

Future realities of Coalitions in South Africa: Reflection on Coalition Governments in the Metros: 2016-2021.

Overview or “Abstracts for each chapter”

Chapter 1

This chapter contextualises coalition government within broader debates on state power and electoral processes, positioning elections as central mechanisms for the attainment of political authority. Drawing on global, continental, and domestic scholarship, it clarifies the conceptual foundations of multi-party governance and coalition formation. The chapter establishes a theoretical basis for subsequent analyses of coalition experiences, highlighting their historical evolution, political conditions, and practical implications in comparative and regional contexts.

Chapter 2

This chapter examines coalition governments in the SADC region through a case study of Zimbabwe’s Government of National Unity, highlighting the limited theoretical grounding and predominantly retrospective analysis of such arrangements in African scholarship. It argues that structural constraints, entrenched ruling party dominance and governance failures undermined the coalition’s effectiveness, shaping public scepticism and raising broader questions about the viability and future of coalition governance in similar political contexts.

Chapter 3

This chapter analyses coalition governance in South African local district and metropolitan municipalities following the 2016 elections, situating outcomes within a context of economic decline, rising unemployment, and social inequality. It argues that coalition instability and intra-party dissent reflect deeper governance failures, accountability deficits and shifting voter perceptions, underscoring the complex interplay between political dynamics and service delivery in shaping municipal coalition experiences.

Chapter 4

This chapter examines the formation and functioning of the coalition government in the City of Ekurhuleni following the 2016 local elections, highlighting the conditions that led to a hung council and the ANC’s decline in support. It argues that despite complex political dynamics the coalition delivered tangible developmental outcomes, positioning the metro for long-term growth as a key economic and industrial hub in the region.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents a critical dialogue with Mzilikazi wa Afrika, positioning the media as a central pillar in the re-imagining of democratic practice amid South Africa's evolving coalition politics. Through reflective engagement, it interrogates institutional accountability, electoral shifts, and governance failures while advancing the need for innovative, sustainable coalition frameworks grounded in both lived political experience and forward-looking democratic thought.

Chapter 6

This chapter examines the growing inevitability of coalition governments in South Africa, situating their rise within shifting electoral dynamics following the 2016 South African local government elections. Drawing on empirical insights, it reflects on governance challenges and opportunities, advancing recommendations for stable, effective coalition frameworks while urging deeper scholarly engagement to re-imagine party politics and democratic practice in an evolving national and global context.