the beginning between the ANC and the NP. The NP and its followers were restless and resented their secondary position in government in relation to the ANC. More importantly, the NP were caught in a strategic dilemma; they were conflicted as to how to approach the surplus majority coalition (emerging out of a negotiated settlement) as a party of opposition. In their approach to the surplus majority condition, the NP developed the subtlest of strategies, that of co-operative opposition. In so doing, it sought to fulfil its coalition obligations by cooperating with the ANC whenever possible, seeking policy concessions through quiet negotiations.[38] Its style of political debate was "conciliatory rather than robust."[39] Schrire writes that this

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Schrire, R. 2008. "Parliamentary Opposition after Apartheid: South Africa" The Journal of Legislative Studies, 14 (1–2): 199.

39 Ibid.

policy failed and was a major factor behind the implosion of the party. The NP "misread the wishes of its largely white and coloured working class supporters who had been led to hate the ANC by the party itself and wanted a strong and robust opposition." For their part, NP leaders believed that "the fragile post-1994 democracy made robust opposition dangerous because it would increase racial tensions and encourage the authoritarian tendencies lurking within the liberation movement."[40] Nevertheless, their conflicting approach to this coalition condition meant that the coalition's survivability would be short-lived. Once the new Constitution was inaugurated in 1996, the GNU became irrelevant; the mission was accomplished. The purpose of the GNU was to manage the process leading to the inauguration of a new constitution. The NP withdrew from the GNU and tried to reinvent itself as the New National Party (NNP) but this did not halt its decline as a political party.

The central dilemma of the NP was thus two-fold. First, it sought to approach a political coalition as an opposition party. To do this, it devised a cooperative opposition strategy. Second, its membership was at odds not just for its strategic approach but in regards to its participation in the first place. Their approach to this coalition determined their survival.

The withdrawal of the NP did not affect the relationship between the ANC and the IFP. The two parties consolidated their collaboration in KwaZulu-Natal with a view to preserving peace in a province traumatised by years of political violence which had led to the killing of thousands. The KwaZulu-Natal government of provincial unity served essentially as a power-sharing exercise that mirrored the GNU; with the IFP serving in the GNU nationally, the ANC, which had received 32% of the votes in the province, had three cabinet portfolios in the provincial government. Inaugurated under the auspices of the transitional Constitution, the IFP-ANC coalition government lasted for a decade at national level and continued in KwaZulu-Natal beyond the 2004 elections.

40 Ibid.

The GNU provided an opportunity for ideologically opposed political parties to jointly work in a coalition cabinet. Within two years of the cohabitation, the three parties had harmonised their views on many policy issues. Kadima writes that GEAR "was sold to the ANC by the NP during the GNU-period when the NP controlled the Ministry of Finance under the power-sharing arrangement." This ensured "smooth economic continuity between the NP and the ANC and demonstrated that the former ruling party had, to some extent, [influenced] the ANC in this regard."[41] It is further alleged that this influence started during the negotiations over a transition pact and culminated during the cohabitation in the GNU when the NP acted as the protector of the interests of the business community. Conversely, the adhesion by the ANC to neo-liberal policies made the presence of the NP in the GNU irrelevant.[42]

The withdrawal of the NP from the GNU and subsequent termination of the agreement had important implications for party politics in South Africa. As a result, South African politics would revolve around three interrelated issues. First, as the ruling dominant party, the ANC would seek to defend its political turf born out of its legitimacy as a liberation movement.[43] For the most part, the ANC has been successful at holding on to its political ground, winning all general elections since 1994 by a landslide with high majorities. Second, the strategies of opposition parties have been defined by this dominance i.e. all opposition parties are set on gnawing into exactly this political base controlled by the ANC.[44] Third, as the ANC gradually consolidated its base and hold over the state, the arena of big politics turned inward; battles inside the ANC turned vicious leading to breakaways. The politics of coalition building after the GNU has been a function of these interrelated processes.

41 Kadima, D. 2006. 'Party Coalitions in Post-Apartheid South Africa and their Impact on National Cohesion and Ideological Rapprochement', in D Kadima (ed.) *Politics of Party Coalitions in Africa*. Johannesburg: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 29.

42 Ibid.

43 Booysen, 2014.

44 Ibid.

### *3.2. Minimum Winning Coalition I: The ANC-IFP Coalition, 1999*

**Table 3: KZN Provincial Election Results: 1994, 1999 and 2004**

| Party | Percentage | | | Seats | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1994 | 1999 | 2000 | 1994 | 1999 | 2000 |
| ACDP | 0.49 | 0.67 | 1.78 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| ANC | 32.23 | 39.38 | 46.98 | 26 | 32 | 38 |
| DP/DA | 2.15 | 8.16 | 8.35 | 2 | 7 | 7 |
| IFP | 50.32 | 41.90 | 36.82 | 41 | 34 | 30 |
| MF | 1.34 | 2.93 | 2.61 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| NNP | 11.21 | 3.28 | 0.54 | 9 | 3 | 0 |
| PAC | 0.73 | 0.26 | 0.19 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| UDM | | 1.17 | 0.75 | | 1 | 1 |
| Total Seats | | | | 81 | 80 | 80 |

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

While the ANC and IFP at a national level chose to continue their coalition after the 1999 general election, a decision motivated by the willingness to consolidate peace in KZN, their provincial allies had different ideas as to how to interpret this condition. What complicated matters was the provincial election result: a hung provincial legislature necessitated a search for a coalition partner by the IFP. Although the IFP obtained the highest number of seats in the province, their loss of an overall majority precluded them from governing alone or constructing a surplus coalition on their own terms. Moreover, the ANC's provincial barons had sought to seize power in the province through an alliance with the Minority Front (MF); the ANC utilised this newfound alliance "to claim that they had parity in seats with the IFP and hence an equal claim

to the provincial premiership."[45] This was a position that was coveted by a segment of the ANC who believed that the only way to exercise real power was to control the province and whose failure to win an election in KwaZulu-Natal was an embarrassment to the provincial leadership.[46] Consequently what followed the second democratic election was a series of coalition negotiations among segments of the IFP, ANC and DP that finally resulted in an IFP-ANC agreement to the exclusion of other parties.

Francis writes that while the ANC-IFP coalition could stabilise political violence, it had a negative consequence on governance. Government institutions "did not function to process or resolve conflict."[47] Instead, accommodation and compromise prevailed in a manner that sheltered provincial leaders on both sides from scrutiny and secured autonomy for party leaders to function in particular spheres of influence. For example, "the development programme of the IFP MEC for Agriculture focused predominantly upon development in the rural areas of Zululand, an area in which the majority of voters support the IFP." Further, "the ANC MEC for Housing chose to spend the annual housing allocation for 2001 by pledging it to the Durban City Council for their distribution in housing projects in the city of Durban, where the ANC's majority of constituents are located."[48]

This dynamic of accommodation and compromise in KZN politics, while ensuring the ANC and IFP party barons autonomy i.e. by providing opportunities in which they are shielded from the public and enabling governance to occur within autonomous spheres of influence, tied both ANC and IFP politicians to the process of patronage.[49] The coalition thus had a negative impact on governance. It was a matter of time before the coalition fell apart. Three developments contributed to this.

45 Francis, S. 2011. 'Institutionalizing elites: Political elite formation and change in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial legislature.' *Afrika-Studiecentrum Series*. Leiden: Brill, 211.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 228.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

First, the IFP began negotiating a separate alliance with the DP/DA to prevent the complete dominance of the ANC at all levels of the government. Second, the introduction of floor-crossing legislation allowed some IFP members of parliament, provincial legislatures and local councils to join the ANC without losing their seats, a process that "strained the coalition and was one of the direct factors which precipitated its collapse at the national level."[50] Third, the management of the Immigration Bill sealed the fate; "Buthelezi wanted to establish an immigration board with executive powers chaired by himself as the Home Affairs Minister while the ANC preferred to have these powers remain vested in the ministry's administration."[51] Once Buthelezi took the government to court, the die was cast and the coalition was over.

### *3.3. Minimum Winning Coalition II: DP-NNP Coalition, 1999/2000*

The history of the coalition that would later be instrumental in forming the Democratic Alliance (DA) is in the outcome of the 1999 general election, with reference to the Western Cape. The results of the 1999 election confirmed the gradual demise of the NNP. Dropping from 20,39% of the national vote in 1994 to 6,87% in 1999, the party lost its place as South Africa's official opposition in favour of the DP.

**Table 4: 1999 Western Cape Provincial Result**

| Party | No. of seats |
|---|---|
| African Christian Democratic Party | 1 |
| African National Congress | 18 |
| Democratic Party | 5 |
| New National Party | 17 |
| United Democratic Movement | 1 |
| Total | 42 |

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

50 Kadima, 37.

51 Ibid.

As in KZN, the outcome of the 1999 election in the Western Cape led to a hung legislature, making it impossible for one party to govern the province alone. The NNP was divided about the choice of a coalition partner. The majority of NNP members were in favour of entering a coalition with the DP, with only a few preferring to work with the ANC. A coalition was finally formed between the NNP, the DP, and, initially, the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), which eventually withdrew, reportedly under pressure from former President Mandela.[52] The goal of the DP-NNP coalition was to keep the ANC out of government in the Western Cape and ultimately to run the province. Following mass demonstrations by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) against what it termed the Western Cape's 'white government' Mandela is reported to have again stepped in, this time to convince the ANC to accept the NP-DP provincial government.[53]

The DA was formed in June 2000 and involved the coming together into an alliance of the DP, the NNP and the Federal Alliance (FA). The idea was an electoral coalition for the December 2000 local government election which would provide conditions for a merger of parties at provincial and national levels. Due to an anti-defection clause in the Constitution, before the passing of the floor-crossing legislation in 2002, parties could not legally merge between elections, and as such, the DA negotiations were pushed through for the DP and NNP to contest the local elections as one organisation.[54] The DA's goal was to provide a strong and effective challenge to the ANC's electoral strength. In the Western Cape, it was formed to prevent the ANC from obtaining a strong political position. After its formation, its main objective was the mobilisation of the DP, NNP and FA constituencies under the DA banner for victory in the 2000 municipal elections.[55]

52 Jolobe, 2007.

53 Ibid.

54 Faull, J. 2004. "Floor-crossing." Paper presented at the Democracy Development Programme Workshop, Royal Hotel, Durban, 13 October.

55 Jolobe, 2007.

The DA electoral coalition's performance in the local government elections of December 2000 was better than expected. The result reflected the DA's more successful mobilising of its supporters in white areas relative to the ANC's efforts in black townships.[56] Apart from electoral victories in Stellenbosch, Swellendam and other high-profile Western Cape municipalities, the DA consequently won the important metropolitan of Cape Town, receiving 53% of the votes, translating into an electoral majority of 107 of 200 councillors, while the ANC received 38% of the votes.[57] Peter Marais was subsequently inaugurated as DA mayor of the Cape Metro.

Even though the DA had become a majority political party at the local level, controlling a key and strategic metropolitan government, the DP and NNP remained separate political entities in a legislative coalition at provincial and national level – sitting separately in the legislatures, receiving separate allocations of public money – but operated as one entity – caucusing together, voting as one and so on. Only through floor-crossing legislation could the respective members embrace their new identity and constitute themselves as one party in these two spheres, a matter that the DA argued in favour of initially, but one that came to haunt them eventually as the NNP leadership took advantage of the new political game of musical chairs and jumped ship to the ANC.

However, despite the DA's successes in mobilising different constituents in their electoral victory, the alliance had not been established on a solid enough political foundation. The main objective in the Western Cape, and Cape Town, was to keep the ANC out of government and less attention was paid to the consolidation of political power. Thus, once that objective had been achieved, cracks began to appear in the political coalition. At the heart of the contestations between the two major alliance partners were not only broad ideological and cultural orientations, but

56 Lodge, T. 2002. *Politics in South Africa: From Mandela to Mbeki*. Cape Town: David Philip; Seekings, J. 2005. 'Partisan re-alignment in Cape Town, 1994–2004.' Centre for Social Science Research, Working Paper No.111, University of Cape Town.

57 Seekings, J. 2005. 'Partisan re-alignment in Cape Town, 1994–2004.' Centre for Social Science Research, Working Paper No.111, University of Cape Town.

also what each party wanted out of the coalition. The objective of the DP was to build an alternative base of power in South Africa's emerging dominant party system by uniting the political opposition in South Africa in general. In this regard, a fragmented opposition was a contributing factor to the continued electoral dominance of a single party, namely, the ANC.

By contrast, the NNP's decision to enter the coalition was a survival mechanism; the end of apartheid and the party's exit from the GNU in 1996 saw a decline in the NNP's support base as the dominant and largest white party under apartheid, as the multiparty system emerged with new alternatives that capitalised on the disillusionment of its constituency. From gaining over 20% of the vote in the 1994 election, and down to 6.87 per cent in the 1999 election, the NNP leadership saw the DA alliance as a lifeline that gave it the opportunity to integrate into a new post-apartheid political entity, and in which they could continue to exercise power but from a different base. The essence was political survival, and this is what explains the ease with which they integrated into the ANC in 2002, a mere two years after the formation of the DA.[58]

Why these differences between the DP and NNP became problematic was due to the lack of effective management structures and procedures necessary to deal with the challenges that would arise from such differences in a political coalition. As a result, when the DA was faced with its very first challenge at local government level, the street-naming saga[59], conflicting parties and resultant political factions coalesced around the DP and NNP entities, as the internal procedures of the DA were ineffective.

58 Jolobe, 2007.

59 See Jolobe, 85–88.

### *3.4. Minimum Winning Coalition III: ANC-NNP Coalition, 2002*

What came out of the NNP–DP coalition was a political alliance between the ANC and NNP. This was both a legislative and cabinet coalition, later made possible through floor-crossing legislation, and designed, inter alia, to propel the ANC into power in the City of Cape Town. For the NNP leadership this was a convenient strategy to maintain access to political power and save face following the fallout with the DP.[60] The ANC–NNP coalition was the consequence of the National Co-operation Agreement (NCA) between the two parties established in June 2002, and the partnership operated at all levels of government. The NCA provided a stabilising role in internal governance mechanisms in the province and local government, and effectively instituted and maintained the political coalition. The importance of the NCA was that it began the process that led to the integration of the NNP into the ANC.[61]

It is precisely because this political coalition was specifically concerned with governance and the maintenance of political power that it could develop the necessary structures for the sustenance of a partnership between ideologically and historically divergent political parties. This is what created the structural basis for the absorption of the NNP into the ANC. This contrasts with the DP–NNP coalition, which placed greater emphasis on mobilising constituents to ensure an ANC electoral defeat and less on governance and the maintenance of power. The DA alliance structures created around coalition governance proved too fluid and unable to withstand the challenges that lay ahead.[62]

Key issues in the agreement led to the functionality of the ANC–NNP coalition. The preamble of the Developmental Local Government Framework of the two parties, the policy framework for the NCA, identified the main reason for political co-operation as the 'institutional

60 Jolobe, 88.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

instability experienced at local level'. The agreement between the parties was founded on three main principles that:[63]

- All political positions in local government be distributed between the parties to achieve a partnership based on fair representation;
- The cause of the governance crisis at local government was institutional instability and as a solution, the contract emphasised the need to promote stability; and
- A joint task team be established as the institutional mechanism to ensure consensus seeking in decision-making.

The parties also established a dispute resolution committee and agreed that the agreement would be in place well beyond the 2004 election. This Provincial Dispute Resolution Committee would be comprised of three representatives from each party and a procedure to deal with any differences that cannot could not be resolved at a local level.[64] The NCA elaborated on this:

*"The parties agree that the primary duty to promote the principles of consensus seeking Government lies with the parties at Municipal Level. The parties will in the first instance look for local solutions to local problems and will endeavour to solve their problems with ingenuity and local creativity within the ambit and the principles of the Agreed Policy Framework. To ensure that proper co-operation exists and to ensure that the overall policy framework referred to above is properly implemented, the parties agree that a Provincial Dispute Resolution Committee be established consisting of three representatives of each party. The parties further agree that whenever, after complying with the formal procedures for decision making prescribed by the Joint Policy Task Team, the parties at local level are unable to agree on any matter, the decision on that matter will be left in abeyance for 1 month.*

63 Jolobe, 89.

64 Ibid.

*If still unresolved after 1 month, or in urgent cases the matter will be referred to the Dispute Resolution Committee for a decision."*[65]

The parties further agreed that only if the Dispute Resolution Committee could not agree on a solution, the matter would be jointly decided by Provincial Party Leaderships whose decision would be final. The NCA and the Developmental Local Government Framework is the policy instruments used to integrate the NNP into the ANC.

The new ANC–NNP coalition took power from the DA in the City of Cape Town during the window period for floor-crossing in October 2002. The Municipal Structures Act was amended, making Cape Town's mayoral electoral system more consistent with all ANC-controlled metropolitan governments, to secure Nomaindia Mfeketo as the executive mayor. Subsequently, the DA lost all its seats on the city's executive committee. The DA lost power in the metropolitan government when 27 of its councillors defected to the NNP, enabling the NNP to establish a city government with the ANC.[66] This began a political process that ultimately saw NNP councillors using the floor-crossing window period in 2004 to cross to the ANC, and the final dissolution of the NNP in the 2006 local elections.

For the NNP leadership, the political lifeline thrown by the ANC was secured through the distribution of political patronage. In June 2002, Marthinus Van Schalkwyk was appointed premier of the Western Cape. Van Schalkwyk was subsequently appointed Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism in President Thabo Mbeki's Cabinet after the 2004 general elections. In November 2002, Renier Schoeman was appointed as the national Deputy Minister for Health and former Western Cape Environmental Minister David Malatsi was appointed Deputy Minister for Social Development, and NNP member Francois Beukman was elected

65 Agreement between the African National Congress and The New National Party. Available from: http://www.anc.org.za/content/agreement-between-anc-and-nnp-establishing-developmental-local-government-framework-attack

66 Jolobe, 89.

as chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.[67] In the same period, the party system in South Africa continued to exhibit a considerable amount of fluidity. In 2003, outspoken Pan-African Congress (PAC) MP, Patricia de Lille, resigned from the former liberation movement to form the Independent Democrats (ID). That same year, the Afrikaner Eenheidsbeweging and the Freedom Front (FF) decided to contest the 2004 general election under the Freedom Front Plus (FF-Plus), and to be joined later by the FA.

### *3.5. Minimum Winning Coalition IV to Surplus Majority II: DA-led City of Cape Town, 2006*

In 2006, South Africa witnessed its fourth minimal winning coalition. The 2006 local elections produced hung councils in all but four Western Cape municipalities: the ANC and the DA won majorities in Hessequa and Bitou (ANC), and Swartland and Overstrand (DA). A pattern developed; the ANC attained plurality overall, with the DA coming second. The important factor was that the ANC did not achieve controlling majorities in most of these municipalities. The implication was that the multiparty politics in the Western Cape became more competitive and, therefore, both the support bases in the province for the ANC and the DA either remained static or began to experience decline. Despite this, these two parties emerged as the main political players and the political struggle between the two in the province became fierce.[68]

What explains the emergence of competitive multipartyism in the Western Cape province was the floor-crossing legislation that was introduced into the South African political system in 2002. This system had important consequences and added new dimensions in provincial politics between 2000 and 2006. First, it created the mechanism for the NNP walkout from the DA into a coalition with the ANC, and at the same time gave elected representatives serious political leverage over party

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., 90.

leaderships. Second, it facilitated the formation of a new political player in the Western Cape, the ID, which began to compete in both the ANC's and DA's constituencies.[69]

The impact of the ID was considerable: in its first local election, the party won 289 360 votes and 10.54% of overall support, making the ID the third largest party in the province, after the DA and the ANC, and consequently leading observers to point out that the party held a balance of power with grand expectations of a possible 'kingmaker' role in provincial politics. As the local elections produced no clear winner in the Western Cape, a trend that would become a lasting habit, forcing the formation of political coalitions to make up the 51% threshold needed to form stable majority executives became a favoured solution. Consequently, the Western Cape became typified by the proliferation of coalitions between the major political players. These, however, were coalitions of a common type; executive and legislative coalitions forged because of hung councils. Electoral coalitions by 2006 were a thing of the past; opposition political parties no longer had appetite after the DA fallout.[70] These provincial-wide post-election political dynamics were replicated in Cape Town. The city's council consists of 210 seats. For a single party to form a government, they would need to win 106 or more seats. However, following the provincial trend, no single party won a controlling majority in the council in this election. The DA attained plurality i.e. 90 seats which translated into 42.86% of council seats; their support had decreased by 10.64% since the 2000 election. The ANC won 81 seats (38.57% of council seats) and the ID took 23 seats and 10.95% of council seats.[71]

The afore-mentioned electoral outcome led to a scramble for the formation of a ruling coalition. In the immediate aftermath of the

69 Ibid., 91.

70 Ibid., 91.

71 Ibid.

election, Jonathan Faull suggested many possible coalitions.[72] These were, firstly, that the ANC and DA could form a unity government with a cumulative total of 171 seats. This would require that the ANC and DA resolve their political differences at all levels of government, especially about the politics of race and race relations. Secondly, the DA could lead a coalition with either the ID, taking the total seat allocation to 113, or the totality of the smaller parties, which together with the DA's allocation would verge on the 106 thresholds.[73] The latter was the coalition which eventually materialised and is discussed further below. A third scenario was that the DA run the council through a combination of the ID and some of the smaller parties. Faull fourthly suggested that the ANC could assemble a coalition with the ID – 104 seats – and with the support of one or two of the smaller parties could reach the 106 thresholds. Finally, there was the option of the ID sticking to their pre-election stated intention of remaining completely independent, forcing the need for a consensus multiparty democracy on every key issue.[74]

The outcome was a version of scenario 2 above with the DA forming a coalition with six opposition parties – the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the Freedom Front Plus, the African Muslim Party (AMP), UDM, the United Independent Front (UIF), and the Universal Party (UP) – and in the process consigning the ANC and ID to the opposition benches.[75] The DA's Helen Zille was elected mayor by 106 to 103 votes. The ACDP's Andrew Arnolds was elected deputy mayor and the FF Plus's Dirk Smit was elected speaker, both by 105 to 104 votes. The ID later joined the governing coalition in 2007 thereby producing a surplus coalition. After expelling the AMP for engaging in secret talks with the ANC in the city to form a new coalition, the DA approached the ID to avert a political

72 Faull, J. 2006. 'Local government elections 2006: The race for the City of Cape Town.' *ePoliticsSA – Edition 01*. Cape Town: Idasa.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Jolobe, 91.

crisis. Simon Grindrod, the then ID caucus chair, stated that their decision to become a part of the coalition was in response to interests from their membership.[76]

The ID had a dismal showing in the 2009 general elections. In 2004, the party attracted 269 765 votes at the national level. In 2009, the number had shrunk to 162 915, a loss of 30%. It is arguably because of this poor showing at the polls that the ID consequently decided to 'call it a day', and entered political negotiations with the DA to manage the dissolution of the party. The outcome was an agreement where the ID would cease to exist, as it merged into the DA in 2014.

After the 2011 local government elections, various opportunistic alliances gained municipal power, especially in the Western Cape. Many of these collapsed or changed shape mid-term, with disruptive consequences. In the Western Cape town of Oudtshoorn for example, the DA and the ANC took turns putting together minimum winning coalitions. They fell apart every time one or more of the participating councillors had a change of heart. Local governance in the municipality collapsed to the point where the provincial government decided to put the municipality under administration. The decision to place the municipality under administration was because a political struggle resulted in a dysfunctional council, which could not approve the town's budget. The provincial government intervened in terms of section 139(1) of the constitution which grants a provincial executive broad power to intervene when a municipality cannot fulfil an executive function in terms of the constitution.

Prior to the 2014 local elections, political parties also attempted various electoral coalitions. In 2012, the DA and Agang attempted to build a coalition but the attempt backfired. In 2013, the Mamphela Ramphele was not able to convince her Agang constituency on the merits of an electoral coalition with the DA. Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA) and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) attempted a merger process,

76 Ibid.

which proved futile as AZAPO failed to win any seats. That same year, key leaders of the ANC Youth League were expelled from the ANC, and subsequently formed their own political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). This event would have profound consequences for South African politics.

### *3.6. Minority Government and Minimum Willing Coalitions: The 2016 Local Elections*

It was not until the 2016 local government elections that another important era of minimum wining coalitions and minority governments emerged at local level. The hotly contested local government election led to 27 municipalities in which no party managed to win an absolute majority, spread across eight provinces as follows: Western Cape (8), KwaZulu-Natal (7), Gauteng (4), the Northern Cape (3), Limpopo (2), North-West (1), Free State (1), and the Eastern Cape (1). The result showed the major parties obtaining the following shares of votes across the country (based on the proportional representation component): ANC 54.49%'; DA 27.02%; EFF 8.25%. The IFP, made a come-back, with 4.27% of the vote, although it was confined to KZN.

The DA could form governments in 14 of the 27 hung municipalities, the ANC in six, and the IFP in four (with two others requiring new elections). In Kannaland (Western Cape), the DA and ANC formed a rare coalition together to push Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA) out of power, with the two parties agreeing on an ANC mayor and a DA speaker of the council.[77] As a shock move, it was believed to be an attempt at preventing the controversial politician, Truman Prince, from any access to local power. The DA managed not only to consolidate its pre-eminence in the Western Cape but also to extend its presence to Limpopo, Gauteng, the Free State, the Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape.

77 Evans, J. 2016. 'ANC, DA climbed into bed with each other' in Kannaland coalition - shocked Icosa'. Available from: https://www.news24.com/elections/news/anc-da-climbed-into-bed-with-each-other-in-kannaland-coalition-shocked-icosa-20160816

The EFF for its part emerged as king-maker in several hung municipalities, including the important metropolitan councils of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay. Further, neither the EFF nor the DA was eager to form coalitions with the ANC. But the EFF has also had acrimonious relations with the DA and other opposition parties. And ideologically, the DA and the EFF are worlds apart. But while the ANC may be closer to the EFF in terms of its policy positions, the DA and the EFF shared a common goal to dislodge the ANC's dominance, which seemed perhaps to override all other considerations.[78] And this is what transpired; determined to keep its identity distinct, and in what has been interpreted by some as a sign of political maturity and a victory of principle over expedience, the EFF announced that it would not join coalitions with any party. Instead, it would vote, on a case-by-case basis, with the DA against the ANC in council meetings, because the former was the "better devil." Thus, the EFF would not participate in any executive structures, but would vote in support of the DA's nominees for mayor and other positions.[79] The result were minority governments led by the DA, with a precarious and easily revocable undertaking of support by the EFF in seven municipalities: Gauteng (Tshwane, Johannesburg and Mogale City); the Free State (Metsimaholo); Limpopo (Thabazimbi and Modimolle/Mookgopong); and Eastern Cape (Nelson Mandela Bay).

The governance implications in the metros initially began relatively smoothly. All three metros insisted that provincial governments pay up overdue rates and service charges; all purged "old-regime" staff implicated in corruption investigations; and all reformed housing and service delivery structures. Johannesburg even pledged to reintegrate all municipal service delivery entities into the city.[80] When it finally came to passing budgets and development plans of their own, the coalition Metros were all rather prudent. All three committed to refocused,

78 Siddle, A. 2016. The 2016 local government elections: The point where South Africa changed course? Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy. Research Report 8.

79 Ibid., 6.

80 English, I. 2017. 'Are South Africa's opposition-led coalition metros flexing their muscles?'. Available from: https://theconversation.com/are-south-africas-opposition-led-coalition-metros-flexing-their-muscles-82091

developmental, service-focused governance free from "vanity projects". They also promised more responsive, transparent and open governance. And all three put their money where their mouths were.[81] But all three also committed to constructive intergovernmental relations. Their development plans were further mostly aligned to national and provincial priorities, just like those of their predecessors.

Things soon fell apart. By 2018, the coalition administration in Nelson Mandela Bay was on the verge of losing power. During the heated debate around land expropriation without compensation, EFF leader, Julius Malema, announced in Parliament that they would be tabling a motion of no confidence against the Democratic Alliance's (DA) Mayor, Athol Trollip on April 6. It has been the culmination of an uphill struggle for the coalition government from the start with infighting between Trollip and his ousted Deputy, the United Democratic Movement's (UDM) Mongameli Bobani.[82] Further, the ANC, EFF, African Independent Congress (AIC), United Front (UF), PA and UDM voted against an adjusted budget meaning that R200 million worth of service delivery projects would grind to a halt.[83]

While these tensions potentially could have been transmitted to the two other metros, this was not the case. This however does not mean that they are out of the woods. With the election of Cyril Ramaphosa as the ANC and state president, the rationale for the minority governments is no longer there. Further, the debate around land reform could sharpen the differences between the DA and EFF. However, the DA has shown considerable resilience in its coalition management and may well live another day.

81 Ibid.

82 Poti, I. 2018. 'Nelson Mandela Bay coalition on the verge of collapse'. Available from: http://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/nelson-mandela-bay-coalition-verge-collapse/

83 Ibid.

## 4. Conclusion

This article has revealed that the survivability of coalition governments is less about the ideological disposition of the parties and more about how parties approach their coalition condition. All the major coalitions illustrate this point. Further, South Africa's coalition models have primarily been comprised of minimal winning types, and the composition of all have comprised of parties with different orientations and constituencies. This demonstrates that political parties in South Africa are willing and able to rise above ideological differences to form governments, while at times these have been characterised by opportunism.

A final observation refers to coalitions between parties across levels of government. The cases reveal that political coalitions at one level often have negative implications for party relations across levels and polities. This shows that at the heart of political coalitions are the individual political leaders and the specific local context through which they approach them. Survivability is thus also a function of the ability of leaders to mobilise their constituencies in support of such agreements.

# Conclusion

*Senzwesihle Ngubane*

Lesotho, Mozambique and South Africa are post-conflict countries. In efforts to transform their societies, political actors chose different pathways to manage issues of governance, and political stability informed by the challenges existing at a particular moment in their history. The conflict in Lesotho, that decidedly determined the pathway to manage issues of political governance, was in the late 1990s when the then electoral dispute resulted in internal instability. Mozambique came out of a long civil war, which ended with the signing of a peace agreement in 1992 between the two main protagonists thus opening up space for multi-party democracy. The approach taken in Mozambique threw the country directly into the terrain of competitive politics, while there were still some unresolved issues between the main political actors. Whereas in South Africa, following a negotiated settlement, multi-party democracy, at least in the first few years, was mediated by a Government of National Unity (GNU). This made it possible for the main protagonists to continue their 'dialogue', long after the negotiated settlement. These different pathways are at the foundation of some of the present-day inter party-political dynamics in these countries and continue to shape how political actors relate to each other. Additionally, these different pathways demonstrate that there is no single formula to guarantee post-conflict political stability. If anything, these processes are work in progress, with the role and relationship between political parties, the posture and attitudes of the leadership, and the responses of the broader society, being central in determining the success or failure of the chosen path.

There are several thematic issues that cut across these three articles and are informative about the place and role of coalitions in contributing to political stability, or lack thereof, within the sphere of governance and peacebuilding. The role of party-political leadership, either in engineering

or jeopardising a sustainable coalition is one key thematic issue. For instance, in all three cases, especially in Lesotho and Mozambique, the challenges experienced with building sustainable coalitions were as a result of the roles played by, and the behavior of the leadership in the different political parties. In the case of Mozambique, for example, attempts to forge coalitions were heavily dependent on the dominant role of the main opposition party RENAMO, and its late leader, Afonso Dhlakama. Those political moments which saw an upsurge of a viable opposition coalition in Mozambique, occurred because the leadership within the main opposition party clearly demonstrated a vested interest in the success of such a coalition.

The issue of a common agenda or programme that drives political actors to enter into a coalition is another critical theme. It is believed that the existence of a common agenda increases the possibility of a coalition being sustainable in the long term, and stable enough to be able to offer effective governance. These three case studies reflect that often-times what is at the core of the weaknesses or failures of some of the coalitions was a lack of a common political programme that united the parties beyond the motive of just staying in power or gaining access to power. Rather, it should be inclusive of a clear set of issues and projects that the coalition partners seek to pursue jointly once they are in government. However, without a common political programme, a coalition is evidently weakened, and parties find it easy to exit from it even when there is no tangible disagreement.

The importance of having clearly defined agreements between the coalition partners emerges as another important theme as they offer predictability of actions and outcomes. These agreements are even more important if they articulate a clearly conflict-resolution process, should disputes arise among the partners. Such an agreement existed, for instance, between the African National Congress (ANC) and the New National Party (NNP) in the form of the National Co-operation Agreement (NCA). It made it possible for the parties to this coalition to know what route they would follow in the event of a dispute. In the case of Lesotho, however, the absence of such a dispute-resolving mechanism contributed

to the collapse of some of the coalitions. As observed in the article on South Africa, such a mechanism is a good example of the stabilising role internal governance mechanisms can play towards instituting and maintaining coalitions.

The issue of having an agreement that provides for predictability of outcomes and possibly the creation of stability in a coalition is one of the key themes for on-going and future research beyond these three case studies. There are several examples elsewhere in Africa where laws have been enacted to make it difficult for parties to a coalition to exit without due process. For instance, this is the case in Kenya, where the Political Parties Act clearly indicates that parties intending to form a coalition before or after an election, need to have a binding agreement that must be deposited with the Registrar of political parties. This has positively contributed to the sustainability of coalitions and general stability at the level of governance as it limits the possibility of a coalition government collapsing before the end of its term of office. This is one example which could be a reference point in cases such as Lesotho, where the absence of binding agreements has impacted negatively on the survival of most coalitions, and where efforts to consolidate stability are still underway.

An additional theme emerging from these three articles is a situation whereby it is possible for political parties with completely diverse political agendas and interests to 'overcome' such differences in the interest of stability. This was the case for instance in South Africa with the formation of the GNU, and it was also the case in Lesotho during the first election immediately following the amendment of the electoral laws. However, what is also clear, is that coalitions formed on such basis tend to be short-lived, because the cracks start to show when the interest of stability at the level of governance is superseded by other specific party-political interests.

Furthermore, it emerges from these three case studies that it is possible for parties with diverse political ideologies to forge a coalition propelled only by a common interest of ascending to political power and/or to limit the power of the majority party. The cases of Mozambique and South Africa are indicative of such experiences. However, the failure

of efforts to forge long-term and sustainable coalitions by opposition political parties in both countries could be attributed fundamentally to a lack of policy cohesion and ideological coherence.

In conclusion, the articles published in this monograph point to a need for further research and sharing of knowledge on the complexities of coalition building by political parties in different African countries. In addition, the articles reflect that while it is often perceived that coalitions are a viable instrument to manage political differences, to advance effective governance, and to build social cohesion among different political actors, some of the experiences however indicate otherwise. Conversely, the articles provide a glimmer of hope that it would be possible to build and sustain viable coalitions as long as certain conditions are present. Therefore, ongoing research inclusive of comparative studies on the conditions that should prevail so as to have sustainable coalitions remains relevant. In the interim, it is hoped that this monograph makes a useful contribution and would become an additional reference point on the complexities related to coalition politics in Africa.

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