



The impact of coalition governments on selected metropolitan municipalities in South Africa

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Dissertation accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Master of Arts in Political Studies* at the North-West University

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Graduation: May 2025

DECLARATION

I **Boikanyo Collins Nkwatle**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, and it has not been submitted for any degree or for examination at any other university. The sources that I have used have been fully acknowledged by complete references. This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of a Master of Art Degree in Political Studies at the North-West University.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Mme Ipeleng “IPS” Kilelo and her family, for the support and encouragement in pursuing this work. Since the year 2022, she has constantly contributed financially towards this research project and been a mother, guide and mentor. May God who has begun the good work in you mom, bring it to completion. I remember there was a period in my life, where life made no sense. I felt like the world had turned against me. One of the greatest mystics in the Catholic Church, Saint John of the Cross, in his seminal work “Dark Night of the Soul”, refers to “purgative contemplation,” in which God specifically darkens a person’s will, intellect, and senses to test the authenticity of one’s love for Him. It was your encouragement, support, and love that resuscitated my hopes, dreams and ambitions.

“May the Lord bless and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace”.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Man above for His grace and mercy. The journey towards completing this work was very long and, in many times, I felt like giving up, there were times of desolation and despondency.
- My supervisor, Dr Frank Lekaba, for having been under his tutelage and guidance in preparing this dissertation from the onset, until his departure from North-West University (NWU) to Wits School of Governance. Kea leboga morwa Lekaba. As the saying goes “A student is not greater than his master.”
- In the same breath, Dr Sysman Motloun, who came on board as a co-supervisor to Dr Lekaba. Dr Motloun came at a very advanced stage of the project; however, his impact on the study has been very substantial and this has not escaped my eye. Your work ethic is impeccable indeed, and is on another level. Ke a leboha, ntate Modimo a o etsetse hantle.
- To my family and friends, Bakang Eric Seleko, Tshegofatso Nxumalo, Dr Makoetja Ramusi, Olebogeng Mongale, Moeti Bafokeng, and Peter Seelamo for your constant encouragement and support, especially in the times when I wanted to throw in the towel - kea leboga.
- To the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) for giving me an opportunity to work under your Research Department as a Research Intern, under the Coalitions in Africa project. This internship has greatly enhanced and contributed to my research in a significant way, and continues to do so.
- The North-West University (NWU) for the financial support over the years.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of coalitions on the administration of local government within South African metropolitan municipalities. Employing a desktop research approach, the research delves into the evolving political dynamics shaped by coalition governance structures and their ramifications on service delivery and operational efficiency. With a focus on South African metros, the study explored the emergent trend of coalitions as a significant aspect of the country's political landscape, shedding light on their multifaceted impacts. The findings underscored the increasing prominence of coalitions as a defining feature of South African politics, signalling a paradigm shift in governance strategies. Notably, the study identified a discernible negative impact of coalitions on the operational mechanisms and service provision within metropolitan municipalities. Despite their intended role in fostering collaboration and consensus-building, coalitions are observed to engender challenges in the effective functioning of local government entities. An analysis of the electoral landscape reveals a fragmentation of political representation across various parties, each advocating distinct interests and constituencies. Coalition agreements, consequently, emerge as pivotal frameworks for power distribution among participating parties, shaping the dynamics of governance and decision-making processes. The diversification of representation resulting from coalition formations highlights a significant transformation in local government structures, reflecting the evolving nature of political engagement at the grassroots level. Coalitions are found to exert a transformative influence on the political landscape of South African metros, catalysing shifts in traditional power dynamics and ideological alignments. By incentivising cooperation and negotiation among disparate political entities, coalitions have fostered a climate of consensus-building, albeit amidst inherent challenges. The imperative for coalition partners to navigate complex interparty dynamics underscores the necessity for building trust and fostering effective communication mechanisms. In conclusion, the study illuminates the intricate interplay between coalitions and local government administration in South African metropolitan municipalities. While coalitions offer a potential avenue for enhancing inclusivity and promoting collaborative governance, their emergence presents formidable challenges to operational efficiency and service delivery.

Key terms: Coalitions, local government, service delivery, governance, power distribution

TSHOBOKANYO YA PATLISISO

Thutopatlisiso e e batlisisitse tlhotlheletso ya pusisano mo tsamaisong ya dipusoselegae mo dimmasepaleng tsa ditoropokgolo tsa Aforikaborwa. Ka go dirisa mokgwa wa patlisiso wa khomphiutha, patlisiso e thatlhoba phetogo ya maemo a sepolotiki e e bopilweng ke ditsamaiso tsa pusommogo le ditlamorago tsa tsona mo tlamelong ya ditirelo le bokgoni jwa tiragatso. Ka go tlhoma mogopolo mo ditoropokgolong tsa Aforikaborwa, thutopatlisiso e sekasekile mokgwa o o tlhagelelang wa pusisano jaaka karolo e e botlhokwa ya maemo a sepolotiki a naga, e e senolang ditlamorago tsa yone tse di maphatamantsi. Diphithlelelo di gateletse botlhokwa jo bo oketsegang jwa pusisano jaaka karolo e e tlhalosang dipolotiki tsa Aforikaborwa, e tsibosang phetogo mo ditogamaanong tsa puso. Se se tlmologileng ke gore, thutopatlisiso e lemositse ditlamorago tse di sa siamang tse di lemotshegang ka pusisano mo mekgweng ya go dira le ya go tlamela ditirelo mo dimmasepaleng tsa ditoropokgolo. Le mororo seabe se se ikaeletseng e le go rotloetsa tirisanommogo le go fitlhelela tumalano, go lemogilwe gore pusisano e baka dikgwetlho mo go direng sentle ga ditheo tsa pusoselegae. Tshekatsheko ya maemo a ditlhopho e bontsha go kgaogana ga kemedi ya sepolotiki go kgabaganya makoko a a farologaneng, lengwe le lengwe le buelela dikgatlhogo le dikarolotlhopho tse di farologaneng. Ka jalo, ditumalano tsa pusisano, di tlhagelela jaaka letlhomeso la pinagare ya go arolelana maatla magareng ga makoko a a tsayang karolo, mo tsamaisong ya popo ya maatla a puso le tseotshwetso. Go farologana ga kemedi go go tlisitsweng ke tlhamo ya pusisano go bontsha phetogo e kgolo mo ditsamaisong tsa pusoselegae, e e supang phetogo ya mokgwa wa go nna le seabe mo dipolotiking kwa maamong a a kwa tlase. Dipusisano di fitlhetswe di gatelela tlhotlheletso e e fetolang maemo a sepolotiki a ditoropokgolo tsa Aforikaborwa, di dira gore go nne le diphetogo mo tseleng ya tlwaelo ya maatla le tsamaisano ya megopolo. Ka go rotloetsa tirisanommogo le dipusisano magareng ga ditheo tse di farologaneng tsa sepolotiki, pusisano e rotloeditse maemo a go fitlhelela tumalano, le fa go na le dikgwetlho tse di rileng. Botlhokwa jwa gore bagwebisani ba pusisano ba tile marara a a farologaneng mo gare ga mekgatlho go gatelela tlhokego ya go aga botshepegi le go rotloetsa mekgwa e e nonofileng ya tlhaeletsano. Kwa bokhutlong, thutopatlisiso e supa tirisanommogo e e raraaneng magareng ga dipusisano le botsamaisi jwa pusoselegae mo dimmasepaleng tsa ditoropokgolo tsa Aforikaborwa. Le fa gone dipusisano di neelana ka tsela e e ka kgonang go tokafatsa boakaretsi le go rotloetsa puso ya tirisanommogo, go nna gone ga tsone go tliša dikgwetlho tse di boitshegang mo bokgoning jwa tiragatso le tlamelo ya ditirelo.

Mafoko a a botlhokwa: Pusisano, tsamaiso ya pusoselegae, go tlhabela ga ditirelo, kgotlhang ya mo teng ga lekoko, bonweenwee/bosenyi, tsamaiso e e sa siamang, Karolelano-maatla.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	All-Basotho Convention
AIC	African Independent Congress
ANC	African National Congress
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CGT	Cooperative Game Theory
CoGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union
DA	Democratic Alliance
DC	Democratic Congress
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EPS	Executive Power-sharing
EU	European Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party
GCs	Grand Coalitions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IRASA	Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa
JOMIC	Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee

LGE	Local Government Election
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NMB	Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
ONHRI	Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
PA	Patriotic Alliance
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PEC	Pre-Electoral Coalition
PNU	Party of National Unity
SABC	South African Broadcast Corporation
SPD	Social Democratic Party
STERP 1	Short-term Emergency Recovery Programme
TNA	The National Alliance
UDM	United Democratic Movement
URP	United Republican Party
ZANU-PF	The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROMINENCE OF COALITION POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICAN METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES

1.1. Background of the study

A political coalition refers to a group formed when two or more people, factions, states, political parties, militaries, or other parties agree to work together, often temporarily, in a partnership to achieve a common goal, such as forming a government (Lawlor et al., 2022). A coalition government is an alternative model to majoritarian governance, which is characterised by winner-take-all "first-past-the-post" electoral systems that favour clear distinctions between winners and losers (ÇaKmaK, 2007). There are various types of coalitions, such as the grand coalition, minimal-majority, and bare-majority coalition (Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019), which are the coalitions under scrutiny in this study.

A brief survey (Falcó-Gimeno & Fernandez-Vazquez, 2020; Sekatle & Sebola, 2020; Plescia et al., 2022; Albala, 2021; Borges et al., 2021) of the literature on coalition formation recognises that the nature and form that coalition formation takes is a function of the unique circumstances prevailing in a given political system. The rationale for coalition formation includes (i) the establishment of a government, and (ii) to pursue policy goals of common interest at times it might not be about common policy interest, but for parties involved to share the pay-offs associated with power-holding (Hinfelaar & Sichone, 2019). There are various approaches to forming coalitions. The first is where political parties agree to work together before an election as a strategy to enhance their electoral outcome; the second approach is where parties work together after the election where one or more parties fail to get a majority to govern (Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019).

Coalitions among political parties are a common feature of pluralist democracies (Oktay, 2022). Coalitions have been a cultural norm in Germany since the end of the Second World War. The country was only ruled by a parliamentary majority from 1957 to 1961, until the Conservative Union lost their majority in 1961 (Martin, 2017). This was the genesis of coalition government. Even outside Europe, in countries such as Japan, India and Israel coalitions are a norm (Oktay, 2022). Coalitions are a recent feature in the African continent, for these emerged during the third wave of democratisation in the early 1990s, where people opposed despotic regimes (Kapa, 2008:339). But coalitions are becoming entrenched in Africa's political systems as weapons through which the political

elites fight political battles (Wilson et al., 2021). In Africa, countries such as Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mauritius, Nigeria, Kenya, and Lesotho are some of the countries that have a history of coalitions as a conflict resolution mechanism to deal with political crises.

The local government entity, the municipality, is a product of devolution or decentralisation of administrative and political authority to the localised geographic area in the political community (Gargan, 2019). It is in contrast to regional and national levels of government; in other words, the local government has limited powers. In South Africa, from the first democratic local government elections (LGEs) in 2000, until the 2016 elections, general elections have always produced so-called “hung councils”. A hung council arises when no political party wins more than 50% of the seats in the municipal council, thus making the formation of a coalition or minority government inevitable (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). The 2000 LGEs produced 29 hung councils. This increased to 31 (including the City of Cape Town) in the 2006 LGEs, before escalating to 37 hung councils in the 2011 elections (Beukes & De Visser, 2021).

The 2016 LGEs produced the least (27) hung councils. Coalition governance became prominent in South African politics after the 2016 local government elections (Gumede, 2021; SABC, 2021). However, a coalition government has existed long before this. The first democratic government in South Africa was a Government of National Unity (GNU) type of coalition (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). The African National Congress (ANC) has dominated the local elections and controlled all the metropolitan municipalities in South Africa except the Cape Town metropolitan municipality, which has been led by the Democratic Alliance (DA). However, the ANC’s dominance had significantly declined by the 2016 elections which introduced multi-party governance through coalition.

Since then, local metropolitan municipalities have experienced sustained instabilities and contestation by political parties who want to retain power and control. These instabilities include disputes on the strategic direction of the council, fighting over positions, and blackmailing moves for one coalition partner to get leverage, frequent changes of political office bearers, council turmoil, deliberate boycotting council meetings, and an inability to pass budgets (Mbanyele & Moffat, 2021) or filling crucial political posts, and undermining municipal administration (Beukes, 2021:8-9). The instability comes about when political

parties fail to vote together on significant policy issues due to ideological differences (Motlanthe, 2021).

The inability of political parties to agree on voting and governance is negatively affecting local government. Other than failing to vote on budgets and filling political posts, political parties have also created a phenomenon of regular votes of no confidence in municipal mayors (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). This has led to negative public sentiments about the intentions of political representatives to promote the public good (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). As a result, some sections of the public have expressed unwillingness to vote in future elections because politicians are self-centred (Kreuser & Slade, 2021). Others have warned that the instability seen in metropolitan municipalities would also feature in the national government, where the ANC also failed to secure a majority to control the government (Mbanyele & Moffat, 2021).

Wary of the negative implications of coalition government, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) has commissioned the Dullah Omar Institute and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to assist with the drafting of a framework for coalitions in local government (Beukes & Jaap de Visser, 2021). The Deputy President, Mr Paul Mashatile, also advocated for the general acceptance of a legislative framework to regulate coalition governments (The National Dialogue on Coalition Governments, 2023). But the efforts to regulate coalitions do not seem to be succeeding yet. One of the concerns is the implication of undermining the enshrined constitutional values of participatory elections (Mbanyele & Moffat, 2021).

On the other hand, others support regulating coalitions because it is necessary to protect the functionality of local government (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). Section 152 of the Constitution (1996) vests legislative and executive authority in the municipal council. It means the national and provincial governments have no legal right to intervene arbitrarily in local government affairs, even when a municipality is failing to perform its duties. This implies instability within coalitions has the serious potential of undermining the efficiency of municipal executive and legislative functions (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). The effective exercise of these functions is crucial for capable and developmental local governance. As the highest decision-making body, the council must steer the municipality, determine its strategic direction, and make crucial decisions.

However, in practice, coalition governments have often been unstable and terminated before the end of the council term (Mbanyele & Moffat, 2021). There has been deliberate collapse of council meetings and walk-outs (Davis, 2023) and lack of passing budget votes which leads to lack of service delivery (Gumede, 2023). Regular presentations of frivolous motions of no confidence (Davis, 2023), and changes of municipal leadership creates serious instability in terms of governance (Moloto et al., 2020), in addition to the complaints about corruption (Davis, 2023), including wasteful expenditure and nepotism (Davis, 2023).

Factors that have led to the collapse of coalitions include lack of conflict management systems (Gumede, 2023), lack of good policies (Sithole, 2023) and not honouring agreements or commitments (Hinfelaar & Sichone, 2019), and those parties that enjoy kingmaker status dictating terms or making unreasonable demands. Kingmaker parties are those with parties whose buy-in and support are needed by parties who need more seats to obtain a required majority to govern or confirm a vote (Farole, 2021). Other factors include parties with the most voter percentage dominating the coalition process by overshadowing their partners (Moloto et al., 2020), disputes over strategic positions of governance (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA, 2021), and vendettas and dislodging the governing party (Booyesen, 2018).

South Africa has eight metropolitan municipalities, and five of them are under a coalition government, namely, City of Ekurhuleni, City of eThekweni, City of Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay, and City of Tshwane (Joshua et al., 2022). Gumede, cited by Motlanthe (2021) commented that Ekurhuleni in Gauteng Province is among the examples of successful or more stable coalitions in metropolitan municipalities. The ANC in Ekurhuleni worked with political parties and civic movements such as the African Independent Congress (AIC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Patriotic Alliance (PA) and the Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa (IRASA).

The former mayor of Ekurhuleni, Mr Mzwandile Masina, credited team work, robust governance, accountability, and effective oversight of the executives for the success of the metropolitan municipality (Feketha, 2021). Booyesen (2021:269) said protecting the municipal administration from political infighting was one of the key strategies to build

stable coalitions. In other words, political parties should ensure seamless function of the municipality despite prevailing political disagreements.

It is therefore the intention of this study to understand the impact of coalitions on the aspects of local government administration.

1.2. Problem statement

The study seeks to understand the impact of coalitions within the City of Johannesburg, the City of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, the City of Ekurhuleni and the City of eThekweni. Over the past 12 years, an increasing number of local government councils in South Africa have been run by political coalitions.

This trend is more pronounced in the metropolitan councils, where there is fierce political contestation, and evolved because in these councils there was no political party which was able to win an outright majority (Olver, 2021). However, these local coalitions have proved to be unstable mainly because they have been established based on a marriage of convenience rather than on a minimum set of principles, values and objectives. In the absence of a binding or founding framework, the partnership remains adversarial. Each member of the coalition continues to pursue their inward-looking interests, thus undermining the principle of collaborative governance (Olver, 2021).

The coalition government has proven to be a very tricky form of governance, with many shortcomings, such as party policy differences, and political parties at loggerheads trying to implement their different local government manifestos without finding a common ground to co-govern. The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMB) in Eastern Cape Province, the City of Johannesburg, the City of Tshwane and the City of Ekurhuleni in Gauteng Province, as well as the City of eThekweni in KwaZulu-Natal Province reflect a very sad state of a coalition government.

This sad state of a coalition government has been seen in the frequent change of leadership that creates political instability and impacts negatively on the administration of the council and the entire municipality (Mbanyele & Moffat, 2021). In the five years (2016 – 2021), since a DA-led coalition ousted the ANC, the City of Tshwane has had four mayors, and was unlawfully placed under provincial administration by the Gauteng

Province Executive Council (Olver, 2021). The City of Johannesburg has had eight mayors since the 2016. This shows the deep-seated political conflicts that affect coalitions at the local government level.

The vendetta politics of getting rid of the ANC has been a greater motivation of coalition parties instead of establishing guidelines for cooperation and the day-to-day business of governing; nor is there a common ground on policy issues to create administrative and political stability (Kotze, 2019). Such animosity and plain sabotage activities affect the smooth flow of operations, and service delivery becomes a challenge that affects the ratepayers, who get a raw deal from their local authority (Olver, 2021).

The NMB has somehow been a tragic story of how a city, entirely captured and bled dry by a criminal syndicate; a patronage system was created by business people, who bought and colluded with politicians and municipal officials (Kotze, 2018; Cherry, 2022). The metropolitan was turned around over a short space of time by a clean and efficient administration led by a DA coalition, only to be recaptured by the ANC through their proxy, the UDM, at the end of 2018 (Whitfield, 2020). The high turnover of key personnel affects the strategic direction of municipalities in the context of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The NMB changed mayors three times and had five municipal managers between 2011 and 2016.

After the 2011 local government elections, and the assumption of office by the new municipal council, Zanoxolo Wayile was appointed mayor; however, he was replaced by Ben Fihla due to the ANC's internal conflict. Ben Fihla was replaced by Danny Jordaan, with the hope that he would restore the governance of the city. The city operated for two years without a municipal manager after the departure of Graham Richards in June 2009. Elias Ntoba was appointed MM on an acting basis till 2011.

Themba Hani replaced Ntoba, also on an acting basis while the process of appointing a permanent MM was on-going. However, in 2013, Lindiwe Msengana-Ndlela was appointed as permanent MM (Ndletyana & Nomarwayi, 2016). This level of instability leads to deep-rooted corruption (Kotze, 2019). The study seeks to understand the impact of coalitions within the City of Johannesburg, the City of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, the City of Ekurhuleni, and the City of eThekweni, specifically examining their influence on the effectiveness of local government administration in these metropolitan municipalities.

1.3. Primary research question

The following is the primary research question that guides the proposed study:

- To what extent has coalition government affected the stability and efficiency of metropolitan municipalities?

1.4. Research questions

To determine the impact of coalition government on the efficiency of Metropolitan municipalities, this study asks:

- How cooperative game theory and consociation theoretical underpinnings explain coalition formation?
- What are reasons and factors that result in the creation of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities?
- Why do coalition governments collapse in metropolitan municipalities?
- How has coalition government affected the stability and efficiency of metropolitan municipalities?
- What are the possible recommendations that can enhance local government administration in the context of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities?

1.5. Research objectives

- To clarify cooperative game theory and consociation theoretical underpinnings for coalition formation,
- To identify reasons and factors that result in the creation of local government coalitions in metropolitan municipalities,
- To explain the factors that have led to the collapse of coalition government in metropolitan municipalities,
- To describe the impact of coalition government on the stability and efficiency of metropolitan municipalities, and
- To suggest recommendations that can enhance local government administration in the context of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities.

1.6. Theoretical statement

Drawing from a theory focused on understanding governance in the context of coalitions, this study examines how coalition governments function in metropolitan municipalities, exploring their impact on policy-making processes, service delivery outcomes, administrative stability, and political accountability. The study posits that coalition governments in South African metropolitan areas face unique challenges such as managing divergent policy priorities, negotiating power-sharing arrangements, and maintaining coalition cohesion amidst external pressures.

1.7. Theoretical framework

It is imperative to provide a theoretical basis that forms the foundation on which the understanding of the study is based. The study will be guided by two theories; the first is on coalition formation and the second is focused on understanding governance in the context of coalitions. The basis of having two theories is to holistically look at the concept of coalition, because the formation of a coalition is equally crucial to understanding the governance aspect of the very same coalition.

The first theoretical focus is coalition formation. This necessitates using cooperative game theory, which assumes that groups of players, called coalitions, are the primary units of decision-making, and may enforce cooperative behaviour (Branzei et al., 2008). Consequently, cooperative games can be seen as a competition between coalitions of players, rather than between individual players. The basic assumption in cooperative game theory is that the grand coalition will form.

One of the main research questions in cooperative game theory is how to allocate in some fair way the pay-off of the grand coalition among the players. The answer to this question is related to a solution concept which, roughly speaking, is a vector that represents the allocation to each player. Different solution concepts based on different notions of fairness have been proposed in the cooperative game theory literature (Branzei et al., 2008).

The initial coalition theories based on cooperative game theory were policy-blind. They held that coalitions would form only to include the parties that were necessary to form a winning (majoritarian) coalition (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944; Riker, 1962;

Leiserson, 1966). More sophisticated studies, such as Laver and Schofield (1990), Sened (1996), Schofield (1995), and McKelvey and Schofield (1986, 1987), have also developed models in multiple dimensions addressing the lack of equilibrium by identifying other solution concepts that would produce centrist results, even if there exists no 'core' (i.e. a set of outcomes common in all possible majority coalitions).

Cooperative game theory provides a high-level approach as it only describes the structure, strategies, and pay-offs of coalitions, whereas non-cooperative game theory also looks at how bargaining procedures will affect the distribution of pay-offs within each coalition. The combination of cooperative game theory and consociation theory is relevant to this study as it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding both the formation of coalitions and their governance dynamics within South African metropolitan municipalities.

The second theoretical focus is on coalition governance. For this reason, consociation theory, advanced by Arend Lijphart (1981) and other scholars (McGarry & O'Leary, 2004), is the most influential theory in comparative political science. Its key contention is that divided territories, be they regions or states, with historically antagonistic ethnically, religiously or linguistically divided peoples, are effectively, prudently, and sometimes optimally, governed according to consociation principles (Stojanović, 2020).

Consociations can be both democratic and authoritarian, but complete consociation democracies respect four organisational principles (McGarry & O'Leary, 2006): (i) executive power-sharing (EPS) – where each of the main communities share in executive power, in an executive chosen following the principles of representative government; ii) autonomy or self-government – where each community enjoys some distinct measure of autonomy, particularly self-government in matters of cultural concern; iii) proportionality – where each is represented proportionally in key public institutions and is a proportional beneficiary of public resources and expenditures; and iv) veto-rights – where each can prevent changes that adversely affect their vital interests.

Consociation democracy is both highly contested in the academic literature and widely used by constitutional engineers working to re-establish democratic governance in deeply divided polities (Kelly, 2019). This is the notion that it is possible to identify factors that indicate the likelihood of successful adoption of a consociationalism democracy

(Ordukhanyan, 2020). Consociationalism is a form of institutional engineering, which maintains that ethnic or inter-group tension can be resolved democratically by the creation of a permanent multi-group coalition government.

The theory was largely developed by a group of political scientists in the late 1960s, who examined several Western European countries as anomalous cases of democratic stability; it has been significantly developed since then (Ordukhanyan, 2020). Consociationalism theory predicts that if, in a fractured society, a system of governance is created that shares governmental decision-making between political representatives of the disputant groups, then the conflict can be contained and a stable government can continue or be established (Salloukh, 2020). By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study offers a holistic analysis of how coalitions influence decision-making, power-sharing, and service delivery, ultimately shaping the effectiveness of local government administration.

1.8. Brief literature review

The thrust of this section is on the provision of a brief literature review on the subject matter. The focus of this brief literature review is to provide case studies in different countries about the way coalitions are formed and the challenges that are inherently attached to the political concept. The literature review will provide case studies of coalitions, at both the national and local government levels.

1.8.1 Coalitions as a political solution

Over the last two decades, the formation of coalitions has grown in the European world, even in countries with no previous political experience with them. Alongside a significant rise in both new and radical parties, coalitions signal the increasing fragmentation of contemporary world politics. Coalitions are increasingly on the table of political solutions, mainly by new opposition parties, who seek to unite and dislodge a ruling party which in many cases, would have been in power for a very long time (Morini & Loveless, 2021).

Whether or not a coalition is stable is mostly determined by the political dynamics between the coalition partners. Most of those dynamics fall outside of what can be regulated by law: success depends on intangibles such as personal attitudes, political

maturity, mutual respect, leadership styles, etc. Furthermore, the reasons for the failure of a coalition can be many. Sometimes, a coalition will fail because of sincere policy differences between the coalition partners. Other times, a coalition will fail because of an unanticipated event with grave political consequences (Morini & Loveless, 2021).

1.8.2 Coalitions in Germany

One cannot study coalitions and leave out the German case study, because it is one of the few countries in the world which has had an unusual coalition history and experience. Germany provides an interesting case study in understanding the way coalitions have been carried out in the European country. For almost six months – 171 days – following Germany's legislative election on September 24, 2017, a caretaker government presided over the country, and a record was set for the length of time between an election and the formation of Germany's government.

On March 14, 2018, a new government was finally formed, with Angela Merkel re-elected as chancellor, leading a government of a renewed grand coalition of the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats (the Christian Democratic sister parties the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria [Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands or CDU and Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern or CSU] and the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or SPD) (Hornung, Rüsenberg, Eckert & Bandelow, 2020).

In the context of Germany, before the start of negotiations to form a German government, the chair of the majority party usually invites the chairs of potential coalition partners' parties that may be of political and strategic benefit to the party to exploratory meetings. If these talks are successful, the process of government formation continues. After the 2017 election, it quickly became clear who those potential coalition partners were, as the SPD had stated publicly that it would not join another grand coalition. Thus, the only parties left to form a politically compatible majority in parliament were CDU/CSU, the Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party; FDP), and the Greens. One important lesson from the German coalitions that is critical to identify is the idea that the process of government formation enables top-level party personnel to gamble on their political posts and political survival. The intraparty backing of top-level politicians, therefore, influences whether parties enter coalitions, as politicians act to advance their interests and pursue

party leadership roles and governmental positions, even if their actions do not gain votes for the party or advance the party's policy objectives. Paradoxically, policy-seeking is also likely to remain crucial to gaining party members' approval (Zittel & Nyhuis, 2018).

To an increasing degree, coalition negotiations turn on intraparty power games centred on politicians' individual goals; the goals of parties negotiating as unitary actors are declining in importance (Zittel & Nyhuis, 2018). Together with intraparty power games, the role of social media in building trust among coalition partners is substantial. While coalition negotiations in earlier decades largely took place behind closed doors, they are now visible to the public, with the possibility of each participant leaking important information, including the blaming and praising of individual actors, even as the negotiations unfold. However, mutual trust is essential for productive cooperation, particularly in political processes, and this does not refer only to interparty disputes but is equally related to intraparty politics (Hornung, Rüsenberg, Eckert & Bandelow, 2020).

1.8.3 Grand coalitions in Europe

In recent decades, grand coalitions (GCs) in which mainstream parties ally with previous rivals or even new challengers, have become more common in European politics. When election results produce no clear winners or no coherent majorities can be formed, GCs become an option to avoid political paralysis or a second election. Some political scientists consider GCs a 'last resort' in desperate times (Campbell, 2015). Safire's Political Dictionary defines these government's majority arrangements as 'unholy alliances and the parties involved as 'strange bedfellows' (Safire, 2008: 132).

The number of GCs in the European Union (EU) has been increasing, with no difference in whether countries are using proportional representation or majority election systems. Since 2004, there have been 17 GCs in 11 European countries. While some countries have become quite familiar with the arrangement – Austria (three times), Belgium (two times), and Germany (three times) – others have had only brief experiences. In the literature, the participation of mainstream parties in GCs is seen as the beginning of a spiral toward electoral irrelevance (Jacoby, 2017), particularly for socialists and left-wing movements (Garton-Ash, 2018).

It appears that grand coalitions have become a less exceptional choice for mainstream parties to hold onto power, and to exclude populist movements and new parties from going into the government. Not being in the position to govern on their own or with the traditional allies for mere arithmetical questions, the major partners of future grand coalitions prefer to enter a coalition with traditional mainstream long-term rival parties, instead of including 'awkward' partners in the government coalition. Long-term rivals may be ideologically distant, but they are preferred as coalition partners to political organisations which have no government experience and are often characterised by anti-establishment sentiments and harsh rhetoric against mainstream parties and their constituents.

In some cases, however, apart from the mainstream parties' natural mistrust towards these 'new challengers', it is the challengers themselves who are against any form of post-election alliance or government negotiation with other parties. Together, this provides an alternative explanation for the mainstream parties' intentions for entering a GC; namely, their desire to exclude unwanted extreme parties rather than flagging electoral performance.

1.8.4 Other international cases

India is one of the countries that comes to mind, with the formation of a coalition government being a result of the diverse and multi-party nature of Indian politics, with no single party able to secure a majority on its own (Blare & Van Willigen, 2021). The diversity of interests within the coalition is leading to disagreements and infighting, making decision-making and governance more difficult, as observed by Blare and Van Willigen (2021). The accountability of the government also becomes more complex, as coalition partners have different agendas and priorities, leading to policy paralysis and instability (Blare & Van Willigen, 2021).

The United Kingdom also comes to mind, considering that in recent years, there has been a growing movement in the United Kingdom to push for electoral reform. "Electoral reform has been a recurring issue over the last 100 years" (Heller, 2021). Activists and political organisations are advocating for the abandonment of the first-past-the-post voting system in favour of a proportional representation system (Hjermitslev, 2020). The current system has been criticised for being exclusive and shutting out the voices of minority parties and

individuals (Klüver & Spoon, 2020). Proportional representation would address this issue by ensuring that the distribution of seats in parliament reflects the proportion of votes received by each party. This would allow for a more diverse and inclusive government, where the voices of all citizens are represented (Klüver & Spoon, 2020). Whitaker and Martin (2022) predict that if the United Kingdom were to adopt a coalition government, it would mark a significant shift in the country's political landscape. Instead of one party holding the majority of seats in parliament, a coalition government would require different political parties to work together to form a government. This arrangement could lead to more collaboration and compromise, as well as a greater representation of diverse political views and interests.

1.8.5 Coalitions in Kenya

It is also imperative to understand coalitions from an African context as well, which is key in benchmarking with the South African context of coalitions. Kenya held its fourth multi-party elections in 2007. It turned out to be Kenya's most closely-contested election, but also the most poorly managed since the return to multi-party democracy in 1992 (Etyang, 2022). Although the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) declared the incumbent and Party of National Unity (PNU) candidate Mwai Kibaki the winner, this was immediately disputed by the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which averred that their presidential candidate, Raila Odinga, was the winner (Nangulu, 2021).

Unprecedented violence resulted from the ensuing conflict, and peace was not restored until a group of distinguished individuals, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, mediated the issue. The PNU and the ODM formed a coalition government as a result of the peace agreement. Before the agreement, ODM-Kenya, the third-largest party in the 2007 election, was already a partner in the administration of PNU. As a result, the country lacked an official opposition when the coalition government of 2007 was comprised of all three major parties (Etyang, 2022). Kenya's coalitions have shown that the building of party alliances and coalitions in Kenya is motivated by factors such as previous election results, the electoral system, the constitutional term limit, the political system and the country's ethnolinguistic characteristics (Vandeginste & Penu, 2018). Kenyan political parties form pre-election alliances and post-election coalitions as a vote- and office-seeking strategy (Nyong'o, 2021). In the same vein, the alliances and coalitions contribute

to national cohesion in Kenya by bringing together polarised political parties and ethnic groups, and a more equitable sharing of national resources (Vandeginste & Penu, 2018).

The politics of inclusion, which characterise grand coalitions like NARC (2002) and PNU-ODM, have contributed greatly to national cohesion, while smaller coalitions make sections of the population feel that they are under-represented in the institutions of the state. The building of grand coalitions almost annihilates opposition, thus limiting checks and balances. While party alliances and coalitions do contribute to a degree of national cohesion, their disintegration may, in certain circumstances, lead to politically-motivated ethnic violence, and therefore to undoing the progress achieved in national cohesion (Nyong'o, 2021).

One of the effects of coalition politics in Kenya is the actualisation of the concept of power-sharing in government and political office. The winner-takes-all situation normally associated with the electoral system has somehow been ameliorated by the new coalition politics. By formalising the coalition agreement between the United Republican Party (URP) and The National Alliance (TNA), the current Jubilee government is evenly constituted on a 50-50 basis. Power-sharing arrangements under the new dispensation are more vividly manifested in the sharing of different tiers of government between the Jubilee and CORD coalitions.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the new Constitution was the creation of a two-tier government consisting of the national government and the 47 county governments (devolved government) across the country (Neubert & von Oppen, 2018). The Kenyan case study provides lessons for the South African local government aspect, as the coalitions are not only on a national scale but also devolve into the local government structures. This is a departure from past practice, where, upon losing power, opposition parties were almost always consigned to oblivion, which also explained their refusal to accept election outcomes in the past. This power-sharing arrangement is new. It is worth observing the consequences of Kenya's party alliance and coalition politics over an extended period, from one election to the next, provided the alliances and configurations which remain largely constructed along current lines (Sekatle & Sebola, 2020).

1.8.6 Coalitions in Lesotho

Ever since independence from Britain in 1966, Lesotho has been an experimental laboratory of various models of governance. The country has experienced multi-party models, plain dictatorships, one-party dominated models, military juntas, and recently, coalition governments (Mothibe, 2017). After a long spell of unelected and repressive governments since 1970, the country returned to electoral politics in 1993. As is the norm with African transitions, Lesotho's transition into electoral politics was marked by much fanfare and optimism. However, such optimism was shattered by the immediate start of a dominant party system ('Nyane & Kapa, 2021).

June 3, 2017 marked the third time in five years that Lesotho held a general election. The election came on the heels of Democratic Congress (DC) Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili losing a no-confidence motion in March in Parliament. His unwieldy seven-party coalition degenerated into infighting less than two years after taking office. This was the second coalition failure in three years. In 2014, the All-Basotho Convention (ABC) Prime Minister, Tom Thabane's five-party coalition crumbled only two years after taking office (Likoti, 2021). The rapid disintegration of two successive coalition governments and continued political violence at the highest levels of politics and security have tarnished the hope seen at the time (Williams, 2019).

Looking at the impact the coalition has had on the investment attractiveness of the country, Buti (2018) observed that Lesotho has been perceived as a risky investment destination. Buti (2018) also observed that coalition government is problematic in Lesotho, as stakeholders have no clear understanding of the context and content of the coalition type of government due to the collapse of two such governments before their respective ends of term. The political unrest fuelled by the conflict between political parties and the killing of two army commanders within the space of three years arose as a result of conflicting interests between coalition partners and has made the coalition unsustainable (Likoti, 2021).

The country has found itself embroiled in a series of unfortunate incidents that have led to numerous social and economic hardships. As a result, the mayhem has not only created an environment that is not conducive for businesses to thrive and for investors to invest, but it has also tarnished the image of the country globally (Buti, 2018). Williams

(2019) established that there is a lack of civic education and a lack of political maturity amongst political parties and their leaders in Lesotho, aspects that are crucial to the sustainability of any coalition arrangement.

1.8.7 Coalitions in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, together with Kenya in 2008, were the first countries in Africa to have governments of national unity (GNU) in post-independent Africa in the 21st century. Just like the Kenya case study, the GNU came as a result of the failure to meet the simple majority, as enshrined in the Constitution to run the government. The basis of using the Kenya and Zimbabwe GNU case studies is premised on the need to drive home the point that power can be shared if the interested parties concerned are willing to share power; a critical component in a coalition. The GNU was a power-sharing agreement that saw two competing political powers working together to promote social cohesion and economic restoration of a country that had been in tatters for close to a decade (Kufakurinani, 2021).

The failure to find a simple majority winner had to do with the fact that irregularities and accusations of fraud marred the whole electoral process that threw a lifeline to The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) (the ruling party) at the expense of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), who claimed to have won the 2008 general elections by over 60% (Rusero, 2019). The country experienced massive political violence, which saw the incumbent winning by over 60% after a violent campaign that killed over 200 people (Nhengu & Murairwa, 2020).

As part of the solution, South Africa, the African Union and the United Nations brokered a grand coalition government, which was nothing but a way of saving the incumbent remaining in power, as Rusere (2019) observed. The South African government's doctrine of buying political and social peace through governments of national unity has not only proved unacceptable to most Africans but has turned out to be a formula for allowing tyrants to stay in power. The option of a coalition government or 'government of national unity' as a reprieve and relief following a disputed poll has proved to be a false start, and a polished euphemism of the African continent's quest and ideated slogan of 'African solutions to African problems' (Rusere, 2019: 01). Assessing the effectiveness of the power-sharing arrangement from the period of 2008-2-13, one has to look at the

objectives the arrangement had necessitated for its creation. The thrust of the power-sharing arrangement was to provide national healing and improve the socio-economic livelihoods of the citizens. From a political cohesion aspect, the GNU prevented the country from descending into chaos, thereby altering the enemy images among the political parties, ZANU–PF and the two MDC formations (Oosterom, 2019).

The GNU also saw the institutionalisation of a national infrastructure for peace-building through the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), and the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) provided the building blocks for an ephemeral peace in the country. The work of the ONHRI and the JOMIC in the various communities influenced the elimination of the then-existing direct forms of violence, paving the way for the institutionalisation of reforms in the political and economic spheres of the country (Oosterom, 2019). From an economic aspect, it is imperative to bear in mind the fact that the GNU was established at a time when the country was facing hyperinflation, a sustained period of negative gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates, and massive devaluation of the currency. Article 31(a) of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) prioritised the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe (Kriger, 2018). The Government of Zimbabwe came up with two Short-term Emergency Recovery Programmes: STERP 1 and STERP 2. Between 2009 and 2012, following the introduction of these two economic policies, the economy rebounded, registering significant growth averaging 10.5% per annum (Kriger, 2018).

However, contrary to the highlighted achievements, several conflict undercurrents among the political parties resulted in disagreements and disengagements among the government's key actors (Mwonzora & Helliker, 2022). This indicates that the GNU in Zimbabwe failed to effect complete conflict transformation in the country. Socially, citizens continued to suffer massive water and power cuts, poor health facilities, the collapse of the manufacturing industry, and a skills flight, five years after the implementation of the GNU (Mwonzora & Helliker, 2022).

Politically, leaders from all parties focused more on political partisanship and self-aggrandisement at the expense of improving the economy (Rusero, 2019). The GNU Cabinet included 41 ministers, an increase from the former composition of 31 ministers, prompting over-expenditure on salaries and related packages. The appointment of the

attorney general before the installation of the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai was also a violation of the GPA, which provided for the prime minister to be appointed before the appointment of the attorney general.

This showed a disregard for the rule of law, even at the onset of the GNU (Rusero, 2019). The power tug-of-war between Mugabe and Tsvangirai is enough proof of the failure of political leaders to move their political interests from the individual to the collective. Mugabe refused to cede power to Tsvangirai, offering him the position of third vice president while, on the other hand, Tsvangirai was adamant that he would accept nothing less than the position of Prime Minister with full executive powers in a two-year transitional government (Rusero, 2019).

1.9. Research design and methodology

The research will make use of qualitative research methodology which is in most cases adopted when the researcher is motivated to theorise a critical issue or when undertaking to interrogate a new research area (Gill, 2014:87). Mohajan (2018:25) states that qualitative research as methodology involves the collection and use of non-numeric data to understand the experiences and obtain insight into the opinions and explanations of the participants. Johnson (1998) describes research design as a strategy on which a study will be based, and the architectural plan on which the strategy is to be carried out.

A research design exhaustively brings out the planned manner and systematic processes on which data collection, measurement, and analyses are to be carried out (Robson, 2011). Ivankova, Cresswell and Plano-Clark (2016) are of the view that a research design is a master plan or blueprint that influences the researcher on how to carry out the study. In the context of this study, the phenomenology research design will be adopted to aid the research methodology in understanding the phenomenon.

Nieuwenhuis (2019:77) defines it as a design that focuses on understanding the 'essence' and meaning their experiences had on the people taking part in the study. With this research design, a researcher can establish a pattern from the sources and develop a composite and generic essence of the experience for all the sources (Nieuwenhuis, 2019:54).

Under this research design, the study adopted the psychosocial phenomenology, which focuses more on the information of experiences by the participants rather than the interpretations of the researcher (Shaw et al., 2011:34). The design will fit in well with the qualitative research methodology that the proposed study will adopt. Charles and Metler (2010) explain research methodology as the systematic procedure adopted by the study to guide how the study collects and processes data to come up with a reliable and constructive conclusive position. In explaining the research methodological concepts, the study will provide the rationale and justification that warrants the adoption of any techniques or tools to be used.

1.9.1 Data collection techniques

The study uses desktop research due to the challenges of obtaining permission and recruiting participants, such as councillors and council officials from the metropolitan councils. Desktop research is done on the basis that it is cost-effective to get the required data from several sources that have data that can be validated and confirmed easily, and help the study to make conclusions. Due to their big sizes and commercial activities, metro cities attract the attention of both national and local news agencies, and the attention of the entire nation as compared to smaller local municipalities. They also attract academics and policy-makers, and because of that, there is a lot of literature which is academic, relating to news and policy positions, hence making desktop research a feasible aspect.

1.9.2 Data analysis

The researcher developed themes from literature review and will confirm these with empirical evidence from metropolitan municipalities. This study relies on thematic analysis as a result (Clarke & Braun, 2012; Boyatzis, 2010).

Figure 1: Determinants of unstable coalitions (own construction).

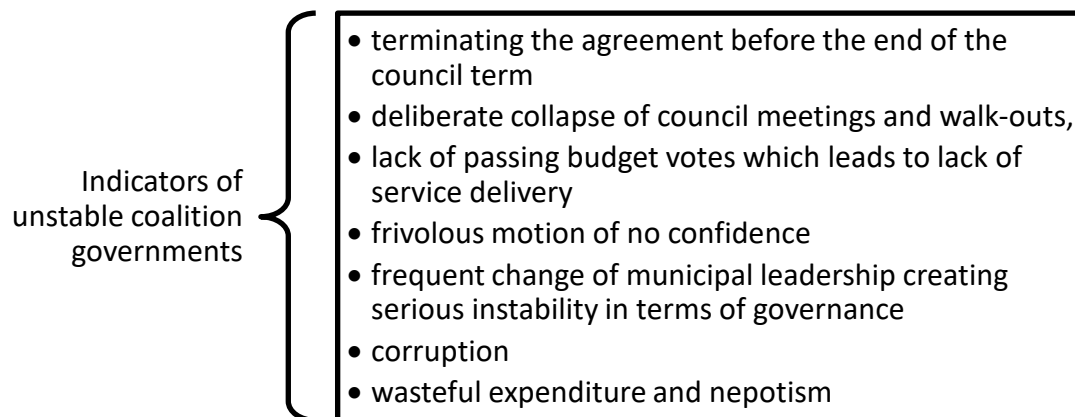
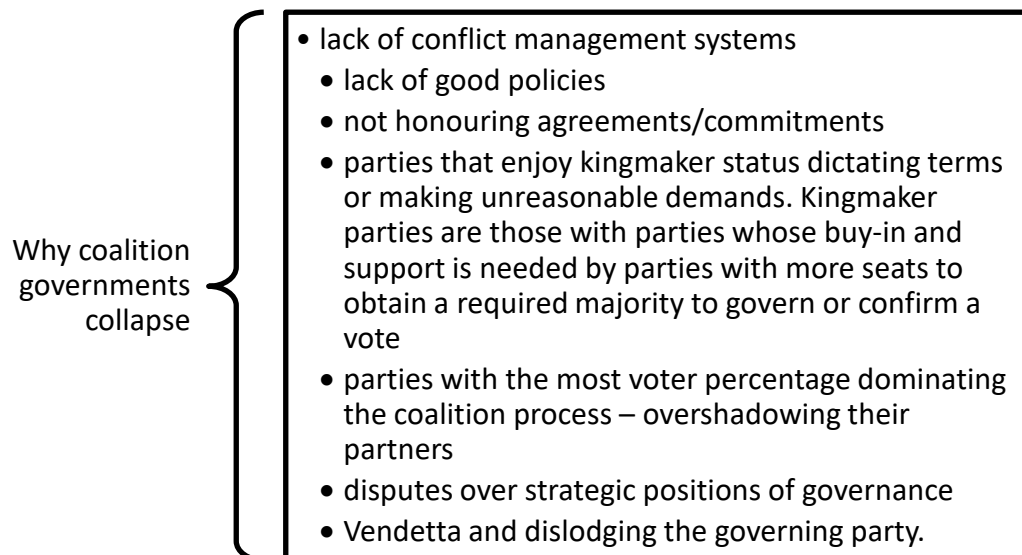


Figure 2: Reasons for the collapse of coalition governments (own construction)



The theoretical connection with empirical realities in South African metropolitan municipalities.

Figure 3: The cooperative theoretical underpinnings for coalition formation (own construction)

Cooperative game theory			
Players in decision-making and nature of relations cooperation/vendetta	Type of coalition formation: grand coalition, minimal-majority and bare-majority coalition	Allocation of pay-offs	Policy awareness/blindness

Figure 4: The consociation theoretical underpinnings for managing coalitions (own construction)

It linked the cooperative theoretical underpinnings for coalition formation which are vital to resolve the instability of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities.

Consociation theory			
Territorial/geographic inclusion	Inclusion – ethnicity, religion, language	Democratic or authoritarian coalition	Organisational principles and conflict resolution: i) executive power-sharing; ii) autonomy or self-government; iii) proportionality, and iv) veto-rights

1.9.3 Population and sampling

The study will analyse five metropolitan municipalities out of the eight in South Africa. The study selected the following five metros; the City of Johannesburg, the City of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, the City of Ekurhuleni, and the City of eThekweni. These metropolitan municipalities were and are still under a coalition government at the time of undertaking the study hence being chosen.

1.9.4 Limitations of study

This study will be limited to the case study of the five identified metros under coalition governments. The study will entirely focus on the subject matter of coalitions in the South African local government sphere.

1.10. Research ethics

This is a low-risk study which is undertaken using the desktop research approach that does not involve any human participants. However, the study used social media channels such as YouTube to watch council meetings. Council meetings are streamlined in order for the public to follow council proceeding and they do not require ethical clearance from the university. However, the North-West University has granted ethical clearance, which grants the permission for the study to be undertaken, taking into consideration all ethical policies of the university the study adheres to.

1.11. Significance of study

This study is crucial in the sense that it contextualises the impact that coalitions have on the effectiveness and level of quality administration in South African municipalities. Local governments are the arm of government that is directly connected to the citizens and provide day-to-day operations that benefit the communities. They are the drivers and key players of community development that are mandated to ensure the provision of basic services and infrastructure for the socio-economic development of communities.

South Africa has a lot of social and economic problems that stem from bad politics, which have infested the whole political spectrum from the national government right down to the local government. The politics is toxic and affects the service delivery of communities that desperately need the attention of the municipalities for the improvement of households' livelihood and escaping poverty. It is therefore imperative for the research to act as an advocate of good governance in the local government discourse and the growing literature on the subject matter that seeks to positively provide solutions and frameworks to ensure citizens benefit from well-administered local municipalities.

1.12. Chapter layout

The dissertation follows a structured chapter layout to ensure a logical progression of the research.

Chapter One introduces the study, providing the motivation for the research, the problem statement, the objectives, and the overall organisation of the dissertation.

Chapter Two establishes the theoretical framework, outlining the key theories and concepts that underpin the study. This framework serves as a foundation for analysis and interpretation.

Chapter Three presents a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to the research topic. It identifies gaps in the literature and situates the study within the broader academic discourse.

Chapter Four details the research methodology, explaining the study's design, data collection techniques, sampling methods, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five focuses on data presentation, analysis, and discussion of the research findings, linking them back to the theoretical framework and literature review.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation by summarising key findings, drawing conclusions, and offering recommendations based on the study's outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO: COOPERATIVE GAME AND CONSOCIATION THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS FOR COALITION GOVERNMENT

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is premised on the need to have a critical analysis and review of the existing literature on coalition governments. Key to this discussion will be the aspect of providing a conceptual framework that provides the theoretical foundations and shapes the perspective from which the study looks at things and is built. The chapter reviewing the existing literature will also provide arguments from different scholars and the literature gap that the study seeks to fill.

2.2. The essence of a coalition and actors in it

The term coalition is also applied in many contexts, but the bottom line is the coming together of two or more parties joining forces for one common cause (Galimullin, 2019). Coalitions are formed by actors varying from two or more people, factions, states, political parties, militaries, and sectors of society cooperating on a temporary basis (Sened, 1996; Pierce & Osei-Kojo, 2022). However, a coalition is not supposed to erase the identity of the parties involved (Pierce & Osei-Kojo, 2022).

It is worth noting that the concept of coalition is applicable in pursuance of social causes like anti-drug abuse initiatives, promoting healthy and safe communities. In other words, a coalition is not only for government formation. Therefore, coalitions are time bound, goal-oriented, based on identity preservation, and promoting cooperation. The principle of cooperation is mainly about sharing resources, skills, and sharing responsibility and political power. Coalitions can be a uniting force that reduces partisan interactions in the political community, and is thereby, a suitable tool to solve political problems that come with majoritarian governance characterised by winner-take-all 'first-past-the-post' electoral systems (Martin & Vanberg, 2008).

2.3. Fundamentals of forming coalitions and making them work

The popularity of proportional electoral systems around the world has necessitated the formation of coalition governments where there is no outright majority winner. But there

often are problems with coalitions that collapse due to political ideological differences and disagreements on fundamental policy priorities.

2.3.1 Cooperative game theory explanations for coalition formation

The study of coalition formation in cooperative game theory is crucial for understanding how rational agents work together to strategically maximise their overall benefits. The cooperative game theory differs from non-cooperative game theory in that it considers the ability of agents to make enforceable agreements to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes (Maestre et al., 2014). The important elements of cooperative game theory include the concepts of coalitions, pay-off distributions, and the core.

A coalition is a group of players who come together to pursue a common goal; in the same vein, pay-off distributions determine how the benefits of cooperation are shared among coalition members, and the core represents the set of pay-off distributions where no subgroup of players can improve their outcomes by forming a different coalition (Ray, 2007).

The cooperative game theory concerning motivations that drive the formation of coalitions is the view that agents engage in coalition formation primarily to leverage mutual advantages that surpass what they could attain individually (Shenoy, 1979). Agents form coalitions to combine their resources and abilities to achieve better outcomes than they could on their own. This is driven by several factors, including the ability to achieve economies of scale, share risks, increase their bargaining power, and gain access to resources or expertise that may be difficult or expensive to attain individually (Chalkiadakis et al., 2010).

The creation of coalitions requires careful planning and decision-making, as agents must consider factors such as compatibility, trust, and shared goals when selecting partners, and negotiating terms and conditions of the coalition. Agents should carefully evaluate potential coalition partners based on their capabilities, reliability, and alignment of objectives (Bloch, 2003). Securing agreements that satisfy all participants involves bargaining over the distribution of benefits and the allocation of responsibilities within the coalition (Bloch, 2003). It is crucial to address issues such as free-riding, defection, and

commitment levels to ensure the sustainability and coherence of the coalition (Bloch, 2003).

2.3.1.1 Players in decision-making and the nature of their relations

Cooperative game theory offers a strong model for studying and analysing how rational players strategise to reach mutual benefits through collaboration in decision-making processes (Shenoy, 1979). In cooperative game theory, players are participants who strategically interact to achieve outcomes that benefit everyone. Each player assesses potential partnership based on their goals, abilities, and the anticipated advantages of working together. Players can include individuals in economic situations or nations in global alliances, each bringing resources, skills, or influence to help achieve shared goals and objectives (Friend, Laing & Morrison, 1977).

In cooperative game theory, decision-making involves strategic thinking to maximise collective benefits while considering individual interests. Important aspects of decision-making include developing strategies, distributing rewards, commitment and collaboration. Players generating plans to maximise their rewards as part of the coalition, considering factors such as choosing partners, negotiation tactics, and keeping the coalition stable.

Regarding the distribution of rewards, negotiations focus on dividing up rewards among coalition members, considering their contributions, abilities, and bargaining power (Humphreys, 2008). Regarding commitment and collaboration, players must commit to working together in ways that align with the coalition's goals, balancing immediate gains with long-term sustainability and trust between members (Humphreys, 2008).

2.3.1.2 Types of coalition formation and their implications

The two key types of coalitions within the context of cooperative game theory are minimal and bare-majority coalitions. In the field of cooperative game theory, minimal coalitions are the smallest groups of players that can unite to achieve a specific goal or outcome (Ray, 2007). Understanding these coalitions is crucial for determining how payoffs are disseminated, and for ensuring the stability of cooperative arrangements among players. Minimal coalitions are characterised by their ability to accomplish specific objectives or

results that those individual participants cannot achieve on their own (Gilles, 2010). These objectives can vary from maximising shared profits in business partnerships to influencing policy decisions in political alliances.

Minimal coalitions are both essential and effective in achieving a particular outcome within the framework of cooperative game theory. This means that without the involvement of all members of a minimal coalition, the desired outcome cannot be achieved, and their participation guarantees the accomplishment of that outcome (Gilles, 2010). Understanding minimal coalitions is essential for evaluating the stability of cooperative agreements. If a minimal coalition exists where members are tempted to defect or join other coalitions, the stability of the current coalition may be jeopardised (Gilles, 2010).

Another type of a coalition to consider is the bare majority type of a coalition. In cooperative game theory, a bare-majority coalition type defines a subset of coalitions where the number of players is enough to form a simple majority within the entire group (Ray & Vohra, 2015). This type of a coalition is important in political scenarios such as voting systems, and other decision-making processes that rely on majority rule to reach decisions (Ray & Vohra, 2015). Political parties are inspired by the need to i) gain dominance in elections, ii) increase their influence in policy directions of a coalition government, and iii) get the most strategic positions in the coalition setting (Fredén, 2021).

These three needs are summarised as office, policy, and vote-seeking perspectives of political party dominance (Fredén, 2021). This perspective has straightforward implications for local coalition formation: parties should prefer coalitions that (i) have the support of a majority in parliament, (ii) include a preferably small number of partisan actors and (iii) are ideologically cohesive. Therefore, coalitions on the local level should be more likely if they reflect the characteristics of key coalition theories that help to explain the coalition game outcome on other levels of the political system.

From an office-seeking point of view, coalitions should be more likely to form if they are minimal or minimum winning coalitions (Krauss & Kluever, 2022). This means the bigger the coalition set up is, the fewer strategic offices there are for sharing; therefore, it is important to consider the transaction costs. Considerations of the transaction cost imply that the largest party in parliament should maximise on its chances to form a government

during a coalition (Krauss & Kluever, 2022). Policy-seeking perspectives of party dominance show that coalitions work best when comprised of centrist political ideological orientations (Lee, 2022).

According to the political spectrum (political compass), median policy positions are at the centre of left and right ideological positions. This could mean a median policy position strikes a balance and appeals to the interests of most electorates; inclusive or non-partisan policies in other words (Lee, 2022). The direct election of the mayors creates an additional institutional constraint for local political actors about coalition formation. The mayors can shape the local policy agenda, in particular in their function as the head of the local administration.

2.3.1.3 Allocation of pay-offs and the policy perspectives

Coalitions ought to be a win-win situation for everyone involved. Coalition agreements set out to ensure that everyone involved gets to advance their political objectives, as set out in their manifestos. This will also enable everyone to delegate representatives in key public offices to showcase their abilities to improve service delivery. Coalition agreements also enable everyone involved to re-build their strategies and adjust their policy priorities to win power in the next electoral cycle (Kalandrakis, 2010). Policy awareness or blindness occurs when members of a coalition are either unaware or choose to ignore the established policies that are meant to dictate how pay-offs should be distributed (Kalandrakis, 2010).

This can be caused by factors such as incomplete information, strategic agendas, or conflicting interpretations of the policies among coalition members. It is vital to understand and address policies in cooperative game theory, as they determine how rewards are disseminated among coalitions (Kalandrakis, 2010). By promoting awareness and addressing blindness to these policies, cooperative game theory improves decision-making, fairness, and collaboration among rational agents striving for mutual benefits in different cooperative settings. Being aware of policies ensures that allocation decisions are fair, transparent, and in line with coalition goals, leading to trust, stability and effective cooperation within the coalition (Kalandrakis, 2010).

2.3.2 Consociation theory explanations for governing effective coalitions

Consociation theory is one of the few existing theories that tries to explain reasons why political parties resort to making pacts. Making pacts and political agreements amongst competing political parties has always been a mainstay in political history (Klingelhöfer & Müller, 2015). One of the commonly-used pacts is the Faustian pact. According to Mosala (2021:34), “a Faustian pact refers to a deal made with the devil for a life of limitless wealth and pleasure in return for one’s soul for eternity”. In a coalition government, the Faustian pact is when political parties trade their sacred values [ideological principles] in exchange for power sharing with political parties they have been calling evil or corrupt.

The example in South Africa is between the DA and ANC. Some political parties refuse to enter into a coalition for the same reasons as sacrificing their ideological persuasion, thinking political power is not worth it if it comes at such a cost. Another interpretation of a Faustian pact could be in the case of small parties entering into a coalition with a big party, even if that means losing their identity and voice. Consociational theorists generally outline several mechanisms by which to encourage elite cooperation and regulate conflict. “The first and key conflict-regulating mechanism in a consociation is a cross-community power-sharing executive, in which representative elites from different communities jointly prevent conflict” (Kelly, 2019:10). Other key mechanisms include community self-government, and proportionality, and sometimes include a form of group veto. It aims to encourage inter-group trust by instilling a culture of cooperation which originates with political elites and ‘trickles down’ to the community level (Kelly, 2019).

The concept of power-sharing is intrinsically linked to the concept of democracy: like the democratic model, power-sharing seeks the inclusion of segments of society that are excluded from the political decision-making process. The democratic model is inherently considered a fair and stable system of conflict management in post-war contexts and/or divided societies for its capacity to transform ethnic or group violence into participation and peaceful political competition (Kelly, 2019). This theory fits in well with the local government coalitions within the context of South Africa. Consociationalism is vital for stability in a polarised political system (Lijphart, 1969:216).

The stability comes about through political elites who guide society towards a common purpose and a national agenda for reforms. This requires political elites to embrace an

inclusive, not a majoritarian approach to policy decision-making. The theory was extended to a new concept of consensus democracy as a normative component of stable regimes (Kelly, 2019; McGarry, 2019). The proponents of consociationalism used case studies of Iran, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, and South Africa as some of the examples of deeply divided countries.

Switzerland has been characterised as a Consociational democracy since 1943, Belgium after World War I, Austria from 1945 to 1966, the Netherlands from 1917 to 1967, and Czechoslovakia from 1989 until its partition in 1993 (Van Haute & Wauters, 2019). Where consociationalism has ended, it often did so, not because of its failure but because of its success: it worked so well that it was no longer needed. Whereas India since 1947, Colombia from 1958 to 1974, Malaysia from 1955, and South Africa since 1994 can be considered successes from a normative view, Cyprus and Lebanon's experiments ended in civil war (Stojanović, 2020).

Consociations can be both democratic and authoritarian (McCulloch, 2021; Lijphart, 1985:13; McGarry, 2002:297) and are sensitive to divisions in society in the context of divided geographical territories [regions or states], ethnic antagonism, religious or linguistic divisions among people. Consociationalism promotes inclusive societies and managing power dynamics for stable public institutions and prosperous communities.

2.3.2.1 Inclusion criterion for successful coalitions

All Consociational analyses start with the destabilising effect of social segmentation, whether because there are coinciding cleavages (Lijphart, 1969:207–11), or because there is so little mobility between social segments that the usual democratic “game” of vote maximisation cannot be played (Lehmbruch, 1974:91), or because of what psychologists would call “in-group –out-group differentiation” (Nordlinger, 1972:7; Steiner, 1974:3). Building effective coalitions requires sensitivity to ethnic tensions in diverse societies. Much of the support for such arrangements relates to consociationalism's inclusive nature of executive decision-making, as well as its legislative guarantees for the main societal groups (Garry et al., 2017: 493).

Coalitions work better for unity when there is sufficient representation of elites from geographic areas in the country [provinces], and social segments such as generation mix,

ethnic and racial integration, and diverse languages and gender. This includes consideration for policy areas in the form of institutional re-alignment by decentralising functions to other spheres of government, even repurposing state departments for them to be more independent from political influence.

Nordlinger (1972:32), however, explicitly rejects such segmental autonomy as too strong an incentive for secessionist demands and threatening the stability of the political system. Lijphart (1977:44–47) is critical that decentralisation is not a sure solution for instability in divided societies. But even if Nordlinger's view is right, Lijphart argues, partition is an acceptable solution under certain conditions, e.g. when the social segments are geographically concentrated.

Coalitions as power-sharing tools are popular in post-conflict peacebuilding, or where the threat of conflict and state collapse is imminent, which is vital for the future growth of democratic institutions (Noel, 2005:1). A critical look is that of seeing coalitions as what they are, as a political device. That is, elites save face by giving up on the politics of violence and embracing engagement within political institutions in return for real executive power (Garry et al., 2017: 494). It is precisely this collaboration that has led critics to dismiss it as a distinctly elitist form of power-sharing; those risks insulate elites from the rest of society.

Putting elites in charge of state stability “not only may aggravate inter-group tensions but may also be inherently anti-democratic or manipulative” (Conley & Dahan, 2013: 4). The elites might be reluctant to broaden the scope of representation for non-dominant minorities or at least facilitate tokenistic participation of these groups in politics (Bochsler & Juon, 2021). Ethnic hegemons seek to co-opt their opponents into politics while attempting to maintain the pretence of ethnic inclusivity (Lijphart 1977:236; Conley & Dahan, 2013:4; Stojanović, 2020).

Policy awareness and interests of various sectors such as business, civic society, the poor, and homeless, ensure that all interests, not only of the coalitions' members but also of the broad society, are taken into consideration. When forming coalitions, political parties should take into consideration policy similarities between coalition partners. Nzimakwe (2022:30) opined that, “the parties that agree to govern in a coalition share similar philosophies and policies; otherwise, coalitions would not work”.

However, this has not been the case in many South African metropolitan municipalities. In many instances, policy consideration is the last thing on the minds of political parties when entering into coalitions. Office-seeking is one of the main drivers of coalitions in metropolitans, where it is more about which party acquires which positions than policy preferences (Geys et al., 2006). Political parties must consider coalition partners and their common policy preferences and objectives when forming a coalition government. Political parties should take into consideration policy interests of their marginalised constituencies which have voted for them, and to represent their interests, especially on issues that are absent from the political agenda. One of the core functions of the municipality is to identify the needs of the communities and develop policies through their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). Once all this has been done, the political office bearers (councillors representing political parties) have the responsibility to pass the budget for the implementation of such policies (Geys et al., 2006).

There are tensions of policy awareness versus political arrogance in metropolitan municipalities. For example, in the formation of coalition government after the 2016 local elections, one of the conditions put forward by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) as part of their coalition preference was on the issue of policies. The EFF said if a political party is willing to work with them, they should be aware of its policies, especially its seven "non-negotiable" cardinal pillars that include expropriation of land without compensation, and nationalisation of mines and banks (Makhafola, 2021).

On the other hand, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has been accused of being arrogant and trying to entrench its dominance and pushing its own party agenda at the expense of silencing other voices of small parties in the coalition. The small parties have accused the DA of wanting to play a brotherly role, forgetting that coalitions should be of all equal members (Woode-Smith, 2022).

2.3.2.2 Power dynamics for successful coalitions

Authoritarian decision making is when one party or a faction within the coalition enjoys veto power without sufficient inclusion of other actors in decision-making and conflict resolution. The authoritarian model is where kingmakers or dominant parties use threats of expulsion or withdrawal from the agreement to coerce others to agree with their demands. Democratic decision-making is where coalition partners share in the executive

power and implementation of governance principles. Each party enjoys some distinct measure of autonomy, particularly self-government in matters of policy concern.

Instead of a compromise in the sense of an intermediate solution, the negotiated agreement may therefore take the form of a package deal in which each social segment loses on some issues and wins on others. Some authors also mention mutual veto as a Consociational device, implying that even non-decisions are preferable to decisions taken by the majority (e.g. Lijphart, 1977:36–38; Nordlinger, 1972:24–26). Organisational principles entail proportional representation of coalition partners in key public institutions, allocation of public resources, and expenditure.

This discourages the emergence of ideological politics and issue-based politicking (Finlay, 2010; Horowitz, 2001). By ensuring ‘all significant segments’ (O’Leary, 2005b: 12) share power and enjoy some level of group autonomy, consociations settle the conflict and encourage democratic stability. This entails coalition partners being potentially disinterested in the political status, participation and representation of citizens who do not belong to any of the significant groups, challenging the view that the state belongs to all citizens in equal measure.

2.3.3 Indicators of unstable and ineffective coalitions

Introducing citizen initiatives for socio-economic development and participation in governance is one of the hallmarks of coalitions that build effective municipalities (Foladi Nashta, Rezvani & Badri, 2022). Stable coalitions are equivalent to good governance, which entails a set of rules guiding organisational operations and decision-making processes (Sarmiento Barletti et al., 2018).

From a point of view focused on a more local level, the main features that should provide a good government include issues such as participation, transparency, accountability, equity, effectiveness, and efficiency, among other aspects (Sarmiento Barletti et al., 2018; Joshua, James & Titos, 2022). The absence of conflict in society and political institutions is also an indicator of stable coalitions. At least, non-violent resolution of conflict is a preferred indicator because conflict is inevitable (Diamond, 1993:24, 29–32; Ordukhanyan, 2020; Bogaards, Helms & Lijphart, 2019).

That said, the concerns are on the prevalence of events that destabilise the management of coalitions and effectiveness of municipalities. In South Africa, a metropolitan municipality terminating the coalition agreement before the end of the council term is a disruptive practice that weakens stability and consistency in governance (Hanabe & Malinzi, 2019). Political alliances in councils and coalition agreements are often delicate and influential in changing priorities and power dynamics, resulting in sudden shifts in leadership and policy direction.

This lack of stability not only hinders long-term planning and development efforts but diminishes public confidence in municipal governance (Hanabe & Malinzi, 2019). In many instances, political parties fail to honour coalition agreements; some of those coalition agreements are oral agreements and are not written or legally binding (Sithole, 2023). Hence, political parties can terminate the coalition agreements at any time. The intentional disruption and deliberate collapse of council meetings and walk-outs are also an aspect that is synonymous with South African municipalities under coalitions and exacerbates governance challenges in South African metropolitan municipalities (Olver, 2021). These tactics are often used strategically by opposing factions within coalitions to disrupt decision-making processes and prevent consensus on critical issues (Hanabe & Malinzi, 2019).

These actions not only hinder the functioning of local government but also reflect underlying political tensions and power struggles that undermine effective governance and accountability. A typical example of this was when the City of Tshwane was unable to meet and elect an Executive Mayor. This was because a group of councillors refused to come to meetings or would walk out of a meeting shortly after it had started (de Visser, 2020). In the case of *Democratic Alliance and Others v Premier for the Province of Gauteng and Others* (2020), the Gauteng High Court dealt decisively with councillor-walk-outs. The court said:

“... the importance of serving in a municipal council is that party political affiliation and agendas are eschewed for the greater good of the communities served by those councils. ... [E]very municipal councillor must comply with the Constitutional injunction to municipalities, to prioritise the basic needs of local communities and to provide the basic minimum services to all members of such local communities. The uncontested evidence in this case is that the overarching injunction was lost

to the councillors, who instead prioritized their own party-political agendas and brought the council to its knees. Walking out of council meetings and disrupting such meetings in a concerted manner could never have been in the interests of the Tshwane local community.” (de Visser, 2020).

“No matter how strongly a councillor disagrees with the proceedings in a meeting, there is no ‘right to walk out’. Councillors are expected (and paid) to attend council and committee meetings. If a councillor, or a group of councillors, walk out of a meeting, they expose themselves to disciplinary action. The law is clear: not attending a meeting without leave of absence is a violation of the Code of Conduct and the speaker “must” investigate violations of the Code of Conduct.” (de Visser, 2020).

The failure to pass a budget in South African metropolitan municipalities is also one of the common challenges, which leads to severe consequences, such as the inability to fund essential services and infrastructure projects. Without an approved budget, municipalities struggle to allocate resources effectively, resulting in delays or outright failures of service delivery (Ndou, 2022). This directly impacts residents, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities and contributing to public discontent with municipal authorities. This also leads to sporadic protests as a result of lack of service delivery. The majority of protests across local government are as a result of lack of service delivery (Breakfast et al., 2019).

Another aspect to consider is the frivolous motions of no confidence. These motions of no confidence are frequently used to destabilise leadership within the South African metropolitan municipalities (Shai, 2024). These motions are driven by personal or factional agendas rather than substantive governance issues; they create uncertainty and distract from addressing real challenges facing municipalities. They divert attention from critical matters such as service delivery and development planning, further undermining effective governance (Shai, 2024).

Frequent changes of municipal leadership create serious instability in terms of governance within South African metropolitan municipalities. Political instability at the leadership level disrupts strategic planning, policy continuity, and institutional memory, hindering effective decision-making and implementation of development agendas (Shai, 2024). This turnover not only impacts administrative efficiency but also contributes to

uncertainty among residents and potential investors, affecting local economic growth and development.

Corruption, unauthorised expenditure, and nepotism further compound governance issues in South African metropolitan municipalities, compromising service delivery, leading to misappropriation of public funds, and undermining public trust (Makaba, 2023). The misuse of resources through corrupt practices diverts funds away from essential services and infrastructure projects, perpetuating socio-economic disparities, and exacerbating poverty and inequality (Shai, 2024).

Wasteful expenditure and nepotism further compound governance issues in South African metropolitan municipalities, perpetuating inefficiency and undermining accountability. Mismanagement of public funds through wasteful spending practices, and the practice of favouring family members and friends for employment opportunities erodes public confidence in municipal authorities (Mpangalasane, 2020). Addressing these issues is crucial for restoring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in local governance processes.

The theories elaborated in this section serve as a robust set of tools for understanding how and why coalitions form in local governance, especially when applied to South Africa. The cooperative game theory offers intriguing explanations about the ways in which rational agents can successfully form coalitions that achieve not just mutually beneficial outcomes but also equitable sharing of the resources and fruits of their cooperation.

2.4 International benchmark on Local Government Coalitions

It is imperative to look at the local government coalitions in other parts of the world to use them as a comparative benchmark with the South African local government context. Local government coalitions are not only a South phenomenon but are global; albeit very few case studies are available, unlike coalitions at the national level. The following are some of the country case studies identified for discussion.

2.4.1 Indonesia

Indonesia uses a constituency representation system in which voters elect individuals directly to the office, that is, for mayors and councillors. Executive offices within the

governance system of the country are reserved for civil service personnel, hence such positions cannot be used to provide positions to politicians (Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019). The local political system in Indonesia is therefore “presidential” in nature. Mayoral candidates establish coalitions with political parties represented on councils in the run-up to popular elections as a signalling device to voters to maximise election vote shares, and potentially facilitate the execution of their political and policy agendas post-election (Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019).

On the other hand, a substantial body of research shows that political parties are often motivated by rent-seeking to join coalitions; parties make themselves available to the highest candidate-bidder and would-be mayors and their financial backers pay those parties to join their coalitions. Coalition formation at the local level in Indonesia is an integral part of the pervasive phenomenon of “money politics” that exists in the country (Vel, 2005; Mietzner, 2007; Buehler & Tan, 2007; Choi, 2007; Aspinall, 2013).

Party motivations for joining pre-electoral coalitions (PECs) in Indonesia differ substantially from those identified in the literature. In parliamentary systems, research has consistently shown that political parties are encouraged to join PECs as a function of both the desire to influence policy and to gain office (e.g. cabinet appointments) (Shin, 2018). These motivations are, in turn, based on a judgement by parties comprising PECs that they are likely to be involved in government formation post-election (Shin, 2018). The belief seems reasonably well-founded. Debus (2009), for example, has demonstrated that pre-electoral alliances significantly influence post-election government formation in parliamentary systems in Europe.

In multi-party presidential systems, executive candidate agreements established with potential political party PEC partners are often argued to lack credibility (Shin, 2018). The unreliability of executive candidates’ promises dampens office incentives for parties to form pre-election alliances. Policy motivations may still be important, however, if policy agreements among executive candidate-political party coalition partners are made public during the campaign (Kellam, 2017).

Untenable commitments notwithstanding, some largely descriptive evidence suggests that presidential PECs often precede the formation of governing coalitions (Kellam, 2017). More analytically, Freudenreich (2016) has shown that government formation in Latin

American presidential systems is largely a function of pre-election agreements made between executive candidates and political parties in the legislature.

Unlike in many legislatures around the world, decision-making in both national and local parliaments in Indonesia is based on deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah untuk mencapai mufakat*) and not vote-taking. Sherlock (2012) argues that in the Indonesian national parliament, consensus is essentially an agreement among party leaders. Consensus in local parliament is driven by political party leaders in the coalition, and the majority status of the coalition facilitates consensus. This position is consistent with recent research by Tans (2012), who notes that the most effective local governments in Indonesia are those that secure a majority in the local council.

Majority coalitions cause a shift in local government spending towards health sector activities and induce improvements in citizen access to health services, but only during the first year or two of the post-election periods, after which the positive effects disappear. Local governments with majority coalitions initially shift their focus to health spending and service delivery, and this assertion is consistent with recent qualitative case study research that argues that decentralised democracy in Indonesia has encouraged local governments to concentrate on healthcare policy to satisfy voter demands (Aspinall, 2013; Tans, 2012).

2.4.2 Germany

Contemporary German politics is synonymous with coalitions. Coalitions seem to be the order of the day after every election in Germany, be it either on a national or local level. Multi-party democracy in Germany is so strong that it is becoming increasingly more difficult for any political party to garner a majority rule (Bräuninger, Debus & Stecker, 2019). The process of coalition formation following the 2017 Bundestag election was the most difficult in German post-war history. For the first time, Germany saw negotiations fail, a minority government being discussed as a real possibility, and the federal president involved as a formatter in coalition politics (Bräuninger, Debus & Stecker, 2019).

To understand local government coalitions, the study selected the multi-level system of Germany and argues that besides policy distances and office-seeking incentives, coalition formation on the local level is influenced by institutional constraints. Particularly,

the implementation of direct elections of the mayor and the abolishment of local councils' right to appoint the mayor strengthened the mayor's political role (Gross & Krauss, 2021; Bräuninger, Debus & Stecker, 2019). Local political actors have an incentive to include the mayor's party in a coalition to avoid situations of 'cohabitation', i.e. a situation where a coalition in the local council is opposed to the party of the directly-elected mayor (Zohlnhöfer & Tosun, 2018).

Consequently, the party of the mayor should have an advantage in the local coalition formation game. Additionally, the relationship between the local and regional levels sets specific incentives for the coalition formation process on the local level. Since local units in Germany depend on the support of the regional government to a significant degree, political actors should be more likely to include parties in a coalition on the local level that also hold key offices in the regional government, as observed by Martínez-Cantó and Bergmann (2020) and collaborated by Zohlnhöfer and Tosun (2018).

Despite the different local institutional settings in the German Länder, all local constitutions create incentives for political actors to compete over policy issues and local offices. German municipalities still have considerable rights to self-government and can shape local policy. Especially during the economic and financial crisis, local political actors had to decide between budget consolidation and the preservation of public social spending. In addition, recent research shows that the ideological positions of parties are a key predictor of policy outcomes that deal with highly politicised issues, such as the degree of registration fees for same-sex unions (Debus et al., 2013) or fees for Kindergarten places (Goerres & Tepe, 2013).

Concerning office pay-offs, the German local political system does indeed hold some positions that can be seen as 'functional equivalents' to ministerial offices on the state and national levels. For example, heads of departments and deputy mayors are elected by the local council and therefore have to rely on the support of a parliamentary majority (Bogumil & Holtkamp, 2013: 40).

Additionally, in most municipalities, the composition of committees depends on the allocation of seats in the local council. Hence, the largest party frequently can install one of its actors as committee chairperson. Since in most cases, no single party can win a majority of seats in the local council, there is an incentive for parties to form coalitions in

the local sphere in a way that maximises their office benefits (Bogumil & Holtkamp 2013:40; Goerres & Tepe, 2013).

Local government coalitions are quite distinct from national and regional government coalitions in general (Plescia & Kritzing, 2022). This is particularly true for the German case. Likewise, in presidential and parliamentary systems, where the government (or parts of it) do not need the support of a parliamentary majority to get into or to remain in office (Plescia & Kritzing, 2022), the end of a coalition can result in the formation of a new coalition in the local councils. There is no requirement to build a new coalition immediately. Instead, the local parties can also build ad hoc coalitions for specific policy issues.

Plescia and Kritzing (2022), by applying descriptive analyses of local coalition politics, observed that local political actors are forming coalitions and are simultaneously signing coalition agreements (which imply the prospect of a permanent cooperation) to reduce their bargaining and transaction costs. Second, the signing of a coalition agreement sends a signal to local voters in a way that there will not be abrupt changes in the policy-making process. Thirdly, this comes with higher credibility and accountability (Debus & Tuttnauer, 2022). To sum up, local coalitions with signed coalition agreements are not equivalent to national or regional executive coalitions, but they have a more formal character than pure legislative ad hoc coalitions.

Countries such as Germany offers significant insights into managing coalition governments a common phenomenon in many democracies worldwide. What is most impressive about the German case is the stability of the coalitions, based on negotiating and upholding very precise and very public, coalition agreements. Formal coalition agreements reduce uncertainty, ensure long-term cooperation, and facilitate a certain amount of accountability.

If coalition partners are going to break up a government, they at least have to explain why, and in detail. Even at the local level, where coalition management is perhaps even more difficult, Germans employ innovative forms of governance that incentivise mayors and councils to work with one another and align their local coalitions with those at the regional or state level and vice versa. Europe's long history of coalition governments

provides a valuable international benchmark from which South Africa can draw lessons for effectively managing coalition governance.

2.5 African benchmark on Local Government Coalition

Africa is a unique region in that, according to the knowledge and extensive research done by the researcher, there seems to be no case study of local government coalitions in the African continent, except in South Africa (Oyugi, 2006). Coalitions at the local government level are a uniquely South African affair, whereas in the region the coalitions are in the form of a National Government of Unity at the national level. The circumstances that result in the creation of coalition/NGU governments in Africa range from allegations of electoral manipulation practices (Nhede, 2012). Coalition governments have been formed in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho, and they all came from a point of contested electoral results and political violence.

The assumption is that the equitable participation of the different contenders will diminish the potential for conflict and enhance the prospects for good governance, development, integration and effective delivery of social goods to citizens. Governments of National Unity (GNU), as they are known in Africa, are preceded by peace agreements that set the framework for their creation and for monitoring success. As part of the post-conflict reconstruction system, GNUs have five dimensions that can be programmed to cumulatively inform sustainable peace; these are political transition, inclusive participation, human rights, rule of law, and resource mobilisation (Accord, 2020).

The current GNU in Lesotho has succeeded in transforming the political character of the Basotho from that of strife among the political parties, enabling them to work together to achieve peace for the first time in history. The fact that Lesotho, with a population of fewer than 2 million people, has had a significant number of political parties, is a sign of the political discord that exists. However, the ability to form a coalition government without receding into escalating conflict signifies a positive outcome of the current GNU (Accord, 2020).

This is not the case of South African local government coalitions, which come from an aspect of failure to gain majority rule. These African coalitions are a political solution that seeks to reduce the political temperatures that come with highly contested election

outcomes, and the warring parties work together for a set period in the same vein making reforms and improving political systems to ensure that the subsequent elections are more acceptable and violence-free (Mukhuhani, 2014).

One important thing that the South African local government context can learn from the coalition governments of Africa is the sense that they were entered into with set agreements and mediated by neutral parties. The coalitions by nature are marriages of convenience that unite in many cases two warring parties with totally different viewpoints, and the arrangements are met with constant bickering and fights. However, that is solved through constant engagement with the mediators and referring back to the signed coalition agreement. Mukhuhani (2014) observed that the Zimbabwean coalition survived for five years due to the mediation role that South Africa, through President Mbeki and later on President Zuma, played in uniting the warring parties, which were ZANU-PF and MDC-T, in a coalition (Nhede, 2012).

South African local government coalitions are mainly premised on a gentlemen's agreement that is mainly premised on key positions, but which cannot draft working agreements that will operationalise the coalition (Accord, 2020). Lesotho has had three consecutive GNUs since 2014. The first two GNUs barely lasted two years beyond their dates of constitution, while the third is already presenting signs of possible disintegration (Accord, 2020). GNUs in Africa are dominated by the interests of the leading political stalwarts, often ignoring the voices of local actors such as civil society organisations, including women's groups, churches, and traditional authorities, as well as other more minor political parties.

As a result, political leaders often fail to understand the needs and aspirations of many, leading to incongruence and the collapse of their political agreements. In both Zimbabwe and Lesotho, GNU formation and implementation remained the preserve of formal politicians, without giving regard to the roles that regular citizens and civil society can play. It is from this point that local government coalitions from the South African context can bring in the contribution of civil society as mediators of the coalition to put the parties together.

South Africa can learn much from coalition governments across Africa, especially when it comes to two key areas: the importance of structured agreements and the neutrality of

mediators. Unlike local government coalitions that we see in South Africa today which rarely have any kind of formalised agreement, African Governments of National Unity (GNUs) are almost always the result of a negotiated settlement. What is more, these settlements are not just written down; they are third-party mediated.

The result is a kind of coalition agreement that approaches a legal framework in its clarity and enforceability. South Africa could benefit from something similar. Secondly, and relatedly, we could use the kind of dialogue that occurs in coalitions involved in the settlement of disputes and disagreements. Mediators, where needed, would facilitate the kind of conversation that makes compromise and the trading of concessions possible. This could take place at the local level, ensuring the kind of cooperation that a coalition government requires to function effectively.

2.6 Coalition governance in South Africa

South Africa transitioned from an Apartheid (racial discrimination) regime and the brink of a civil war between the government and political liberation fighters (Mpangalasane, 2020). The interim Constitution of 1993 exemplifies characteristics of consociationalism: a government of national unity [inclusive society and democratic power dynamics], a proportional electoral system, and some autonomy for provinces and local spheres of government. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the Constitution of 1996 marks an erosion of consociationalism (especially the disappearance of the grand coalition), although there is still room for disagreement about how much of it is left and what is the prognosis for stable democracy in South Africa (Hanf, 1997; Lijphart, 1997:692–95).

It is important to state that South Africa is the only country in the African region that has coalitions at the local government levels (Mpangalasane, 2020). Countries in Africa are more inclined to have coalition governments at the national level rather than at the local level. Coalitions in municipalities have become the mainstay of local government politics in South Africa since the inception of the local government election; however, since the 2016 local government election, coalitions have become prominent.

The greatest impact of the ANC's loss of electoral support is felt in metropolitan municipalities where the opposition parties took political power through coalitions (Murwirapachena, Kabange & Ifeacho, 2022; Joshua, James & Titos, 2022). The

hegemony and popularity of the ANC are gradually diminishing as the electoral patterns are changing towards multi-party governance (Ndou, 2022:29; Naledi, 2019:34). Local coalition government in the context of South Africa has been marked by a litany of problems which resulted in instabilities in various municipalities, especially in the metros; more so, in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality which is the subject matter of this study (Joshua, James & Titos, 2022; Ndou, 2022).

Challenges range from lack of proper service delivery by municipalities, and lack of consequence management in corruption incidents, irregular financial mismanagement, nepotism, and maladministration, to name a few (Mathonsi & Sithole, 2021; Ndou, 2022; Joshua, James & Titos, 2022; Selby, 2022). The legacy of being a liberation movement is no longer sufficient to sustain the ANC's dominance (Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2011; Baregu, 2004; Suttner, 2004). And using the status of a liberation movement is no longer effective to delegitimise the opposition (Ziegfeld & Tudor, 2015; Naledi, 2019:34).

2.6.1 Metropolitan municipalities in context of government structures

The institutional alignment of political systems is often based on centralised models of power where the majority/ultimate executive decisions lie with the national government (Hanabe & Malinzi, 2019). Power is then decentralised through functions or competencies given to regional and local spheres of government in what indicates elements of federalism (Thusi & Selepe, 2023). Despite some executive and legislative functions accorded to the regional and local sphere, the ultimate political authority on law-making and execution remains with the national/central government (Martin, Levey & Cawley, 2012; Utama, Evana & Gamayuni, 2019).

The local sphere of government is closest to the citizenry and is mandated with the provision of services that are directly consumed by the people on a day-to-day basis (Wilson & Game, 2011). Local councils, which are the most common type of local authority, are made up of councillors who are elected representatives chosen in local elections (Utama, Evana & Gamayuni, 2019; Martin, Levey & Cawley, 2012).

Councillors work with local people and partners, such as local businesses and other organisations, to agree and deliver on local priorities (Coulson, Mdee & Tshomba, 2019). Government administrators implement the decisions deliver services daily (Utama, Evana

& Gamayuni, 2019). In defining and conceptualising the term 'local government' it is also imperative to look at its types within the South African context.

There are three different types of municipalities in South Africa, which are: metropolitan municipalities classified as category A (Ndou, 2022). Metropolitan municipalities exist in the eight biggest cities in South Africa: City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane, City of Ekurhuleni in the Gauteng Province, City of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province, City of eThekweni in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, and the Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape Province. There are often more than 500 000 voters in metropolitan areas, which make them highly contested (SALGA, 2021).

Metropolitan municipalities co-ordinate the delivery of services, development, and movement of goods and services to the whole area. Within these municipalities exist strong interdependencies, as well as multiple business districts and industrial areas (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). These municipalities are broken into wards. Half the councillors are elected through a proportional representation ballot, where voters vote for a party. The other half are elected as ward councillors by the residents in each ward (Rogerson, 2018).

Local municipalities, classified as category B, are the areas that fall outside of the eight metropolitan municipal areas and are divided into local municipalities. There is a total of 205 of these local municipalities and each municipality is broken into wards (CoGTA, 2024). Local municipalities share municipal executive and legislative authority with the district municipalities, as they fall under the district's municipal areas (White Paper on Local Government, 1998).

The residents in each ward are represented by a ward councillor. Only people who live in low-population areas, like game parks, do not fall under local municipalities. The areas are called District Management Areas and fall directly under the District Municipality (Abrahams & Everatt, 2019). Half the councillors are elected through a proportional representation ballot, where voters vote for a party. The other half are elected as ward councillors by the residents in each ward (Rogerson, 2018).

District municipalities are classified as category C. District municipalities are made up of several local municipalities that fall in one district. There are usually between 4 and 6

local municipalities that come together in a district council (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). There are 44 district municipalities in South Africa (CoGTA, 2024). Some district municipalities also include nature reserves and the areas where few people live these are called district management areas. They fall directly under the district council and have no local council.

The district municipality has to coordinate development and delivery in the whole district. It has its administration staff. The district council is made up of two types of councillors according to Abrahams and Everatt (2019). First are the elected councillors they are elected for the district council on a proportional representation ballot by all voters in the area and make up 40% of the district councillors. Second are the councillors who represent local municipalities in the area they are local councillors sent by their council to represent it on the district council (60% of the district councillors).

While metropolitan municipalities are responsible for all local services, development, and delivery in the metropolitan area, local municipalities share that responsibility with district municipalities (Reddy, 2018). This is especially the case in very rural areas, where district municipalities will have more responsibility for development and service delivery. In other words, a district municipality could step in to assist where a local municipality cannot deliver services. But no other institution can step in when metropolitan municipalities do not deliver; this makes them more sensitive and needing attention to make them effective.

Generally, all municipalities in South Africa also fall under the domain of the Department of CoGTA at a provincial level. Hence, the province can place any category of municipality under administration when they show significant failures to fulfil their functions. The provincial government can invoke Section 139 (1) (b) of the Constitution (1996) when the municipality cannot fulfil an obligation.

2.6.1 The South African electoral system and vulnerable coalitions

In the electoral system of South Africa, there are two types of elections: proportional representation (PR) and constituency representation (first past the post) (Francisca, 2019:48). Both systems have advantages and disadvantages (Schulz-Herzenburg, 2020). In South Africa, members of the National Assembly and the nine provincial legislatures are elected according to the PR system. This allows both big and small

parties to be represented, but the disadvantage is that the elected representatives owe their positions to the party and are therefore not directly accountable to the public (Schulz-Herzenburg, 2020).

For municipal elections, there is a combination of PR and first-past-the-post (Schulz-Herzenburg, 2020). This provides a proportionally fair outcome, because it reflects the total number of votes each party has earned, and it encourages councillors to be accountable to the voters, because half of them is directly elected by people in the wards, and not just appointed by their parties (Masuku & Jili, 2019).

Despite being a relatively common occurrence in South Africa, coalition governments have not become institutionalised, i.e. there are no rules or guidelines for coalitions. A political party with outright control of a council can fall back on its internal institutionalisation, i.e. its internal constitution, to steer the voting behaviour of its councillors. The party constitution will define the values, principles, rules, procedures and sanctions that apply to its members, including those that serve as councillors. This is supposed to, and often does, constrain party behaviour and promote party discipline. If the party discipline works well, it contributes to stable governance.

Yet, in the case of a coalition, there are no rules in the Constitution or in legislation that define the principles, rules, procedures, or sanctions that will apply to the political parties (and independent councillors) that attempt to govern together (SALGA, 2021). There are no formal guidelines for coalition formation. As a result, coalition governments are often unstable, as illustrated by the history of problematic coalition governments in municipalities. What is lacking is thus a framework for coalition governments that can be used as a guide by political parties in structuring their coalitions in practice (Alford, Hartley, Yates & Hughes, 2017; Averchenkova, Gannon & Curran, 2019).

The coalition formation phase starts immediately when a general election or a by-election produces a hung council. It also starts when an existing coalition collapses, usually with the passing of a motion of no-confidence in one or more political office-bearers. This is often referred to as 'coalition bargaining' or 'coalition talks'. It refers to the bargaining process in which different political parties (and independent councillors, if applicable) engage in coalition talks before deciding to enter into a coalition. This phase of the coalition life-cycle is important, because it determines how the coalition will be structured,

the terms and conditions for cooperation in the coalition, and the policies the coalition will pursue as a municipal government (Alford, Hartley, Yates & Hughes, 2017; Averchenkova, Gannon & Curran, 2019).

It is now considered standard practice for the coalition partners to adopt an agreement of sorts. Coalition agreements define the policy programme of the government formation and prescribe procedures for decision-making, coordination, and dispute resolution in the coalition. The coalition agreement must anticipate and resolve conflict, in that it prescribes the terms and conditions for the behaviour of coalition partners. The coalition agreement sets out how parties will be expected to work together in the coalition (Alford, Hartley, Yates & Hughes, 2017; Averchenkova, Gannon & Curran, 2019).

In Africa, countries such as Kenya make an interesting benchmark due to the systems they have in place, and South Africa can derive valuable lessons from Kenya. For instance, Kenya's Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) ensures transparency, accountability, and legality in the registration and regulation of political parties. Additionally, the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal (PPDT) serves as an independent arbiter, providing fair resolution mechanisms for conflicts within or between parties (Kavindu & Atamb, 2024). Political parties are required to deposit their coalition agreements with the ORPP, allowing for effective mediation of disputes. South Africa could adopt similar structures to help manage volatile coalitions in hung metros and local municipalities.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a review of the existing literature on the subject matter, and the theoretical framework from which to understand the concept of coalitions. This was important to build a foundational theoretical understanding of what is meant by effective local government administration and how it can be measured. The next chapter provides a discussion on the reasons for the collapse of metros in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: REASONS FOR THE COLLAPSE OF COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the reasons behind the collapse of coalitions in the five identified metropolitan municipalities under study, namely City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, City of eThekweni, and City of Ekurhuleni. It further assesses the state of the coalitions in question and the impact of coalitions on the stability, operation and governance of the municipalities. The chapter outline is important as an extension of the discussion in the previous chapter to locate the expression of coalitions' governance in context in South Africa.

3.2. Reasons for the collapse of coalitions

Several factors are responsible for the collapse of coalitions, be it in the context of South Africa or any other context.

3.2.1 Terminating the agreement before the end of the term

One key aspect which causes the collapse of coalitions is the premature termination of the coalition agreement before the end of the council's term. It is easy to just terminate the coalition on the basis that it does not have much legal validity except being just a political agreement (Ndou, 2024). Political agreements are hurriedly done to constitute a government to meet legislative timelines after the elections, and some aspects are just agreed on regarding the detrimental political objectives of the different political parties (Ndou, 2022).

There has been a public outcry for structured guidelines, legislation, and regulation of coalition agreements. Various entities, both public and private within the local government and political space, including the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), the Dullah Omar Institute and both the Democratic Alliance (DA) and African National Congress (ANC), have put forth proposals to amend the legislative framework to enhance stability within coalition agreements.

The DA has proposed several significant changes to curb these loosely arranged coalitions. First, they propose that coalition agreements should be formalised as legally binding contracts: second, parties should be granted an additional timeframe for negotiations following the announcement of election results; and third, there should be restrictions on how often motions of no confidence can be introduced in the legislature (Ndou, 2024). On the other hand, the ANC has proposed that the electoral threshold should be increased to 1 percent for a party to get a seat either in council or parliament (Mkhwanazi, 2023). However, small parties have rejected this proposal by both the ANC and the DA, citing that it will close the democratic space for small parties.

Table 3.1: The increase of the threshold to 1% (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2024)

This table demonstrates the effect of increasing the threshold to 1%. It means a majority of political parties in the selected metropolitan municipality under study could not make it into council. This could have significantly decreased the number of political parties represented in the five metropolitan councils.

Thresholds							
Party representation in Category A municipalities after the 2021 LGE							
Category A	Parties receiving over 1% of the total vote			Parties receiving less than 1% of the total vote			Total seats
	%of all Votes	# Parties	#of Seats	%of all Votes	# Parties	#of Seats	Total seats
Ekurhuleni	95,5	5	215	3,3	8	9	224
eThekweni	87,5	4	199	8,4	19	23	222

Johannesburg	94	6	257	3,7	10	13	270
Nelson Mandela Bay	95,9	4	117	1,5	3	3	120
Tshwane	93,8	5	203	3,6	10	11	214

Further, the ANC has proposed that a party with most of the votes should form the coalition governments to avoid instability in governance structures (Mkhwanazi, 2023). Even these proposed measures are unlikely to provide a definitive solution, on the basis that legislation cannot eliminate or regulate political pettiness, as observed by Pieterse (2020). It is widely acknowledged that coalition governments thrive in an atmosphere of political maturity; a quality that, regrettably, is not often observed in South Africa.

The report on local government coalitions, produced by the Dullah Omar Institute (2021), highlights significant challenges with coalition agreements across municipalities. Chief among these issues is their vague nature and the lack of public accessibility (Zweni et al., 2024). To enhance accountability, political parties have begun to publish their coalition agreements, aiming to undermine the credibility of those who breach those contracts. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this strategy is effective (Chigova & Hofisi, 2023). A notable offender in this context is the Patriotic Alliance (PA), led by Gayton McKenzie, which has consistently exited coalitions or threatened to do so, following its improved electoral performance in 2021 (Chigova & Hofisi, 2023).

Coalition wrangling in one place causes blow-ups elsewhere, and this phenomenon is described as the Coalition Butterfly Effect (Mooney et al., 2024). For instance, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) threatened to displace the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) from authority in as many as 13 municipalities across KwaZulu-Natal province. This action was reportedly in retaliation for the IFP's decision to abstain from supporting the EFF in the City of Johannesburg (Davis, 2023). In a similar vein in the City of Ekurhuleni, the EFF threatened to displace the African National Congress (ANC) in all the metropolitan and municipalities across the Gauteng province where they are in coalition,

by the mass resignation of the party's MMCs, should Dunga not be reinstated, after the Ekurhuleni mayor Nkosindiphile Xhakaza removed the EFF's Nkululeko Dunga as the member of the mayoral committee (MMC) for finance (Mzangwe, 2024). Such political strategies often have little connection to the actual issues, or the individuals who are ultimately impacted by these decisions, but in the same vein demonstrate how easy it is to collapse a coalition agreement.

Moving away from the South African context, the same can be seen in the context of Germany, which faced challenges with coalition stability, particularly after the 2017 federal elections. The protracted negotiations to form a "Jamaica coalition" (composed of the Christian Democrats, Free Democrats, and the Greens) ultimately failed, largely due to disagreements over immigration policies and climate change initiatives. The inability to reconcile these priorities underscored how diverse ideological positions can complicate coalition governance, leading to heightened political tension and subsequent electoral consequences (Gross & Krauss, 2021).

The Government of National Unity (GNU) formed in Zimbabwe in 2009 between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is another notable case. Initially successful in stabilising the economy and governing collaboratively, deep-seated mistrust and power struggles soon resurfaced. The political parties had an agreement called the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that succinctly explained how the parties were supposed to conduct themselves, but during the entire coalition period, South Africa was always called to mediate between the warring parties (Mwonzora, 2022).

3.2.2 The need for positions with economic benefits

Political parties are particularly interested in securing positions within a coalition associated with economic opportunities. A case in point is the Patriotic Alliance, which was so eager to obtain the Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) position for economic development in the City of Tshwane that they were willing to destabilise the entire coalition to achieve it, according to Steenhuisen (Davis, 2023). This is not surprising; it is well-known that local government portfolios that provide the greatest access to contracts, tenders, and lucrative deals are highly targeted by certain political

parties (Mdlalose et al., 2024). DA federal council chair Helen Zille previously described her experience of entering into a coalition with the EFF:

“They would insist, make this person a municipal manager, assign that contract to this company, and ensure adherence to this policy. If you fail to comply, we will withdraw our support, and your government will collapse” (Davis, 2023).

According to the report by SALGA (2023), it is illegal for coalition negotiations to involve discussions about municipal staff appointments or procurement decisions. However, there are strong indications that such practices are commonplace, on the basis that parties want access to economic opportunities that come with certain strategic positions, hence the collapse. The need to occupy economically strategic positions is also evidenced by the desperation of political parties to get their candidates into key positions. Despite the DA and ActionSA having an agreement with each other to support Mpho Phalatse for the City of Johannesburg mayoral position, ActionSA renegaded, then went ahead and nominated its own candidate for the mayoral position (Davis, 2023). This is the reason why coalitions are synonymous with frivolous motions of no confidence as parties jostle to be in charge of the critical portfolios that provide economic benefits (Zweni et al., 2024).

Looking at Zimbabwe, the coalition agreement/ Global Political Agreement (GPA) ended not only because elections were due, but also due to the need for ZANU-PF to control the levels of power without sharing with anyone (Chinyere & Rukema, 2020). During the NGU talks, four ministries were problematic in how they could be shared among the parties; these were Finance, Home Affairs (in charge of police and voter registration entity), Defence, and Justice. Each of the parties was looking for ministries that would ensure that their interests were met and agendas pushed (Nhengu & Murairwa, 2020). The MDC being in control of Finance and Public Service was in a position to curtail the use of state resources for party politics, something that ZANU-PF was used to doing on its own.

In the context of Italy, a notable instance of political turmoil occurred with the fall of Matteo Renzi’s government in 2016. His Democratic Party experienced substantial internal strife, marked by disagreements over ministerial appointments and economic policy directions. The rivalry for dominance over critical economic roles, particularly the Ministry of

Economy and Finance, intensified these conflicts, ultimately culminating in Renz's resignation and collapse of his administration (del Palacio Martin, 2019).

Similarly, Israel's political framework, defined by proportional representation, frequently leads to the formation of coalition governments that are often precarious. This was exemplified by the disintegration of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government in 2019 (Shamir & Rahat, 2022). The coalition, which spanned a wide range of political ideologies, fractured due to conflicts over ministerial allocations and budgetary priorities. The contest for control of essential economic sectors, especially concerning the defence and finance ministries, significantly contributed to the coalition's failure, resulting in a series of elections and ongoing political instability (Shamir & Rahat, 2022).

The Grand Coalition Government of Kenya was established in the wake of the contentious 2007 presidential election and the ensuing violence. It was aimed at uniting the two principal rival factions: the Party of National Unity (PNU) and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) (Etyang, 2022). However, the coalition was plagued by persistent internal conflicts over crucial positions and financial resources. The competition for control over lucrative ministries, particularly the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Energy, generated considerable tension between President Mwai Kibaki of the PNU and Prime Minister Raila Odinga of the ODM (Etyang, 2022). This ongoing power struggle severely compromised the coalitions' ability to function effectively, resulting in disjointed policy execution and ultimately led to its dissolution.

3.2.3 The need to show governing competence

It is challenging to win over South African voters based on governance experience if you lack a substantial record (Kikasu & Pillay, 2024). The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) noted that the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) put forward a proposal in January, expressing their intention to govern a municipality in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, where they aimed to showcase their commitment to good governance (Beukes, 2021). To succinctly understand this point of view one needs to understand that the connection between casting a vote, and a political party adhering to the mandate that secured that vote, seems to be nearly non-existent (Ndou, 2024).

Coalitions are created and dismantled with minimal regard for shared values or policies; the primary focus is solely on gaining and maintaining power (Chigova & Hofisi, 2023). Unless the fundamental principles of prioritising the needs of ordinary citizens take precedence over the quest for power, any changes are unlikely (Mayekiso, 2023). As many analysts have pointed out, this could lead to a troubling trend; declining voter turnout in each election, resulting in outcomes that increasingly reflect a diluted version of the “will of the people” (Mayekiso, 2023).

In Italy, the same aspect was present. Italy’s political landscape has long been characterised by unstable coalitions, with the alliance between the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the League serving as a recent illustration of this trend (Chiarini, 2020). Formed after the 2018 elections, this coalition disintegrated within just 14 months, primarily due to significant disagreements over critical policies and overall lack of effective governance (Chiarini, 2020).

The M5S, which positions itself as an anti-establishment force, clashed with the right-wing nationalist League over fundamental priorities and governance strategies. Conflicts surrounding fiscal policies, immigration, and infrastructure highlighted their profound ideological rifts, which ultimately hindered their ability to lead effectively. The coalition’s demise was notably accelerated by League leader Matteo Salvini’s call for new elections, driven by frustrations over the government’s failure to adequately address Italy’s urgent economic and social challenges (Chiarini, 2020).

The same can also be seen in Australia, in which the Labour Party of Australia, initially led by Kevin Rudd and subsequently by Julia Gillard, formed a coalition government that ultimately faltered in showcasing effective governance, culminating in its downfall (Cameron, 2020). Key challenges during this period included the management of the carbon tax, asylum seeker policies, and ongoing internal conflicts within the party. The government struggle to present a cohesive and effective policy framework fostered an impression of ineptitude, which contributed to the coalition’s disintegration, and the Labour Party’s defeat in the 2013 elections (Cameron, 2020).

In Zimbabwe, the GNU encountered considerable obstacles in showcasing effective governance. Issues such as economic mismanagement, divergent policy views, and persistent political violence impeded the government’s ability to enact meaningful reforms

(Rupiya, 2020). The MDC's attempts to introduce necessary economic and political changes were frequently thwarted by ZANU-PF, ultimately creating a dysfunctional governing body. This coalition's failure to stabilize the economy in its dissolution in 2013 (Rupiya, 2020).

3.3. The state of coalition governments in South African metropolitan areas

The thrust of this sub-section is to provide a detail account of the current state of the coalitions in the five metropolitans under study. This will be done by assessing the state of the metropolitans first, before coalition governance, and second, during coalition governance and the impact of coalition governance on the metropolitans.

3.3.1 City of Johannesburg

Since the inception of the City of Johannesburg as a metropolitan municipality, the African National Congress (ANC) has dominated the city until 2016 (Pietersen, 2021). Before the onset of the coalition, government in the city of Johannesburg was primarily under the control of a single-party-majority, predominantly the ANC.

3.3.1.1 The state of the city before coalition governance

Since the inception of local government elections in 2000, the ANC has consistently secured a decisive majority in municipal elections within the city. The party's stronghold facilitated stable governance, as it did not require negotiations with opposition parties to pass budgets or implement policies. Throughout this time, all mayors hailed from the ranks of the ANC, with prominent leaders such as Amos Masondo (2000-2011) and Parks Tau (2011-2016) at the helm. The ANC administration focused on enhancing governance and improving financial management practices (Thusi & Selepe, 2023). This was done with the aim of positioning the City of Johannesburg as the World Class African City (WCAC) in the continent, and through sustained economic growth for all its citizens (Sihlongonyane, 2016).

Nonetheless, challenges such as corruption, inefficiency, and bureaucratic obstacles emerged, hindering the city's overall performance. The city was confronted with frequent criticism for its sluggish response to service delivery protests and the growing dissatisfaction among residents. As South Africa's economic hub, Johannesburg

launched several initiatives aimed at spurring economic growth and attracting investments. The city pursued urban regeneration projects, particularly in the inner city, to revitalise neglected areas, and draw in business (Thusi & Selepe, 2023).

3.3.1.2 The state of the city during coalition governance

Since the 2016 local government elections, the city of Johannesburg has operated under a minority government, or what is termed minimal-majority coalition type. In the 2016 elections, the African National Congress (ANC) forfeited its majority in the city for the first time since the dawn of democracy in 1994. The Democratic Alliance (DA) emerged as the largest party, though it did not secure an outright majority (Khumalo & Netswera, 2020). The DA went into a minority government with the Congress of the People (COPE), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), Freedom Front Plus (FF+), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and The United Democratic Movement (UDM) (Anon. 2016).

This minority government had a combined 40.15 percent of the combined electoral support. However, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) had committed to support the DA subject to certain conditions, while the “DA stated that the party will work with the EFF on an issue-by-issue basis” (Beukes, 2021). This minority government needed the 11 percent of the EFF votes to elect the city’s executives, to pass and approve city’s budget, by-laws and policies. According to Mokgosi et al. (2017), the EFF was a kingmaker in this coalition, and the party made it quite clear that it is not in coalition with the DA; however, it will vote with the party to punish the ANC and depose it from power in all the metropolitans. According to Makgale (2020):

“The EFF President Julius Malema in his press statement speaking about the EFF queenmaker status said ‘The DA is the better devil. We couldn’t be neutral, we had to take sides. This is history. We were caught between two devils.’” (Makgale, 2020).

In November 2019, Herman Mashaba resigned as mayor of the city, citing insufficient support from the DA, which triggered further instability within the coalition. This was further exacerbated by EFF demands to take control of the City of Tshwane; however, the DA refused to accede to the EFF demands to run the City of Tshwane. According to Makgale (2020):

The DA however did not support the EFF's intentions of taking over Tshwane metro and this resulted in the collapse of the EFF and DA collaboration. The EFF decided to withdraw its support of DA on the basis that the DA had no intention of supporting them in taking ownership of Tshwane. EFF leader, Julius Malema was quoted by City press (July 2019) saying '*We cannot keep voting for people who do not vote for us. Power sharing is about give and take*'. (Makgale, 2020).

The DA's refusal to grant the EFF's demand to govern the city of Tshwane led to the collapse of the coalition in the city of Johannesburg. According to Hanabe and Malinzi (2019), this coalition was fraught with difficulties stemming from policy disagreements and internal power struggles. The collapse of the coalition paved a way for the ANC to regain a mayoral position, when Geoffrey Makhubo of the ANC was elected mayor in December 2019, with backing from small parties, signifying a shift in coalition dynamics (Nzimakwe, 2022). According to Pietersen (2021) "the ANC formed a new coalition government with the IFP, PA and Al Jam-ah".

After the 2021 local government elections, the DA got into a nine-party coalition government in the City of Johannesburg (DA, 2022). This was a minority government, with the "DA, together with COPE, ACDP, Freedom Front Plus, and UDM, in cooperation with the IFP and EFF" (Pietersen, 2021). This coalition collapsed and according to Dr Mpho Phalatse the "coalition was fraught with mistrust, dishonesty and hostile negotiations" (Anon, 2022). While Lekabe (2023) opined that the collapse of the coalition was due to a "fallout between the DA and the Patriotic Alliance (PA) over a power-sharing deal." The city has had about 5 changes in the position of the mayorship since 2021.

The DA mayor Mpho Phalatse was ousted by a no confidence motion by 139 votes, and the ANC's Dada Morero was voted in as mayor at the same sitting, unopposed (Anon, 2022). However, the "South Gauteng High Court in Joburg has reinstated Dr Mpho Phalatse as the mayor of Joburg following her successful bid to challenge her removal" (Ndaba, 2022). Four months after her reinstatement as the mayor by the court, the African Transformation Movement (ATM), Al Jama-ah and the African Independent Congress (AIC) filed a motion of no confidence against mayor Phalatse, the motion was successful, and she was removed from office (Lekabe, 2023).

Thapelo Amad, of the Al Jama-ah party, was voted in by the city council to replace Mayor Mpho Phalatse. Mayor Amad was supported by the ANC-led coalition government, with the EFF, IFP, COPE, PA, and Al Jam-ah (Pietersen, 2021). In April 2023, Cllr. Thapelo Amad resigned as the mayor of the city of Johannesburg on the eve of a motion of no confidence against him (Mkentene, 2023). However, he was succeeded by his comrade from Al Jam-ah, Kabelo Gwamanda as the new mayor. On the 13th of August 2024, Mayor Gwamanda tendered his letter of resignation to Speaker Margaret Arnold (Madia, 2024). On the 16th of August 2024, the speaker of council Margaret Arnold called a special council meeting, which elected Dada Morero as the new mayor for the City of Johannesburg. This was Morero's second stint as mayor; he previously served for 25 days as executive mayor from September 30 to October 25, 2022. A close analysis of service delivery trends in the CoJ does not inspire any confidence about significant changes that could be accrued under Mr Morero's leadership. Instead, there would be more controversies of governance, especially heading to the local government elections in 2026.

3.3.1.2 The impact of coalition governance

From 2016 to date, the impact of coalition governance on the city of Johannesburg on both the political and administrative has been severe. The city has had 10 mayors, all because of political bickering (Davis, 2023). The city has often faced impasses within municipal councils, complicating the passing of budgets and the implementation of policies (Joshua et al., 2022). According to Pietersen (2021), citing the report of the Auditor General of South Africa on the city, the AG indicated that the city did not manage its financial and human resources properly. He further indicated that:

“The Municipal IQ (2016-21) highlights poor management of grants, dodgy expenditure and capital expenditure in need of improvement; therefore, the metro was allocated 66 percent. Overall, it is important to resolve AG-identified weaknesses such as high vacancy rates, irregular expenditure, and ageing infrastructure to reduce costs for water management. These audit-related shortcomings have implications for service delivery, as housing, road maintenance and municipal billing have been some of the weaknesses” (Pietersen, 2021).

On the other hand, Joshua et al. (2022) notes that the political instability, coupled with administrative inefficiencies, has caused interruption in the delivery of essential services. As a result, residents are suffering from delays and disruptions in critical services, including waste collection, water supply, and infrastructure maintenance. Moreover, the breakdown of coalition agreements tends to shift the focus from service delivery to political manoeuvring, further intensifying the challenges related to service provision (Hanabe & Malinzi, 2019). The city is currently in financial distress and has recently approved a R2.5bn loan from French Development Agency to be paid over 15 years, with a total repayment of about R5.7bn (Patrick, 2024). Pietersen (2021) notes “the municipality regressed during the coalition era, particularly on financial management and audit processes”. This is a clear demonstration of the impact a coalition had on the city’s governance.

3.3.2 City of Tshwane

Prior to the introduction of coalition governance in the city of Tshwane, the metropolitan was controlled by a single-party majority, chiefly the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC has since ruled and dominated South Africa “since the end of apartheid in 1994 until they lost their majority in important urban metropolitan municipalities and economic centres such as Tshwane” (Kgarose & Mashilo, 2023).

3.3.2.1 The state of the city before coalition governance

From 1994 until 2016 the ANC maintained a commanding presence in the city of Tshwane municipal council. This majority facilitated a period of steady and reliable governance, permitting consistent leadership and effective policy implementation, which in turn fostered a sense of administrative stability (Maserumule, 2020). Such stability was key for the well-functioning of the city from both the political and administrative point of view. It allowed for comprehensive long-term planning and the smooth execution of municipal projects, free from the interruptions frequently associated with coalition politics (Maserumule, 2020).

3.3.2.2 The state of the city during coalition governance

The city had its first minority government, or what is termed minimal-majority coalition type. This was the DA-led coalition with other political parties such as the Freedom Front Plus, ACDP, COPE, and UDM (Pietersen, 2021). The EFF agreed to support the DA, based on certain conditions, in the city of Tshwane (Beukes, 2021). The EFF was a kingmaker in the city with the 11, 63 percent votes the party received in the city. Pietersen (2021) opined that “The non-committal position of the EFF rendered the DA-led coalition insecure” This is because the DA-led coalition had a combined 45, 87 percentage, which means the coalition needed the EFF to elect executives, and pass and approve city’s budget, by-laws and policies. This coalition was motivated by a collective ambition to dislodge the historically dominant African National Congress (ANC) and to promote a fresh governance agenda centred on transparency, combating corruption, and enhancing service delivery (Mpangalasane, 2020).

The coalition in the city of Tshwane encountered a myriad of challenges that resulted in both notable achievements and its eventual disintegration. The parties, particularly the DA and the EFF, had conflicting policy objectives, often leading to disputes and impasses in decision-making (Mpangalasane, 2020). Internal power dynamics and rivalries for leadership roles fuelled tension among coalition members, as evidenced by conflicts over the mayoral position and committee chair appointments (Shai, 2024). According to Makgale (2020):

“The EFF wanted to take ownership of Tshwane regardless of the reported financial challenges. The DA however did not support the EFF’s intentions of taking over Tshwane metro, and this resulted in the collapse of the EFF and DA collaboration. The EFF decided to withdraw its support of DA on the basis that the DA had no intention of supporting them in taking ownership of Tshwane” (Makgale, 2020).

The refusal of the DA to allow the EFF to lead the city led to the collapse of the coalition in Tshwane. From 2016 to 2021, the city has had four mayors (Mothibi, 2021). In 2016, Solly Msimanga, the provincial leader of the DA in Gauteng, was appointed the mayor of the city. In 2019, he resigned as mayor of the city, citing that he needed to concentrate on his campaign for the Gauteng premiership. However, the ANC accused Msimanga of “running away from a possible vote of no confidence due to the GladAfrica scandal and the hiring of an unqualified person to be the chief of staff in his office” (Mothibi, 2021).

Following Msimanga's resignation, the DA appointed Stevens Mokgalapa as mayor of the city, who also resigned as mayor in 2020 "after he was allegedly caught in a sex audio scandal" (Mothibi, 2021). Mokgalapa was replaced by Randall Williams from the ranks of the DA. The EFF withdrawal from supporting the DA-led coalition in the city, proved to be disastrous. "The city would not pass budgets, so service delivery in the City of Tshwane suffered a great deal; rubbish could not be collected, repairs to municipal properties could not be carried out and the city was in complete chaos" (Mothibi, 2021). This led to the provincial government putting the city under administration using Section 139 1(c) of the Constitution. However, the DA legally challenged the decision of the provincial government and won, both in the High Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, and ultimately at the Constitutional Court, and the party was successful (Pietersen, 2021). Since the 2021 local government elections, the city of Tshwane has had three changes in the position of the mayor. Randall Williams of the DA who was elected in November 2021, resigned in February 2023. He was replaced by Murunwa Makwarela of COPE, who also resigned as mayor, Cilliers Brink of the DA. replaced him

On September 26, 2024, Cilliers Brink was ousted as Executive Mayor of Tshwane through a successful motion of no confidence led by the ANC, with support from ActionSA. As a result, Tshwane currently lacks an Executive Mayor and a functioning Mayoral Committee. ActionSA, which had previously allied with the DA-led coalition in Tshwane, chose to exit the Multi-Charter for South Africa coalition. This coalition was established before the 2024 general elections, aimed at uniting various political parties to secure an outright majority against the ANC.

The agreement explicitly prohibited any collaboration with the ANC. After the elections, the multi-charter coalition failed to achieve the necessary majority, with the ANC emerging as the largest party at 40% of the vote. Consequently, the ANC proposed a Government of National Unity (GNU), which the DA joined, causing ActionSA to perceive this as a significant betrayal of their prior agreement. ActionSA has cited the DA-led government's failure to deliver services effectively, particularly in the townships, as a key reason for its withdrawal from the coalition in Tshwane. This situation has led to political instability in the city, with questions about governance and service delivery at the forefront of public concern.

3.3.2.3 The impact of coalition governance

The city of Tshwane under coalition governance has experienced significant political instability, characterised by frequent changes in leadership and struggles with service delivery (Joshua et al., 2022). Since the coalition offered prospects for more inclusive and accountable governance, it grappled with considerable hurdles stemming from divergent policies, internal rivalries, external pressures, community expectations, and strategic manoeuvres (Mpangalasane, 2020). These complexities ultimately contributed to the coalition's breakdown, underscoring the inherent difficulties of managing a coalition in a diverse and politically fragmented landscape. Issues such as inaccurate billing, poor quality of water in Hammanskraal, uncollected rubbish, corruption, and maladministration, irregular expenditure, protests by municipal workers, and failure by the metropolitan to spend conditional grants; also lack of political cooperation and political bickering among political parties, impact negatively on governance. Pietersen (2021) notes "The causes of these managerial and service delivery shortcomings could be linked to poor coalition agreements that did not include the EFF."

3.3.3 Nelson Mandela Bay

Just like most other metropolitans in South Africa, Nelson Mandela Bay has been under the governance of the ANC since 1994. This stability facilitated effective policy implementation and long-term planning, which in turn fostered infrastructure development and urban renewal (Knowles, 2021).

3.3.3.1 The state of the city before coalition governance

NMB strategically aimed to utilise its prime location and port facilities to enhance trade and attract investment. One noteworthy initiative was the implementation of the Integrated Public Transport System (IPTS), designed to improve public transportation and alleviate traffic congestion (Prevost et al., 2014). The ANC-led administration placed a strong emphasis on infrastructure development, focusing on roads, public transport, and housing projects (Prevost et al., 2014). However, all these efforts were hampered by the ANC's factional battles and corruption in the metropolitan. According to Olver (cited by Khambule, 2022) "the coalition government in Nelson Mandela Bay was formed after years of the ANC's maladministration and factional battles that gripped the city."

After the 2021 local government election, the city was governed through a bare-majority coalition government. The DA and the ANC received 48 seats each in the municipality (Bates, 2021). The DA entered into a coalition with ten other political parties to govern the city (Ellis, 2023). Eugene Johnson of the ANC was elected as mayor on the 22/11/21 and removed through a motion of no confidence on the 21/09/2022. She was replaced by Retief Odendaal of the DA, who was elected on the 21/09/22 and removed through a motion of no confidence on the 26/05/2023. Gary van Niekerk of the Northern Alliance was elected mayor on the 26/05/2023.

3.3.3.2 The state of the city during coalition governance

During the 2016 municipal elections in NMB, no single party secured a decisive majority, resulting in the establishment of a bare minimum majority type of a coalition government. While the DA was the largest party with the majority of votes, it fell short of an outright majority. To govern the municipality effectively, the DA joined forces with several smaller parties, including the Congress of the People (COPE), the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), and the United Democratic Movement (UDM).

Athol Trollip from the DA was subsequently appointed as the executive mayor (Maneng, 2022). Coalition members occasionally took strategic actions to bolster their standings, which resulted in a decline of unity among them (Olver, 2021). A pivotal moment in the coalition's downfall occurred in 2018 when UDM withdrew its support for the DA-led alliance (Olver, 2021). Growing public discontent regarding service delivery and governance challenges intensified the pressure faced by coalition partners. Widespread protests and public outcry over service disruptions and political instability exacerbated the coalition's difficulties (Olver, 2021).

The UDM withdrew from the DA-led coalition, which led to the collapse of the coalition. This was after UDM Mongameli Bobani was removed as deputy mayor of the city in April 2017, after allegations of corruption (Olver, 2021). The UDM was not pleased with this decision, and joined forces with the ANC, EFF, AIC, and other smaller parties to remove Athol Trollip as mayor through a motion of no confidence and replaced him with UDM's Mongameli Bobani. After the 2021 local government elections, NMB had three changes in the mayoral position in less than a year: Eugene Johnson of the ANC, Retief Odendaal of the DA, and Gary van Niekerk of the Northern Alliance (Ellis, 2023).

The city established a bare-majority coalition government led by both ANC and DA. The frequent change in the executive of the city led to political instability, which affected governance. The provincial government through the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) responsible for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs threatened to change the structure of the metropolitan to facilitate replacing the executive mayoral system with a collective mayoral system to bring stability to the metropolitan (Ellis, 2023).

3.3.3.3 The impact of coalition governance

Coalition governance resulted in frequent alterations in crucial leadership roles. Athol Trollip, representing the DA, was the first mayor to take control of the city after the 2016 local government elections. However, his time in office was characterised by political turbulence, culminating in his removal by Mongameli Bobani of the UDM in 2018, after a vote of no confidence (Olver, 2018). This cycle of instability persisted with additional leadership transitions.

The ongoing changes disrupted organisational continuity, posing challenges to effective long-term planning and the execution of municipal projects (Olver, 2018). The coalition turbulence in the metropolitan had serious impacts on the proper functioning of the city, especially towards the provision of services. According to Ndletyana (Cited by Khambule, 2022), “The municipality faced instability because of several motions of no confidence and challenges in passing budgets.”

3.3.4 eThekwini

After the 2021 local government elections, the city of eThekwini became a hung council. Before this new development, the city had always been under the governance of the ANC since 1994 (Khambule, 2022). The ANC’s commanding majority in the city provided a foundation for steady leadership and administrative continuity, facilitating the implementation of municipal initiatives and programmes.

3.3.4.1 The state of the city before coalition governance

The ANC went into coalition with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC). Mxolisi Kaunda, who served as the mayor in the previous administration, was re-elected after the 2021 local government elections, from 2021 to 14

June 2024. After the 2024 National and Provincial elections, the ANC recalled Kaunda as mayor of the city and redeployed him to serve as a permanent delegate to the National Council of Provinces.

Kaunda was replaced by Vusumuzi Cyril Xaba as the new mayor of the city. The redeployment of Kaunda came as a no surprise, considering growing calls from opposition parties and the public for his axing. While the coalition in the city politically remained stable, service delivery on the other hand was deplorable.

3.3.4.2 The state of the city during coalition governance

The ANC secured its position as the largest party in the metropolitan; however, it fell short of a decisive majority to govern. To address this conundrum, the ANC formed a bare-majority coalition government in the city (Dlakavu, 2022). According to Khambule (2022), the ANC got into a coalition with the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC), and in exchange for their cooperation and votes in the city, the ANC gave the ABC the deputy mayor's position.

According to Mantzaris (2022) "eThekweni had the lowest scores in the administration category due to continuous budget deficits." The city experienced many service delivery protests due to the inability of the city to provide services such as water, electricity, refuse removal, and sewer repairs and maintenance. This was further exacerbated when the city workers affiliated with the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) downed tools in a prolonged unprotected strike, demanding better wages.

3.3.4.3 The impact of coalition governance

According to the Good Governance Africa (GGA)'s Governance Performance Index (GPI) of 2024, coalition is the contributing factor to the city's inability to perform at an expected level. The report highlighted that the city was not doing well; however, it was better compared to the other metropolises and received a score of 3 out of 5 (GGA, 2024). In June 2024, the new Provincial Government of Unity (PGU) placed the city of eThekweni under administration. Section 154 (1) of the Constitution was invoked by the provincial government to provide support and strengthen the capacity of the city to enable it to manage its affairs (Harper, 2024). The provincial government appointed a former city

manager, Michael Sutcliffe, and a former director general in the presidency, Cassius Lubisi, to head the intervention team in the city and restore the proper functioning of the city to provide services. According to Harper (2024):

“Maladministration, collapsing municipal services and the poor state of the city’s finances, city’s inability to spend on human settlements and infrastructure grants from the central government; eThekweni was forced to return a R1.5 billion grant for housing provision to the treasury last year after it failed to come up with a plan to make use of the funding; these are among the issues to be addressed by the intervention team.”

3.3.5 Ekurhuleni

Before the 2016 local government elections, the city has been under the governance of the ANC since 1994.

3.3.5.1 The state of the city before coalition governance

The ANC’s hegemony in the city and other metropolitans has been evident according to Pietersen (2021). According to Marutlulle and Ijeoma (cited by Olver, 2021), before the 2016 local government elections, there were issues such as “political interference in the administration affairs of the metropolitan, especially on housing delivery projects and supply chain.” According to Buti Manamela of the ANC (cited by Moichela, 2024) “Before we had coalitions in Joburg and Ekurhuleni, both those metros were the most stable, yes with challenges, but they had a very good track record in terms of delivering water, electricity, refuse removal, and others”.

3.3.5.2 The state of the city during coalitions governance

The shift to coalition governance in the city of Ekurhuleni marked a paradigm shift in the political landscape of the city. The city in 2016 was governed through a bare minimum majority type of a coalition led by the African National Congress (ANC) in partnership with the African Independent Congress (AIC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Patriotic Alliance (PA) and the Independent Ratepayers Association of South African (IRASA). The ANC-led coalition managed to govern the city from 2016 to 2021.

Mzwandile Masina, who was the ANC's regional chairperson that time, was elected as the mayor of the city. During that election cycle, Ekurhuleni had the most successful and stable coalition compared to its counterparts; this was largely attributed to the written coalition agreement that existed between coalition partners (Pietersen, 2021). According to Pietersen (2021) the city had received positive feedback from both the Municipal IQ Report and the office of the Auditor General of South Africa:

"Municipal IQ report (2016-2021) allocated an overall score of 82 percent to the metro for good expenditure management and management of grants. Although the audit management has assessed Ekurhuleni relatively positively, there is a need to avoid irregular expenditure and to manage contracts appropriately"

After the 2021 local government elections, where no single party secured an outright majority, the city was governed through a bare minimum majority type of a coalition, led by the Democratic Alliance (DA) with the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), Freedom Front Plus (FF+), Congress of the People (COPE), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Action SA and the Patriotic Alliance (PA). This coalition sought to harness their collective strength to implement more effective governance strategies, prioritising improved service delivery, economic development, and transparency in municipal operations. The coalition model also aimed to bring diverse political perspective to the decision-making table, reflecting the multifaceted needs of Ekurhuleni's population (Harry & Shopola, 2024).

Tania Campbell of the DA was elected mayor on the 22 November 2021, and she was removed through a motion of no confidence on the 26 October 2022 by the ANC and EFF coalition. She was reinstated as mayor of Ekurhuleni on the 8 November 2022, after beating ANC candidate Jongizizwe Dlabathi. According to Mbolekwa (2022) the reason for the reinstatement of Campbell was "due to failed negotiations between the ANC and the EFF. This resulted in the EFF voting with the DA to reinstate Campbell". However, she did not last long in the mayoral office. After six month she was removed through another motion of no confidence sponsored by the ANC and EFF. She vacated the mayoral office on the 30 March 2023, and was subsequently replaced by AIC councillor Sivuyile Ngodwana as the new mayor on the 30th of March 2023 (Banda, 2023).

However, Mayor Sivuyile Ngodwana was also removed from office on the 28 March 2024, through a motion of no confidence sponsored by ActionSA, while the ANC and DA abstained from voting (Mkhwanazi, 2024). Nkosindiphile Xhakaza of the ANC was elected the mayor on the 11 April 2024 through the ANC and EFF alliance (Njilo, 2024). Since the 2016 local government elections, the EFF has always maintained that they are not in any “formal coalition, although it opted to vote on a case-by-case basis” (Pietersen, 2021). The EFF withdrew their support for the DA in all the metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng, when the DA refused the EFF’s request to elect an EFF mayor in Tshwane. This led to the collapse of the DA-led coalition. The DA relied on the vote of the EFF to pass budget and policies in the metropolitans (Nicolson, 2019). Essentially, the EFF was a kingmaker in metropolitan coalition governments.

The ANC and EFF have agreed to work together in the Gauteng province, at local government. The ANC and EFF coalition currently in the city of Ekurhuleni is fairly stable. However, the removal of Nkululeko Dunga as finance MMC by Mayor Nkosindiphile Xhakaza nearly destabilised the coalition, and this will most likely collapse it. The EFF’s Commander-in-Chief has threatened to recall all EFF MMCs in the city of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Mogale City and Nelson Mandela Bay if Dunga is not reappointed as the MMC of Finance (SABC, 2024). However, the party has not yet acted on their threats, which means the coalition is still stable in the metropolitan.

3.3.5.3 The impact of coalition governance

The impact of coalition governance in the city of Ekurhuleni has been multifaceted. Firstly, the city experienced political instability as a result of the frequent change of mayors through the abuse of motions of no confidence by coalition partners. This had an impact on the governance of the city. According to Mkentane (2024), the city was marred by a “litany of service delivery challenges such as a lack of access to housing, water and electricity, poor and crumbling infrastructure, joblessness, crime, poverty and fiscal pressures”. The city’s public services, particularly in waste management, water supply, and public safety, were often criticised for inefficiency and mismanagement. Furthermore, rampant corruption and lack of transparency within the municipal government eroded public trust. Residents expressed frustration over the perceived inadequacies in local

governance, which contributed to increasing disillusionment with the ruling party, the ANC (Zweni et al., 2024).

There was a public spat between the city and the office of the Auditor General of South Africa over the city's failure to submit their 2022/2023 annual financial statements within the legislated deadline (Mbolekwa, 2024). Furthermore, Moody's Investors Service, a rating agency, downgraded the City of Ekurhuleni's credit ratings further into 'junk' status in the wake of the metro's worsening financial position. The DA's Shadow MMC for Finance in Ekurhuleni, Fana Nkosi, blamed the state of the city's financial crisis on the ANC- and EFF-led coalition. He said this coalition has compromised and collapsed the city's service finances (Nkosi, 2024).

3.4. Chapter summary

This chapter provided an account of the reasons behind the collapse of selected South African metropolitans. The chapter then went to zoom in five metropolitan municipalities under coalitions, which were the focus of the study, looking at the reasons that warranted their formation, and how they impacted upon governance. The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The research methodology plays an important role in any academic research, including this research, as it serves as the foundation upon which the entire research endeavour is built. The methodology offers a systematic approach undertaken to investigate the impact of coalitions on local government administration in South African metropolitan municipalities. By providing the research structure, data collection methods and analysis techniques, the researcher can provide some level of trustworthiness for the study, including transparency to the research process.

Also, the research methodology allows readers and examiners to scrutinise and understand the rigour and validity of the study's findings, thus making sure that the conclusions drawn are firmly grounded in sound research practices (Kothari, 2004). In essence, the research methodology serves as the guiding framework that navigates the researcher through the complexities of the study, allowing for a robust and reliable investigation into the phenomenon under examination.

Following in this chapter is the research methodology of the study, which entails details of how the study was structured, how data were collected and analysed, and what ethical constructs were followed. The researcher provides a detailed account of the methodology adopted by the study to accomplish the intended aims and objectives. To do that, the following are the sections that will be covered, namely research method selected, research design, sample size, data collection, data analysis, and finally a chapter summary. The chapter will also provide the rationale and justification that warranted the adoption of any techniques or tools used.

4.2. Research paradigm

The purpose of the study was to explore and investigate the impact of coalitions on local government administration in South African metropolitan municipalities, and as such, interpretivism played a crucial role in shaping the overarching approach to understanding and analysing social phenomena within its contextual realities. Interpretivism is grounded in the belief that knowledge is inseparable from historical context and power relationships

(Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). It is essential for analysing the subjective nature of reality and the importance of multiple perspectives in constructing meaning about the impact of coalition government (Muzari et al., 2022). By embracing interpretivism, the study rejected the positivist notion of a single, objective reality and instead recognised the socially constructed nature of truth and reality (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021).

Secondary data is therefore essential to reveal interpretivist principles in what political leaders say about the ideal government in the context of coalitions, including the nature of disagreements about managing effective municipalities through coalitions. The desktop research approach enabled the researcher to access a wide range of sources that reflected the diverse perspectives and experiences of stakeholders involved in local government administration and coalition politics.

This kind of philosophy is very well-suited in exploratory studies where the research problem is not clearly defined and seeks to understand how coalition government impacts municipalities (Babbie, 2007). Exploratory research served as the initial phase of inquiry in the study, which allowed the researcher to draw attention to a problem that was not clearly defined. Given the complexity of coalition dynamics within local government administration, the study aimed to explore and unravel the multifaceted nature of the research topic before proceeding to a more in-depth analysis.

Exploratory research allowed the researcher to identify and articulate the specific research questions, objectives, and areas of inquiry that warranted further investigation. The researcher was able to use exploratory research mechanisms to facilitate a better understanding of the existing problem by enabling the researcher to gather preliminary insights, perspectives, and data from a variety of sources. Through desktop research and literature review, the study engaged with existing scholarship, policy documents, and empirical studies related to coalition governance and local government administration in South African metropolitan municipalities. This process allowed the researcher to gain a comprehensive overview of the subject matter, identify gaps in knowledge, and formulate assumptions or preliminary findings that would guide subsequent phases of the research.

Overall, it can be said that in this research, the interpretive philosophy was able to aid in offering a theoretical lens through which to conceptualise the research questions, thus providing the direction of both the research methods and data analysis approaches. At

the same time, knowing the research purpose helped the researcher to select an appropriate research design and methodology. By recognising the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher was able to acknowledge that the research process would not necessarily yield conclusive results but rather provide insights and generate assumptions for further investigation. This understanding influenced the decision to adopt qualitative research methods, such as desktop research, which allowed for a flexible and iterative approach to data collection and analysis. By embracing exploratory research, the study embraced an open-ended and iterative approach to inquiry, which was well-suited to the complex and evolving nature of the research topic.

4.3. Research design

The chosen research method for the study is a qualitative research method, partly because the study is multifaceted, and well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena (Mohajan, 2018) and understanding the intricate dynamics of local government administration within the context of coalitions (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Unlike quantitative approaches that prioritise numerical data, qualitative research allowed for the exploration of nuanced and context-specific factors that influence decision-making processes, power dynamics, and governance structures within metropolitan municipalities (Ospina, Esteve & Lee, 2018).

By exploring the unique features and environments of each metropolitan municipality, qualitative research methods permitted the researcher to understand and explore the diverse perspectives, experiences, and organisational dynamics that shape local governance practices. This was crucial in terms of uncovering rich and detailed insights into the impacts of coalitions on administrative effectiveness, including how collaborative decision-making processes unfold: how power relations are negotiated: and finally, how policy outcomes are shaped within the context of coalition governance.

Also, qualitative research acknowledges the role of the researcher's background, experiences, and insights in shaping the research process and interpretation of findings. In the context of studying local government administration and coalition dynamics, the researcher's understanding of political contexts, institutional arrangements, and socio-cultural factors played a huge role in enriching the research process and contributed to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. For the above reasons,

this study was able to generate comprehensive and insightful analyses that contribute to both scholarly understanding and practical insights into the functioning of local government within coalition contexts.

4.4. Data collection tools

The desktop research was a viable design for the study. The research aim was to understand the impact of coalitions on the effectiveness of Metropolitan municipalities. It is therefore possible to answer these questions without using interviews. There is a considerable body of literature and data on local government structures, coalition dynamics and administrative processes in metropolitan municipalities. This qualitative research approach integrates secondary sources (Hughes & Tarrant, 2019) of information with content analysis to uncover rich and detailed insights (Kleinheksel et al., 2020) into the complex dynamics of coalition governance, contributing to a deeper understanding (Kleinheksel et al., 2020) of governance practices within these urban contexts.

The choice of desktop research as the methodological design for this study on the impact of coalitions in South African metropolitan municipalities was carefully deliberated upon due to several factors. First of all, consideration was put on the eight metropolitan municipalities. From the onset, the study had envisaged conducting fieldwork to gather primary data; however, the researcher had encountered difficulties obtaining permission from research sites as a pre-requisite from both the research site and the university in providing ethical clearance for the field-work to be undertaken.

The use of desktop research (secondary published data) allowed the researcher to save costs, while also at the same time acquiring access to a wealth of information. It is imperative to note that the subject matter of coalitions in South Africa is one of the most prominent research focus areas, and therefore there is a lot of new literature which also covers the metro areas under study in this context. It is important to state that sources required for the study were focused on the 2016-2021 term, and the current 5-year term from 2021.

4.4.1 Document review

The data collection tool that the research used was historical data (secondary data) as a source of information to provide critical insight to the research study. The research was exposed to operational records of the metros, research documents from other scholars, which emanated mostly from the North-West University Library's A-Z database, which includes amongst others EBSCO host, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Consensus, Sabinet Online and African journals, residents' associations' documents and communiques, and media reports.

Key information was also acquired from the operational reports of the local government entities accessible from the office of the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA), Municipal IQ, a specialised local government data and intelligence organisation, South African Local Government Association, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Good Governance Africa (GGA), the metropolitan municipalities' websites, and full council minutes which are also available upon request.

Some of the documents include i) the state of local government in South Africa from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), ii) consolidated general report on local government audit outcomes from the office of the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA), iii) metropolitan municipalities' annual reports and Integrated Development Plans (IDP), and iv) full council meetings minutes available from metropolitan municipalities upon request.

Due to the nature of their size, metro councils are by nature associated with the attention of the media, since many of the media houses are located in the very same areas. The study also looked for newspaper articles on the subject matter, and there are a lot of news articles written on coalitions, and this can be corroborated by other sources of news. News sources provide a good source of data, for they can be confirmed and validated through a number of ways. They set a base to then provide critical analysis and conclusions to the study. Newspaper articles from publications like News24, IOL, Daily Maverick, Daily News, and Sowetan were vital for the completion of this study.

4.4.2 Social media sources

The researcher also watched full council meetings broadcast on the social media sites of some of the metro areas to get a real appreciation of the state of the coalitions and how they conducted business. Broadcasting full council meetings allows the public to stay informed about ongoing developments and key issues being addressed by the council, promoting transparency and accountability in governance. It is during the full council meetings that one gets the idea of how political parties interact with each other and how such interactions affect the business operations of the local government entity in question.

Full council sessions provide a full picture from an outsider of the political nature and atmosphere in a local government entity, and how different political actors cooperate in undertaking council business. South African council meetings are often marked by conflict, disruptions, and disorder, reflecting broader challenges in municipal governance and operational stability. The opposition political players are on the one hand criticising the ruling party, and the ruling party on the other hand will be defending itself (Mashilo & Selelo, 2020).

Therefore, social media was a vital source of first-hand events that occurred from which to analyse the factors that led to the formation and collapse of coalition governments. Including the nature of coalitions created for the administration of metropolitan areas. Examples of social media sources include:

- 26th Extraordinary Council Meeting of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwu0t3kC3ak> and others available at the Joburg City's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@CityOfJoburgZA>).
- the Special Council meeting (Continuation), 4 June 2024 [https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Special+Council+meeting+\(Continuation\)%2C+4+June+2024](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Special+Council+meeting+(Continuation)%2C+4+June+2024) and others available on the City of Tshwane's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@cityoftshwanemetropolitanm6772>)
- full council meetings available from the eThekweni's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@eThekweniMuni>)
- the NMB Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/NMBayM>), and

- news channels to access reports about proceedings of municipal meetings like https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGk_5T_I9P8

4.5. The study context - sampling

The proposed study was conducted on the following identified five coalition governments: Tshwane, Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay, Durban (eThekweni) and Ekurhuleni. These five metros have an estimated cumulative population of nearly 20 million people. Ekurhuleni has 224 councillors ([City of Ekurhuleni website](#)), Tshwane has 214 councillors (Nkosi, 2021), the City of Johannesburg has 270 councillors ([City of Johannesburg website](#)), the City of eThekweni has 222 councillors ([City of eThekweni website](#)), and Nelson Mandela Bay has 120 councillors ([Nelson Mandela Bay website](#)). In all the metros, half of the councillors are voted for, and the other half are selected proportionally. Nelson Mandela Bay employs 1,437 employees, the City of Johannesburg has 40 441, City of eThekweni has over 8000 employees, Tshwane has 4,332 employees and Ekurhuleni has 6,180 employees. This is a very big study context for any researcher and requires proper due diligence.

From this background, the researcher went on to read a number of data sources that include academic literature, policy documents, and reports, with the primary purpose of getting an insight into the functioning and effectiveness of local government administration within the realm of coalition politics. The context of desktop research allowed the researcher to access a vast number of perspectives, experiences, and empirical evidence concerning coalition governance in South African metropolitan municipalities, without the logistical constraints associated with traditional fieldwork. By using this wealth of knowledge and/or information available, the researcher was able to understand the underlying dynamics, challenges, and opportunities linked to coalition arrangements in local government, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of governance practices within these dynamic urban contexts.

4.5.1 Limited access to the primary data

The study relied heavily on secondary data sources, and this played a significant role in restricting the depth and breadth of information needed for collection. With limited access to primary data such as interviewing councillors or conducting a survey with other

stakeholders, the research may have overlooked important insights and perspectives that would have played an important role in enriching the analysis. There were limitations to the availability and access of data linked to coalition governance for some metropolitan municipalities. It was increasingly difficult to find data on certain metropolitan municipalities, such as Buffalo City, on the subject of impact of coalitions on local government administration. Since the study relied heavily on secondary sources, there may have been potential subjective bias on the sources sampled to enrich the study. This led to potential bias in the interpretation of the findings. The researcher was confronted with challenges in terms of examining the trustworthiness of the information obtained from the sources. To ensure the accuracy and the validity of the information gathered, the researcher checked the data's date, the credibility of the source, the relevance of the material to the research topic and the methodology used by the third-party researchers. The researcher ensured that the information was appropriate for the aspect mentioned, and this influenced the accuracy and robustness of the analysis.

4.5.2 Failure to establish causality

The study attempted to understand the impact of coalitions on the effectiveness of local government administration in metropolitan municipalities. Since the study relied heavily on secondary sources of information to achieve this objective, the researcher was confronted with a challenge in establishing the causal relationships among variables. By causal relationships, the researcher refers to a cause-and-effect relationship, where one event leads to an occurrence of another event. The study was limited in its ability to establish causality and determine the exact mechanisms through which coalitions influence local government administration.

4.5.3 Generalising the findings

The study paid attention to the South African metropolitan municipalities, and as such, the study findings cannot be generalised to other context or countries due to the unique socio-political and institutional landscapes. This aspect alone makes the findings of the study not applicable to other regions nor countries, especially with varied governance structures and political systems.

4.6. Data analysis and presentation

Interpretive philosophy guided the use of an inductive approach to data analysis, allowing patterns and themes to emerge naturally from the data rather than being predetermined by existing theories or frameworks. By adopting an inductive analytical framework, the study aimed to uncover emergent insights and generate theory that elucidated the complexities of coalition governance within the unique contexts of South African metropolitan municipalities.

This approach resonated with interpretivist principles of understanding social phenomena in their context and acknowledging the active role of individuals in constructing meaning and naming different social realities (Grass, 2024). Data analysis and interpretation were guided by an intent to answer the research questions. In this study, the research questions were converted to form part of the themes and patterns for data analysis, and as a result, the following were the themes and patterns that emerged.

Table 4.1: The thematic analysis of research questions (Own construction)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THEMES	PATTERNS
What are the reasons and factors that result in the creation of local government coalitions in metropolitan municipalities?	Formation of Coalitions	• Electoral Outcomes • Party Politics
What are the bases of political parties' agreements in the creation of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities?	Basis of Coalition Agreements	• Policy Priorities • Power Sharing
What are the key local government administrative functions that coalitions have a bearing on in metropolitan municipalities?	Impact on local government functions	• Policy Implementation • Service Delivery

		• Budget Management
To what extent do coalitions impact upon local government administration in metropolitan municipalities?	Coalition Stability and Performance	• Duration of Coalitions • Performance Indicators
What are the possible recommendations that can enhance local government administration in the context of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities?	Enhancing local government administration within coalitions	• Institutional strengthening, • Capacity building • Inter-party cooperation mechanisms. • Policy interventions

The above table of themes and patterns played a significant role in the analysis and interpretation of the data including the overall understanding of the impact of coalitions on local government administration in the country's metros.

4.6.1 Content analysis – part of data analysis

Content analysis played a crucial role in extracting meaningful insights from the broadcast full council meetings that the researcher watched. In this approach, key words and phrases relevant to the study's themes were identified and analysed within the context of the discussions and interactions observed during these meetings. Key words and phrases included terms related to coalition dynamics, such as:

- Coalitions, local government administration, lack of service delivery, intra-party conflict, corruption, maladministration, and power-sharing.

Additionally, phrases reflecting the challenges and opportunities associated with coalition governance, such as:

- "power struggles"; "policy conflicts"; "inter-party cooperation"; and "coalition stability" were also of particular interest.

Also, the researcher was able to use content analysis to contextualise the data obtained from the full council meetings within the broader framework of the study's objectives and research questions. Identifying key words and phrases related to coalition governance and local government administration, the researcher was able to extract relevant information that contributed to a deeper understanding of the impact of coalitions on the functioning of metropolitan municipalities.

These phrases served as valuable data points that enriched the qualitative analysis of the study, providing insights into the complex interplay between political parties, governance structures, and policy outcomes within the context of coalition governance. Also, the researcher was able to use content analysis to contextualise the data obtained from the full council meetings within the broader framework of the study's objectives and research questions. Identifying key words and phrases related to coalition governance and local government administration, the researcher was able to extract relevant information that contributed to a deeper understanding of the impact of coalitions on the functioning of metropolitan municipalities. These phrases served as valuable data points that enriched the qualitative analysis of the study, providing insights into the complex interplay between political parties, governance structures, and policy outcomes within the context of coalition governance.

Over and above, content analysis played a very important part in extracting meaningful insights from the broadcast full council meetings. This allowed the researcher to identify key words and phrases relevant to the study's themes and analyse how these phrases contributed to the broader research objectives. By systematically analysing the content of these meetings, the researcher was then able to uncover valuable insights into the dynamics of coalition governance in South African metropolitan municipalities, enhancing the depth and richness of the study's findings.

4.7. Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide details of the method that the study followed to collect and analyse the data. In doing so, I discussed the research method and design, the purpose and research philosophy including the research strategy and context, historical data, and finally analysis and presentation of the data. Chapter five of the study is where the researcher illustrates the presentation and analysis of the data thematically.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE IMPACT OF COALITION GOVERNMENT ON THE STABILITY AND EFFICIENCY OF METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is the findings of the study reflecting empirical evidence against the stated research questions. By so doing, this study can describe the impact of coalition governments on the efficiency and stability of metropolitan municipalities, which informs the suggested recommendations in the next chapter. This chapter is set in two sections, i) findings based on research questions, which is important for showing that the chosen research method led to valid results; and ii) critical considerations of research findings, which is important for theoretical congruence and expansion.

5.2. Findings based on stated research questions

The thematic analysis of secondary data clarifies the relevance of the research questions for the completion of this study. These helps identify recurring patterns and meanings people attach to coalition governments (Braun & Clarke, 2012: 45).

5.2.1. Reasons for the creation of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities

The decline of the ANC's electoral dominance and inability of opposition parties to garner more than 50% of votes has led to the inevitable creation of coalitions in South African politics. The ANC's longstanding failure to improve service delivery and stop the prevalent corruption in the public sector has led to low voter confidence in its leadership. The emergence of more political parties vying for power as opposition to the ANC has fragmented the voter bases. This has led to the prospects of coalitions being inevitable in South African politics. This fragmentation of political parties could also be seen as a strengthening of democracy and maturation of the multi-party political system as reasons for the collapse of coalition government in metropolitan municipalities.

5.2.1.1. *Failure to garner majority rule*

Suppose the researcher is to look at the last three elections from 2016, be it at the local or national level. In that case, the number of ANC voters has drastically declined, while opposition parties have tremendously profited from disgruntled voters leaving the

country's liberation party. Failure to garner a majority to rule has been a significant factor contributing to the formation of coalitions in South African metro councils. In a democratic system, majority rule is often seen as the essential principle guiding decision-making processes within local governments.

However, in South Africa, where political landscapes are diverse and fragmented, achieving this majority can be a challenging task. This is an idea that is repeated by a lot of studies and published materials on the subject matter. Olver (2021:267) understands that the failure to garner a majority is the number one reason why coalitions are formed. A coalition cannot be formed if one party has the numbers and majority to govern. It would be illogical to get into bed with another party when you have the means to govern, hence it is the failure to garner a majority that results in the formation of a coalition to achieve majority rule.

Pieterse (2019), Naid (2021), and Ndou (2022) share a view that one of the main reasons for the failure to gain a majority in metro councils is the multiplicity of political parties. Unlike some other countries where two dominant parties usually hold the majority, South Africa has a plethora of political parties representing diverse interests and ideologies. Consequently, often no single party can secure enough seats to establish a majority in a metro council. This situation leads to the need for parties to form coalitions with other parties to gain sufficient power to govern effectively.

One of the contributing factors to this phenomenon is the nature of South Africa's electoral system, proportional representation. In this system, the allocation of seats is proportionate to the number of votes received by each party. While this system encourages fair representation, it simultaneously increases the likelihood of fractured representation in parliament, making it difficult for a single party to gain a majority. Political parties must then engage in negotiations and coalition-building to secure the necessary support, resulting in complex arrangements that influence decision-making processes.

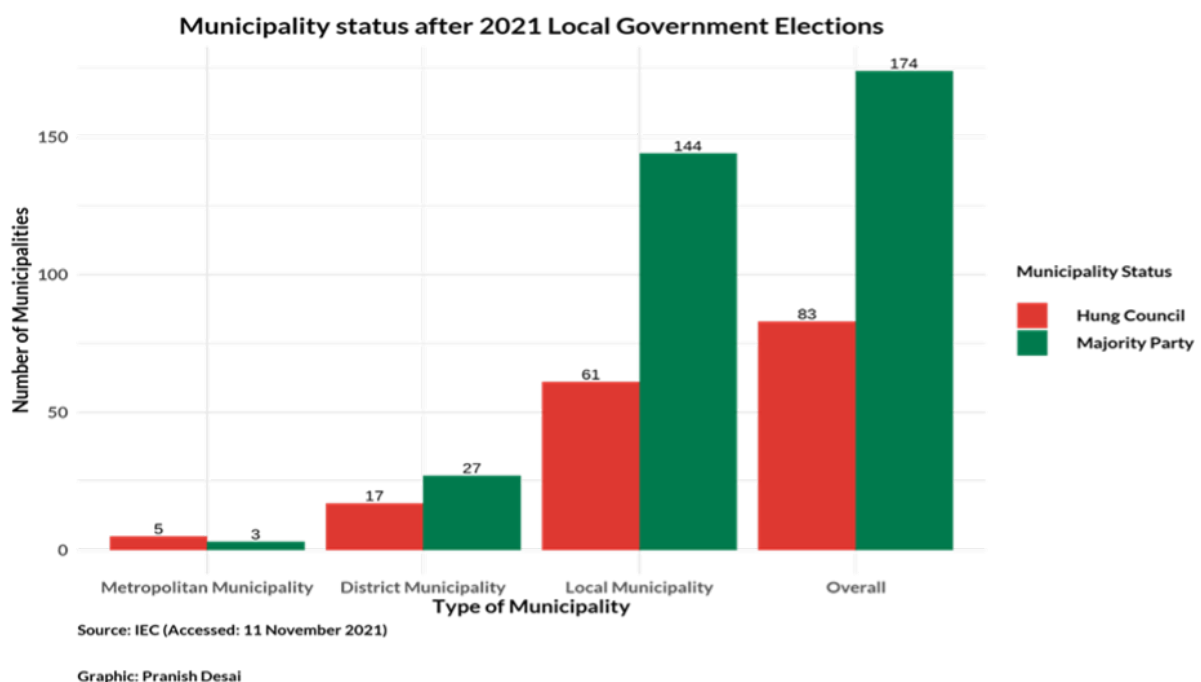
For any political party to garner a majority in the City of Johannesburg, a party needs 136 seats from 270 to form a government; the ANC has the biggest share of the seats with 91, including 87 ward and four proportional representation (PR) councillors. To continue governing Johannesburg, the ANC required 45 votes from smaller parties to form a coalition government. The DA is the second biggest party in the country's economic hub,

with 71 seats, 43 from wards and 28 from PR. In the capital, the City of Tshwane, 108 councillors are needed to form a government and the ANC secured 75 of the 214 council seats, while the DA had 69.

Therefore, a coalition had to be formed, led by the DA with other smaller parties (Sidimba, 2021). In Ekurhuleni, 113 councillors out of 224 are needed to form a governing coalition, and the ANC won 86, meaning they needed 27 other seats. The DA won 65 seats in the municipality east of Gauteng, while the EFF secured 31, followed by ActionSA with 15. The FF+ has eight, PA four, IFP and AIC, three each, and two for the ACDP. The PAC, ATM, UDM and COPE are among seven parties with one representative each in the council (Sidimba, 2021). After the 2021 local government elections, the country saw the emergence of 66 hung councils without a majority winner.

Figure 5: The increase of hung councils in South Africa after 2021 (IEC, 2021)

This depicts how coalitions are increasingly becoming the mainstay of South Africa politics in local government elections.



5.2.1.2. Proportional representation electoral system

One significant factor contributing to the formation of coalitions in South Africa's metros is proportional representation. South Africa uses a proportional representation electoral

system, which allows smaller parties to win seats in municipal councils. This system ensures fair representation of the diverse range of ideologies and interests within the population. However, it can also lead to a fragmented political landscape, where no single party holds a majority.

As a result, coalitions are often necessary to form a governing majority in the metros. South Africa's proportional representation system plays a crucial role in its local government. Designed to ensure fair and inclusive political representation, this system has proven to be effective in fostering a democratic ethos and promoting diversity in local decision-making bodies (Robson, 2022). By examining the key principles and processes of proportional representation in South Africa, one can understand its impact on local government and the benefits it brings.

The proportional representation system in South Africa works on the basis of allocating seats in local government bodies according to the proportion of votes received by political parties. This means that the number of seats a party receives is directly proportional to the percentage of votes it obtains in an election (De Kadt & Lieberman, 2020). Local government elections are held every five years, and citizens have the ability to cast their vote for a political party rather than an individual candidate. By doing so, citizens contribute to the overall percentage of votes that a party receives, influencing not just representation at a local level but also in parliaments and other government bodies (De Kadt & Lieberman, 2020; Oliver, 2021; Roodt, 2021; Naid, 2021).

The study observed that a proportional representation system ensures that marginalised groups and minority voices have a platform in local government decision-making. In a country as diverse as South Africa, this is critical. By granting smaller political parties and independent candidates a chance to be represented, the system encourages a multiplicity of perspectives to be considered, leading to more inclusive and comprehensive policy-making. Various interest groups can have their voices heard, be it based on ethnicity, language, religion, or specific issues affecting their communities.

In addition to promoting inclusivity, proportional representation also allows for stable governance and coalition building. Since no single party usually secures an outright majority, parties are often required to form coalitions or alliances to gain a majority in local government. This necessitates consensus-building and negotiation, fostering a culture of

compromise and collaboration. As a result, the interests of multiple parties and their constituencies are considered, further enhancing democratic processes in South Africa's local government (Oliver, 2021; Roodt, 2021; Naid, 2021).

However, proportional representation does come with its challenges. One criticism is that it can lead to weaker government accountability, as parties often prioritise maintaining their coalitions over the needs and demands of their constituents. Moreover, voters might feel detached from the individuals who actually represent them, as they do not directly elect specific candidates. Critics argue that this can lead to a lack of personal connection between voters and their representatives.

Nonetheless, the benefits of South Africa's proportional representation system in local government outweigh its drawbacks. By ensuring equitable representation and accommodating diverse voices, the system has helped to dismantle the oppressive legacy of apartheid and promote equal political participation. Communities throughout the country have gained a stronger sense of agency and ownership over local decision-making, creating positive change at the grassroots level. (Oliver, 2021; Roodt, 2021; Naid, 2021).

5.2.1.3. Political diversity and fragmented voter base

The formation of coalitions in metro councils also arises from the dynamic nature of politics and the need for compromise. In a diverse society such as South Africa, different parties often represent a wide range of social, economic, and cultural interests. As a result, coalitions offer opportunities for parties to combine their strengths and ensure that the interests of various communities are represented in decision-making processes. By forming coalitions, parties can accommodate the diverse needs of their constituents while ensuring a more inclusive and representative governance structure.

Ethno-linguistic divides also play a role in the formation of coalitions in South Africa's metros. The country is home to a diverse population with various ethnic and linguistic groups. These groups often have their own political parties that specifically cater to their interests. Coalitions can be formed along ethnic lines, as parties seek to consolidate their support base and gain representation in the municipality. These alliances can bridge the gaps between different communities and promote effective governance that considers

the needs of all citizens. The fragmentation of political parties is another crucial factor that leads to coalition formation.

South Africa has a multitude of political parties, each with their own agenda and support base. This fragmentation often results in no single party having enough support to govern on its own. Parties must then form alliances, negotiate power-sharing arrangements, and make compromises to create a stable coalition. The diverse views and interests within these parties can lead to a more inclusive and representative government (Munzhedzi, 2020; Rennkamp, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2020).

About 48 political parties contested the 2019 general elections, and this number increased to 325 parties contesting the 2021 local government elections. The ruling ANC has been the majority party in most municipalities across South Africa, with the exception of those in the Western Cape, since 1994. To understand the issue of the multiplicity of parties in South Africa it is imperative to look at the diversity aspect of the country known for being a 'rainbow nation'. The country is composed of a diverse array of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions (Mngomezulu, 2020; Ngcamu, 2019).

The ANC, the dominant political party since the advent of democracy during the 1994 elections, primarily represents the interests of the majority Black African population. However, the needs and aspirations of other communities, such as the white, coloured, and Indian populations, often necessitate the existence of additional political parties. These parties, such as the DA, the IFP, GOOD Party and Patriotic Alliance provide alternative platforms for these communities to organise and advocate for their specific concerns, thereby ensuring a more inclusive political environment (Mngomezulu, 2020).

Not only are the parties formed on the basis of race but also of tribes and regional politics. The research observed that there are political parties based on the need for a specific region to grow. Parties such as ActionSA have focused more on the metros and left other areas because they are of the view that they are in a position to make inroads in the metros rather than other areas (Roodt, 2021). Other political parties exist on the basis of religious beliefs, and these include parties such as the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and Al Jama-ah (Ngcamu, 2019).

Within each race or religious belief that has a sizable population, there are other political parties that are alternatives to the main political party that will be representing a particular group of the population. An example is parties such as FF+ and GOOD Party, which are off-shoots of the DA, and they eat into the support base of the DA rather than the main opposition. Msenge and Nzewi (2021) observed that any major conflict between the main political parties tends to lead to a split, and the aggrieved parties form their own parties. This can be evidenced by parties such as COPE, ActionSA, GOOD Party, and the EFF, to name just a few.

The study also realised that one cannot take away the history of the country to explain the concept of the multiplicity of political parties. South Africa's tumultuous history under apartheid contributes significantly to the presence of multiple political parties. Apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination, oppressed the majority Black African population and ensured the dominance of the white minority. This oppressive regime generated a strong sense of persecution and resistance, ultimately leading to a fragmented opposition.

During the struggle against apartheid, various political organisations and liberation movements emerged to challenge the regime, most notably the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), and the United Democratic Front (UDF). This history of division and diverse political ideologies planted the seeds for South Africa's multiparty system, as different factions emerged with distinct visions for the future of the country (Rennkamp, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2020; Ngcamu, 2019). The existence of multiple political parties can also be attributed to the nature of South Africa's democratic constitution.

The South African Constitution, adopted in 1996, enshrines the principles of multi-party democracy, ensuring the right to form political parties and encouraging political pluralism. This constitutional commitment to diversity and the protection of political freedoms has contributed to fostering a political environment in which various parties can thrive (Rennkamp, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2020; Ngcamu, 2019).

5.2.1.4. Endemic poor governance and service delivery

The need for effective governance is a primary driver of coalition formation in South Africa's metros. Many municipalities face significant challenges, such as infrastructure

development, service delivery, and economic growth. Forming a coalition allows for pooling of resources, expertise, and ideas from multiple parties to address these issues. The diverse perspectives brought by coalition partners can provide innovative solutions and promote better decision-making. Coalition governments can foster collaboration and cooperation among parties to meet the needs of the communities they serve (Rennkamp, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2020; Ngcamu, 2019).

South African metros are complex in terms of governing these urban areas. Metros are characterised by a diverse population, economic disparities, and complex social issues that demand a holistic approach to governance. The need for effective governance is paramount in addressing these challenges and ensuring the delivery of essential services and solutions to citizens. For instance, issues such as housing, transportation, healthcare, and unemployment require a coordinated and collaborative effort from all stakeholders, necessitating coalition-building among political parties.

Moreover, coalitions in metros can be a response to the changing political landscape of South Africa. The dominance of the African National Congress (ANC) in the political arena has gradually eroded over the years, resulting in increased competition among political parties in metros. This shift has made it difficult for any single party to secure an outright majority, creating a fragmented political environment.

In such scenarios, coalitions become a pragmatic solution to ensure political stability and effective governance. By forming alliances with like-minded parties, political parties can collectively negotiate and make collective decisions that benefit the metropolitan regions (Rennkamp, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2020; Ngcamu, 2019). The creation of coalitions in metros can also be seen as a reflection of the growing demand for citizen participation and accountability in the governance process.

The residents of these urban areas are increasingly vocal in voicing their concerns and expectations from their elected representatives (Mngomezulu, 2020). They demand transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness from their governments. Coalitions, by their nature, promote dialogue, consensus-building, and collective decision-making, which are the hallmarks of effective governance. By fostering citizen participation and accountability, coalitions can bridge the gap between the government and the governed, resulting in better service delivery and social cohesion (Rennkamp, 2019)

5.2.2. On cooperative game theory and consociation theoretical underpinnings about coalition formation

The cooperative game theory and consociation theoretical underpinnings helped establish the basis of coalition formation and practical dynamics of managing, including the analysis of subjectivities and interests of political parties involved. The study identified that there are three critical bases of agreements which are: ideology, party representation, and the distribution of council seats, especially which party receives which seat in the mayoral committee, and the pursuit of shared interests and common goals (Beukes & De Visser (2021:40).

5.2.2.1. *Allocation of pay-offs and policy perspectives*

“Evidence from coalition governments in Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands confirms that most of the policy priorities that are contained in coalition agreements are subsequently adopted as official government policy. This suggests that coalition agreements can be effective in encouraging political parties and interests to work together to fulfil the agenda of the coalition government” (Beukes & De Visser, 2021:13).

Ideological alignment forms one of the most critical bases for political parties entering into coalitions. In South Africa, political parties have distinct ideologies that guide their policy positions and vision for the future of the country (Mancebo, 2019). Ideologies go deeper than just the focus on removing the governing party from power or retaining power but entail that there should be some common ground that parties can have when it comes to making coalition agreements.

When forming coalitions in metropolitan municipalities, parties tend to seek alliances with those that share similar beliefs and policy objectives. This alignment ensures a certain level of cohesion in decision-making processes and allows for the implementation of a unified agenda (Mancebo, 2019; Roodt, 2021). To buttress this theme, EFF and DA provide the perfect case study for one to focus on, on the basis that they are two major parties who have had coalition agreements, albeit from totally opposite ideological understandings.

The coalition agreements have been rather interesting on the basis that they were two opposite parties, naturally antagonistic to each other, with totally opposite ideologies, and the only common ground being the need to remove ANC from power. However, the EFF has always maintained a stance that they are not in a coalition with the DA; rather they will vote with the DA in order to depose the ANC from power.

Essop (2016) quoted the EFF president, Julius Malema, commenting about the outcome of local government elections:

"We have heard you South Africa - we will not go into bed with the ANC. We will vote for the opposition, but we are not in bed with the DA."

The above excerpt confirms what this study has mentioned about Faustian pacts. This means EFF made a deal with the devil – seeing the DA as a better devil than the ANC. The EFF went on to vote with the DA in the city of Johannesburg. In 2022, the DA's Gauteng Provincial leadership, through its chair Solly Msimanga, categorically stated that it was not interested to work with the EFF to retain Gauteng municipalities because of their ideological differences with the red berets (Chester, 2022). This decision was premised on the experience gathered from previous arrangements with the EFF in the province, which had proven disastrous. The DA was open to working with any other smaller opposition parties rather than the EFF. Solly Msimanga is reported to have said the following:

"We previously partnered with the EFF. It made things very unstable in a sense that if they wanted to have land invasion taking place in Lenasia and the surrounding areas, Herman Mashaba, who was the mayor, turned a blind eye to that and then it cost us to lose wards in Lenasia, as an example" (Duma, 2022).

EFF is pro-black pro-socio-economic emancipation through the levers of state and government, and approaches things from a radical understanding. It is the belief of EFF that without being radical, it will take ages to deal with the socio-economic challenges that are faced by the black majority. The EFF proposes, based on its pillars of economic freedom, the expropriation of the country's land without compensation, for equal redistribution among the citizenry. The EFF's founding manifesto asserts that there is a

need to build state and government capacity, which will lead to the abolishment of tenders (Masuku & Jili, 2019).

On the other hand, the DA believes in the neo-classical economic models of supply and demand, with the private sector providing the required services with minimum interruptions and involvement from the government (Wolpe, 2023). EFF sees the private sector as the problem that has led to the marginalisation of the black people, and that the state and government through its different forms and levels should radically redress the challenges (Wolpe, 2023; Masuku & Jili, 2019).

Nethonzhe (2023) reports that the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC) passed a resolution, which stated that it was open to working with all political parties in coalitions, as long as those parties were aligned to its principles. Speaking on behalf of the NEC, David Makhura said:

“The ANC is not ruling out the possibility of working with any party but there are some non-negotiables... even though we don't have a principle that says we don't work with this party, there are some red lines” (Nethonzhe, 2023).

It is therefore these ideologies that either make or break a coalition agreement. It is important to note that in coalition governments, partners are forced to bargain over a common policy position, which means that in a coalition arrangement, partners have to compromise (De Kadt & Lieberman, 2020). The compromise at times may be costly, as a party may be forced to forgo a preferred policy option that may have brought positive results, just to accommodate the demands of its coalition partner. Therefore, it makes sense for a party to look for a coalition partner with a lot of common ground from an ideological point of view (Maserumule, 2023).

5.2.2.2. Inclusion criterion and the distribution of seats

Party representation and the distribution of seats play a significant role in the formation of coalitions. Parties often engage in negotiations to determine the allocation of power and positions within the coalition government. This process is vital as parties strive to secure a fair distribution of influence and decision-making authority. The proportional representation system used in South Africa's municipal elections provides the framework for determining seat allocation, further cementing its relevance in the coalition-building

process (Olver, 2021; Felix, 2023). Party representation and seat distribution shape the stability of coalitions.

When different parties come together to form a coalition, it is essential that there is a balance of power and influence among the participating parties. If one party holds a significant majority of seats, it can dominate decision-making processes and potentially disregard the interests and concerns of smaller parties (Bradshaw & Breakfast, 2019). This can lead to a lack of cooperation, internal conflict, and even the collapse of the coalition. Therefore, adequately distributing seats among participating parties ensures a level playing field, promoting stability and preventing the monopolisation of power (Law, 2023; Felix, 2023).

Numbers are very important in the game of forming a coalition. A party that holds the balance of power in a hung council could, in certain circumstances, prevent the formation of any government if it attended the meeting. However, its councillors would vote but spoil their ballots unless, say, the second largest party decide to support the candidate of the largest party for mayor (without agreeing to a coalition with the largest party), in order to allow a minority government to be formed (Mbalula, 2023). The number of seats a party holds is important, not only to win power but also to continue in power.

The EFF, as the kingmaker in many metros, has shifted the goalposts in many cases, as observed by Pietersen (2021). Ralarala (2023) reports that the DA lost control of Tshwane after its mayor, Stevens Mokgalapa, was voted out through a motion of no confidence by the ANC, which was supported by the EFF. It is worth noting that the EFF had agreed to vote with the DA on all council matters after not aligning with the ANC, and this move came as a shock. Recently, relations between the EFF and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) have broken down after the EFF decided that they will no longer vote with the IFP in all municipalities where the IFP could not demonstrate stability and support.

This, in a nutshell, paved the way for the ANC, EFF, and National Freedom Party-led coalition in the municipalities which were under the IFP.

The inclusion criterion and allocation of seats is vital for stable and effective coalitions. The basis of stable and effective coalition agreements depends on prioritising the fundamental local government administrative functions.

5.2.2.2.1. Portfolio allocation

Coalitions seem to have a bearing on the allocation of key portfolios within the executive committee. Coalitions have a direct impact on the formation and composition of the executive committee, commonly known as the mayoral committee or mayoral council, in metropolitan municipalities. The executive committee is responsible for decision-making and overseeing the implementation of municipal policies and programmes. In a coalition scenario, different political parties may have representation in this committee, leading to a multiparty approach towards governance (Makgale, 2021).

The work of the council is coordinated by a mayor who is elected by the council, and the mayor is assisted by an executive or mayoral committee, made up of councillors. This influences administrative functions, as decision-making becomes an exercise in negotiation and consensus-building, which may result in compromises and shared responsibilities (Makgale, 2021; Munzhedzi, 2020; Felix, 2023). Section 43 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act states that an executive committee must be composed in such a way that parties and interests represented in the municipal council are represented in the executive committee in substantially the same proportion they are represented in the council.

In the same vein, the same act provides room for municipalities to determine any alternative mechanism for the election of an executive committee, provided it complies with section 160(8) of the Constitution. This is where the challenge comes in when it comes to the composition of the executive committee in the sense that such negotiations are not easy to agree, and experience shows that they are the source of tension for as long as the coalition continues (Munzhedzi, 2020; Felix, 2023).

The allocation of portfolios, such as finance, transport, housing, and infrastructure, determines the focus and priorities of the municipal administration (Munzhedzi, 2020). In a coalition arrangement, different parties may negotiate for the allocation of key portfolios based on their policy agendas and strengths. This interplay between different parties greatly shapes the administrative functions and policies implemented by the metropolitan municipality.

Due to the differences in terms of ideologies of coalition partners, each political party would want to be in control of a portfolio that helps them to achieve their party objectives and ideologies and show that as proof to the electorate (Däubler, Debus & Ecker, 2023; Odendaal, 2023). There are cases and accusations of sabotage in the sense that parties would try to thwart each other's chances of success in the allocated portfolio on the basis that it might tend to entail the growth of that party in the future elections.

The study observed that the EFF is radical and propagates the involvement of the state in dealing with socio-economic challenges faced in South Africa, yet the DA are inclined to engage the private sector to provide the services (Rennkamp, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2020; Ngcamu, 2019).

5.2.2.2.2. Appointment and competency of the municipal manager

Coalitions affect the appointment of senior municipal officials, mainly the municipal manager. As the municipal manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the municipality, this appointment becomes a critical administrative function. In a coalition scenario, multiple parties may have a say in the appointment process, potentially leading to a more politically diverse and inclusive administration.

This can bring a variety of perspectives and expertise to the forefront, influencing the overall functioning of the municipality (Beukes & De Visser, 2021; Khambule et al., 2020). Ndletyana (2022) observed that the appointment of city managers has been a contentious issue in municipalities in South Africa. It has made coalitions even more precarious. The source of this controversy is the manner of appointing city managers and their accounting lines. The Municipal Systems Act (Regulation No 21 of 2014) affirms that mayors and councils are appointing authorities, to whom city managers are accountable, and have powers to fire or re-appoint.

Politicians have abused this power to get city managers, either coercively or willingly, to enable their financial interests in council through improper contracts or financial irregularities. Having city managers as instruments for financial gain has become an entrenched part of political culture amongst local political elites. This explains why the Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) municipality in early 2022 had two city managers, elected by feuding groupings within the council. Each was unyielding in its choice. The reason for

this intransigence is the financial benefits that accrue to politicians dependent on the choice of city manager. The government came to a halt, and the governing coalition at NMB may even collapse over the disagreement.

This impasse highlights the need to change selection procedures by taking the process outside of the council to an independent and professional body (Ndletyana, 2022; Ellis 2022; Odendaal, 2023). Reddy (2022) observed that together with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and ActionSA, the ANC in Johannesburg charged the DA mayor, Dr Mpho Phalatse, of backroom manoeuvring to have the DA's favourite candidate, Johann Mettler, appointed city manager. Phalatse admitted to having met with Mettler before the interviews. Mettler topped the list of three recommended candidates.

The EFF and ActionSA preferred a different candidate, Floyd Brink. He is the current city manager, appointed by ActionSA's leader, Herman Mashaba, when he was City of Joburg mayor, with the backing of the EFF, which has historical ties with the man (Reddy, 2022). Considering that the appointment of a municipal manager is actually a result of political contestation and boardroom agreements, it is sufficing to then say the impartiality of the city manager is very much questionable. One of the ways in which coalitions can impact the impartiality of a municipal manager is through the allocation of resources and the distribution of public services.

When a manager is beholden to a particular coalition partner, there is a risk that decisions regarding resource allocation and service delivery may be influenced by political considerations rather than objective criteria. This can result in favouritism towards certain groups or neighbourhoods at the expense of others, leading to perceptions of unfairness and inequality among residents (Greene, Henceroth & Jensen, 2021).

5.2.2.3. Type of coalitions and the pursuit of shared interests

Political parties, despite their ideological differences, often identify common policy priorities that can be addressed effectively through collaborative governance. These shared interests may include but are not limited to, economic development, social welfare, infrastructure improvement, and service delivery. By focusing on these tangible objectives, political parties can align their efforts and work towards achieving the common

goals outlined in their coalition agreements (Pietersen, 2021; Munzhedzi, 2020; Felix, 2023).

The need for political stability and effective governance act as significant incentives for parties to forge coalitions. Political fragmentation resulting from a lack of a clear majority often necessitates the formation of multi-party alliances for stability purposes. Given the diverse range of challenges faced by metropolitan municipalities, the ability to provide efficient, accountable, and transparent governance becomes imperative. By establishing coalitions, political parties can pool resources, expertise, and experiences to tackle complex urban issues and provide effective leadership (Knowles, 2021; Munzhedzi, 2020; Felix, 2023).

The desire to represent diverse constituencies and foster inclusivity is also a driving factor in creating coalitions. South Africa is a country characterised by its diversity, and political parties are keen on ensuring that all interests within the metropolitan municipalities are represented. Coalitions allow for the inclusion of voices from different communities, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity in representation enhances democratic participation and strengthens the legitimacy of the coalition government (Knowles, 2021; Munzhedzi, 2020; Felix, 2023).

It is important to state that coalitions in political governance can take many forms, depending on the system of government and the political landscape of a given country. The two most common types of coalition are a coalition government, where multiple political parties come together to form a government, typically when no single party has a majority in the legislature (Fortunato, 2019). This allows for more diverse representation and collaboration among different parties. The other common type of a coalition is a policy coalition, where various interest groups, political parties, and stakeholders come together to advocate for a specific policy agenda or issue. These coalitions can be temporary or more long term, depending on the goals and objectives of the participants (Bergman et al., 2020).

There are also informal coalitions, where political parties or interest groups may align on a specific issues or decisions without forming a formal agreement or government. These coalitions can be fluid and dynamic, changing based on the political climate and circumstances (Bergman et al., 2020). Ultimately, coalitions play a crucial role in political

governance by promoting cooperation, negotiation, and consensus- building among diverse stakeholders.

5.2.3. Concerning the impact of coalition government on the stability and efficiency of metropolitan municipalities

Coalitions impact the development and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in metropolitan municipalities. The IDP is a strategic document that outlines the long-term development goals and objectives, as well as the budget allocations, of the municipality. In a coalition, the diverse interests and policy priorities of the different parties involved can greatly shape the content and focus of the IDP. This directly influences the allocation of resources and the implementation of various projects and programmes within the municipality, impacting the lives of its residents (Munzhedzi, 2020; Joshua, James & Titos, 2022; Roodt, 2021). Considering that most of the coalitions are marriages of convenience the focus tends to be on political manoeuvrings at the expense of service delivery and actions that ensure the achievement of the set targets in the IDP.

The integrated development plan (IDP) is an important document which sets out the policy and service delivery needs of the communities. According to de Visser (2024), the “IDP sets out the municipality's key priorities and objectives for the medium and long term. Second, the IDP is implemented through the municipal budget, which allocates resources to the priorities of the IDP for the financial year and two years thereafter.” In 2023, the City of Tshwane failed to pass an adjustment budget after political parties asked for several caucus breaks during the council sitting, and subsequently the meeting adjourned without the adoption of the adjustment budget (Mahlali, 2023). The metro was undergoing financial distress; however, political parties would not put aside their political and coalition differences.

In Nelson Mandela Bay metro, National Treasury had revoked R430-million due to underspending of allocated conditional grants from the National Treasury (Ellis, 2024). This means that the metro will not be in a position to implement its IDP which will have a severe impact on service delivery in the metro. The City of Ekurhuleni also failed to pass its budget, because both the ANC and the EFF as coalition partners in the metro could not agree on the contents of the budget. This led to the removal of Nkululeko Dunga of

the EFF from his Finance MMC position. The city failed to pass a budget twice under Dunga's stewardship (Vilakazi, 2024).

The City of eThekweni managed to pass the budget after some time, when opposition parties rejected the budget stating that it was pro-poor. The budget only enjoyed the support of the minority in council (Phungula, 2024). On the other hand, the City of Johannesburg managed to pass its 2024/25 financial year budget. Budgets remain a core component in addressing policies contained in the IDP, and budgets are allocated to respond to the needs of the communities which were identified through the IDP (Munzhedzi, 2020).

Difficulties in metropolitans' municipalities budgets and spending conditional grants impacts on the implementation of the IDP, coupled with other challenges such as "including capacity and corruption" (Munzhedzi, 2020: 95). Political instability at local government is another impact of coalition governance. This is one aspect that has come to be synonymous with coalitions in the metros. Coalitions in South Africa's major metros are reaching unprecedented new levels of instability simultaneously, with ongoing disputes in Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni.

Since the 2021 local government elections, the City of Johannesburg has had 8 mayors, all due to the fact that there is no political party with a majority to run the council. According to Mwareya (2023), the City of Johannesburg has had the following mayors in this period:

- Geoffrey Makhubo appointed on 04/12/2019 and recalled on 09/07/2021
- Jolidee Matongo appointed on 10/08/2021 and recalled on 18/09/2021
- Mpho Moerane appointed on 01/10/2021 and recalled on 22/11/2021
- Mpho Phalatse appointed on 22/11/2021 and recalled on 30/09/2022
re-appointed on 26/10/2022 and recalled on 25/10/2022
- Thapelo Amad appointed on 27/01/2023 and recalled on 24/04/2023
- Kenny Kunene appointed on 14/05/2023 and recalled on 15/05/2023 (mayor for two days), and
- Kabelo Gwamanda appointed on 05/05/2023 and recalled on 16/08/202
- Dada Morero appointed on 16/08/2024 to date

Commenting on this aspect, independent analyst Kudakwashe Magezi (Africa Report, 2023) said “Eight mayors in two years – it’s such a tragicomedy that will haunt Johannesburg’s residents for years to come.” Since 2016, City of Tshwane mayors have failed to finish their five-year terms. Former mayor Solly Msimanga, who had won the City of Tshwane for the DA in the August 2016 local government elections, resigned in January 2019 due to a corruption scandal.

Msimanga’s successor, Stevens Mokgalapa, resigned in February 2020, after having assumed the mayorship in February 2019, just over a year in office (Mantzaris, 2022: 218). Since Steven Mokgalapa’s resignation, from March 2020 to October 2020 –eight months – the city did not have a mayor, resulting in the council being put under administration (Maserumule, 2020:328). The new mayor and speaker were appointed on 30/10/2020 and 23/11/21 respectively (Mantzaris, 2022: 218).

Since the 2021 elections, Nelson Mandela Bay Metro has had 3 mayors, with the first two being removed, due to the politics of coalitions, via votes of no confidence. The same Metro has had 7 mayors in 7 years (SABC, 2023).

In the 2021 local government elections, the ANC electoral performance saw a sliding decline in the City of eThekweni; however, statistically, the party had retained a substantial margin of votes in the city (Maserumule & Ndletyana, 2016:446). Politically, the city was more stable in terms of mayorship, as Thomas Mxolisi Kaunda was appointed the city’s executive mayor after the 2021 local elections. He was recalled by the ANC on the 14 of June 2024, after the National and Provincial general elections in South Africa, and he was redeployed to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

The city has been stable in terms of political leadership, compared to the rest of the metropolitans under coalitions. However, the city has been experiencing service delivery challenges and other administrative issues. The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) invoked a section 154 intervention by appointing Dr Mike Sutcliffe, the city’s former manager, and Dr Cassius Lubisi, the former director-general in the Presidency (Jasson Da Costa, 2024).

Since the 2021 local government elections, the City of Ekurhuleni has had three mayors, with the first two being removed due to coalition politics through votes of no confidence.

Tania Campbell of the DA was elected on 22/11/2021 and recalled on 26/10/2022; she was re-appointed on 08/11/2022 and recalled on 31/03/2023. The inherent fragility of coalition governments in South African metros is a key contributor to the high turnover of mayors. Coalition partners may disagree on crucial matters, making it difficult to maintain consensus and trust over time.

This frequently results in the collapse of coalitions and the subsequent removal of mayors, triggering early local elections and further perpetuating the cycle of high turnover (Knowles, 2021). The high turnover of mayors due to coalition politics poses significant challenges to governing stability. Frequent changes in leadership disrupt administrative continuity, making it difficult to implement long-term policies and projects. This instability can deter potential investments, hinder economic growth, and perpetuate governance inefficiency, ultimately impacting the quality of life for residents (Knowles, 2021; Joshua, James & Titos, 2022; Roodt, 2021). At the centre of the problem of political instability is the issue that parties are desperate to get their own candidates into key positions.

In the context of Johannesburg, Davies (2023) reports that according to the version of the DA, the party fielded its own candidate for mayor, and ActionSA wanted that same position; this resulted in their coalition agreement with ActionSA starting on shaky ground. Davies (2023) argues that another case in point is the Al Jama-ah, the Muslim-interest party, that has proved more than happy to put forward councillor Thapelo Amad as Johannesburg mayor, despite the fact that every indication is that he will simply serve as a proxy before the “real” mayor is decided by the outcome of negotiations between the ANC and EFF. Parties are particularly greedy for posts with economic opportunities.

A case in point is the example of the Patriotic Alliance. The party wanted the post of MMC for economic development in Johannesburg so badly that it was prepared to collapse the entire coalition for it (Davies, 2023). It is no secret that the portfolios in local government which allow the greatest access to contracts, tenders and deals are the ones which are most in demand by certain parties (Knowles, 2021). On the other hand, Beukes and De Visser (2021:32) note “Studies on coalition governments in other countries suggest that a coalition partner attaches the most value to portfolio areas that relate to policy areas that are ‘close to its heart’.

According to Hellen Zille, commenting on the experience of working with the EFF in a coalition as recorded by Davies (2023):

“EFF would say, “Appoint this person as a municipal manager, give this tender to that company and ensure that you follow this policy. If you don’t, we’ll withdraw our support, and your government will fall.”

To understand the political instability in the metros one has to also look at it from the point of political parties trying so hard to appeal to South African voters on the basis of their track record in governance. There are national elections to follow after the local government elections, and parties need to use case studies to show that they have the capacity to run national affairs because they could do it at the local government level. Political instability therefore increases because the stakes are high; a party needs to have control in the form of a mayor to then use as a case study as a campaign tool. Parties are willing to do what it takes to take over sites which they can then point to during election campaigns. To buttress this point, one has to consider comments made by the IFP on the EFF:

“EFF made a proposal in January where the party “expressed their desire to govern a municipality in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal where they would demonstrate good governance by the EFF” (Davis, 2023).

The political bickering amongst political parties is also at the core of the existence of political instability in the metros. A case in point is the conflict between the EFF and IFP. According to Davies (2023), the EFF is now attempting to remove the IFP from power in up to 13 municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal as revenge for the IFP not voting with the EFF in Johannesburg. These kinds of manoeuvres have literally nothing to do with politics, or with the people who end up being most affected, and the existence of political instability is entrenched.

5.2.3.1. Strategic policy paralysis

The problem of strategic policy paralysis in South Africa's coalition-led metros is a significant issue that hampers the effective governance and development of these regions. Coalition governments are formed when no single political party secures an absolute majority in an election, leading to a partnership between multiple parties to

govern the region. While this form of governance aims to promote inclusivity and representation, it often results in policy paralysis and inefficiencies due to divergent priorities and power struggles among the coalition partners. One of the primary reasons for strategic policy paralysis in coalition-led metros is the inherent ideological differences between the participating parties.

These differences can hamper decision-making processes, as parties try to advance their respective agendas, often at the expense of compromise and pragmatism (Joshua, James & Titos, 2022). For instance, the DA, which is to all appearances a conservative party, tends to prioritise fiscal responsibility and limited government intervention, while a more progressive party, such as the EFF, prioritises social welfare and redistribution of resources. Such conflicting priorities make it challenging to develop coherent and effective policies (Joshua, James & Titos, 2022; Roodt, 2021).

To remedy policy contradictions within the coalition government, political parties and independent councillors should incorporate their preferred and agreed policies within the coalition agreements. Beukes and De Visser (2021:14) note that political parties must agree on policy programmes. Coalition partners often engage in power struggles, leading to political deadlock and policy gridlock. Parties may prioritise their short-term political gains over the long-term needs of the population, resulting in indecisiveness and inertia. Each party wants to avoid being seen as capitulating to the other, leading to a lack of consensus and a failure to implement crucial policies. The constant disagreement and deadlock can create a sense of institutional instability that undermines effective governance in these metros.

The Nelson Mandela Bay coalition saw problems arising after April 2017, because it was difficult for the administration to predict whether items would pass the council. According to Johan Mettler, City Manager of the Nelson Mandela Bay, planning became impossible, as the officials had to constantly take account of new contingencies or initiatives demanded by coalition partners. Some politicians eschew the obligation of accountability because they are eager to make an impression or be seen as acting in a manner that responds positively to the popular demands of the electorate (Joshua, James & Titos, 2022). This at-a-whim nature of policy-making further interferes with municipal operations, as directors tend to report to politicians instead of their line managers

(Joshua, James & Titos, 2022). Mettler found that certain MMCs now took to issuing direct instructions to their executive directors without going through the city manager:

“Suddenly everyone in the municipality had become an expert on something. I found that there were parallel operations running in finance and electricity. This resulted in accountability for delivery becoming really confused, and it tested the relationships in the municipality like never before” (Joshua, James & Titos, 2022).

Additionally, coalition governments can suffer from an absence of strong leadership and accountability. In a single-party government, there is usually a clear leader who is responsible for making final decisions. However, in a coalition government, decision-making is often diluted among multiple parties, resulting in a lack of centralised authority and a diffusion of responsibility. This diffusion of power can lead to delays in decision-making and a lack of accountability, as no single party can be directly held responsible for policy failures or the lack of progress (Makgale, 2021).

The problem of strategic policy paralysis is further exacerbated by the lack of trust and cooperation among coalition partners. Parties may view each other with suspicion and perceive any gain made by one party as a loss for the others. The resulting lack of trust impairs the collaborative environment necessary for effective policy-making. Politicians are reluctant to share information or cooperate genuinely, fearing that their counterparts may gain an advantage or use the information against them. Such an environment of distrust hinders the development of comprehensive and strategic policies.

5.2.3.2. Service delivery focus

Coalition politics have an impact on the consequences of service delivery in metros. According to a 2018 survey report,

“Ekurhuleni increased its built-environment performance targets 47 from 71 per cent in 2016/17 to 73 per cent in 2017/18; water losses decreased from 30.6 per cent to 28.5 percent, and electricity losses from 13.4 per cent to 11.7 percent (Bell & Baloyi, 2019:14). In Johannesburg, the city reported a performance of 56 per cent against service delivery indicators for 2017/18; electricity losses increased from 20.2 per cent in 2016/17 to 23.3 per cent in 2017/18 but water losses declined from 26.8 to 25.5 per cent (Voigt, 2019: 4). In Tshwane only two out of 13 service

delivery and budget improvement targets were achieved in 2017/18. The biggest challenges related to water provision (water losses increased from 23 per cent in 2016/17 to 28 per cent in 2017/18) and land invasions, with a mushrooming of informal settlements stretching the city's ability to meet service-delivery targets" (Maja, 2019:19).

Service delivery was getting worse in the city of NMB, where just over half of the service delivery targets were achieved in 2017/18, down from 81 per cent in 2016/17 (Mashoeshoe & Mokgabodi, 2019:5). Signs of worsening service delivery standards in NMB include high levels of unaccounted for water that increased by 5 percent between 2017-2018; high levels of land invasion and forced occupations of unallocated government sponsored (RDP) houses, and lack of coordinated planning between state departments with the city (Mashoeshoe & Mokgabodi, 2019:6).

Fast forward to 2022, and the picture is different if one is to use the case study of the City of Johannesburg. According to Ndlovu-Nachamba (2023), coalition politics have had devastating consequences for service delivery in Johannesburg, particularly for the nearly two million residents living in the city's informal settlements. The city of Johannesburg has been negatively affected by the frequent changes of mayors, which led to the turnover of political leaders that presented a need to revise policy priorities because of the changes. The political changes in leadership did not only present policy instability, but led to the instability in the efficiency of council meetings, and worsening service delivery standards (Ndlovu-Nachamba, 2023). The people living in informal settlements were the hardest hit by the instabilities. Asivikelane is a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) that works with informal settlements to affirm people's rights to basic services.

"Asivikelane's service delivery index, which assessed the city's performance in providing access to water, sanitation and refuse removal, shows that there has been a decline in service delivery from February 2022 to February 2023. The index shows that in February of 2022, 67.3% of residents said that they had access to enough water, their toilets were cleaned and drained, and their refuse was collected. A year later, in February 2023, only 58% of residents could answer yes to those questions. The referenced data for Johannesburg is collected monthly by Planact, a Joburg-based non-profit organisation together with 1to1 Agent of Engagement. It is a real-time

depiction of the lived experiences of people who currently stand at the losing end of political warfare.” (Ndlovu-Nachamba, 2023).

In the City of Ekurhuleni, residents who participate in Asivikelane have shared their frustrations of spending days without access to adequate water or their refuse being collected (Ndlovu-Nachamba, 2023). Asivikelane is a network of 500 informal settlements which was established in the year 2000, which provides a platform for urban informal settlement residents to engage with government about basic service delivery reforms. In the City of Tshwane, rubbish dumps in Phomolong lay uncollected for months, posing a significant health hazard for children, particularly during the rainy season (Ndlovu-Nachamba, 2023).

In Tshwane, residents also now have less access to water. Without mayors, the executive decision-making structure, which is made up of members of the mayoral committee, cannot be formed and pass agenda items. This leadership vacuum defeats the developmental agenda of local government created to link government with its community. In essence, residents and non-profit organisations advocating for transparency and accountability cannot pin down the municipal council to respond to the 10% decline in service delivery, as motions of no confidence have been more certain than the actual delivery of services (Ndlovu-Nachamba, 2023; Sidimba, 2022).

5.2.4. On enhancing local government administration in the context of coalitions

There is no solution to the factors for the creation of coalition government, because the proportional electoral system will likely produce more outcomes of political parties that do not have an overwhelming majority. Hence the need for policy interventions to address the strategic paralysis in coalition-led metros.

Firstly, it is essential to strengthen the mechanisms for coalition coordination and decision-making. Clear processes and structures should be established to facilitate dialogue, compromise, and decision-making. These mechanisms should include regular meetings, policy workshops, and avenues for constructive engagement, allowing coalition partners to find common ground and work towards shared objectives (Makgale, 2021; Wolpe, 2023; Nethonzhe, 2013). Furthermore, it is important to promote accountability and leadership within the coalition government. Specific roles and responsibilities should

be assigned to each party, and clear lines of authority must be established. Holding regular evaluations and assessments of the coalition's performance can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that parties remain accountable for their actions (Makgale, 2021; Wolpe, 2023; Nethonzhe, 2013).

Secondly, a legislative framework for coalition formation and management is necessary (Reddy, 2022; Ndletyana, 2022). After the 2016 local government elections, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) commissioned a study, together with the Dullah Omar Institute and the University of the Western Cape. The study focused on looking at coalitions in various countries such as Indonesia, Sweden, India, etc. In 2023, the department of CoGTA in conjunction with the Presidency, Dullah Omar Institute and the University of the Western Cape convened the National Dialogue on Coalitions which included academics, civil society organisations, and political parties, to dissect the proposed Coalition Bill (2024). On the 27th of March 2024, the cabinet approved the Coalition Bill to be published for public comments by the end of July (Naidoo, 2024).

These are some of the key points which emanates from the proposed Coalition Bill (2024):

- That councils without an outright majority should be converted from a mayoral executive system to a collective executive committee.
- Provide for binding coalition agreements between political parties in municipalities in which no party has a majority of seats on the council.
- Key office bearers may only be removed from office after they have been in office for two years, and by show of hands.
- To increase the electoral threshold to 1% of valid votes cast, for a political party to qualify for a seat on the municipal council (Government Printing Works, Government notice no. 50682, 21 May).

A framework for coalitions in local government (Beukes & De Visser, 2021), commissioned by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and National Dialogue on Coalition Governments (Dullah Omar Institute, 2023), should be streamlined to an official legislative guideline for local and national elections. The first justification for a legislative framework for coalitions lies in the advancement of democratic

principles. Proper guidelines are essential to reinforce the principles of accountability, transparency, and stability in the context of multi-party governance structures. A clear legislative framework will not only outline the rules of engagement but also lay the foundation for building trust among coalition partners and the public (Knowles, 2021; Ndletyana, 2022).

The proposed Coalition Bill (2024), as a legislation framework which will regulate coalitions, would address the issue of political instability that often arises from coalitions. In the absence of proper guidelines, numerous conflicts of interest and power struggles can occur between coalition partners, undermining the delivery of critical services to citizens (Ndlovu-Nachamba, 2023). The Coalition Bill (2024) will help mitigate such conflicts, establish clear rules for resolving disputes, and provide a roadmap for managing power-sharing agreements (Pietersen, 2021).

Service delivery is a primary concern for local governments, and stable coalitions can contribute to its efficient implementation. By defining the roles and responsibilities of each coalition partner, the legislative framework can provide a clear framework for consensus-building, decision-making processes, and accountability mechanisms. This would lead to more effective service delivery and prevent the disruptions that may arise from politics-driven disagreements (Pietersen, 2021; Oliver, 2021). A legislative framework for coalitions is crucial to safeguard the interests of local communities. By requiring coalition partners to align their policies with a shared agenda for local development, the framework ensures that the coalition remains focused on addressing the needs and aspirations of the community (Sidimba, 2022).

Specific provisions can also encourage greater public participation, enhancing the role of citizens in shaping local governance (Olver, 2021). Additionally, a legislative framework would promote long-term stability by providing guidelines for forming, managing, and dissolving coalitions. Prescribing the procedure for coalition formation, the framework can establish mechanisms for negotiating and managing inter-party relationships. Additionally, having a defined process for disbanding coalitions would minimise uncertainty and avoid political crises (Olver, 2021; (Sidimba, 2022).

5.3. Critical consideration of research findings

Lessons can be derived from European countries such as Sweden which have legislation that guides the formation of coalitions. In Sweden, coalitions are carefully crafted and established through a systematic process that mirrors the nation's parliamentary democracy and diverse party system. This procedure is essential for sustaining effective governance and guaranteeing that legislative choices are representative of the collective agreement among various political factions (Lindvall, 2021).

Germany is one of the countries which has put in place legislative guidelines to regulate how coalitions should be formed. According to Tselane (2023), in Germany, once the election has been concluded, the political parties begin the process of negotiations to form a government. Those negotiations will materialise in the form of a coalition agreement known as *Koalitionsvertrag*. The *Koalitionsvertrag* contains policy objectives, the sharing of cabinet positions, and other matters of importance.

The study having provided the data findings, the following are areas that require critical consideration by local government and various stakeholders.

- There is a need to legislate the coalition formation, and agreements made among the political parties. There have been comments made by various sections of the political parties or community about the unfair tactics of negotiations, which makes the coalition process itself flawed and the foundation shaky, as alluded to in the study.
- It is critical to review the electoral law and to put in place a mandate that states that the political party with the majority of votes should be given preference to be the leader and to form a coalition. This reduces the heavy political bickering that takes place and gives a sense of control and responsibility to the party with the majority to form a coalition.
- Another critical aspect is to make the coalition agreements legally binding, and any deviation from the coalition agreement should be grounded on merit and law, and on sufficient grounds for litigation. The fact that there is no financial cost on the part of the political parties and no accountability on deliberately collapsing a coalition means that political bickering will be the order of the day just to score cheap political points.

5.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the key findings established by the study from the existing literature. In looking for data, the study was guided by its objectives and research questions. The next chapter provides a summative conclusion to the study, including the position of this study on the subject matter.

This chapter has explained details about the formation of coalitions. This objective was met in several ways. The study found that the inability to secure a governing majority was primarily due to the presence of numerous political parties, driven by South Africa's diverse political landscape. This fragmentation reduced the likelihood of any single party consolidating power. The cooperation and consociation theoretical underpinnings revealed dynamics in managing coalitions to include ideological compatibility, party representation about the distribution of seats, and the pursuit of shared interests and common goals.

Effective coalitions prioritise the fundamental local government functions. Therefore, coalitions have a significant impact on the executive committee, portfolio allocation, the appointment and work of the municipal manager, and the implementation of the IDP. The study observed general instability in metropolitan areas governed by coalitions. Metros such as Johannesburg have had 8 mayors since 2016, because coalition parties are always scheming on how they can get power instead of providing the needed services to the residents. The study also observed that there is strategic policy paralysis in the sense that there is a high turnover of mayors and personnel due to political bickering.

The next chapter is about proposing possible recommendations that can enhance local government administration in the context of coalitions in metropolitan municipalities.

CHAPTER SIX: ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF COALITIONS

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to provide conclusive views and recommendations based on the realities and findings of this particular study. The findings were presented using the thematic approach and descriptive statistics as needed. Conclusions will be drawn from the results which were presented in the previous chapter. Recommendations will also be made towards relevant stakeholders to make necessary adjustments to help improve the municipalities used as case studies in the study.

6.2 Recommendations on findings

Political parties need to recognise that the likelihood of forming a coalition after elections is becoming increasingly possible and inevitable. This will need them to be mature about the practice of politics and government formation. This includes adaptability to the changing political context, and applying the theoretical underpinnings of cooperation and consociation is vital for political stability. This is vital for assuring public confidence in the electoral system and possibly increasing the voter turnout. This section provides recommendations to the different stakeholders that are critical to the existence of effective governance and administration of metros.

6.2.1 Recommendations to political parties

The recommendations are provided to political parties, the parliament and residents

6.2.1.1 Type of coalitions – the nature of relations

First and foremost, transparency and clear communication are essential in coalition governments. All parties involved must have a clear understanding of each other's goals, values, and interests. This can be achieved through regular meetings and open dialogue, as well as the establishment of clear rules and procedures for decision-making within the coalition. There is a need to prioritise public interests. Political parties need to prioritise the needs and interests of the communities they serve when forming coalitions. This

means focusing on the delivery of effective and efficient services, regardless of party affiliation. Political parties need to work together to address pressing issues such as infrastructure development, job creation, and poverty alleviation. Transparency and public interests are essential to building trust, both for inter-party relations and with the people. South African political parties should also focus on building trust and fostering mutual respect within coalition governments. Trust is the foundation of any successful coalition, and parties need to demonstrate honesty, integrity, and accountability in their interactions with each other. Mutual respect and understanding of diverse political perspectives are also crucial for creating a cohesive and effective coalition government.

6.2.1.2 Allocation of pay-offs and common policy perspectives

Another important recommendation for South African political parties entering into coalitions is the need to compromise and find common ground on key policy issues. While parties may have differing ideologies and priorities, they need to find areas of agreement and work together towards shared goals. This may require parties to make concessions and find pragmatic solutions to complex issues.

6.2.1.3 Power dynamics and conflict resolution

Political parties need to establish mechanisms for conflict resolution within coalition governments. Conflicts and disagreements are inevitable in any political partnership, but parties need to have a clear and fair process for resolving disputes and addressing grievances. This may involve the establishment of independent arbitration systems, or the use of mediators to facilitate dialogue and negotiation. Lastly, South African political parties need to invest in capacity building and training for their representatives involved in coalition governments. This may involve providing education and resources on coalition management, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, and effective governance practices. Equipping party representatives with the necessary knowledge and skills will enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of coalition politics and contribute to the success of the coalition government.

6.2.1.3 The need for political humility and maturity

When dissecting the toxic nature of South Africa's political environment, especially the coalition politics, political humility and maturity are essential qualities for political parties and politicians to possess when forming local government coalitions. Political humility allows parties to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of their positions, as well as those of their potential coalition partners. This will allow political parties to outgrow their narrow political interest and partisanship in the interest of the electorate. This openness to compromise and cooperation is crucial for successful coalition building. Political maturity enables parties to put the interest of their constituents and the greater common good above their party affiliations, egos, and political ambitions. By practising humility and maturity, South Africa political parties and politicians can foster a more inclusive and collaborative and conducive political environment leading to more effective and stable local government coalitions. Ultimately, the success of these coalitions will depend on the ability of parties to set aside their political differences and work together for the betterment of the people they are serving.

6.2.2. Recommendations to the parliament and government

One of the first steps that the government and parliament should take is to establish clear guidelines and regulations for coalition governments at the municipal level. This includes defining the roles and responsibilities of coalition partners, as well as outlining the decision-making processes and mechanisms for conflict resolution. By providing a framework for cooperation and governance, the government can help to mitigate the potential for infighting and deadlock within coalition governments.

The government has already started the efforts of providing order in the making of coalitions, after the realisation that coalitions are affecting local governance issues. The government has taken the first steps to develop new laws for coalition governance in the country, publishing a concept paper on the topic for public comment. While the concept document is one of the earliest stages of formulating official regulations on coalitions, it sets the path forward, which includes having a national dialogue on the topic and tabling a framework in the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces by the end of 2023.

The legislative framework under construction should enhance transparency and accountability in municipalities under coalitions. This includes implementing stringent financial oversight measures, such as regular audits and transparency in budget allocations and spending. Additionally, the government should establish mechanisms for citizens to hold their local government officials accountable, such as through public accountability forums and reporting mechanisms. Another key legislative aspect to consider is empowering citizens to participate in decision-making processes and hold their local officials accountable; the government can help to ensure that the needs and priorities of the community are reflected in municipal governance.

6.2.2.1 Recommendations to citizens

Citizens are either beneficiaries or victims of coalition governments. The local government sector is mandated by law to ensure the participation of citizens. It is in the interest of citizens to take advantage of legislative-mandated rights to ensure that they demand better service and governance. One of the most important things that citizens can do is to stay informed and engaged in the political process. This means staying up-to-date on the issues facing their municipality, understanding the various perspectives of the coalition parties, and actively participating in discussions and debates.

By being informed, citizens can contribute to the dialogue and help shape the decisions being made by the coalition. In addition to staying informed, citizens can also make their voices heard by reaching out to their local representatives. This can be done through attending public meetings, writing letters or emails, and participating in community forums. By expressing their concerns and opinions, citizens can influence the decision-making process and hold their elected officials accountable for their actions.

Citizens can work towards promoting collaboration and compromise within the coalition. This can be done by fostering a sense of unity and understanding among the parties involved and encouraging them to find common ground to move forward. By advocating for cooperation and constructive dialogue, citizens can help bridge the gaps between the coalition parties and promote positive change in their municipality. Another important aspect of addressing challenges in metro municipalities under coalitions is to actively support and promote transparency and accountability.

Citizens should demand clarity and openness from their elected officials and hold them responsible for their actions and decisions. By advocating for transparency, citizens can help combat corruption and ensure that the government is working in the best interest of the public. Lastly, citizens can work towards creating a culture of civic engagement and participation in their municipality. This can be done by organising community events, volunteering, and working together to address local issues. By coming together as a community, citizens can create a strong and unified voice that can drive change and improve the effectiveness of the coalition government.

6.3. Summary of Findings

This chapter was the pinnacle point of the study and provided a summative conclusion to the study. The chapter provided a snapshot conclusive summary of the key findings that the study established. It also provided recommendations to political parties, parliament government and the citizens.

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