

# Chapter 17

## Examining the Impact of Coalition Governments on Service Delivery: The Case of ANC–Led All

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Formation of coalition governments and politics before and after elections is the manifestation of the absence of overwhelming winner in national, provincial, or local government elections. This chapter aims to contribute to the nascent literature on coalition government and politics within the context of South Africa by examining the historic coalition of the ANC, SACP, COSATU, and SANCO. The chapter is conceptual in approach and it uses a desktop method. The research acknowledges that the tripartite coalition/alliance is without precedent on the African continent and with few parallels throughout the world. Coalition governing is now a phenomenon defining South African body politics, and it is likely to be the future system of government in this country. In terms of the South African system of government, national, provincial, and local governments are critical platforms for service delivery and the overall development of the country that is currently riddled by the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-1654-2.ch017

## INTRODUCTION

South Africa will be going to its 7<sup>th</sup> round of National and Provincial elections in 2024. This happens while the cracks between the ruling coalitions that has governed South Africa since 1994 has become increasingly very difficult to mend and that is likely to impact negatively on coalition's upcoming election hopes (COSATU political report, 2022). There is serious tensions among the different parties of the ANC led- and ruling coalition made up of two political parties, the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) the largest workers federation known as the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU). And the Civic Organisation called South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO). This is a rather permanent, historical and left wing ideological alliance existing outside government but with each party represented in the South African government. The alliance is currently loosing its popularity as demonstrated by the 2019 national elections and 2021 local government elections. To the extent that a number of the South African people have abandoned the ruling coalition for the newly formed party called uMkhonto Wesizwe Party (MKP). MKP is the party announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 by the former ANC and South African State President, Mr Jacob Zuma. Given the popularity of Jacob Zuma amongst ANC members, the MKP is expected to have a sizable impact on the election campaign of the ANC-led Alliance (Omorjee, 2023).

Political parties are organisations representing modern politics whose tasks are to channel societal participation, express social interests, occupy government posts and produce policy (Vercesi, 2016). Resnick (2013) considers political parties as critical institutions to make representative democracy possible either as they govern individually or as part of coalition arrangements. There are but not mutually exclusive definitions of government coalitions. Resnick (2013) defines coalition government as a cabinet of a parliamentary government in which several parties come together using economies of scale to pull together resources (both human and financial) into a more substantial collection and conduct a larger campaign to form a unity government. Coalition is the association of two or more parties who agree to work together to form government based on election outcomes (Mokgosi, Shai, Ogunnubi, 2017). Kadima (2014) argues that coalitions are objectives driven and are processes of organising coalition parties towards a common goal which is explicit agenda to control the executive. This chapter aims to contribute to the nascent literature on coalition government and politics within the context of South Africa, by examining the historic pre-election coalition of the ANC, SACP, COSATU and SANCO currently ruling the country, under the topic "Examining the service delivery impact of Coalition governments and politics: The Classical Case of ANC-led Coalition formed of the ANC, SACP, COSATU and SANCO. Referring to this coalition then formed by ANC, SACP and COSATU, Oliver Reginald Tambo (former ANC president), the longest serving and former President of the ANC, at the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the South African Communist Party on 30 July 1986 had this to say:

*Ours is not a paper alliance, created at conference tables and finalised through the signing of documents and representing only the agreement of leaders. Our Alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. It was built of our separate and common experiences.*

South Africa's governing coalition is, therefore, a product of the history of struggle. The partnership was first started by the ANC and SACP in the late 1940s and were joined by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the pre-cursor to now COSATU in 1955 and SANCO in 1992. This Alliance/coalition may have played a role in inspiring the formation of the Zimbabwean Alliance formed

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