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

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## 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,

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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]

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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

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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,

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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.

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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

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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,

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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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

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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]

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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

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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.

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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

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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.*

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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,

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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.

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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,

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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.

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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.