


Chapter 6

Mozambique's Singular Path in Southern Africa's Coalition Governance Landscape

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ABSTRACT

This in-depth comparative study explores the complexities of coalition governance in Southern Africa, specifically focusing on Mozambique's remarkable absence of coalition governments. It sets it apart from neighboring countries where coalition experiences and party alliances are firmly established. The tumultuous contestation of the October 2023 municipal election results, marked by allegations of fraud and favoritism, sheds light on critical challenges within Mozambique's electoral system. This contentious episode highlights the need for comprehensive changes in the country's electoral regulatory framework, which is crucial for alignment with regional contexts and cultivating a political environment conducive to joint governance, particularly at the local level. In addition, it requires a re-evaluation, leading to improvements that increase transparency, fairness, and public confidence in the nation's electoral processes, and could bring the country closer to standards of electoral integrity.

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INTRODUCTION

Distinguished by its rich history and unique political trajectory, Mozambique is a notable figure in Southern Africa's governance landscape. Characterized by a significant political imbalance, primarily attributed to the dominance of Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) since the onset of democracy in 1994, the nation has witnessed a consistent stronghold on political power (Cortes, 2018; Nuvunga, 2014; Vines, 2021). As exemplified by the 2019 elections, FRELIMO's candidate, Filipe Nyusi, secured over 73% of the votes. Despite the existence of 27 political parties in the country, parliamentary representation remains limited to three, revealing a lack of political diversity and competitive pluralism (Jatula & Conshello, 2021).

With 25 years of democratic governance, Mozambique has yet to experience successful joint political ventures or coalitions. A pervasive climate of mistrust among vital political players, particularly political parties, has hindered the development of alliances in the form of coalitions. The chapter aims to address this gap by pursuing several objectives:

1. It meticulously examines and compares the historical development of political governance practices in Mozambique and other Southern African countries, specifically focusing on the dynamics of coalition politics. This comparative analysis seeks to unveil insights into the region's unique trajectories and historical aspects of governance practices.
2. The chapter delves into the factors influencing the formation and stability of coalitions in countries where such political arrangements exist.
3. It assesses the impact of coalition politics on governance structures and policy-making processes.

Adopting an exploratory approach, the study integrates rigorous secondary source analysis through a comprehensive review of academic articles, books, reports, and news articles. These sources provide a foundational understanding of coalition politics and party alliances in selected Southern African countries and the noticeable absence of such dynamics in Mozambique. The chapter identifies Southern African countries with established coalition governments for a meaningful comparison. Information was also obtained from social media focused on posts from Mozambican political parties and respected individuals on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, renowned for political discourse. Thematic analysis categorizes social media posts based on key themes, including public sentiment, political discourse, and coalition-related discussions. The subsequent comparative study aims to distinguish commonalities, differences, and pertinent patterns, contributing valuable insights into Mozambique's governance and political stability implications.

This chapter embarks on a comprehensive exploration of Mozambique's experience with coalition governance, aiming to unravel the complexities and peculiarities that define its political evolution. The introduction provides a concise overview, emphasizing the distinctive nature of Mozambique's political journey within the Southern African region. As a guide to the reader, the chapter objectives are clearly outlined, setting the stage for an in-depth examination of Mozambique's intricate path in coalition governance or party alliances.

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