Chapter 15
The Role of Coalition Governments as Sustainable Democracy Enhancing in South Africa

Mukesh Shankar Bharti

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3693-7247

Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to discuss the nature of coalition government and its role in strengthening the norms of democracy in South Africa. Over the past two decades, South Africa has continued to focus on the progressive development of the country's political institutions under the ethos of the democratic principle of coalition government. This chapter also discusses the various South African governments' roles in the establishment of democratization in the country. The research method used in this study is the qualitative approach to search for actual research output. The empirical method would also involve discussing research gaps on the nature and characteristics of coalition government for better governance. Moreover, this study will answer the following research questions: How is the coalition government in South Africa paving the way for the healthiest democracy? There is the second question: Why are the people of South Africa electing a coalition government in the country? This study also uses the third wave of democratization theory of Samuel P. Huntington, which contributed to the democratic transition and the establishment of democratic governments in the late 1980s in developing countries, namely in Africa, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe. Apart from Samuel P. Huntington's idea on democratization, this study also utilises other modern democratic theories to discuss South Africa's democratization process under the coalition government. Finally, the chapter outlines how political alliances are conceptualized and operationalized for the democratization of South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The most significant event was the end of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic government in 1994. This marked the beginning of a new era characterized by non-racialism, democracy, and equality under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) and its leader, Nelson Mandela. South Africa has held several democratic elections since 1994, with the ANC winning the majority of votes in each election. The country's political landscape has seen the emergence of opposition parties such as the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), contributing to a more pluralistic political environment. Despite the progress made since 1994, South Africa continues to face significant challenges, including poverty, inequality, unemployment, and crime. The government has implemented various social welfare programs and economic policies aimed at addressing these issues, but progress has been uneven. The several past governments of South Africa had made tremendous efforts to address historical injustices and inequalities have included initiatives such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action policies aimed at promoting the participation of previously disadvantaged groups in the economy and society.

Land ownership remains a contentious issue in South Africa, with calls for land redistribution to address historical injustices. The government has initiated land reform programs, including land restitution and redistribution, although progress has been slow and uneven. South Africa has played an active role in regional and international affairs, advocating for human rights, democracy, and development. It has also been involved in peacekeeping efforts on the African continent and has sought to strengthen ties with other emerging economies through platforms such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). Overall, South Africa's post-1994 journey has been characterized by both progress and challenges as the country continues to grapple with the legacy of apartheid while striving to build a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society through enhancement of sustainable democratic development in the country. As South Africa transitioned to democracy, traditional authorities saw a decline in their popularity, particularly among younger generations and those advocating for greater democratic accountability and participation. However, it's important to note that traditional leadership still held significance for many rural communities, particularly in matters of culture, identity, and local governance.

This study examines various factors that influence the formation and functioning of coalitions in South Africa. This includes analyzing trends in political party electoral performance, ideological differences among prospective coalition partners, policy preferences, and the personalities and qualities of political leaders. Understanding these factors helps identify areas of potential cooperation, compromise, consensus, and divergence among coalition partners, which are critical for the success and sustainability of coalition governments. The feasibility, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of coalition governments in South Africa depend on several factors, including the degree of ideological alignment among coalition partners, the strength of leadership within the coalition, the ability to forge consensus on key policy issues, and the capacity to manage intra-coalition conflicts and disagreements (Dlakavu, 2022; Mnwana, 2015). By examining these factors, analysts can assess the prospects for successful coalition governance and identify potential challenges and areas for improvement.

The South African Constitution establishes a three-tier governance model consisting of national, provincial, and local government spheres. Each tier has its own set of powers, responsibilities, and functions. This decentralized structure aims to ensure effective governance and service delivery at different levels of government, while also promoting accountability and responsiveness to local needs. The Constitution also mandates the use of a proportional representation (PR) system for elections at all levels

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-role-of-coalition-governments-as-sustainable-democracy-enhancing-in-south-africa/347761

Related Content

Coalition Government and Democratic Instability: An Analysis of the City of Johannesburg's 2021 Coalition Government
Bonolo Debra Makgale (2024). *Enhancing Democracy With Coalition Governments and Politics (pp. 188-200).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/coalition-government-and-democratic-instability/347758

The Role of Coalition Governments as Sustainable Democracy Enhancing in South Africa
Mukesh Shankar Bharti (2024). *Enhancing Democracy With Coalition Governments and Politics (pp. 246-262).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-coalition-governments-as-sustainable-democracy-enhancing-in-south-africa/347761

Tweeting to Vindicate the "Marginalised Nigerian Diaspora" in China: A Content Analysis of Nigeria MFAs' Online Communications
Floribert Patrick C. Endongand Eugenie Grace Essoh Ndobo (2023). *The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Digitalization of Diplomacy (pp. 133-156).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/tweeting-to-vindicate-the-marginalised-nigerian-diaspora-in-china/321772

It Takes Two to Tango: 2010 British Con-Dem Coalition
Sureyya Yigit (2024). *Enhancing Democracy With Coalition Governments and Politics (pp. 50-73).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/it-takes-two-to-tango/347750

Mozambique's Singular Path in Southern Africa's Coalition Governance Landscape
Maximino G. S. Costumado, Delma C. Da Silvaand A. D. Chemane (2024). *Enhancing Democracy With Coalition Governments and Politics (pp. 92-111).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/mozambiques-singular-path-in-southern-africas-coalition-governance-landscape/347752