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## Conclusion

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*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.