

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Local political coalitions on public service delivery: The Case of eThekweni
Metropolitan Municipality – South Africa**

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College of Law and Management Studies**

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DECLARATION

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Date: 04 February 2026

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, my husband Jabulani Gumede and our boys Usiphile and Bukhosi Gumede. Your love and support have been nothing short of amazing. Thank you, dear husband, for having my back and being my number one cheerleader. My Bukhosi, who would stay up with me until the wee hours of the morning, sometimes falling asleep on the couch while I worked well into the early hours of the morning. As young as you are my boy, the support you have shown me is beyond your 3 years on this earth. Usiphile, my sweet boy, your hugs were always comforting, often reminding me how cherished I am and to keep pushing, even when I felt overwhelmed. To my parents, Nonhlanhla and Khulekela Mchunu, your teachings and prayers have carried me this far and continue to propel me to even greater heights. You have been pillars, standing firm against all to raise and support me, all that love and warmth has been extended to my husband and kids. I cherish each one of you, family.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC - Abantu Batho Congress
ACCORD - The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACDP - African Christian Democratic Party
AIC - African Independent Congress
ANC - African National Congress
AU - African Union Commission
BDP - Botswana Democratic Party
BN - Barisan Nasional
CD - Christian Democrats
COGTA - Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
COPE - Congress of the People
CSU - Christian Social Union
DBSA - Development Bank of Southern Africa
DA- Democratic Alliance
DPP -Democratic Progressive Party
EEA - Employment Equity Act
EFF - Economic Freedom Fighters
FF+ - Freedom Front Plus
FORD - Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
GHC - Ghanaian Cedi
GNU - Government of National Unity
IEC - Electoral Commission of South Africa
KANU - Kenya African National Union
KY- Kabaka Yekka
KZN - KwaZulu Natal
LGE - Local Government Elections
MCP - Malawi Congress Party
MKP - Umkhonto Wesizwe Party
MMP - Mixed Member Proportional
NARC - National Rainbow Coalition
NDI - National Democratic Institute
NDP- National Development Plan

NFP - National Freedom Party
NMB - Nelson Mandela Bay
NP - National Party
NRM - National Resistance Movement
PA - Patriotic Alliance
PN - Perikatan Nasional
PR - Proportional Representation
PR-STV- Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote
PPA - Political Parties Act
RSA/SA - Republic of South Africa
SADC - Southern African Development Community
SALGA - South African Local Government Association
SNP- Scottish National Party
UDC - Umbrella for Democratic Change
UDM - United Democratic Movement
UMNO - United Malays National Organisation
UN - United Nations
UPC - Uganda People's Congress

ABSTRACT

The 2016 and 2021 local government elections were a turning point in the South African political landscape, ushering in an era of coalition politics/governance on the local sphere. The dominance of the African National Congress was shaken to the core with the loss of metropolitan strongholds such as Johannesburg and eThekweni. Consequently, competing political parties grappled for power. Power-holders accustomed to governing alone had to compete with the new power-seekers on the political landscape. This then set in motion a series of events seeming to influence local service delivery. The issue of political coalitions emerged. The study is guided by the theories of office and policy seeking. The objectives of this study were to determine underlying intentions of political coalition formation, discover perceptions about any nexus between coalition governance and local service delivery, while exploring whether political coalitions influence public service delivery. The qualitative research approach was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm and guided by phenomenology strategy. Using purposive sampling, the seven (7) study participants comprised of political and administrative leadership in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The study applied thematic analysis which produced patterns from which themes emerged. Core findings revealed that political parties in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality context, in the absence of a majority, coalesce to retain or gain power. Once obtained, party interests will be furthered during council decision-making, at the expense of the electorate. Smaller parties demonstrate ‘kingmaker’ attributes and may succumb to ‘selling’ their support to the highest bidder, regardless of ideological disparities. Rather than coalition formation, coalition management and governance problematise service delivery given individuals within the coalitions and the lack of political will. Recommendations include formulation of guiding principles in coalition formation, mandatory capacitating programmes for municipal councils in managing coalitions; and enhancement of political will by holding decision makers accountable as many issues linked to service delivery stem from the lack of political will in ‘getting things done’.

Key words: Service delivery, Political coalitions, eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, Electorate, Local government

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and Background of the study

Coalitions governments, whose origins can be traced back to Western Europe (Kadima, 2014), have gained ground in South Africa. The country is no stranger to coalitions as the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 1994 was a form of coalition and the first local government elections in the year 2000 also yielded some coalitions (Booyesen, 2014; Kadima, 2014; Ndletyana, 2018; Netswera, 2012). While not a completely new phenomenon, the country's command of coalitions has not sufficed when it comes to coalition governance, particularly on the local sphere (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019; Khumalo and Netswera, 2022). The dismal failure of coalitions in the cities of Tshwane, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni confirms that point (Khumalo and Netswera; 2022; Pietersen, 2021).

Government in South Africa comprises three spheres, namely national, provincial, and local government. By virtue of being closest to the people, the local sphere of government is the custodian of public service delivery (Khanyile, Nzimakwe and Mthuli, 2021, Mokgopo, 2017). The coming together of two or more parties to form a government when neither has obtained absolute majority in an election is a coalition (Beukes and De Visser, 2021; Booyesen, 2014; Kadima, 2006). Coalitions of this nature can be divided into grand coalitions, governments of national unity (GNU), bare majority coalition governments, and minority governments (Beukes and De Visser, 2021). The ground-breaking 2016 and 2021 Local Government Elections (LGEs) that ushered in a new dawn in South African politics, intensified political competitiveness with the significant growth of coalitions, particularly in local government. This may have set in motion a series of unstable coalitions on the local sphere of government (see: Khumalo and Netswera, 2022; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023a).

The abolishment of the apartheid regime in South Africa necessitated the drafting and adoption of an inclusive Constitution (1996). One of the aims of the Constitution (1996) is to correct the injustices of the past, including the provision of public services only to the minority groups. This South African Constitution gave rise to the three spheres of government. Through intergovernmental relations, the local government sphere would handle public service delivery

to local communities within their jurisdiction (Mokgopo, 2017; The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Section 152 (1) of the Constitution obligates government “to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner” (RSA Constitution, 1996, p. 74). To realise these objectives, municipalities and local communities rely on elected officials who form council. This makes the local government sphere and decisions made by elected political representatives crucial to local service delivery.

In South Africa, the political landscape has shifted from the one-party system, pre-1994, to the multiparty electoral system post-democracy. The monumental LGE in 2016 and the significant decline in support for the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has triggered growth in political alliances and coalitions in the country on the local sphere of government (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019; Khumalo and Netswera, 2022; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). These coalitions, although inevitable considering the multiparty electoral system of South Africa and the ANC falling out of favour with the people, have proven detrimental to service delivery (Booyesen, 2014; Sithole, 2023). While the multiparty electoral system promotes democracy, South Africa’s young democracy appears to be susceptible to unsuccessful coalitions that have led to whether this influences service delivery (Booyesen, 2014; Khumalo and Netswera, 2022).

Since coalitions have become widespread in South African municipalities, the central point of local service delivery is contextualised by an ever-increasingly competitive political intensity. It appears that crumbling coalitions have led to dysfunctional municipalities and by extension, to poor service delivery, hence undermining performance (see: Khumalo and Netswera, 2022; Maserumule, 2020; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023a; Mthuli, 2024).

1.2 Research problem statement of the study

The African continent is facing numerous issues and challenges, and it is still recovering from years of colonial oppression preceded by centuries of the institution of slavetrade, removing Africans from the continent. This includes the colonising of Nigeria by the British in the late 1800s to both colonisation and the apartheid regime in South Africa (Ismail, 2023; Mokgopo, 2017). To get everyone on equal footing by remedying the injustices of the past, various goals have been developed nationally and globally. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), all aimed at eradicating poverty through realising sustainable socio-economic growth. The thrust is to eliminate inequality

which effectively starts locally, with creating a capable state (National Planning Commission, 2024; The African Union Commission, 2024, United Nations (UN), 2023).

The Constitution provides objectives that local government must endeavour to achieve, namely, sustainable public service delivery, inclusive and accountable local government, socio economic development and the promotion of a “safe and healthy environment” (Constitution, 1996, p. 74). These objectives can only be achieved through self-sufficient local municipalities capable of providing services to meet the basic needs of local communities. The 2024 General Election (GE) results reiterated the fact that coalitions are an inevitability and are likely here to stay, thus political parties need to learn to work together if they are to live up to the NDP’s aim to “eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030” (National Planning Commission, 2024, p. 14).

The 2021 LGEs yielded a coalition in eThekweni Municipality as no political party obtained the required majority of over 50% of the electorate (Pothier, 2021). The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality has been marred with corruption allegations, failure to meet service delivery needs of residents and partisan politics (See: Kariuki and Bhola, 2023; Naidoo, 2023; Rall, 2024). Yet these elected officials swore to uphold the Constitution. Although the city had already been struggling to meet service delivery needs of communities, failure of billing systems has exacerbated the dire living conditions of residents who have been crippled by debt because of “over-inflated” municipal bills (Naidoo, 2023; Rall, 2024).

Botched council meetings, collapsing coalition partnerships and motions of no confidence have been the order of the day for eThekweni Municipality (See: Erasmus, 2023; Rall, 2024). This may, among other factors, influence service delivery. A decisive turning point in the governance trajectory of eThekweni Municipality occurred when it was placed under Section 154 support. The requirement of Section 154 support means that the Municipality was no longer able to effectively govern itself without external intervention. Consequently, required structured assistance from provincial and national government was required as mandated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Kariuki and Bhola, 2023). The subsequent “recalling” of the City’s mayor did little to stabilise governance arrangements (Xulu, 2024). These developments articulated by Xulu (2024) indicate a significant erosion of public confidence in eThekweni Municipality and its council, implying that substantial institutional

and political changes will be necessary to restore trust, beginning with enhanced political compromise and cooperation among parties to deliver on their electoral commitments.

The volatility of coalitions give rise to chaos and instability in Council which in turn disrupts the provision of services to communities whose needs are not adhered to (See: Erasmus, 2023; Rall, 2024). This study aims to contribute empirical insights to the body of knowledge by exploring the causes of political party coalitions to consider whether they facilitate or hinder local government public service delivery. To do so, the study uses the case of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. Research on local political party coalitions and the service delivery nexus have been centred mainly around the municipalities in Eastern Cape, Gauteng, and Western Cape provinces. From coalitions of the early 2000s in the Western Cape to the landmark 2016 and 2021 LGEs in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape, power was usurped from the then incumbent, long dominant political party. There is thus a need for empirical evidence focused on eThekweni Municipality in KZN Province, which has also been governed through a coalition since 2021. While this coalition is still intact, eThekweni Municipality residents face poor service delivery problems (Chonco, Mabunda and Mvunabandi, 2023; Magubane, 2024).

1.3 Research aim

The aim of this research is to explore the influence of political coalitions on eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality's service delivery in South Africa. To accomplish this aim, and given the research problem, the researcher formulated the following research questions and research objectives.

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the perceived driving forces behind the local political coalition formation at eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality?
2. What are the views of political and administrative leadership on the local political coalition and public service delivery nexus in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality?
3. What are the perceptions of political and administrative leadership on local political coalitions influencing service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality?

1.5 Research objectives

The research objectives are to:

1. Determine the driving forces of political and administrative leadership (short and/or long-term) underlying eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality political coalition formation.
2. Discover the views of political and administrative leadership on the factors that determine political coalitions as well as the coalition governance and local service delivery nexus in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, if any.
3. Explore the influence of the political coalitions on local service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.

1.6 Rationale for and significance of the study

The monumental 2016 and 2021 LGEs and the 2024 GE in South Africa have supported utterances of many researchers on political coalitions. Some argue that this is inevitable, particularly in a system of democracy that seemingly promotes coalition formation. This study using the case of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality is significant as it aims to interrogate whether coalitions influence service delivery and if so, what is the nature of the influence. Moreover, South Africa does not exist in isolation. Therefore, this study places the issues regarding political coalition formation, the political coalition and public service delivery nexus as well as the influence of coalitions on public service delivery in a global context. The literature review that covers various countries across five of the seven continents. This contribution to the body of knowledge offers solutions to addressing the problem. The reality of the yield of elections, the previous and current, is that South Africans must learn to live with local political coalitions. Political leaders and municipal administrators need to develop ways to create and sustain them as enshrined in the Constitution. The findings of this study, together with conclusions and recommendations derived will provide guidance for local government political and administrative leadership.

1.7 Research methodology

The study was informed by the interpretivism philosophy and followed the qualitative research design approach. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Secondary data from various areas of literature were also explored to understand the political topography of certain countries, the triggers of coalitions, their influence on service delivery as well as how coalitions are managed. Thematic analysis was then employed to identify the common themes and patterns emerging to be able to provide a comprehensive analysis of the data collected before presenting a narrative of the findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations.

This methodology allowed the researcher to delve into the real-life phenomena of local political coalitions as experienced by the people on the ground.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

The study comprises five (5) chapters as outlined below:

Chapter One: Introduction and overview of the study

This chapter provides the introduction and overview of the study. It further details the research problem, followed by aim, research questions, the rationale and significance of the study.

Chapter Two: The global to local political landscape (literature review)

This chapter focuses on selected cases of political coalition governments globally. It considers how such coalitions are navigated by means of categorising Global South and Global North countries and whether they influence public service provision. The review provides guidance on coalition government best practices around the world that can be modelled in South Africa. It also explored, guided by existing literature, the theoretical framework applied to answer the research questions as posed in the study.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

This chapter details the methodological approach, the research philosophy relating to the study along with the sampling strategy and technique employed in the study. Additionally, it outlines the data collection and analysis procedures, data analysis and highlights the trustworthiness and credibility aspect of the data collected. Lastly, it captures ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Data presentation, analysis and discussion

This chapter delineates the research findings aligned to the accomplishment of each objective of the research. It applies literature to analyse implications of the empirical data collected. The chapter is organised in accordance with the chronology of research questions and objectives.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter concludes the study and proposes recommendations for addressing the research findings. It contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on local political coalitions in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and their influence on public service provision after considering the nexus between these coalitions and service delivery.

This study focused on individuals in positions of leadership knowledgeable on the subject matter of coalitions, both administrative and political. While valuable information emerged from this study, a study focused on the general citizenry needs to be conducted to get their view on how they received public services during and prior to coalitions.

1.9 Conclusion

This first chapter, lays the groundwork for the study, presenting the introduction into political coalitions and their intensification in South Africa during the 2016 LGEs. The background and problem statement demonstrate the need to consider political shifts to coalition establishment and any relationship that such formulations may have on public service delivery. It also features the aim of the research, objectives and questions that the study seeks to address. The next chapter presents a critique of international literature on coalitions from five of the seven continents and inclusive of both Global South and Global North countries before delving into the theoretical framework that guided the study.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE GLOBAL TO LOCAL POLITICAL COALITION LANDSCAPE

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a “detailed and justified analysis and commentary of the merits and faults of the literature within a chosen area, which demonstrates familiarity with what is already known about your research topic” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012, p. 668). Mauer and Venecek (2022), similarly state that a literature review provides the reader with an outline or synopsis of the research available on the subject matter. It is inclusive of any literature, your theory of choice for the research and the methodology employed. This literature review serves as reference to previous studies, practices and experiences relating to political coalitions, drawn from five of the seven continents of the world.

The literature review of this study focuses on formation of political coalitions and the influence of coalition governance on public service delivery. In South Africa, there is intensifying political competition, particularly on the local sphere of government. This sphere of government is where all powers and functions of the municipality are vested (Constitution, 1996). There seems to be a nexus between coalition governance and public service provision.

This review is organised first by factors guiding coalition formulation. Secondly, it covers whether a political coalition and public service delivery nexus may emerge. Third, it considers the influence of coalition governance on public service delivery, including the role of kingmakers and the multiparty chapter of South Africa. Fourth, the chapter highlights the case of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality before lastly introducing the theoretical framework that guides the study.

2.2 Factors driving coalition formation in selected countries and in South Africa

Coalition formation in democracies is triggered by many factors in both the Global North and Global South. Bormann and Golder (2013) classify elections as democratic when the following three points have been satisfied, (1) the leader or president and the legislature have been elected (come into power through an election); (2) more than one party is contesting elections and (3) in the case of a change in power after elections, the exchange from the incumbent and incoming party is democratic and conflict-free. In the case of a democracy, there is a higher chance of

the formation of coalitions, particularly in parliamentary and multiparty electoral systems (Kadima, 2014, 2006). The ever-evolving political landscape giving birth to increased polarisation and political fragmentation can also not be excluded (Vision of Humanity, 2025).

- **The evolving political landscape**

The world is constantly changing, progressively or sometimes regressively. With the growing changes, the political topography has been gradually shifting, hence parties must learn to adapt or be replaced. Kadima (2006) states that, African politics have been largely characterised by presidential systems which tend to yield dominant parties, limiting the chances of coalition formation. The political landscape has since evolved, dismantling dominant systems, and giving rise to power sharing through coalitions (Ajwang and Lugano, 2025).

The intra-party conflict within the ANC, borne of dissatisfaction and internal disagreements resulted in the forming of splinter parties like the United Democratic Movement (UDM), Congress of the People (COPE), and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) (Booyesen, 2014). In multiparty systems, an evolving political landscape could mean new entrants into the political arena as dominant parties weaken, and existing minority opposition parties grow their support base. This could equate to vote sharing after elections. Booyesen (2021, p. 13) states that “coalitions in multiparty democracies thrive as dominant systems weaken”. The declining electoral support for the former ruling party creates a conducive space for coalition formation (Ndlovu, Sithole and Thwala, 2025). Well ahead of a ruling party’s fall from grace, it had long been preceded that their vote share would decline, it was just a matter of “by how much” (Mngomezulu and Phetha, 2025). That is the reason behind the Democratic Alliance (DA), together with several small parties, conceiving the pre-electoral alliance in the form of the multiparty charter, to ensure that power was seized from the ANC (Masuabi, 2023; Thorne, 2025).

There are at least six well-known factors that may drive political coalition formation. Namely, these are political fragmentation, political polarisation, social schisms, nature of political system, ideological proximity and alignment, office-seeking or rent-seeking behaviours. Each is highlighted in turn.

- **Political fragmentation**

Political fragmentation has been a commonality in various countries such as Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and South Africa, giving rise to coalitions [National Democratic Institute (NDI), 2015]. As a signal of the South African political environment evolving, political parties have been growing in number with many of them obtaining seats in municipalities and playing crucial roles in government formation (Ndlovu, Twala and Sithole, 2025). It is for this reason and many others that fragmentation cannot be excluded as a trigger for coalitions.

- **Political polarisation**

Political polarisation occurs when the electorate is split between political parties with ideologically opposing views, to the point of extremity. Cole, Gillis, van der Linden, Cohen and Vandenberg, (2025) define polarisation as opposing stances on political issues between political parties. The apartheid era oppression of one race by another (Southall, 2019) and the clash in the 1990s between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and ANC (Khan, Lootvoet and Mantzaris, 2006) are both examples of polarised environments. In the context of this study, it is posited that the tipping of the political landscape towards polarisation is advanced when social cleavages are more pronounced (Borbáth, Hutter, and Leininger, 2023).

- **Social schisms (cleavages)**

According to Bornschier (2009, p.1) the term cleavage means “a specific type of conflict in democratic politics that is rooted in the social structural transformations that have been triggered by large-scale processes such as nation building, industrialization, and possibly also by the consequences of post-industrialization.” Social cleavages can encompass economic; ethnic; linguistic; religious and regional dissimilarities (Chhibber and Petrocik, 1989).

Social schisms have been a significant factor in voting patterns and behaviour, particularly in Global South countries like Chile (Bargsted and Somma, 2016) Uganda (Manyak and Katono, 2010), Kenya (Kadima and Owour, 2014) and South Africa (Gethin, 2020) to name but a few. They have also been a factor in coalition formation in deciding which parties are voted for and by extension, which coalitions are formed (Li, 2025).

- **Type of political system in place**

The type of national political system in place is one of the factors that drive coalition formation (Kadima, 2014). For instance, in multiparty and proportional representation electoral systems, political coalitions are more likely to be formed (Booyesen, 2014; Mokgopo, 2017; Pietersen, 2021). This is because those types of systems create opportunity for increased political competition, rather than in a single party system. The higher the level of political competition, the more the chances the votes will be spread amongst various political parties which in fact will have a domino effect on obtaining majority vote and consequently, a coalition formation (Ashworth *et al.*, 2014). However, the question remains as to whether political competition is the primary driving force behind political coalition formation (Powell, 2000 cited in Cleary, 2007). In other words, how much political competition is enough or too much?

- **Ideological proximity and alignment (political ideology)**

Ideological proximity and alignment may and can be factors in coalition formation. ‘May’ being the operative word because coalitions have been formed amongst political parties with contradictory ideology. On the one hand, Kadima (2006, p. 16) states that the “political environment has seen racially and ethnically configured coalitions, ideologically matched and disconnected coalitions, as well as politically opportunistic ones”. On the other hand, Indridason (2011) expresses that ideology is a key determinant in the type of government coalitions that are formed. Where some coalitions are formed despite ideological divergence, longevity may be compromised. Kadima (2014) maintains that in African politics, the shared history of colonialism and liberation movements bred political parties that had a shared ideology centred around emancipation and socioeconomic transformation.

- **Office-seeking or rent-seeking behaviours**

Office-seeking and or rent seeking can be triggers for coalition formation. Office-seeking suggests that, in the absence of requisite votes to govern alone, alliances and coalitions will be sought-after to maximise power (Lembani, 2014). Once power is accessed, Kadima (2014, p. 14) states that “it often comes with various privileges, including financial advantages.” For some smaller parties, cabinet payoffs can be huge. For instance, in joining the GNU, the Patriotic Alliance (PA) which obtained 2.06% of the national vote in the 2024 General Elections (IEC, 2024b), received the Sports, Arts and Culture Ministerial Portfolio (Parliament of South Africa, 2025).

The study next reviews the context of coalition formation in countries covering five regions across four continents. The latter are namely Europe, Asia, South America and Africa.

2.2.1 Western European region (Germany, Ireland, Scotland and Spain)

Similarly, ideology has been viewed as the major driving force behind coalition formation because it is expected that political parties with similar ideologies will stick together where coalition formation is concerned (Dumont, Falco-Gimeno, Indridason and Bischof, 2024; Gross, Jankowski, Juen and Erlnruch, 2024). That is, political parties on the left wing will coalesce with those on the left while their right-wing counterparts will coalesce with parties on the same wing. The expectation however is far from reality. Coalitions have been formed in environments rife with clashing (jarringly incompatible) ideology as evidenced in Germany, Austria, and Israel (Gross, *et al.*, 2024), but more so in so called “newer democracies” (Spoon and Pulido-Gomez, 2018). This section considers Germany, Ireland, Scotland, and Spain.

- **Germany**

The electoral system (multiparty) in place in Germany renders it difficult to get a majority, making it inevitable that a coalition government will be formed (Gross *et al.*, 2024; Grotz and Schroeder, 2024). Pre-election discussions occur between the various political parties prior to elections (Gross *et al.*, 2024). This transparency helps get a feel of the preferences of the voters well before the actual elections take place and assists parties in choosing which coalitions to negotiate into formation (Gross, *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, according to Debus and Gross (2016), German political parties on the local level of government (due to their office-seeking nature), will factor “party affiliation” of the incumbent mayor in coalition formation.

Schmidt (2008) in the chapter titled “*Germany: The grand coalition state*” in the book “*Comparative European Politics*” refers to Germany as the grand coalition state because of the recurrent political alliance between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). These are the first (CDU-CSU union) and second (SDP) largest parties in the country. This case of Germany being labelled the “grand-coalition state” (Schmidt 2008, p. 28) has been proven to be true. The German government as of 2026, despite there being different players, is governed by a grand coalition, although significantly smaller in size compared to previous grand coalitions that have been in place in the country (Faas and Klingelhöfer, 2026).

Yet, this has not always been the case. The 2017 election proved to be a tumultuous period for German politics, not only presenting a highly fragmented result but leading to an equally fragmented political coalition among six (6) party groups (Bräuninger, Debus, Müller and Stecker, 2019). Although Germany has been recorded as one of the countries with frequent and stable coalitions, the coalition forming process in 2017 painted a different, bleaker picture (Bräuninger *et al.*, 2019). The country experienced a lengthy coalition bargaining process along with failed negotiations of a potential coalition. For the first time, this led to the contemplation of a minority government (Brauninger *et al.*, 2019).

This is evidence that even in the most mature of democracies, with vast coalition-forming experience, coalitions and overall coalition formation can present some challenges. Hence, the importance of allowing sufficient time for coalition negotiation and putting mechanisms in place to thwart coalition disintegration.

- **Ireland**

Ireland formally broke away from the United Kingdom in the year 1922 (Mitchell, 2020; Rath-Bosca, 2025). The country employs the parliamentary system of democracy (McCarthy and O'Donoghue, 2024; Mitchell, 2020) which allows for government to be formed by elected officials to represent the citizens in government (Ntshangase and Makole, 2025; Rohal, 2014). Voting is by Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote (PR-STV) (Mitchell, 2020). PR-STV means that when electors (the public) cast votes, it is for an individual representative, regardless of party affiliation and not for the party. Whereas general PR means a candidate is selected from a pre-selected party candidate list provided by the party (Chigova and Hofisi, 2023; Kadima, 2014), PR-STV is candidate-centric (Tideman, 1995). Apart from the Republic of Ireland, the PR-STV is in use in the election of the Australian Senate; in Malta in the election of the House of Representatives (See: Mitchell, 2020; Morton, 2025; Tideman, 1995) and in local elections in Scotland (Clark, 2021).

Ireland was governed by a single party from secession until a coalition of Fine Gael and Labour; the second and third largest parties (Mitchell, 2020). This ended the single party dominance in the country. The evolving political environment, starting with removing a dominant party that governed for a good part of the period following the year 1922, had a domino effect on the Irish democracy (Mitchell, 2020; 2000). Leading to the Fianna Fail, a long-standing dominant

single party, opting to coalesce to gain power back considering Irish governments were now predominantly coalition governments (Mitchell, 2020; Mitchell, 2000). Coalition agreements have also become a crucial part of coalitions in the Republic of Ireland (Mitchell, 2020), as in many other countries in Western Europe (Bergman, Angelova, Bäck and Müller (2024) becoming more comprehensive. Mitchell (2020, p. 1) states that “there is strong evidence that the increasingly detailed coalition agreements are a very important commitment device during the life cycle of coalition agreements” in the country. Bergman *et al.*, (2024) ranks coalition contracts as one of the most important devices in the quest to achieve coalition stability and lessen the chance of agency loss. In addition, Mitchell (2020) speaks of the harsh reality that political actors often confront; coalition contracts are not an infallible, fail-safe plan for successful, stable coalitions. Implementation is not automated and requires commitment and putting tools in place to keep track of and “enforce” coalition agreements to assuage any losses from the side of the political agents, parties, and constituents.

- **Scotland**

Next, Scotland is currently governed by a minority government of the Scottish National Party whose ability to pass laws in parliament hinges on the support of other parties and their votes (Cairney, 2011; Clark, 2021). The country was previously run through a “cooperation agreement” (not a full-blown coalition) termed the Bute House Agreement between the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish Greens Party which was terminated in April 2024 (Rosie, 2024). The termination of the arrangement comes at the back of a policy stalemate, with the SNP not conceding on issues of climate change amongst other things (Castle, 2024).

Although the minority government in Scotland is by choice as there are several coalition partners that could be sought or coalitions that could be formed, the case of the SNP minority government (occurred in 2007 and 2016 as well - Castle, 2024) reveals that coalescing is indeed a party’s choice, and so is the decision of a coalition partner. The ANC in the Republic of South Africa, after the loss of their majority in the 2024 general elections could have chosen not to form a coalition with the ideologically opposite Democratic Alliance. Although passing legislation could have necessitated seeking support from other parties, it may have at least ingratiated them with their constituents. It would have meant they were not seeking office at whatever cost but that they were loyal to their policy positions.

- **Spain**

Finally, regarding coalition forming in Spain, coalescing parties are seen as ideologically proximate (Hjermitsleva, Kraussa, and Thürk, 2025). This means that coalescing helps eliminate ideological distance between the parties. Hence, whether voter preference leans towards policy or office-seeking, when political parties enter coalitions, voters have the inclination that their favoured party has diminished the “ideological distance” between themselves and their alliance partners in the coalition (Fortunato and Stevenson, 2013, cited by Dumont, *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, if political parties enter exceedingly ideologically divergent coalitions, voters can view this as a betrayal, leading to loss of votes through defection and or retrospective voting (Dumont, 2024; Gross *et al.*, 2024). The knowledge that voters may not favour a particular alliance plays a role in choosing coalition partners and ultimately, in forming coalitions. That is, voters in Spain seem to make a significant contribution to the decisions by political parties to either ally or coalesce with another political party (Falco-Gimeno, 2012). Spain is one of those countries whose coalitions are formed based on the preference of the left-right spectrum of the voters (Falco-Gimeno, 2012).

In European Union (EU) countries such as Spain, its municipal elections and subsequently, government formation are also characterised by incumbency advantage (Bogues, Belguise, Campa and Monterosa, 2024; Carozzi, Cipullo and Repetto, 2024). In Spain, political alliances on the municipal and regional level are very popular. ‘Aligned’ political parties have a higher probability of forming governing coalitions than their non-aligned counterparts (Carozzi, Cipullo and Repetto, 2024). These alliances also produce stable and longer lasting terms of government coalitions; with less occurrence of motions of no confidence (Carozzi, Cipullo and Repetto, 2024). Empirical studies point to political alignment leading to partiality in resource allocation, government or otherwise, by fellow affiliates (Arulampalam *et al.*, (2009), Bracco *et al.*, (2015), Curto-Grau *et al.*, (2018) and Brollo and Nannicini (2012) cited in Carozzi, Cipullo and Repetto, 2024) and Spain is not an exception. Alignment between local (municipal) and regional political actors thus increases chances of re-election for the incumbents, revealing that, political alignment is a factor in government formation and by association, coalition formation (Carozzi, Cipullo and Repetto, 2024).

The Asian region follows, with a focus on India.

2.2.2 Asian region (India)

In Indian politics, pre-electoral coalitions are quite popular and are key in ensuring election success locally (state) and nationally (Li, 2025). Kadima (2014) defines a pre-electoral coalition or alliance as one established prior to the election taking place and is likely to produce a win. In contrast, post-electoral coalitions are formed based on election results. Policy-driven and ideologically allied (aligned) coalitions formed are long lasting but office-seeking and ideologically misaligned coalitions are also formed. These are significantly influenced by the possible gains to be obtained from gaining office (e.g. power) (Li, 2025).

India, as with many countries across continents, has not been immune to the wave of coalition politics. These coalitions are at both “state and national level” (Yadav, 2023). Indian politics not unlike Kenyan (Kadima and Owour, 2014) and South African (Masuabi, 2023) politics, saw political parties on different sides of the political spectrum come together to remove a single dominant party that had monopolised power in the country (Yadav, 2023). Anti-incumbency was at play in India, proving that incumbency can be an advantage, until it is not.

The study next turns to the South American region followed by the East African and Southern African regions respectively.

2.2.3 South American region (Chile)

Chile operates under the presidential system (Jofré-Cabezas and Navia, 2024). Bunker (2019) speaks of the difficulty in forming coalitions under a presidentialism system as opposed to a parliamentary system, echoing the assertions of Kadima (2014) and Thijm and Fernandes (2024). Valenzuela (1994, p. 93) goes further to say that the rules innate in presidentialism often breed “pressures that undermine the logic of coalition formation”.

Chile has come a long way since the times of General Pinochet’s dictatorship between 1973 and 1990 (Chaignon, and Gosalbes, 2023; NDI, 2015; The Washington Post, 2000). His assassination of any individual not affiliated with him or in support of his policies (Chaignon, and Gosalbes, 2023; NDI, 2015; The Washington Post, 2000) evidences the dark times that Chile has undergone. Subsequently, the centre-left Concertación coalition found Chile ushering in a new democratic dispensation (Sehnbruch and Siavelis, 2014). The Concertación went on

to unite voters on opposite sides of the spectrum, governing Chile for two (2) decades (between 1990 and 2010) (Garrido-Vergara, 2020). Coalitions, therefore, are known to be formed for more than power maximisation as evidenced in Chile.

Despite the Concertación coalition successfully ruling for twenty (20) years, having been built and maintained on consensus, Sehnbruch and Siavelis (2014) argue that power was largely concentrated amongst elites. This limited inclusivity of the person on the ground (communities, particularly the poor) in decision-making, goes against what is expected of a democracy. All parties affected by a decision should be included in the process of decision-making, not just the elite (Lata, 2015). The economic growth achieved by the coalition's policies and free market economy in Chile was beneficial to elites but not so much to those on the lower end of the economic spectrum (Sehnbruch and Siavelis, 2014). It perpetuated and widened inequality as no drastic economic reforms have been initiated to really tackle the development gap. Though health care services in Chile rival many in the world, the premium private healthcare is more accessible to those with deeper pockets than the general populace; the same can be said for education (Sehnbruch and Siavelis, 2014). Chile boasts an exceptional standard of education, but there is a catch, you must be wealthy. The disproportionate gap between the privileged and the poor could be said to be what brought it all to a halt, with massive mobilisation calling for the amendment to the Constitution inherited from Pinochet's dictatorship (Negretto, 2021).

Chile is a classic example of “the more things change, the more they stay the same” (Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, 1849). The Concertación successfully overthrew a dictatorship, managed to foster stability in a long-standing coalition and elicit widespread voter support. Yet coalition governance failed to address the deep-seated issues of elitism and inequality which subsequently led to the demise of the coalition.

2.2.4 East African region (Kenya, Uganda)

One of the aims of coalitions, which can also be seen as a driving factor for coalition formation, is to bring about social cohesiveness amongst a people of different cultural beliefs and ethnicities (Kadima and Owour, 2014; Makole, Ntshangase and Adewumi, 2022). Unfortunately, ethnicity may also be a driving factor for coalition formation (Kadima, 2014; Prattay, 2024) which can achieve the opposite of social cohesion, social dissolution (Chan, To

and Chan, 2006). In Kenyan, Ugandan, and South African politics, social fissures are very prominent and have an impact on who is elected. Politicians tend to exploit and sometimes craft these socio-political cleavages when it comes to electioneering. These actors devise ways to appeal to the ethnicity of voters and their regional base to gain power (De Leon, Desai, and Tugal, 2009; Paret, 2018). The endemic divisions in these countries are inherited from colonial rule, with apartheid spatial planning being a major contributor to the divisions visible in South African society today (Nyathi, Balogun, De Lange, Human-Hendricks, and Khaile, 2024; Roman and Davids, 2021).

- **Kenya**

Kenya has a multiparty pluralist electoral system in place, which encourages forming of coalitions (Maasi, Okoth and Lulambili, 2024). Since gaining independence in 1963, the country has been dominated by coalition politics (Maasi, Okoth and Lulambili, 2024). Kenya like most new democracies has seen a rapid rise in coalitions since the coalition of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), featuring various organisations fighting against abolishing the one-party rule of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) (Kadima and Owour, 2014). KANU used incumbency to their advantage by exploiting state resources to remain in power but were eventually removed by FORD (Kadima and Owour, 2014). This new breed of Kenyan political coalitions, however, is characterised by the leveraging of ethnicity in coalition formation (Kadima and Owour, 2014; Maasai, Okoth and Lusambili, 2024; Prattay, 2024). They opened-up opportunity for political parties to compete using ethnicity to best their political opponents in exchange for pay-offs to candidates that join their cause (Prattay, 2024).

Kenya can serve as a blueprint for African coalitions in that, the country's Political Parties Act (PPA) No.11 of 2011, contains a legal framework underpinning coalition formation. The PPA makes provisions for coalition agreements, stipulating that they must be submitted to the Registrar three (3) months prior the election for pre-electoral coalitions and twenty-one (21) days after signing for post electoral coalitions (The Political Parties Act of Kenya, 2011). The PPA is also explicit in that, coalition agreements must contain mechanisms for resolving disputes among coalition partners and "enforcement and sanction mechanisms and procedures for breach of any of the provisions of the agreement" (PPA, 2011, p. 32). These requirements mandate agreements for coalition formation and ensure political parties cannot come and go as

they please in coalition as seen in South Africa. They also lead to more coalition-stability (Maasi, 2025).

- **Uganda**

Coalitions in Uganda date as far back as the 1960's (Ndebese, 2020) when the coalition of the Kabaka Yekka (KY) and Uganda People's Congress (UPC) successfully defeated the Democratic Party (DP) (Accord, 2006). Uganda like many other countries on the continent, come from a history of colonial rule (Funjika and Getachew, 2022; Manyak and Katono, 2010). The country however, as with many Global South countries whom, despite having gained independence earlier than most African democracies, struggles under the weight of social cleavages. These cleavages are an inheritance from the "federal structure" of local government instituted by the British that divided districts by ethnicity and tribe (Manyak and Katono, 2010, p. 3).

Moreover, Uganda has been characterised by human rights and democracy violations preceding and succeeding colonialism (Mubangizi, 2023). After colonial rule, which catered to the capitalistic and imperialistic interests of the coloniser, caring little for human rights and dignity (Mubangizi, 2023; Sinani, Agung and Purwanta, 2023). There was Apollo Abote's dictatorship (ended in a coup) and then General Amin's tyranny that ended in full scale war (Accord, 2006,). Uganda's history of coup d'états and guerilla wars (Accord, 2006; Barka and Ncube, 2012) and the "colonised political imagination" (Mugamba, 2025, p. 1) make it fertile ground for political instability, violence at the hands of a totalitarian government of over 34 years and gross human rights violations (Barka and Ncube, 2012; Ndebese, 2020).

The move from direct representation in Ugandan local government, a system for which South African researcher Maserumule (2020) advocates for in one of his works, to a multiparty system was meant to promote democracy and improve service delivery. However, it has further perpetuated corruption (Manyak and Katono, 2010; Mubangizi, 2023). Manyak and Katono, (2010) state that at times, an entirely new district is created and while on paper, the benefits of a new district mean a new budget injection for necessities to procure for mandate fulfilment. The injection is a major boost to the economy as jobs are created and the tender system can also benefit local players (Manyak and Katono, 2010). The challenge that emerges in these newly created districts is the political interests of the incumbent party, the National Resistance

Movement (NRM), which may overpower community interests. The districts are used to benefit partisans to induce more loyalty and grow support base while portraying themselves as the messiah in parliament (Manyak and Katono, 2010). The other challenge is that districts are created even when there is no financial viability in there being a new district since these resources could be better invested in an existing lower local government setup (Manyak and Katono, 2010).

Considering restrictions on media and political campaigning, it remains to be seen whether a coalition will be the one to successfully dethrone President Museveni and put an end to his undemocratic practices, government sponsored violence and police brutality (Ndebese, 2020).

2.2.5 Southern African region

In this section we focus on the RSA context. Political parties have 14 days to form a government after results of an election have been declared by the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) (Beukes and De Visser; 2021). This means that, where no party has obtained a majority, political parties must coalesce to form a government before a re-election is triggered (Beukes and De Visser, 2021; Hadaad, 2024; IEC, 2024a). This was observed in the initial 2016 and leading to the 2021 LGEs that produced 66 hung councils and the recent 2024 general elections where no political party obtained over 50% of the electorate. The little time afforded to political parties to have discussions, choose coalition partners, and draw-up coalition agreements, leads them to forming coalitions with little to no policy convergence, with disastrous consequences to public service provision (Joshua, James and Titos, 2022; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). This is the case post RSA's 2016 and 2021 LGEs.

Notwithstanding that the RSA's electoral system encourages coalition formation (Booyesen, 2014; Kadima, 2014), the increasing unemployment, poverty, misgovernment, overall poor service delivery and the inability to turnaround the socio-economic conditions of millions of South Africans despite over 29 years of political rule, caused major dissatisfaction with the ANC (Mlambo and Thusi, 2023). That dissatisfaction has contributed to their dropping support and the increased political fragmentation. Political parties exploited this by creating the Multiparty Charter (see Section 2.4.7) whose main aim was to unseat the ANC (Masuabi, 2023). While there was unity in the common goal to unseat the ANC, Kadima (2014) contends that ideological similarities, although a driving factor, have little bearing to coalition formation or disintegration in African countries. That is evidenced by the utterances of the main party

leaders in Malawi and Kenya who appeared uncertain about their parties' ideological positions but entered coalitions nonetheless (Kadima, 2014 citing Kadima and Lembani, 2006).

“Ethno-linguistic and regional factors” (Kadima, 2014, p. 12), policy and office payoffs (Evans, 2018), can also be considered factors driving coalition formation. “Ethno-linguistic and regional factors” being more popular in African countries like Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, and South Africa where members of certain ethnicity and region will rally behind a candidate with whom they best identify (Kadima, 2014, pp. 12-13). The discussion next considers, in a global and local context, possible existence of a political coalition and public service delivery nexus.

2.3 The political coalition and public service delivery nexus

The political coalition and public service delivery nexus relates to the political and administrative dichotomy (see: Masuku and Jili, 2019; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023a; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023b; Vilakazi and Adetiba, 2020) and how political coalitions impact public service provision. The nature of the politicised administration rearing its ugly head in local government means programmes like cadre deployment can be instituted. This places unqualified party loyalists in key government positions, whose inefficiency, despite decentralisation of the public service, hampers service delivery (Masuku and Jili, 2019; Shava and Chamisa, 2018).

Decentralisation to local government is aimed at ensuring that service delivery tailored to the needs of local communities is provided as centralised service delivery would not achieve the same results (Mokgopo, 2017; Nzimakwe and Pillay, 2014). In countries all over the world, local government is a key player in local service delivery (Allan, 1997 cited in Mokgopo, 2017). This then means that whoever is elected in local government plays a vital role in the provision of services, thus a coalition government is not exempt. This section next explores Western European, West African and Southern African regions respectively.

2.3.1 Western European region (Austria, Belgium)

Austria has a multiparty electoral system (Meffert and Gschwend, 2010), a system notorious for being fertile ground for political coalitions (Booyesen, 2014; Mokgopo, 2017 ; Pietersen, 2021). Literature suggests that, whether political coalitions thrive or wither, is dependent on the political landscape of each country. Austria has a rich history of governance through grand coalitions. Granted, this usually brings more stability (Muller , 2021) than a highly fragmented

political landscape (see Jacobson, 2024) but can lead to political patronage (see Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014) thereby closing ranks amongst the affiliated parties (Jacoby, 2017), partisan appointments, and a politicised administration (Muller, 2007), while hampering service delivery. The 2017 end of the Austrian grand coalition was characterised by clientelism (Jacoby, 2017) and party patronage (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014). This, in turn, led to the drop in public employment and social housing because partisanship won over public service provision to the rest of Austria (Jacoby, 2017). The more politicised an administration, the less effective, as politicisation goes hand in hand with partisanship – loyalty will be to party, to the detriment of service delivery, as in the case of Austria.

Belgium, also with a history of grand coalitions (Jacoby, 2017), but with a more cooperative (collective) system of governance and “long lasting governments” post 1981 (De Winter and Dumont, 2021, p. 115); has since moved away from them. The highly fragmented political system that De Winter and Dumont (2021, p. 81) label the “most fragmented party system in Western Europe”, renders it difficult to form coalitions, with a drawn-out bargaining process lasting up to three (3) months. Bergman, Back and Muller (2024) however, attribute lengthier bargaining processes to stability in coalition governments as they allow time to iron out issues as well as make the necessary policy concessions amongst ideologically, and in the case of Belgium, linguistically diverse parties (French and Flemish). The strength of Belgian coalitions lies in collective policy decisions as, irrespective of the size of partners in a coalition, none can be made without agreement/consensus amongst each member (De Winter and Dumont, 2021).

The political fragmentation in Belgium gives rise to a politically competitive environment (Ashworth *et al*, 2014). Besley, Perrson and Sturm (2010); Cárcaba, González and Arrondo (2023) and Ashworth *et al*, (2014) contend that it has positive results for public service delivery as the lack thereof can lead to inefficiency. Lack of competition, as in dominant party systems means no competition thus never-ending electoral advantage and nobody to hold incumbent parties accountable in cases of poor performance. Political parties in Belgium exist in a highly competitive political environment thus, in Flanders for instance, “competition is a force for efficiency” (Ashworth, et al, 2014, p. 24).

2.3.2 West African region (Ghana)

- **Ghana**

Ghana is the first country in the West African region to attain independence from colonial sovereignty in the year 1957 (Ahlman, 2011). Madu (2023, p. 1) refers to service delivery as “one of the cardinal objectives of governance”. Madu (2023) further stresses the proximity of public service delivery to development programmes meant to combat poverty and foster sustainable communities. This cannot be achieved when coalition relations break-down before policy objectives are realised.

On the African continent, politics are strongly associated with corruption and leadership immorality (Madu, 2023) which includes but is not limited to misappropriation of public budgets by politicians who use state resources. For example, some government officials have been known to finance election campaigns, thereby retaining power (Brierley, 2020, pp. 211-212; Madu, 2023 citing Mireille E’al, 2014 and Moscona, 2019). Brierley (2020) citing Lindberg (2003) submits that Ghana is a prime example of politicians exploiting state funds for electioneering as election campaigns there are expensive. The exorbitant costs result from mayors bearing the responsibility for campaigning for incumbent presidents over and above their own campaigns for election (Brierley, 2020). Nyarko (2021) states that the cost of politics in Ghana is steep, citing that the cost of electioneering for a parliamentary seat comes to the tune of two (2) million Ghanaian Cedis (GHC) or \$348,432. When the cost of campaigning in Ghana is financed through siphoning state funds, then what of service delivery for citizens?

Whilst we condemn colonialism, it must be acknowledged that many African governments are continuing where it left off, running states so they feather the nests of select elites while providing the bare minimum for poor communities (Brierley, 2020; Barka and Ncube, 2012).

2.3.3 Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius and South Africa)

2.3.3.1 Botswana

The political environment in Botswana has been characterised by a dominant party regime (Osei and Seabo, 2025; Sebudubudu, Bodilenyane and Kwerepe, 2016; Poteete, 2012), the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). It has been at the helm for over fifty-eight (58) years before their removal in 2024 (Mgomezulu; 2025). Pre-electoral coalitions that were formed with the intention of removing the BDP from power and in turn get rid of the dominant party system,

have been ineffective for a long time (Sebudubudu, Bodilenyane and Kwerepe, 2016; Poteete, 2012). Maundeni (2012) argues that political coalitions on the African continent have flourished mainly in times of turbulence and in the era of liberation movements fighting against colonial rule. Maundeni (2012, p. 106) thus attributes their premature failure to the political setting in Botswana that has been free from deep seated discord; gross infringement of human rights and “political intolerance.” The above assertion is rooted on the utterances of Khadiagala, Matlosa, and Shale (2010) in the book titled *when elephants fight: preventing and resolving election-related conflicts in Africa* (2010). Those authors state that when elections are unsuccessful in facilitating democratic governance then they are incapable of contributing to “peace, stability, and political harmony” in societies where social cleavages (ethnic, gender, racial, regional, and religious) are a key aspect. And that to remedy these shortcomings, there has been a tendency for “African leaders and the international community to favour inclusive governance in their attempts to redress post-election political impasses. The notion of inclusive governance entails power sharing or other mechanisms, such as unity governments, designed to increase the number of groups formally represented in government” (Khadiagala, Matlosa, and Shale, 2010, p. 4). On this basis, Maundeni (2012) posits that the Botswanan government has not had coalitions because they have been successful in the avoidance of any turbulence and political violence. In contrast, Sebudubudu (2016) credits the lack of coalitions to animosity amongst political parties in Botswana who are unable to cooperate even for a common goal such as to remove a dominant party.

2.3.3.2 Malawi

Politics in Malawi are vastly clientelistic in nature. In the absence of guarantees that a political party will be re-elected to office, use of state resources to trade with voters for electoral support manifests (O'Neil, Cammack, Kanyongolo, Mkandawire, Mwalyambwire, Welham, and Wild, 2014). The endemic maleficence, maladministration and weak accountability mechanisms impede service delivery, with the public service being notorious for bribes in exchange for service provider contracts (Mtuwa and Chiweza, 2023). These have all contributed to Malawi being one of the poorest countries in the world, dependent on foreign aid (Masefield, Msosa and Grugel, 2020; Phiri, 2025). The coalition of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) has been characterised by poor governance practices (Mtuwa and Chiweza, 2023) with poverty levels getting to a point where half the population are living below the poverty line and do not get the requisite supply of nutrients, (Phiri, 2025).

Lembani (2014) states that the presidential regime in Malawi coupled with an electoral system that is pluralistic in nature makes political fragmentation a given. Ethnic cleavages only aggravate the fragmentation (Mtuwa and Chiweza, 2023). Despite the fragmentation, Malawi was successful in removing the MCP, voting in the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which it hopes will reduce the inflation which has hiked to just over twenty per cent (20%) (Phiri, 2025).

2.3.3.3 Mauritius

Mauritius has a long history of coalition governance, having been governed through a coalition of parties since gaining independence in the year 1968 (Kadima, 2014, 2006; Sithanen, 2003). Pre-electoral alliances are the order of the day, ensuring that, by the time elections are upon them, decisions on matters of office (who gets what positions) and policy (concessions) have been made (Sithanen, 2003). Sithanen, (2003) maintains that the pre-electoral alliances assist in the prompt formation of government so that the business of governing the people and provision of public services can resume as soon as the elections are over. Mauritian alliances and coalitions can be considered a “marriage of conveniences” formed amongst different ideological and religious lines with the aim of gaining office (Kadima, 2014; Sithanen, 2003).

The fact that these coalitions can foster a stable political environment (Kadima, 2006; Kadima and Kasenally, 2005; Mauritius Times, 2024), supports the utterances of Imre, Ecker, Meyer and Muller (2023); that stability and durability of coalition governments is dependent on their adeptness at averting conflict. Having negotiated and formed these pre-electoral alliances prior to coalition government formation, means conflict can be avoided. Mauritius enjoys economic growth, inclusive government (in areas of employment, healthcare, and education to name but a few) and has been able to maintain peace despite diverse ethnic groups (ranked top in Africa, in the Global Peace Index) (Dzinesa, 2023; Magellan, 2024) . The case of Mauritius is proof that if there is political will, irrespective of ideological, religious, and ethnic differences; political parties can work together to maintain stable coalition governments.

2.3.3.4 South Africa & coalitions in selected provinces

In the absence of a majority claiming more than 50% of the votes in South Africa’s recent elections, while this may be electorate determine, it is commandeered by the kingmakers.

Kingmakers have an influence on who becomes ruler – who governs (Beukes and De Visser, 2021; Makabongwe, 2019). Growing political competitiveness in RSA is witnessing history in the making; particularly when the ANC lost their 30-year majority rule in the 2024 GE at national government level (Hadaad, 2024; Kimber, 2024). The country also witnessed the growing popularity of new parties such as the uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP) led by former president Jacob Zuma (Rondganger, 2024). The loss of ANC dominance and the looming coalition might have been predictable if the 2016 and 2021 LGEs were considered a signal. However, the growing populism in SA politics is another animal altogether (Holcombe, 2021; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023b). Furthermore, local government coalition management has proven difficult. Many collapse shortly after their inception, with disastrous consequences to service delivery (Joshua, James and Titos, 2022).

While local government is tasked with the delivery of public services to the people through municipalities, the political leadership are the instruments that control and direct the public resources for the benefit of local communities (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019; Mbandlwa and Mishi, 2020; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023a). Several factors hamper service delivery. For example, when those tasked with control of said government resources enter coalitions that solely serve party interests rather than the populous, public service delivery is negatively influenced. The same is true when petty political disputes take centre stage (Pietersen, 2021).

In RSA, decentralisation allows for local communities to take government to task when the objectives of local government as contained in Section 152 (1) of the Constitution have not been achieved (Mokgopo, 2017; Nzimakwe and Pillay, 2017). One of those objectives is the sustainable provision of services to communities (Constitution, 1996). Leadership comprising of various individuals from the political parties represented in Municipal Councils per the coalition agreements preside over the financial management and public service provision aspects in their respective municipalities (South African Local Government Association (SALGA), 2021). The city manager may be the “accounting officer” in charge of managing the revenue of the city (Manyaka, 2014, p.127); but the councillors approve the budgets and keep track of municipal spending (SALGA, 2021). Dysfunctional municipalities are therefore a consequence of poor municipal political oversight that can be accredited to, amongst other things, poor coalition management as evidenced in Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB), as subsequently considered. Poor service delivery can be seen as

linked to political parties' engagement in destructive 'political games'. This destabilises the establishment of self-sufficient municipalities capable of the delivery of premium public services (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019; Maserumule, 2020; Mokgopo, 2017).

While the rest of the country was reeling from the number of hung municipalities produced in the 2016 and 2021 LGEs, the cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni were under siege (Maserumule, 2020; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017; Pietersen, 2021). Municipalities, though in receipt of government grants, must be able to sustain themselves by generating their own revenue to manage their operational costs (Mahabir, 2023; Mashigo and Zerihun, 2022; SALGA, 2021). Johannesburg was deteriorating. The city of Johannesburg, dubbed the largest economic hub, was financially unsustainable and accordingly, failing to meet their financial and public service delivery obligations (Patrick, 2023a). Financial disburdenment meant they needed an urgent "cash injection" and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) was the solution. However, it was met with resistance by council members (Ngobeni, 2023; Patrick 2023a). Only constituting a minimal winning coalition (Koehler, 1975; Pietersen, 2021), the DA-led coalition could not obtain council approval without the support of other parties. Council, in effect, denied financial assistance through a DBSA approved loan. This was meant to alleviate the financial woes of the city of Johannesburg during the DA's Mpho Phalatse's tenure. She was removed through a motion of no confidence. Subsequently the same loan was approved under the leadership of Al Jama ah's Thapelo Amad. This speaks to the political games and sabotage in which political parties partake at the expense of service delivery (Patrick 2023a).

Tshwane Municipality was in no better condition, with the ANC and EFF rendering it ungovernable rather than allow the DA to prosper in the Municipality. The EFF did not form part of the DA led coalition in 2016 but opted to vote with them as a deterrent against the 'ex-incumbent', hence the ANC retaining any semblance of power in Tshwane (Maserumule, 2020). This left the coalition vulnerable as, with only minimal winning power, council resolutions hinged on the support of the EFF and by default, decision-making was impacted any time the EFF was not up to voting with them (Booyesen, 2021; Maserumule, 2020). Considering the distance in the policy positions of the DA and EFF and the different voter base for each party to appeal to, the fall-out was inevitable (Maserumule, 2020).

Revenue in these Gauteng Municipalities, along with many other municipalities in the country, has been on a downward trajectory (SALGA, 2021). In 2025, The Gauteng province, once boasting Johannesburg as the largest employer for 10 years straight (Thorne, 2024), was the epicentre of unemployment amongst metros. Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Tshwane were sitting at an average unemployment rate of 79% in 2024 (Thorne, 2024). The national Government of National Unity - 'GNU' has also struggled to lower the unemployment rate, with a reported increase in unemployment by 0.3% in the second quarter of 2025 (Madubela, 2025; Statistics South Africa, 2025).

Coalition governments may appear to be new-found in South Africa but that is not the case considering the country's history prior and post democracy. Post democracy, coalitions on a municipal scale have been in place from as early as the year 2000 (Booyesen, 2014, Ndletyana, 2018). Notwithstanding the intensity with which they occurred post the 2016 and 2021 LGEs; the most recent 'grand' coalition in national government between the ANC, DA, IFP and a bloc of smaller parties (Nzewi, 2024; Tladi, 2025) is noteworthy; as was the initial GNU in the year 1994 (Booyesen, 2014, Pieterse, 2021). The only problem, according to Bogopa, Mofokeng, and Ramolobe (2025, p. 53) is the "new set of problems and challenges" they have unleashed, in municipalities such as eThekweni. Next, the study explores coalitions in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape Provinces respectively.

2.3.3.4(a) KwaZulu Natal coalitions and IFP stronghold

The majority population in the province of KwaZulu Natal (KZN) comprises of people of mainly African Zulu descent, with isiZulu recorded as the most spoken language at 81% (Statistics SA, 2023). As of the 2022 Census, KZN had a population of 12.4 million, putting it at second place for the largest population next to Gauteng (Statistics SA, 2023). It had one of the worst political wars between the IFP and the ANC which prompted the forming of a provincial coalition post 1994. That was aimed at quelling the violence and fostering social cohesion (Desai, 2017; Simelane and Nkwatle, 2024). It ran parallel to the Government of National Unity (GNU) of post 1994 democratic elections (Simelane and Nkwatle, 2024). Mottiar (2014) attributes the drop, in support for Inkatha to a significant decline in people who subscribe to the "Zulu nationalist" rhetoric. Allusively, if most of the votes obtained for IFP, particularly female votes, were obtained through sheer use of force and fear mongering. The success of the Government of Provincial Unity (GPU) (coalition) in repressing violence

between warring ANC and IFP had a domino effect on vote share. Mottiar (2014) suggests two outcomes from the waning conflict – people could either vote for a political party of their choosing or invoke their right not to vote at all. The declining support of the IFP which coincided with the increasing of support for the ANC, particularly in predominantly IFP areas, resulting in the ANC usurping power in 2004. This suggests that people chose to switch allegiances.

It seems history would repeat itself again years later where one party would gain favour over another, the IFP being the one gaining favour this time around. From 2019, ANC support has been dwindling while IFP's has been growing in KZN. In 2019 the ANC received 54% of the provincial vote share, a 10% drop from 64% in 2014 (IEC, 2024b). In 2024 the ANC received 16% of votes, 2% shy of the IFP's 18%. While it may not seem like a significant vote share, it has surpassed the ANC. The IFP has been on an upward trajectory growing by 6% in 2019 compared to the 10% in 2014 and then again by 2% in 2024 when contrasted to the 16% received in 2019 (IEC, 2024b). The incumbent premier is also from the IFP. Considering the ANC has been at the helm since 2004 in KZN, the IFP has recorded substantial gains. The tale of the IFP's ascent to power is one for the history books, regardless of their comeback assumed to be associated with loyalty to Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

2.3.3.4(b) Western Cape coalitions and DA stronghold

The Western Cape is one of three (3) of South Africa's largest provinces in terms of population along with Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal (Statistics SA, 2022). Occurring as early as 1999 after a hung Western Cape vote (Dlakavu, 2022), coalitions have not only been frequent but also notable as well. An example is the coalition of the ANC and New National Party (NNP) in 2000 (Beukes, 2014; Dlakavu, 2022). The NNP, who had a fallout with the DA after their provincial coalition of 1999, formed a coalition with the ANC to eliminate the DA as a contender and for a share of the spoils the democratically elected "popular" ANC could help them attain (Dlakavu, 2022, p. 481). The DA employed a similar opportunistic tactic by pushing to only have themselves and the ANC as the biggest parties in the national coalition after the 2024 general elections (Dube, 2024). This was to extend their reach through the "partnership" with the ANC, helping them access places they would not have been able to on their own; hence their key positions in the KZN province under the so-called Government of Provincial unity. In 2002, thanks to floor crossing by some DA members, the ANC and NNP were able to

successfully wrestle power from the DA in the Western Cape province (Beukes, 2014; Dlakavu, 2022) and then in the capital city, Cape Town the same year.

Dlakavu (2022) states that in South Africa, political coalitions have been formed for power maximisation, this exposes the transactional nature of political coalitions in South Africa and how quickly parties can abandon ideology to gain power. The NNP were rewarded for sticking with the ANC, holding the Western Cape Premiership in 2002 and positions in the national legislature in 2004 (Dlakavu, 2022). Ntshangase and Makole (2025, p. 328) bemoan the new age of political coalition governance which they assert is “based on self-serving, greed, political gerrymandering and an insatiable yearning for power to the detriment of good governance and improvement of quality of services”.

With the factors driving coalition formation in mind and acknowledging the seeming political coalition and public service delivery nexus, the study next explores influence of political coalitions on public service delivery.

2.4 The influence of political coalitions on the provision of public services in selected countries

One of the most important roles of government is to provide access to fundamental services to communities, efficiently and effectively (Madu, 2023; Ndebele and Lavhelani, 2017). To make this a reality, globally, many countries have delegated the responsibility to local government as the domain closest to the people. Hence, Nkomo (2017, p. 2) considers local government the “engine” of the provision of rudimentary services. The duty of government is to provide services; local or otherwise and local coalition governments are not exempt. Thus, a change in government or government formation can influence provision of public services.

Satterthwaite (2014, p. 2) names the following as key responsibilities in local governments globally, “public services; infrastructure development and maintenance; buildings and town planning; and local economic development”. Each is briefly considered.

Public services

Local communities require basic services. These include water and sanitation; electricity; fire and disaster management; cleansing and solid waste; policing; human settlement; public health

and environmental health control (Ndebele and Lavhelani, 2017; Satterthwaite, 2014; Zweni, Koma and Ndevu, 2024).

Infrastructure development and maintenance

This is inclusive of coastal and stormwater drainage; supply of treated piped water; wastewater treatment plants and creation and maintenance of public spaces and the road network (Satterthwaite; 2014). Local government receives infrastructure grants that must be utilised to build or upgrade local infrastructure (Oosthuizen and Thornhill, 2017). The duty to spend these grants accordingly and within the allotted time frame is the duty of the local government and by default, the coalition government in a coalition setting.

Buildings and town planning

This is inclusive of the regulation and enforcing of building controls and municipal bylaws; maintenance of municipal buildings; management of land use/ town planning matters; and granting land use rights according to relevant regulations and legislation (Satterthwaite; 2014). For instance, there are two (2) council committees in eThekweni Municipality related to city planning comprising of councillors, namely, the Town Planning Appeals Committee and the Executive Committee Appeals (headed by the Mayor) (eThekweni Municipality, 2022c). These committees deliberate and decide on planning appeals made by the public on Land Use Management decisions issued by the eThekweni Metro (eThekweni Municipality, 2022c). The Exco appeals arise from decisions issued by the Town Planning cases.

Economic development

Local economic development entails development and constant improvement of strategies and policies aimed at the creation of employment opportunities, poverty alleviation and overall enhancement of quality of life for local communities (Malizia, Feser, Renski, and Drucker, 2020). There is a link between infrastructure development and economic development according to Khan and Alam (2025) as it creates employment opportunities and cultivates economic growth. Functioning infrastructure is crucial to business and attracting investment. Damage caused by the 2022 eThekweni floods rendered roads leading to the Durban port, an economic hub of the city, unusable. This is testament to affecting the supply chain with long-lasting negative economic effects (Mokwena and Maphaka, 2025).

Resolving all the above then becomes the responsibility of governing political party. In this case, the question turns on how a coalition of parties handle service delivery, infrastructure development, and disaster management preparedness – factors which influence public service provision. In this exploration, the study considers seven countries across five continents.

2.4.1. European Region (Denmark and Finland)

Global North and South countries have commonalities despite their economic disparities: public service delivery is key to continuous economic upliftment (Saarimaa and Tukiainen, 2012) and the achievement of the sustainable development goals. While public service delivery may steer Global South countries towards economic development, it is equally important to ensure that Global North countries retain their standard of living and remain sustainable for future generations. This is a point further substantiated by Madu (2023) who opines that, public service provision is one of the fundamentals of governance; that public service delivery is closely linked to initiatives designed to fight poverty and build more sustainable communities.

Pointedly, although seldom, even the most mature of democracies may find coalitions collapsing in the face of rivalling political parties with varying ambitions regardless of a similarity in ideology (Christiansen, 2021; Christiansen and Pederson, 2014). Danish coalitions, however, have mechanisms in place to ensure government continuity in the event of the collapse of a coalition (Christiansen, 2021). For instance, at local government, any breakdown in coalitions would not affect administration due to the type of electoral system in place, meaning no citizens are left in limbo. Dissolution of a coalition has little to no bearing on governance as the mayor serves a 4-year term and only faces removal in cases where they have committed gross misconduct (Amashabalala, 2023; Christiansen, 2021). Although there is a prevalence of minority coalitions in Finland, it is easy to reach consensus on policy issues, limiting the dragging of the bargaining process (Christiansen, 2021).

About Finnish municipalities, Saarimaa and Tukiainen (2012) argue that local service delivery is paramount to the national economy considering the considerable nature of responsibilities bestowed upon local government. (Merilainen, 2013). As of 2012, local municipalities in Finland were found to be quite self-sufficient, contributing an average of 18 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through municipal spending and providing employment to 20 percent of the total labour force (Merilainen, 2013; Saarimaa and Tukiainen, 2012). Finnish

municipalities are largely run through mergers (coalitions), a model of governing that seems to have worked for them as they are “renowned” for being pivotal to the provision of high calibre critical public services (Kull and Moodie, 2021). These collaborations ensure that resources are pooled to provide the best in public services (infrastructure, public health).

2.4.2 Oceania region (Australia and New Zealand)

Australia had a coalition different to most in Europe from 2013 until 2022. It was in the form of a permanent coalition between the Liberal Party (LP) and the National Party (NP) (Costar, 2011). The coalition government had a positive impact in many aspects. While other countries struggled with economic growth post the pandemic, they managed a growth of 3.4 percent and managed to create more employment opportunities than before the pandemic struck (Liberal Party of Australia, 2024). Australia also boasts a relatively strong budget and a low dependency on welfare care, meaning their healthy budget can be invested in infrastructure and in the regions to build capacity (skills) and industries (Liberal Party of Australia, 2024; Reuters, 2024).

Coalitions have also become a common feature in New Zealand following the move to the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system (Hicks, 2013; Roy, 2020). Despite over 25 years of coalition governance experience (since 1996), it has not always been smooth sailing (Hicks, 2013; Roy, 2020). The very first coalition to be formed in 1996 took two months at the negotiating table before a coalition government came into effect and even then, it collapsed (Hicks, 2013; Knight, 2022). This failure, according to Hicks (2013), is attributed to poor command of coalition governance despite massive research into coalitions well before the very first one was formed. Political actors proved ill equipped to maintain them. Negotiations have been known to reach gridlock. Political parties going weeks without reaching consensus leads to a standstill in governance and public service delivery (Roy, 2020). Despite the negative experiences the New Zealand political landscape has undergone, they are ranked amongst the best in coalition governance, producing stable governing coalitions and an equally “stable country” (Rabele and Shale, 2023). This signals the notion that stable coalitions yield stable governance and administration mechanisms and thus productive service delivery.

2.4.3 South American region (Mexico)

Ashworth, Geys, Heyndels, and Wille (2014) assert that political competition, from which party coalitions are borne, has a positive effect on public governance as the ‘threat’ of replacement of politicians ensures better performance in the discharge of their duties. This means that, having other political parties governing and as ‘watchdogs’ minimises the risk of wrongdoing that otherwise results in poor service delivery.

Cleary’s (2007) study on Mexican municipalities provides another view on political competition and its effect on government performance of service delivery. Cleary’s (2007) study found that well performing Mexican politicians are not encouraged to do more. That is because their good performance cannot be rewarded by re-election, yielding from their “constitutional prohibition against re-election” (Cleary, 2007, p. 296 citing Guill’en L’opez, 1996). This assertion then posits that electoral competition may not be a primary factor in all countries and regions and that there is no one size fits all. In other words, context matters. This is further supported by the utterances of Muchie, Gumede, Oloruntoba and Check (2016) in the case of African countries needing African specific solutions to African problems when it comes to political coalitions and their influence of service delivery or other matters.

2.4.4 Asian Region (Indonesia, India)

Hamid (2012) laments the state of democratic reversion in Indonesia despite it having been an established democracy. She attributes the poor quality to insufficient political answerability, if any. This is owing to too much coalition building amongst political parties, motivated by office-seeking (to gain power). The grand coalitions usually in place in Indonesia tend to be so large that opposition tends to get diluted (Hamid, 2012). With the dilution there is then confusion among voters as they do not know who to attribute any success or failure to or whom to hold accountable for undelivered promises (Al Hamid, 2025; Hamid, 2012). Voters have no idea of policy positions or ideological standpoint of coalitions partners because it is not clearly communicated and deliberately so if Hamid (2012, p. 326) explains the “cartel like” politics in place in Indonesia. The bloated nature of coalitions in Indonesia, aimed at fostering inclusivity, also tends to breed a “weakened opposition”, eroding accountability mechanisms as there is an absence of a strong opposition to institute the necessary checks and balances on the coalition government (Al Hamid, 2025, p. 121).

Coalition building does not always equate to success as the Indonesian populace cannot be persuaded by appealing to ethnicity and or religion (Hamid, 2012). The regression of democracy is because voters seem to have no say in the decisions of the parties, it is all in the hands of the politicians. This supports the views of Hanabe and Malinzi (2019) that political coalitions do tend to undermine the voice of the voter. The overly fragmented political landscape resultant from the multiparty electoral system in place in Indonesia and the required vote threshold in place to be able to choose one's political contenders encourages coalition formation (Al Hamid, 2025; Hamid, 2012).

Coalition formation is opportunistic and parasitic in nature in Indonesia and is driven by retention and consolidation of power amongst the political “cartel” and rent-seeking (Arifin and Purnomowati, 2017; Hamid, 2012). Other studies on the Indonesian local government reveal that coalition parties have significant sway on local government expenditure and will influence expenditure to their benefit (Lewis and Hendrawan, 2019; Lewis, Nguyen and Hendrawan, 2020). For that reason, health and education expenditure is not prioritised (Lewis, Nguyen and Hendrawan, 2020), with coalition parties opting to rather divert funding to areas that will improve their chances of re-election and not necessarily improve general service delivery (Lewis, Nguyen and Hendrawan, 2020 citing Skoufias, Narayan, Dasgupta, and Kaiser, 2014). Hence, coalition building, formation, and governance influence public service delivery in Indonesian municipalities. Our final region in this section is SADC.

2.4.5 Southern African Development Community region (Lesotho and South Africa)

Lesotho, like many countries who have changed to the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system (Hicks, 2013; Rabele and Shale, 2023), has seen a rise in coalitions since 2012 and subsequently 2015, 2017 (‘Nyane, 2019; Rabele and Shale, 2023) and again in 2022 (Rabele and Shale, 2023). The turbulent political climate in the country has however made it difficult to maintain any semblance of stability in coalition governments (‘Nyane, 2019; Rabele and Shale, 2023). Even with the provisions of Section 87 (2) of the Constitution of Lesotho (1993) that the “appointed” prime minister be the leader of the majority party or coalition of parties in the national assembly (Limpitlaw, 2021; ‘Nyane, 2019). These are provisions that ‘Nyane (2019) views as grounds for coalition agreements to be legally binding and therefore enforceable.

The unenforceable nature of coalition agreements that 'Nyane (2019) labels “gentlemen’s agreements”, has made it so that no coalition since their emergence in 2012 has lasted over two (2) years. That together with the office-seeking nature of political parties (Debus and Gross, 2016) reared its ugly head in the Basotho politics. At that point, coalition parties abandoned each other to be part of other coalitions that could possibly ‘maximise their payoffs’ (‘Nyane, 2019; Rabele and Shale, 2023). It also created a breeding ground for conflict as leaving coalitions “willy-nilly” also meant interparty conflict, formation of new parties and floor crossing (Rabele and Shale, 2023). How then, would this influence service delivery, becomes the question. The problem with Lesotho politics, states Rabele and Shale (2023), is the unresolved conflict that individuals in these political parties carry over to their new relationships (new parties and coalitions). This action thereby renders newer coalitions (with the same old actors) victims of personality clashes and therefore doomed from inception.

Turning to South Africa, while the assertions of Ashworth *et al.*, (2014) on political competition positively impacting public governance were based on a study in Flanders (Belgium). The researcher is inclined to find the results applicable in RSA where, until recently the ANC has been leading national government since 1994 (Hadaad, 2024; Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019). While there has not been a shortage of political competition in the country, the lack of an ‘acceptable’ substitute to the ANC may have contributed to the party staying in power for 30 years despite its shortcomings. Once political competition intensified at national level, the electorate punished the ANC at the polls (Kimber, 2024; Ntingi, 2018), which is a product of ‘rent-seeking’ behaviour (Ashworth *et al.*, 2014; Mthuli, Singh and Reddy, 2023a).

The local party coalitions in effect since the 2016 and 2021 LGE in RSA have proven ill-equipped to deliver efficient public services (Joshua, James, and Titos, 2022; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). The metropolitan Municipalities of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg are examples of how forming coalitions where no policy convergence exists results in dysfunctional municipalities. This is evident when parties are unable to come to a consensus, which impedes public service delivery (Joshua, James and Titos, 2022; Maserumule, 2020; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). Hence, governments formed through political coalitions do have an impact on public service provision. This is because the power to adopt policies and pass budgets that enable service delivery is vested in whoever is in power at

that point in time, this includes governing through a coalition partner or partners. As earlier indicated, kingmakers affect political coalitions.

2.4.6 Kingmakers and the stability of political coalitions in selected municipalities in South Africa

The current political landscape in South Africa has created an environment where ‘kingmaker’ status has been afforded to the smallest minority of political parties. This places the power to make or break a coalition on a group of individuals (political party) with a meagre 2 seats and 0.70% of the support of the electorate. This occurred with the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) in eThekweni (IEC, 2021; Makabongwe, 2019). Democracy and the multiparty system seemingly promote the contestation of elections by several political parties (Booyesen, 2014; Mbandlwa and Dorasamy, 2021; NDI, 2015). Yet, it is equally important to take cognisance of the decision of the electorate in forming of coalitions and potentially granting considerable power to political parties that the electorate would never have expected in governance positions (Makabongwe, 2019).

Hanabe and Malinzi (2019) argue that the votes cast by the electorate communicate their wishes, thus the forming of some coalitions. Although advantageous for the coalition partners, this goes against and potentially undermines the voice of the voter. Makabongwe (2019) echoes these sentiments, stating that the kingmaker enjoys more power than the electorate after elections. Maserumule (2020, p. 310) advocates for abandoning the party system altogether in local government and opting for “direct citizen representation”. This occurs where residents of a ward elect a ward representative not accountable to political parties, to represent them in council. Maserumule’s advocacy paves the way for potentially eliminating transactional politics between political parties seeking the throne and kingmakers in a position to install them.

Smaller parties being able to decide which coalitions are formed means that they sell their votes to the highest bidder and normally make larger than life demands (Makabongwe, 2019). When the demands are not met, they threaten to withdraw support which makes for unstable coalitions and therefore unstable government (Phakathi, Ngwenya and Nene, 2025). Kingmakers also create a sort of dependency rather than consensus, as expected of a coalition if it is to govern successfully.

The study next considers kingmakers in selected municipalities in South Africa between 2016 and 2025. The subject municipalities are Tshwane, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni in Gauteng Province, Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape Province and eThekweni in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

2.4.6.1 Coalition in the City of Tshwane

The city of Tshwane was left in limbo after the 2016 LGEs produced a hung council (Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). With new entrants in the political landscape, old ones were puzzled at the results making next steps unclear. Therefore, coalition talks had to begin at some point to salvage the city. The city had previously been governed under the ANC since the advent of local government in the year 2000 (Pietersen, 2021) and despite the service delivery shortcomings, it had still avoided falling into “foreign hands” until 2016. The hung council prompted the Democratic Alliance (in coalition with several smaller parties) and the Economic Freedom Fighters to venture into a voting partnership, with the EFF as the kingmaker (Munzhedzi and Shopola, 2024; Maserumule, 2020, 2016). Having only managed to scramble together a minority government (Pietersen, 2021; Maserumule, 2020; Koehler, 1975), the DA’s success in the city hinged on the EFF’s mercy (Maserumule, 2016). Kingmakers, although with fewer seats, as it has emerged in South African politics, determine the direction in which the municipality must venture (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019). This partnership orchestrated by the EFF was marred with gridlock in council decision-making, halting service delivery. This culminated in the provincial government invoking Section 139 of the Constitution in 2020, taking over the municipality (Pietersen, 2021; Zweni, Koma and Ndevu, 2024).

2.4.6.2 Coalition in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

The Johannesburg Metro did not escape kingmaker politics either. In 2016, the EFF emerged as the kingmaker, striking an arrangement that would see them supporting the DA in Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and Tshwane. This, however, was without any formal coalition agreement (Khumalo and Netshwera, 2022; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). This arrangement eventually collapsed when the DA was averse to making certain concessions (Khumalo and Netshwera, 2022). Succeeding the 2021 LGE’s, the city once again had a hung council (Joshua, James and Titos, 2022). The DA run coalition faced numerous trials and tribulations that led to several motions of no confidence and subsequently, the

removal of their mayor in 2023. That position was replaced by a candidate from a kingmaker with just three (3) seats, the Al Jama ah party (Patrick, 2023a; Thorne, 2025). In the space of two (2) years, the Johannesburg Metro had run through eight (8) mayors. This included five (5) in less than two (2) financial years (Munzhedzi and Shopola, 2024) and eight (8) in another two years (Mwareya, 2023).

2.4.6.3 Coalition in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality

The decision of the EFF after the 2021 LGE's to vote with the DA on certain matters on the basis of their potential service delivery viability (Maneng, 2022) lives up to the term “strange bedfellows” (Maserumule, 2020). A similar arrangement occurred in Tshwane. The whole deal was a rather bizarre affair. This is particularly because both parties understood the ideological distance between themselves, meaning the nuncupative agreement was doomed at inception (Maneng, 2022; Maserumule, 2020). The 2016 coalition was relatively stable and that can be attributed largely to the previous ruling party only falling short of the 50 plus 1 threshold by a small margin with a 48.64 percentage win (Pietersen, 2021).

The initial coalition formed in 2021 was between the DA and various smaller parties including the Congress of the People (COPE) and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) with the tacit supporters, the EFF as kingmakers (Beukes, 2021; Booysen, 2021; Ngoma, 2021). This coalition successfully elected Tania Campbell of the DA as Mayor, overstepping an ANC candidate (Booyesen, 2021). In late 2022, the DA mayor was removed through a motion of no confidence (the weapon of choice in political coalitions in SA) (Booyesen, 2021). The removal of the incumbent mayor under the executive mayoral system, according to the Municipal Structures Act, 1998, calls for the dissolution of the municipal council in its entirety. The dissolving of the council was equivalent to no service delivery in Ekurhuleni as all crucial decision-making including the approval of budgets, was halted (Pholoma, Lubinga, Masiya and Madumo, 2024). A couple of days later, the DA mayor was re-instated and subsequently removed again to make way for a candidate from a minority party, the African Independent Congress (AIC) (Booyesen, 2021). During this power struggle between political parties, Ekurhuleni was plagued by service delivery issues that led to service delivery protests in the municipality (Patience and Nel, 2021).

2.4.6.4 Coalition in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) was one of the Metros previously dominated by the ANC that the party lost in the 2016 LGEs (Ndletyana and Nomarwayi, 2016). Following years of electoral decline, the former reigning party was gradually losing its grip on its dominion. Kotze (2018) cites the rampant corruption, cadre deployment and self-enrichment as only somewhat part of the basis for electoral dissatisfaction with the ANC. Following the hung council in 2016, NMB formed part of the DA-EFF arrangement to create a voting bloc, although by tacit agreement (Booyesen, 2021, Maneng, 2022 and Maserumule, 2020) It was also in the NMB that relations grew sour after the removal of the DA mayor, Athol Trollip, through a motion of no confidence spearheaded by the EFF. Trollip was replaced with a UDM candidate who was later removed by a motion instituted by the DA. This game of merry-go-round continued until the DA regained the mayorship until the end of 2021 (Maneng, 2022).

The most notable kingmaker to emerge in NMB was the United Democratic Movement (UDM) (Maneng, 2022). In 2018, the UDM ascended to the position of mayor even though they had just two (2) seats (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019). Subsequently, in 2021, during the ANC-led coalition, they would rise to the position of deputy mayorship once again.

2.4.6.5 Coalition in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

The former ruling party had to venture into a coalition with the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) as the kingmaker to retain some hold of the city slipping through their fingers following the 2021 LGEs (Harper, 2021). ABC had only 2 seats in council (IEC, 2021) with their leader heading the block of smaller parties in council. But this was instrumental in the ANC retaining power in eThekweni (Harper, 2023, 2021). The ABC were rewarded handsomely, with their president getting the deputy mayorship position (Harper, 2021). Not unlike many of the coalitions of a similar nature, it was not a bed of roses. The relations soon splintered in 2022, leading to the ousting of the deputy mayor (Harper, 2023; Singh, 2022).

Zweni, Koma and Ndevu (2024) assert that kingmakers such as the likes of the EFF, have a crucial part to play in ensuring coalitions contribute positively to poverty alleviation. In contrast, Makgale, (2020) cited in Makubalo, Rulashe and Gwala (2025) as well as Makole, Ntshangase and Adewumi (2022) argue that they can also undermine and destabilise government.

Local government coalitions in South African municipalities have been characterised by instability owing to prioritising consolidating power rather than advancing service delivery needs (Tladi, 2025). This is evidenced by political parties forming coalitions in the absence of shared political ideology (Maserumule, 2020). This can lead to short-lived political partnerships with power dynamics and decision-making authority seldom remaining constant and with the everchanging power dynamics, stilted decision making becoming more pronounced.

2.4.7 The Multiparty Charter of South Africa

The multi-party charter, once labelled the Moon-Shot Pact (Ngculu and Naidoo, 2024), is a pre-electoral alliance conceived by the DA and parties like the IFP, Action SA, Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus) and other minority parties (Democratic Alliance, 2023). It was formed to contest the national and provincial elections in 2024 and with one goal in mind. That is to dethrone the ANC and dismantle the dominant party system once and for all (Dlakavu, 2022; Masuabi, 2024;). Pre-electoral alliances are formed before the election and based on the yield of the elections (Kadima, 2005). Beukes (2014) remarks that in democratic South Africa, coalitions have been two-fold, formed pre-election (alliances) and post-election when there has been no outright winner. In the country the most common has been coalitions formed post-election.

The multiparty charter was founded on the premise that the ANC was losing support and prospects of successfully removing them from government were enhanced (Masuabi, 2024; Ndlovu, Twala and Sithole, 2025). Although it was not known how huge a blow the former ruling party would be dealt prior to the elections, it was a given that they would lose further support (Mngomezulu and Phetha, 2025). Their support had already been declining (Mngomezulu, 2025; Rubin and von Soest, 2024; Chigova and Hofisi, 2023). The ANC received 65.9% of the vote in 2009 (down from 69.69% in 2004); 62.15% in 2014 and 57.5% in 2019 (IEC, 2025) coupled with the mounting disenchantment among their constituents (Maserumule, 2016; Ndletyana, 2018). The DA-led alliance did not garner enough support to govern alone, scrambling combined support (votes) in the range of 30% (See: IEC, 2024). This subsequently led to the abandonment of the multiparty charter (Masuabi, 2024) as parties like the DA saw opportunity to coalesce with the ANC.

2.4.7.1 A grand coalition and or a government of national unity?

Miller and Muller (2010, p. 332) define a grand coalition as the alliance or the “joining of forces of the two major parties in the system” on the one hand. Beukes and De Visser (2021), on the other hand, state that a grand coalition occurs when a coalition has more political parties than is required to constitute a majority. For instance, in the current national government, the ANC and the DA have sufficient combined votes to co-govern as a majority coalition (Mngomezulu and Phetha, 2025), however the current make-up of the coalition has an excess of political parties and or interests (Beukes and De Visser, 2021). A government of national unity on the other hand features “the most political parties represented in the legislature” (Takalani and Maemu, 2025, p. 317).

Governments of national unity (GNU) are normally formed under conditions of turbulence and to foster social cohesion through nation building in a racially and ethnically diverse nation (Kadima, 2014; Thwala and Vilakazi, 2024; Zweni, Faku and Yan, 2025). There was no turbulence in South Africa although it is a racially and ethnically diverse nation. Can the deliberate exclusion of some political parties with “significant interests represented in the legislature” (Zweni, Faku and Yan, 2025, p. 147) achieve any unity and stability as expected of a GNU? A subsequent question is whether the current national coalition satisfies all the requirements of a GNU.

It is worth considering coalitions in Malaysia at this juncture. Coalitions in the form of pre-electoral political alliances in Malaysia are not a new phenomenon, having been part of the political landscape for decades (Wong, 2023). However, the country in 2022 had its first ever hung parliament since attaining independence (He, Song and Yan, 2025; Wong, 2023). The dominant party, the Perikatan Nasional (PN) was forced to form a government of unity with the opposition party, the Barisan Nasional (BN) and other parties (He, Song and Yan, 2025, p. 361). This reiterates how hung parliaments all over the world compel political parties to form coalitions (Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). Prior to PN rising to power, political dominance was enjoyed by the coalition of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and BN since independence in 1957 (Ostwald, 2020). This long stretch of political dominance is typical of post-colonial regimes and Global South countries as seen in India (Yadav, 2023) Kenya (Kadima and Owour, 2014) and South Africa (Ndlovu, Twala and Sithole, 2025). Malaysia is pluralistic in nature which promotes fragmentation. Yet “inter-ethnic power-

sharing” is no longer the main trigger in coalition formation. This contributes to the political landscape shifting and the growing number of workable political alliances from a mere one or two to many (Wang, 2023).

Malaysian political alliances, as with Indonesian coalitions (Al Hamid, 2025; Hamid, 2012), for example, have partnerships amongst too many disparate groups. This potentially causes confusion as to their policy positions and or ideology (Wong, 2023). This then extends to difficulty in holding the coalition government accountable for service delivery shortcomings.

2.4.7.2 Politics of personality cult or populism?

On the one hand, Ighotomo and Orji (2022) define a personality cult as a situation where an individual, usually in the political space, is deliberately presented to the public as an out of this world phenomenon worthy of worship and adulation. Sundahl (2022, p. 2) on the other hand suggests that a personality cult must satisfy the following criteria: lasting political survival despite many political fails and pitfalls; “symbolic elevation” at various societal levels; and a religious idolisation. It is here argued that personality cults are evolving and simply satisfying one of the criteria developed by Sundhal (2022), is sufficient to deem it just that, a cult of personality.

After the loss of the face of the IFP, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the IFP had heated internal clashes. Some people believed it was important to retain his image as the face of electioneering rather than the new president elected four (4) years prior, Velenkosi Hlabisa (Tandwa, 2023). It was believed that such action would be more appealing to their loyal supporters and possibly aid their campaign. It is the same with loyalty to the ANC in parts of the country despite many disappointments faced at the hands of the party, still holding Mandela in high regard as their liberator (Braun, 2024; Rwafa, 2017). The same can also be said about the MKP. It relied heavily on former president Jacob Zuma’s charisma to gain a large vote base and that was realised (Gordon, Roberts, Mchunu, Struwig, and Bohler-Muller, 2024; Seepe, 2024). Despite only being a couple of months old, they successfully contested elections and became the third (3rd) largest party in the national assembly, surpassing the EFF (IEC, 2024; Rubin and von Soest, 2024). The MKP had no policy that people would say led them to voting for the party, it simply relied on the popularity of Jacob Zuma.

The growing popularity of newly formed political parties as well as the attachment to party “symbols” in the older parties may seem like simple populism; however, there is a very thin line between populism and cult of personality. Appealing to the populace, inducing loyalty so strong it creates political resilience (Sundahl, 2022). The case of Mandela displayed hints of personality cult, Jacob Zuma’s MKP and his appeal to the marginalised is populism verging on personality cult. It is just missing the one point in Sundahl’s (2022) model, elevation by the media. Although he is not beyond using “negative” reporting by the media to boost his popularity.

2.5 eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality: Case Context

eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality is in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. It is the largest municipality in the province and the third largest in the country (eThekweni Municipality, 2022). As Figure 1 shows, the metro spans inward from the Indian Ocean, upward and downward being geographically provided into regions: Central, Inner West, North, Outer West and South.

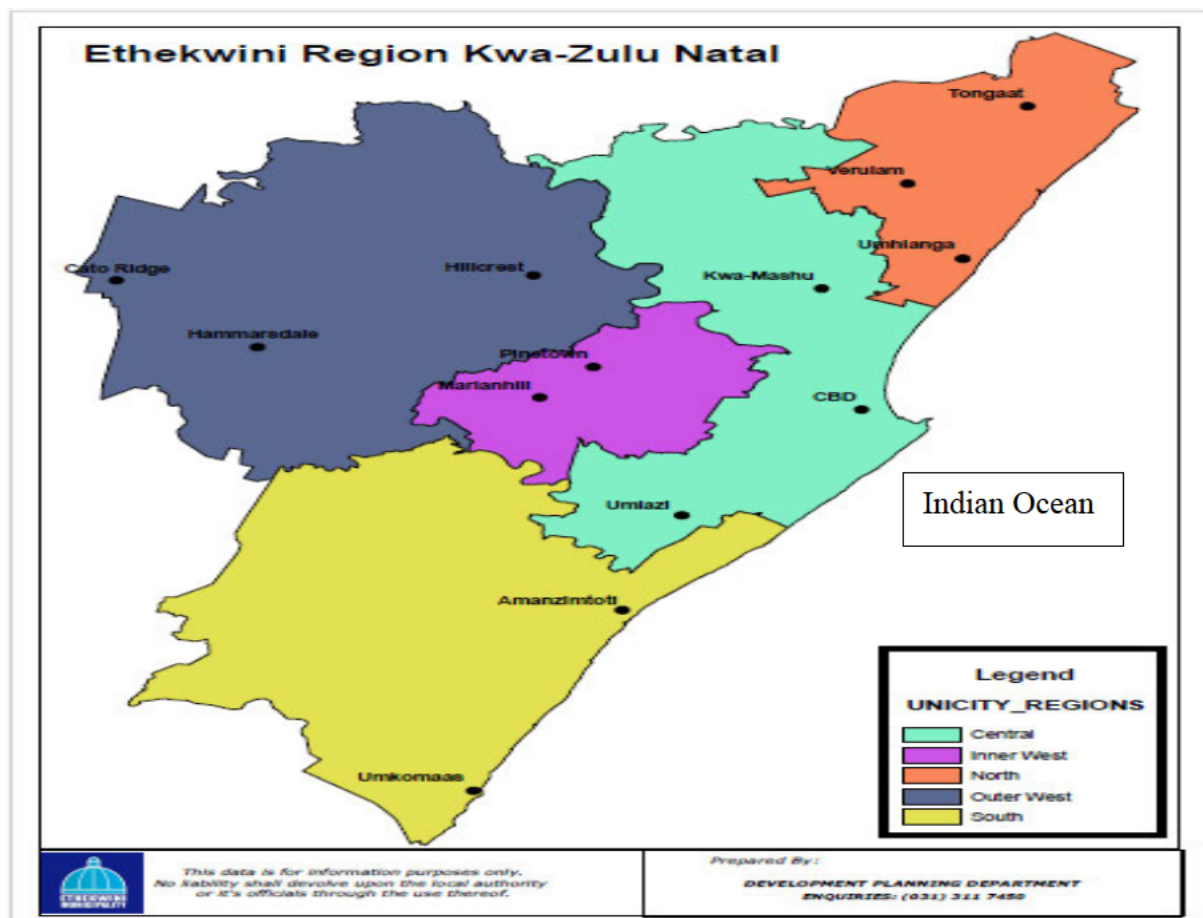


Figure 2.1: eThekweni Region Map

Source: eThekwini Municipality (Development Planning)

As of the year 2022, eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality was home to a population of 4,239,901 (Census, 2022). The demographics are structured as shown by Table below 2.1 and Figure 2.1 respectively. At more than three million strong, the majority population consists of Black Africans. The next largest group is comprised of Indians/Asians followed by whites and coloureds.

Table 2.1: eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality population

Population Group as of the 2022 Census	
Black African	3035769
Coloured	105998
Indian/Asian	835260
White	254394
Other	12720

Source: RSA Census (2022)

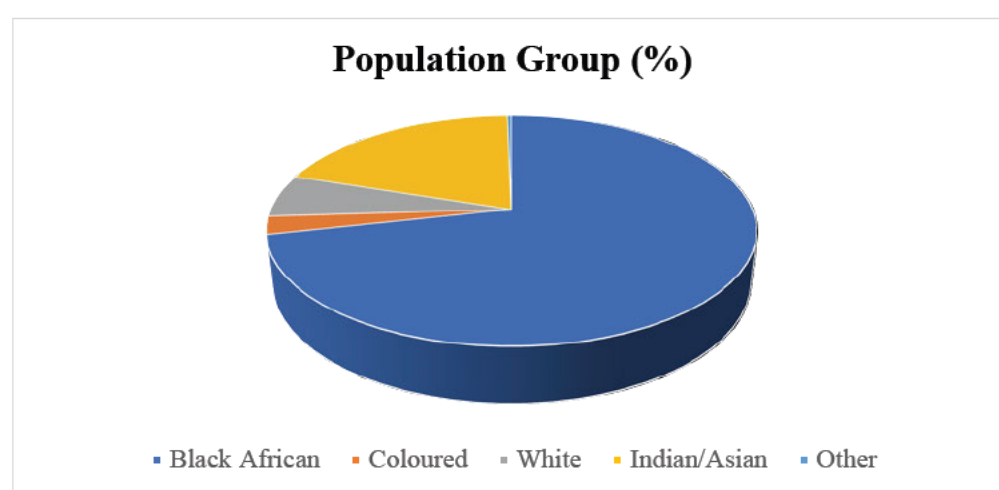


Figure 2.2: Population group pie-chart

Source: RSA Census (2022)

The population grouping shown in Figure 2 includes 1 122 738 households according to the RSA 2022 Census. As to gender, this population consists of a little over two million males at 2,073,312 and slightly more than that amount when it comes to females who, according to the 2022 census totalled 2,166,589. Table 2 reflects the age groupings, indicating that more than

three million people are between 15 and 64 years old. Figure 3 reflects age groupings by percentages.

Table 2.2: Age groupings in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

Age group	
0-14 years	890379
15-64 years	3,061,209
65+ years	288313

Source: RSA Census (2022)

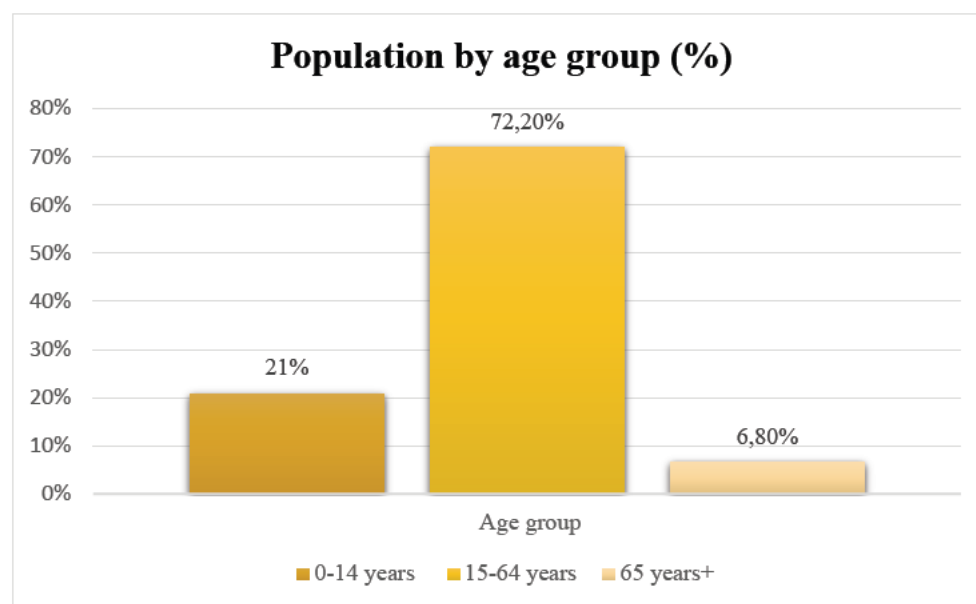


Figure 2.3: eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality age groupings, percentages

Source: RSA Census (2022)

The foregoing figures and tables shed light on the context of metropolitan eThekweni. The context reveals the expansiveness of the metropolitan municipality, the diversity, gender and age of its population. This in turn, informs service delivery expectations and signals whether and if so, political coalitions may influence public service provision.

Service delivery woes in eThekweni, the focus of this study, were not solely ensuant to the 2016 and 2021 LGEs, which was a deeply politicised administration (Masuku and Jili, 2019) that exacerbated the dire straits of the city. For instance, disintegrating relations saw the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC), a coalition partner of the ANC, vote against their ally's city manager

of choice, delaying the appointment of an eThekweni metro city manager, thereby halting city administration (Papayya, 2022). In addition, there was the subsequent crumbling of the ABC and ANC which led to the removal of the former's leader as deputy mayor through a vote of no confidence (Singh, 2022). Moreover, the municipality failed to spend government grants allocated for infrastructure repairs in the city (Kariuki and Bhola, 2023). The foregoing factors combined with the results of a recent Governance Performance Index (GPI) report placing the Municipality 7th out of 8 metros for service delivery (GGA, 2024) all count against the city. That report was compiled by Good Governance Africa (GGA) for the periods 2021-2023.

If Koma's (2010, p. 118) assessments about local service delivery are anything to go by, the poor performance by South African municipalities, eThekweni included, was bound to erode "public confidence and trust" by local communities. The literature above has highlighted that the cooperation between political actors and public administrators is key to effective and efficient governance and decision making in public institutions (Jacobson, 2024). It has also highlighted the effects of political coalition on service delivery, abroad and locally. The effects are healthy bargaining, consensus, and improved performance in Flanders (Belgium) (Ashworth *et al.*, 2014; De Winter and Dumont, 2021), negative influence on education and health expenditure in Indonesia (Rizky, Setiawan and Wirnana, 2021), a 'clientelistic' and politicised administration in Austria and good performance from some politicians in Mexican municipalities (Cleary, 2007).

However, locally there is no empirical evidence detailing the perceived influence of local party coalitions in eThekweni Municipality nor the connection between party coalitions and public service delivery. The embattled Metro had its own service delivery issues to contend with, leading to and during the coalition. Moreover, there is the recent placing of the Metro under Section 154 administration (Kariuki and Bhola, 2023). This study aims to fill that gap in knowledge by using empirical evidence to connect political party coalition and public service provision (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019; Joshua, James and Titos, 2022; Mokgopo, 2017; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017).

The result of the 2016 LGEs was unexpected in South Africa. Then, the 2021 LGEs shook the very foundation of the ANC and further shifted the political topography as we know it. Producing 66 hung councils was an astounding increase of 39 from the previous elections

(Zweni, Koma and Ndevu, 2024). Moreover, this time around the ANC's 'traditional stronghold' of eThekweni was the latest casualty in the 2021 LGE's (Papayya, 2021). This is a clear indication of the uphill battle the ANC would need to face to appease voters and the looming end of an era of ANC dominance (Ndlovu, Twala and Sithole, 2025).

Knowing eThekweni demographics and that it is the largest municipality in KZN province and the third largest in the country (eThekweni Municipality, 2022), it is no surprise that it would have remained uncontested following the watershed 2016 LGEs. Nevertheless, as the last of the ANC strongholds to fall, the eThekweni Municipality's political coalitions are complex and understudied. There is a lacuna of empirical evidence. Therefore, this study aims to contribute empirically based knowledge on political coalition formation, its nexus with service delivery and the influence of coalition governance on public service provision.

2.6 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is significant in research because it aids in supporting the researcher's justification for the use of a theory to answer research questions and address problems (Grant and Osanloo, 2014). The study's theoretical underpinnings originate from the office-seeking and policy-oriented theories, founded on size and ideology (Kadima, 2014). These have historically been pronounced by various researchers such as Gamson (1961), Riker (1962) and Axelrod (1970). These theories were developed in Western Europe, and are mainly applied to coalition formation there, a widely recognised and practised event. Kadima (2014) states that application of the policy-oriented theory, which is grounded on ideology, to the African context, may be flawed. This flaw can be attributed to shared historical experiences of colonialism leading to political parties with similar or closely linked ideological positions (Kadima, 2014). Arguably, South African and Mauritian politics have elements of ideological disparities, but which are largely influenced by ethnic, regional, and racial schisms (Kadima, 2014). That then suggests that it is a given that many coalitions will be office-seeking oriented. There has been expansion of the office-seeking orientation to include individualistic office-seeking and opportunistic office-seeking.

Before exploring that expansion, it is worth noting that coalitions seem to be inevitable in today's evolving political landscape. They are particularly more likely to be formed under certain political systems such as the proportional representation electoral system (Booyesen,

2014, Mokgopo, 2017; Pietersen, 2021) and the parliamentary system (Kadima, 2014). Given their inevitability, theoretical considerations underpinning their formation must be explored.

2.6.1 Office-seeking theory

The office seeking theory purports that the aim of political parties in running for office is to gain power and when there is no outright winner, a coalition that allows access to power is formed (Kadima, 2014). The office-seeking theory is founded on the theory of games and economic behaviour developed by von Neumann and Morgensten (1944) (Axelrod, 1984). Game theory relates to how actors (decision-makers) arrive at decisions when dealing with each other and posits that the overall end goal is dependent on the actions of other actors (Hayes, 2019). In a political coalition setting, game theory would allude to parties forming coalitions to gain access to power which may place them in a position to pass laws. This then alludes to the nexus between office-seeking and policy-seeking approaches (Evans, 2018).

Game theory was applied in the case of political coalitions in South Africa (succeeding the National General Elections) when political parties like the DA determined with which parties they would coalesce. This was based on what they believed other political parties in a position to strike similar deals would do under the circumstances. For instance, they knew the likelihood of the MKP coalescing with the ANC was diminished. They knew, based on each party's vote share (IEC, 2024a) that the ANC coalescing with the various smaller parties would constitute a minority government (Beukes and De Visser, 2021). Thus, they struck a deal with the ANC that would allow them to maximise their benefits (office payouts).

The former opposition party (DA) demanded certain cabinet portfolios that would ingratiate them with their mainly "white" constituents considering the party could be seen as having gone against its ideological standing by forming a coalition with the ANC (Lukiv, Nyoka and Booty, 2024). Game theory in this scenario projected that, although there are other actors in the GNU, the DA had leverage because the twenty (20) plus percent vote share helps the ANC maintain a majority. This is an ANC that wants to maintain some semblance of power by any means possible. A coalition amongst the ANC, EFF and MKP had a smaller chance of being formed because of "tensions", such as the MKP calling for the resignation of President Ramaphosa as incentive to ally with the ANC (Masuabi and Ludidi, 2024). Granted, in going into coalition with the ANC the Democratic Alliance displayed that they place getting into office above their

policy positions. It can also be argued that the only way they can affect any policy changes in government, is from the inside, once again emphasizing the link between office and policy.

It can be argued that the formation of the multiparty charter whose sole intention was to unseat the ANC (Masuabi, 2023), supports the theory that forming coalitions is about maximising power. Similar cases of office-seeking were observed in Kenya when the National Rainbow Coalition ended the forty (40) year reign of the Kenya African National Union (Kadima and Owour, 2014) and the Concertación successfully ended Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile (Garrido-Vergara, 2020). Office and policy seeking theories are both informing the study as it is argued that to enact policy (be policy seeking), you first need to be in office therefore there cannot be one without the other (Evans, 2018).

Office-seeking theory suggests that parties coalesce to maximise power (which means cabinet payoffs and the perks that come with them) (Budge and Laver, 1986; Kadima, 2014) however it falls short in its applicability to the recent case of the South African National Assembly and the KZN Province. Kadima (2014, p. 4) in his study titled *"An introduction to the politics of party alliances and coalitions in socially-divided Africa"* posed the following question on coalition theories (office and policy seeking) "what is the applicability to African contexts of theories of party alliances and coalitions developed in other settings and, if relevant, in what ways might they need modification?" If the MKP was purely office-seeking like most parties have exhibited in South Africa, then why did it not coalesce with the ANC to get the spoils of office for itself in National and Provincial legislatures? Office-seeking fails to account for such situations, but it could also be argued that the MKP displayed nuances of opportunistic office-seeking when they tried to invalidate the KZN vote to have an outright win in the province (Qodashe, 2023).

2.6.1.1 Individualistic office-seeking

This term is conceptualised to mean office-seeking, but not in the name of the party. Rather, office-seeking for individual benefit. This individualistic office-seeker can be continuously supported by certain party loyalists despite the person's many shortcomings. It is the expectation that there is benefit, mostly financial, to be gained by that political party staying in power. This was also observed in the Indonesian case where members of incumbent political parties would rather have a diluted coalition that allows them to close ranks on potential new

entrants. The new entrants may destabilise the arrangement that allows the incumbent to stay in power and possibly squander budgets meant for the Indonesian populace (Al Hamid, 2025; Hamid, 2025). In South Africa, individual political actors within political parties seek office for the spoils it could bring them, in eThekweni it was benefiting through tenders (Magubane, 2021).

2.6.1.2 Opportunistic office-seeking

Opportunistic office-seeking seeks to capitalise on an opportunity by exploiting the maximum possible benefit from the office. The DA exhibited opportunistic behaviour in pushing for the exclusion of the EFF and MKP from the GNU. In excluding these parties, they eliminate the chances of these parties ever consolidating their power and pushing them out of decision - making. This also means they could get spoils in places they would not have been able to on their own, like the crucial positions in the KZN GPU arrangement. The PR system breeds office-seekers (further exacerbated by racial and ethnic cleavages) because the only prospects a party with two (2) or three (3) seats in parliament has to sell is their votes to the highest bidder. This was noted in Johannesburg, with the Al Jamaah party getting the position of mayor with three (3) seats (Patrick, 2023a; Thorne, 2025) and the ABC party with two (2) seats getting the deputy mayorship in eThekweni (Harper, 2023). Political parties in South Africa have displayed opportunistic and individualistic office-seeking tendencies. Simply put, the coalitions formed transcended even party mandate.

2.6.2 Policy-oriented theory

The theory of policy seeking hinges upon coalition formation and building because of shared policy objectives and ideology among and between political parties – not for office (Kadima, 2014). The collapsing of coalitions in Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg suggests that many political parties in South Africa, that included the largest, second and third largest political parties, were not policy seeking. This is because the coalitions have been formed between the DA and EFF even though there is no policy convergence between the two (Maserumule, 2020). The most recent GNU further enforces that although South Africa is listed among the southern countries with elements of policy orientation, office aspirations often override those of policy.

2.6.3 Knowledge contribution from studying eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

The result of the 2016 LGEs was unexpected in South Africa. Then, the 2021 LGEs shook the very foundation of the ANC and further shifted the political topography as we know it. Producing 66 hung councils was an astounding increase of 39 from the previous elections (Zweni, Koma and Ndevu, 2024). Moreover, this time around the ANC's 'traditional stronghold' of eThekweni was the latest casualty in the 2021 LGE's (Papayya, 2021). This is a clear indication of the uphill battle the ANC would need to face to appease voters and the looming end of an era of ANC dominance (Ndlovu, Twala and Sithole, 2025).

Knowing eThekweni demographics and that it is the largest municipality in KZN province and the third largest in the country (eThekweni Municipality, 2022), it is no surprise that it would have remained uncontested following the watershed 2016 LGEs. Nevertheless, as the last of the ANC strongholds to fall, the eThekweni Municipality's political coalitions are complex and understudied. There is a lacuna of empirical evidence. Therefore, this study aims to contribute empirically based knowledge on political coalition formation, its nexus with service delivery and the influence of coalition governance on public service provision.

2.7 Conclusion

Coalitions have proven to be an unavoidable and deeply entrenched feature in politics across the world. They have been particularly successful in the Global North and in some Global South countries as highlighted in this literature review on the global context of local political coalitions and in turn service delivery. Simultaneously, some countries have found it challenging, such as young democracies like South Africa. The review of literature has brought forth how social cleavages seem to have a lot of bearing in the forming of political coalitions. It emerged that such coalitions have been even more destructive in less mature democracies where they have led to great division. This sometimes leads to clashes as seen in Uganda and Chile. The theories of office-seeking and policy-seeking approaches suggest that office driven political parties ally to maximise power while policy driven parties seek to coalesce with those political parties with whom they have shared ideology and policy goals. These theories however, fail to account for socio-political factors such as ethnicity, race, education, inequality, the self-serving interests of actors and power dynamics to name but a few. In a perfect setting without corruption, there would be policy driven parties who seek to form ideologically matched coalitions and enact policies meant for the betterment of society. However, even those

policy-seeking coalitions may aim to enact policies that favour their own interests and those of the elite few. The next chapter details the research methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is intended to answer the question of how research was carried out, thus “the method may be divided into subsections that deal with research design, participants, techniques and procedures, and ethical considerations” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012, p. 54). In pursuit of the study’s research aim to explore the influence of political coalitions on eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality’s service delivery, the researcher employed a guiding paradigm which leads to its research methodological considerations. Identification of the paradigm is followed by the research design, strategy and data collection methods and tools. The chapter goes on to highlight sampling matters, data quality control and analysis before pointing out ethical considerations.

3.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm is defined as a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Research paradigms in qualitative research can be divided into interpretivism, positivism, realism, and pragmatism (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012). The study was informed by the interpretivism paradigm-philosophy. The philosophical position of interpretivism “is the way we as humans attempt to make sense of the world around us” (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012, p. 142). Qualitative research is interpretative in nature as “researchers need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied” (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012, p. 163). Political coalitions are a real-world phenomenon, with which South Africans are currently faced. This requires involvement of human subjects to better understand their experiences. Towards that end, the researcher investigated the subjective understanding of political coalition formation and the perceived influence on service delivery (Makgale, 2020 citing Tuli, 2010).

3.3 Research design - approach

Research design may be defined as the “method and structure of an investigation chosen by the researcher to conduct data collection and analysis” (Salkind, 2018, p. 262). Research designs at the disposal of researchers are the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches to

design (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). The study adopted the qualitative research approach, which entails studying events within the social and cultural setting in which they occur (Salkind, 2018).

3.4 Research strategy

A research strategy is an outline of how the researcher intends to answer the research questions posed in the study (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). Qualitative research strategies comprise of at least the phenomenology; ethnography; case studies; grounded theory and narrative research strategies (Creswell, 2009). The study undertook the phenomenological research approach, which is “a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants” (Creswell, 2009, p. 30). What made this strategy of enquiry suitable for the study is that the phenomenological approach requires the researcher to undertake the study of lived experiences to better comprehend the experiences of the subjects of research (Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio, 2019; Nieswiadomy, 1993, cited in Creswell, 2009). The researcher wants to study a subject’s lived experiences of the phenomenon of political coalitions which are a real-world issue that is currently being experienced in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, making this research strategy appropriate.

3.5 Data collection and tool selection

The process of data collection involves the gathering and assessment of data and or information from a variety of sources to answer research questions and address problems (Creswell, 2009). It is a fundamental part of research because if the data collected is neither adequate nor accurate, the research findings might not be accurate (Kabir, 2016). Data collection may be divided into primary and secondary data (Kabir, 2016). The study utilised both primary and secondary sources of data to answer its research questions and achieve its research objectives. The researcher first obtained ethical clearance (Appendix E) as further discussed in section 3.9.

3.5.1 Secondary data

Secondary research is readily available data that had been collected for a purpose other than the research being undertaken (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). It may be in the form of journal articles, research papers, government articles and books, to name but a few (Taherdoost, 2021). For the study at hand, the researcher utilised search engines like Google Scholar to obtain the relevant

literature. Using the search engines, the researcher obtained data specific to political coalitions and the relationships between local political coalitions and public service provision. This then led the researcher to various academic publishers like Tyler and Francis; Wiley; Sage; and Sabinet. The study delved into journal articles, research papers, government publications, Statistics South Africa and various other sources to understand the research matter under investigation.

3.5.2 Primary data

Primary research is data whose collection is specifically for the research being conducted (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). Primary data may be collected through interviews, questionnaires, observation, surveys, and other forms (Taherdoost, 2021). Interviews are among the most widely used qualitative data collection methods. Data for the study was collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews in the various municipal offices and/or council chambers as well as on the online Microsoft Teams platform for those who preferred this. This flexibility of venue allowed participants to partake in the study at their convenience. Interviews with participants were conducted in English as it is the medium of instruction. The average interview lasted forty-five (45) minutes. In this study, interviews constituted the primary means of generating empirical data. This enabling the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of individuals operating under coalition governance (Taherdoost, 2021; Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio, 2019; Creswell, 2009).

Data collection tools refer to instruments used to collect data in research (Kabir, 2016). In qualitative research, the following tools can be used to collect data, namely, interviews guides; group discussions/focus groups instruments; observation checklists and survey instruments (Taherdoost, 2021). An in-depth semi-structured interview guide was employed as a data collection tool. However, this was preceded by the participants completing an Informed Consent form (Appendix A). The interview guide is attached as Appendix C. The instrument was administered to political and administrative leadership in eThekwin Municipality. This allowed for, during data analysis, the identification and possible exploration of themes and patterns in the responses provided by the interviewees (DeJonckere and Vaughn, 2019).

3.6 Sampling in research

A sample is “a representative portion of a population” and sampling entails selection of a research population to participate in a study (Salkind, 2018, p. 85, p. 262). Sampling and sampling techniques are crucial in research because a successful research project lies in accurate sampling while suitable sampling techniques produce more precise results (Salkind, 2018).

3.6.1 Sampling strategy and technique

Sampling strategies can be categorised into probability and non-probability (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The study employed a non-probability sampling strategy, a procedure of sample selection in which certain members of the populace have a higher likelihood of selection than others (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). This strategy was adopted because not only is it useful in qualitative research, but also because it is unfeasible to sample the population in its entirety (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015; Makgale, 2020; Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Non-probability sampling was suitable because it supported a purposive sampling strategy that limited the sample to individuals who are knowledgeable on the phenomenon being researched (Gill, 2020; Saunders *et al.*, 2016). This type of strategy prescribes the selection of individuals that have experience or are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being researched (Gill, 2020). This aided in limiting the sample size to participants with “rich, in-depth knowledge” of the phenomenon being studied and obtaining more research accuracy and reliability (Gill, 2020, p. 580). In this case, the phenomenon was political coalitions and public service delivery.

There are various techniques available in qualitative research. Volunteer, purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling can be applied in qualitative studies. Nonetheless, the purposive sampling technique was employed for the study being undertaken (Gill, 2020). Purposive sampling entails restricting study participants to “key knowledge holders in the field of enquiry” (Mthuli, Ruffin and Singh, 2021, p. 14). The study thus purposively sampled political leadership of parties in the coalition, past and present, considering the “dissolution” of the previous coalition between the ANC and ABC (Papayya, 2022; Singh, 2022), as well as eThekweni Metro’s administrative leadership who interact with members of the municipal council.

3.6.2 Sample size

Sample size is the “subset of a population required to ensure that there is a sufficient amount of information to draw conclusions” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010, cited in Memon, *et al.*, 2020, p. 2). Sample size aided in the collection of sufficient and relevant data that was useful in answering the research questions posed in the study (Gill, 2020). In determining sample size for the study at hand, several considerations were made. One is the geographical limitation of the study and other related factors (Mthuli, Ruffin and Singh, 2021).

Thus, using the non-probability sampling technique, purposive sampling of individuals who are knowledgeable and fluent about the matter were interviewed. These characteristics and factors were considered (Gill, 2020; Mthuli, Ruffin and Singh, 2021; Saunders *et al.*, 2016) in selecting eThekweni Metro’s political coalition and administration leadership. Originally the researcher sought to purposively sample four (4) individuals from a political coalition and five (5) from administrative leadership. The plan was to interview two political leaders of a past coalition (ABC and ANC) and two (2) from a current (ANC and EFF) coalition in eThekweni Municipality. Administrative leadership of five (5) units directly involved in street level bureaucracy participated in the study. The administration leaders represented: Community and Emergency Services and Operations; Economic Development, Planning, and Invest Durban; Engineering and Transportation; Human settlements and Trading Services. These departments help drive service delivery in eThekweni Municipality. The researcher had planned to purposively sample nine (9) individuals, however seven (7) participants ended up being sampled. The sample was not determined by data saturation but rather by DEJA (Mthuli, Ruffin and Singh, 2021). Nonetheless even though sample size is predetermined in qualitative research, it is not set in stone, and a sample size may be altered as research advances (Gill, 2020). In this case, rather than four (4) political leaders, two (2) political leaders were interviewed as explained in section 5.5.

3.7 Data quality control: Trustworthiness of qualitative data

The absence of experiments and or statistics in qualitative research means other ways to eliminate bias in research findings must be explored. Data quality control is to determine validity and reliability of quantitative data. For qualitative studies, this is carried out in pursuit of trustworthiness of the qualitative data (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

According to Stahl and King (2020, p. 26) trustworthiness “means that when readers interpret the written work, they will have a sense of confidence in what the researcher has reported”. Trustworthiness is categorised into credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Bezuidenhout, 2014 citing Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study employed credibility and transferability to achieve trustworthiness. Credibility was ascertained by using the strategy of triangulation to check for consistencies in data collected through methods like in-depth semi structured interviews and observation and transferability (Creswell, 2012; du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Bezuidenhout, 2014). Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings can be transferred or can be relatable to similar circumstances with a different group (Anney, 2014 citing Bitsch, 2005 and Tobin and Begley, 2004). Credible and transferable research findings contribute to the advancement of the body of knowledge through accurate and reliable research findings as is the intention of the study. Hence, studies lacking credibility can easily be dismissed as inconsequential.

3.8 Data analysis through thematic analysis

The analysis of data entails the sorting of data collected and grouping it according to themes and patterns, presenting and interpreting it (Creswell, 2013). It is a crucial part of research. Qualitative data analysis can be divided into narrative, thematic, or content analysis (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). The study employed the thematic analysis technique to analyse data.

Thematic analysis is widely used by qualitative researchers. “It involves the identification and reporting of patterns in a data set, which are then interpreted for their inherent meaning” (Naeem *et al.*, 2023, p. 2 citing Braun and Clarke, 2006; Liebenberg *et al.*, 2020; Xu and Zammit, 2020). Following the process of thematic analysis for the study helped the researcher delve into transcribed interview data to identify recurring common patterns and therefore deemed ideal themes, that emerged from the interviews and the secondary data. This was to accordingly answer each of the research questions posed in the study (Rosairo, 2023).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Adherence to ethical considerations is crucial in research. Creswell (2012, p. 234) stresses the need to collect data ethically with consideration of “participants, populations being studied and research sites”. A gatekeeper’s letter which grants permission to use eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality as a study site was obtained from the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) (Appendix B). MILE is the only body authorised to issue gatekeepers’ letters for researchers

hoping to use eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality as a study site. This letter allowed the researcher to apply for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal (Appendix E). On receipt of the ethical clearance (Protocol number : HSSREC/00007974/2024), the researcher could then undertake data collection after permission was sought from the intended research participants who participated voluntarily and made disclosures to that effect. It was also clearly articulated to the research participants that no penalties would result in the event of withdrawal from participation and that they could withdraw at any time. Before any interview would commence, participants were required to sign an informed consent form (Appendix A) which clearly outlined the aim, objectives and goal of the study. The informed consent forms provided a guarantee of anonymity to the participant to ensure that their participation in the study remains confidential and does not prejudice them in any way or form (Creswell, 2012; Sarantakos, 2005). It was reiterated to the participants that all raw data collected during the interviews (recorded or otherwise), including the names of participants, would be safeguarded in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). Names of participants in recordings contained unique identifiers only known to the researcher. The data would then be stored in a locked, password protected computer where access is restricted to the researcher. After five years, the data would be disposed of accordingly. All interviews were conducted where participants felt safe and comfortable and in a place of their choosing. The interview guide is attached as Appendix C.

3.10 Conclusion

In achieving the research aim of exploring the influence of political coalitions on eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality's service delivery in South Africa, the study endeavoured to obtain empirical evidence to answer the research questions through semi-structured interviews. Observation of local practices suggest the re-emergence and intensification of political coalitions in RSA. The literature indicates that some coalitions may hinder public service provision, in RSA and other parts of the world. It was imperative that a study be conducted to determine whether the current service delivery woes in eThekweni can be attributed to political coalitions. This research methodology chapter laid the foundation as to how the study was planned and then executed. This chapter delineated employment of a qualitative research design underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm and guided by a phenomenology strategy. Purposive sampling meant 'deliberately' selecting individuals with knowledge on the subject matter. Data quality control was administered by applying trustworthiness strategies including ensuring credibility and transferability. All research methodology steps assisted in obtaining

credible research that can be transferable. The next chapter will delve into the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four presents the findings of the empirical data amassed in the data collection process. To recap, the empirical data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the political and administrative leadership in the eThekwin Metropolitan Municipality. The study employed the thematic analysis technique to identify patterns and themes in the data collected. These are shown in section 4.2. This chapter then presents the interview responses, interpreting them according to the phenomenology strategy and against the backdrop of the interpretive paradigm whilst applying the literature to the analysis and discussion. Section 4.3.1 focuses on formation of political coalitions. Section 4.3.2 highlights political and administrative leadership perceptions of the local political coalition and public service delivery nexus. Then, section 4.3.3 presents and analyses data in relation to the influence of local political coalition governance on public service provision. In other words, Chapter Four is where the study demonstrates realisation of its aim and achieves the research objectives and answers to the research questions – thereby addressing the research problem presented in Chapter One.

4.2 Thematic overview of the findings

There were several themes that emerged during data analysis. These are listed in the second column of Table 4.1. The first column presents the research objectives which are juxtaposed against the themes in the second column.

Table 4.1: Research objectives and themes

Research objectives	Themes
1. Determine intentions of political and administrative leadership (short and/or long-term) underlying eThekwin Metropolitan Municipality political coalition formation.	• Power and support • Individualistic office preservation
2. Discover the views of political and administrative leadership on the factors that determine political coalitions as well as the coalition governance and local service delivery nexus in eThekwin Metropolitan Municipality, if any.	• Personality traits • Power interplay dynamics • Media and public opinion

3. Explore the influence of the political coalitions on local service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, if any.	• Political ideology decision-making • Apolitical administration and political influence
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Source: Author, 2025

Data presentation, analysis and discussion come next.

4.3 Data presentation, analysis, and discussion

As earlier indicated, the upcoming three sections address each of the research objectives.

4.3.1 Short and/or long-term intentions of political coalition formation in eThekweni Municipality

Political coalitions have been a growing phenomenon globally (Bogopa, Mofokeng and Ramolobe and 2024). While firmly rooted in Western Europe (Masipa, 2016) Hanabe and Malinzi, (2019) point out that several countries on the African continent have not escaped the coalition ‘experience’ and South Africa is among those countries. The type of electoral system in place in South Africa, the multiparty system, is a favourable setting for political coalition formation (Booyesen, 2014, Mokgopo, 2017; Pietersen, 2021). Because of the prolonged domination of the ANC spanning across thirty (30) years, this has not always been the case. Recently multipartyism is the reality that encourages the forming of coalitions (Booyesen, 2014, Mokgopo, 2017; Ndlovu, Twala and Sithole, 2025; Pietersen, 2021). eThekweni Municipality may have narrowly missed being a hung municipal council in 2016 LGEs but did not escape unscathed in the 2021 LGEs (IEC, 2025). At inception, the eThekweni coalition in 2021 was plagued by disagreements, political parties often staging walkouts to prevent council from making decisions, because no quorum equals no decision-making (eThekweni Municipality, 2022). In trying to ascertain, the short and/or long-term intentions behind the formation of political coalitions in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, the following themes emerged, namely, power and retention and individualistic office-seeking.

- ***Power and support***

The theme of power (acquisition) and support for the purposes of this study, relates to the grapple to hold on to power. This may occur under one of two scenarios. Either the political party has long been in power and expects to retain their position. Or it may reference those power-seekers who have been bolstered by the political fragmentation driven by fluctuating –

declining electoral support for the ANC, hoping for a share of the spoils. An interviewee indicated that:

“The ANC support has been dwindling, for them to keep the ‘majority’, they had to have people who were like-minded to keep that upper hand but as time goes on, you are getting coalitions with opposition in them, so the opposition is keeping you on your toes. The bigger parties, when their support is dwindling, they bring in others to bolster them. If you don’t give the smaller parties what they want, for instance as we saw with the ABC, those coalitions break up at the end of the day. They say, I’m supporting you, so what are you giving me in return?” (Interviewee 1- Gov).

Furthermore, another stated that:

“The intention is to have a municipal government - parties do not have the numbers to govern on their own – that is the primary reason for forming these coalitions” (Interviewee 2- Gov).

While another indicated that:

“...long-term and short-term intention is to still be in power. Those that were in power, being the ANC, wanted to still be in power. Because they did not have the majority, so they spoke to the smaller parties so they can still be in power. So, the intention was to always be in control. The smaller parties have become part of coalitions because they want to taste the power – in as much as in terms of the numbers they are farfetched from being in power. But having been approached by the ANC, they want to also taste power and see and taste how it feels. It is more around power; a little bit linked with trying to make sure service delivery is ongoing” (Interviewee 4- Gov).

And that:

‘The reason is not being able to get a majority. Without numbers, a government cannot be formed, it can’t be escaped” (Interviewee 5- Pol).

And also, that:

“Coalitions are a reality that was imposed on political parties by how people voted. The ANC would not have been able to govern without support from the minority parties”
(Interviewee 7- Gov).

The study’s findings, therefore, indicate that political parties, when they have failed to win the elections outright, opt for coalitions to acquire and retain power, rather than risk waiting for another election. This alludes to the lengths political parties will go to, to gain power, hinting to the office-seeking nature of political parties which aligns with the argument by Kadima, (2014) and Mngomezulu and Phetha (2025). The lack of an opposing party strong enough to topple a party that has for a long time thrived in a dominant party system (Brooks, 2004), gaining enough votes to constitute a majority, means that the only way the smaller parties can gain access to power, is through coalescing. If political parties are not office-seeking, then they would respect the assertions of the electorate, by not coalescing with political parties they have obviously tried to remove from power (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019). Thus, long dominant political parties such as the ANC are a casualty of retrospective voting (Plescia and Kritzing, 2022).

- ***Individualistic office preservation***

Individualistic office-seeking, for the purposes of this study, refers to the office-seeking nature of individuals (politicians) within political parties. This means in their individual capacities and in the absence of sufficient votes for their respective parties to govern alone, opting to form or join coalitions to access positions. This can also be in the party not choosing the candidate as a ward, municipal or provincial candidate, the candidate defecting and choosing rather to run for elections independently (VOA, 2024). Therefore, although political parties are naturally office-seeking, individuals within political parties cannot be excluded from that too. The theory of office-seeking infers that, in the absence of majority votes, the reason political parties form coalitions is to have access to power (Kadima, 2014, p. 5). Hence the researcher posits that individual members of political parties cannot be excluded from being office-seeking. This is supported by literature in section 2.6.1.1.

An interviewee had the following to say on individualistic office preservation:

“Everyone was working to outshine the other, which created tension. ...instead of playing a role as Deputy Mayor, - one saw himself as the mayor, ...wanting to be more relevant

out there and furthering one's political career at the expense of service delivery"
(Interviewee 2- Gov).

And another that:

"The then president of the ABC refused to be part of a collective. He wanted to have his own programmes outside of the others including everybody else. He abused the platform"
(Interviewee 3- Pol).

And that:

"The challenges most of the time are caused by the party interests and on the other side, personal interests. There are cases where programmes were not running because officials have personal interests. A situation where an official wants one company favoured over another in a tender. Manipulation of supply chain and tender processes. Service delivery within officials, sometimes it is politically influenced" **(Interviewee 5- Pol).**

The study's findings therefore allude to the fact that it need not necessarily be political parties who are office-seeking, but individual political actors may also have personal ambitions that an alliance or coalition can propel them to or help them to achieve. Kadima (2014) suggests the promise of monetary benefits and scarcity of employment prospects outside of government as impetus for seeking office and by default, advocating for the forming of coalitions. Political and administrative leadership alike agreed on this matter of the 'individualistic' nature of office seeking. Office-seeking can also be opportunistic.

Corruption Watch in 2024 reported a spike in political assassinations leading up to election seasons (Corruption Watch, 2024). SALGA mentions several reasons for politically motivated killings, citing intraparty conflict over positions as one of the motivators with some individuals seeing these political positions "as means of accessing and exploiting resources for their own selfish interest" (SALGA, 2019, p. 28). The spate of assassinations leading up to 2016 LGE's in KwaZulu Natal and Professor Bhekithemba Mngomezulu's utterances that the killings are resultant from people's entitlement to positions as they see them as professions (Desai, 2016) cements the assertion that political actors within parties do have personal ambitions outside of party interests.

4.3.2 Political and administrative leadership perceptions of factors that determine the local political coalition and service delivery nexus in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

The intention of this second objective was to explore the views of the political and administrative leaders on not just the factors that determine the local political coalition, but also the nexus between the coalition and local public service delivery. The study does not interrogate coalition formation and service delivery determinants separately but rather it examines how local political coalitions shape service delivery processes. In establishing these views of participants, certain themes emerged. These are power interplay dynamics (within coalitions) and personality traits (ego and personality clashes).

Political coalitions, whether national, provincial, or local, occur when there has not been a single party who has received the required threshold of votes to govern alone (Khumalo and Netswera, 2022; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017). In this context, they were compelled by hung councils, including the locale of the study's focus, eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The most fundamental factor is that, since none of the political parties have received the required 50% plus votes, a coalition must be formed or new elections will be triggered (Beukes and De Visser, 2021). That, however, is not the only factor determining the local political coalition. The themes that emerged are elaborated on below.

- ***Power interplay dynamics***

Power interplay dynamics, for the purpose of this study, speaks to the power play that various political parties engage in as they endeavour to retain or gain political power – government authority. Losing eThekweni Municipality was a strong blow to the ANC but an opportunity for the official opposition and other small parties. Bogopa, Mofokeng and Ramolobe (2024) cite power dynamics as one of the pitfalls in coalitions but also cite transparency and accountability as advantages, as these add the necessary checks and balances. Thus, an interviewee in relation to the theme of power interplay dynamics stated that:

There were times where there were conflicting messages when Mavundla - Deputy Mayor would speak contrary to what the mayor has spoken. It was deliberate on his part – he launched a new party and wanted to use his position as deputy mayor to grow his support base. Trying to smuggle policies of his party and uttered things prior to discussion with

other coalition partners on a public platform. He was conflicted because he was desperate to grow his support base and was using the city to grow - elevate” **(Interviewee 3- Pol).**

Another interviewee also expressing that:

“The challenges most of the time are caused by the party interests and on the other side, personal interests. There are cases where programmes were not running because officials have personal interests. A situation where an official wants one company favoured over another in a tender. Manipulation of supply chain and tender processes. Service delivery within officials, which is sometimes politically influenced” **(Interviewee 5- Pol).**

And another interviewee stated the following about a (portfolio) committee in Council:

“This decision-making committee has a mixture of political parties but because of the “concessions” of the coalition, the Democratic Alliance now chair it. There are certain decisions that cannot be taken because the DA chair has or holds a different view from the ANC, and it conflicts with the main vision of council because this committee is being chaired by the DA, but the main council is being driven by the ANC, so you have these conflicting views when you are supporting this committee” **(Interviewee 4- Gov).**

The findings indicate that there has been use of power whether political or administrative for access and personal gain. They also allude to the ‘kingmaker’ hoping to ascend to the throne by usurping power. It has been hinted on several occasions on both the side of the administration and politicians that the destabilisation of the relations between partners was ensuant to power struggles within the coalition, with the kingmaker ‘fancying’ themselves as king. Looman, van Woezik, van Asselt, Scherpbier-de Haan, Fluit and de Graaf (2021, p. 445) define power dynamics as “the way in which power impacts the interaction of two or more people or groups”.

The study has touched on the political landscape constantly evolving. With these changes, comes developments in the power dynamics in political terrain. There has been a dominant party for over thirty (30) years in South Africa. However, consider the ANC and New National Party (NNP) coalitions in the Western Cape between 2000 and 2009 as an instance of power

sharing. (Booyesen, 2018; Habib and Nadvi, 2002; Jolobe, 2018; Seekings, 2006). While this shows that power sharing arrangements have always been a part of provincial and local government, for a prolonged period, everything revolved around one party's move. From determining policies to implementing them unchallenged because of their majority, the dominant domain was clear. Now the current environment finds that no party has the unilateral absolute power to enact policies or take any other decisions that require a majority. There must be a lot of bargaining and battering amongst political parties. SA has entered a new advent that has shifted power towards minority parties who understand that they wield tremendous power over those dominant parties who want to gain or retain power. Coalitions that have been formed in local municipal elections have been minority coalitions that have relied heavily on support from opposition (Jolobe, 2018). Those coalitions have made government unstable as should any one party pull out of that arrangement, the entire coalition collapses or is rendered useless in the face of decisions that hinge on majority support in Council. Parties have displayed that given enough incentive, they can swing at any time with little regard for how that could affect the public. The Nelson Mandela Bay coalition in 2016 between DA and EFF is a perfect example (Maneng, 2022). eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality is no exception as the initial coalition inclusive of the ABC demonstrated how smaller parties with as little as two seats could leverage power in a hung local council. It speaks to how power dynamics can shift party dominance to government fragility.

- ***Personality traits***

Personality traits equating to ego and personality clashes, for the purpose of this study relates to the stimulus or cause for conflict and deterioration of relations among coalition partners. Political coalitions require collaborating with different political parties to share power and decision-making in government (Beukes and De Visser, 2021). In essence a group of individuals with differing ideals, views and party mandates does not make the setting conducive. It is the expectation however, that public service delivery should always take precedence over personal squabbles and egos. An interviewee had this to say on the causes of disintegration of relations between the then prominent political coalition at its inception in eThekweni:

“...an issue of personalities, the relationship was not genuine, and it had no public interest at heart. Everyone was working to outshine the other, which created tension. ...”
(Interviewee 2- Gov).

With another saying the cause for the breakdown of relations was *“Individuals. Personality clashes that spilled into the municipality (government)”* **(Interviewee 1- Gov).**

And another interviewee expressed that:

There has never been a problem in terms of the coalition and how it was run. When he was removed, he was not defended by anyone. He was easily removed because he was not good for council. He is a populist and was not serving the interests of the people but his own” **(Interviewee 3- Pol).**

While another interviewee adding that:

“...a matter of egos and a matter of power, wanting to be in power, everyone wanting to be the one who is driving certain projects. Especially the infrastructure projects, that’s the one thing that made it fail – the coalition, ...it was more related to power than anything else and egos of course. If there were no ego clashes at that time, it would have worked out. Everyone wanting to be responsible for the infrastructure projects - water, electricity etc. The two elephants were fighting for power and unfortunately the grass suffered. Service delivery would have suffered when there is jostling of power between those who are in leadership in council” **(Interviewee 4- Gov).**

An interviewee had the following advice for the various political parties: *“It is time political parties came to their senses and realise that no one will rule alone. This new terrain of politics, this new environment, means no one can govern alone nor exercise political dominance over other parties”* **(Interviewee 7- Gov).**

The findings of the study within the cases examined therefore suggest that egos and personalities can sometimes get in the way of political coalition governance and the overall public service delivery mandate. Pholoma *et al.* (2024) citing Sithanen (2003) support the assertion that coalitions are made more susceptible to instability by personality clashes.

Public service delivery is one of the cardinal pillars of effective governance, with Diala and Okeng (2024, p. 3) contending that service delivery is a social contract between the elected officials (government) and those who voted for them (electorate). The assertion by Diala and Okeng (2024) then suggests that not providing efficient basic services to the citizens, as obligated by the Constitution, the government is in violation of the social contract. South Africa has been experiencing a surge in violent service delivery protests, evidencing the dissatisfaction of communities with government (Botes, 2018; Mamokhere and Kgobe, 2023). The eThekweni Metro has also been among municipalities with growing protests by discontented residents, with the most recent protest taking place in May 2025 (Dawood, 2025). The main plight of residents was the absence of value for money in services offered by eThekweni despite rapid hikes in charges (Dawood, 2025).

- ***Media and public opinion***

Media and public opinion, for the purposes of this study, speaks to the various media channels responsible for the propagation of information to the public. This also entails how the information they disseminate plays a role in shaping the views of the communities at large. Happer and Philo (2013) state that the media, print (newspapers) or otherwise, is pivotal in communicating current events and goings-on in society and thus influencing perception. In cases where the public's knowledge on a subject is scant, they depend on the media for information. That is why when political actors need the support of the community, they themselves go to the media.

An interviewee had the following to say:

“The media and public elevated Mavundla to a position he was not in ” (Interviewee 3- Pol).

And another that:

“It was never, ANC and ABC or ANC and Mavundla in the coalition. There were only 2 Cllrs under the ABC. He was the most experienced hence his nomination smaller parties” (Interviewee 5- Pol).

The perception had always been that the coalition was between the ABC and ANC and that was largely because of what has been presented by the media (See: Polity, 2022). Hinting to how instrumental the media is in shaping public perceptions.

“The leader of the ABC was removed because he became a law unto himself. Despite being nominated by the smaller bloc of parties to represent them in Council, he made decisions alone and did not even seek approval or an audience with them” (Interviewee 5- Pol).

Another interviewee cited the following as some of the challenges encountered in the endeavour to deliver public services in the eThekweni Municipality coalition:

“The politicisation of service delivery by the various parties. Even the public will look at service delivery along party colour lines. Everyone wants to be seen that they are the ones who brought service delivery to the people. If it goes wrong, everyone is quick to distance themselves from the wrong and point fingers at each other, with unity being for convenience’s sake” (Interviewee 2- Gov).

The findings of the study therefore suggest that the media has a crucial role to play in the dissemination of information and shaping of public opinion. Thus, the media should take care to report as accurately as possible to avoid misleading the public or misrepresenting information. Several interviewees in administrative and political leadership suggested a member of the coalition was problematic but, in the media, he was portrayed as a victim and a sacrificial lamb, removed to hide the inefficiencies of the ANC-led coalition (Singh, 2022). This could be a picture he possibly painted deliberately. Muringa and Adjin-Tettey (2024, pp. 1-2) refer to the media as a tool used by capitalists to “reinforce” capitalistic and patriarchal “power structures” through shaping public perception. Further stating that media narrative during the 2017 ANC presidential elective conference, undermined Dr Nkosazana Zuma’s candidacy while her counterpart, Cyril Ramaphosa was glorified. His economic policies were touted while hers, calling for radical economic transformation, were slammed. What all the above reveals is that the media can create an image, fake or real, for public consumption, bringing an image to life or decimating it, that can have detrimental effects. The study now turns to the third and final objective.

4.3.3 The influence of local political coalitions on service delivery in eThekweni Municipality

The third objective of the study was to establish the local political coalition’s influence on service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, if any. If so, the question becomes whether they hinder or improve service delivery in the Municipality. In doing so the following

themes emerged, namely, political ideology decision-making and apolitical administration and political influence.

The 2016 and 2021 LGEs to recap, gave birth to a new normal in the local government space with the increased intensity of political coalitions (Beukes and De Visser, 2021; Hanabe and Malindzi, 2019; Mokgosi, Shai and Ogunnubi, 2017; Pietersen, 2021). Although the eThekweni Metro has been governed through a single political party since the early 2000's (IEC, 2025a), it was indeed amongst the many municipalities that 'fell victim' to the absence of any political party gaining the required votes to govern alone in 2021, making political coalitions inevitable. Due to the nature of local government decision making structures, governing through a political coalition means that decision-making in municipal councils must be shared amongst various political parties instead of the 'usual' single party.

- ***Political ideology decision-making***

The first theme that emerged from this section relates to the ideological standpoint of political parties, their individual party aspirations and how decision-making is navigated in that space. The English proverb 'birds of a feather, flock together' when decoded relates to like-minded people sticking with each-other. The same is understood with political parties with ideological similarities (Wurthmann and Krauss, 2024). It is expected that, the closer the ideology of political parties, the more likely they are to stick together. However, as revealed in Christiansen (2021) as well as in Christiansen and Pederson (2014), political parties remain political rivals with different ambitions regardless of a similarity in ideology. That has often been a stumbling block in most coalitions as observed in many of the metros under coalition government in South Africa (Hanabe and Malinzi, 2019; Maserumule, 2020; Pietersen, 2021). eThekweni Municipality has not been immune to such stumbling blocks. There might be unity as long as decisions 'benefit' each party. Simultaneously, in the same breath, once political parties are forced to deviate from their party aspirations, there will be a rift in the relationship with fellow coalition partners. Political parties in the eThekweni coalition have differing policy positions and party mandates. At times, decision-making in council on matters of service provision is politicised, with political parties trying to advance policies of their own political parties. This makes it difficult to reach any consensus among parties with mismatched ideology.

An interviewee mentioned that:

“Coalitions are good and bad, from a service delivery point of view. The decision-making processes are impacted by political infighting and individual party politics. Different parties are needed in reaching a decision. Where there is decision making, decision making is delayed and by extension, service delivery also gets delayed. If it is a coalition of like-minded political parties, is it not as bad as cases where ideologies differ”
(Interviewee 2- Gov).

The interviewee stressed the importance of shared standpoints (ideology) in coalitions, indicating that the ideal situation is not to have a coalition as it makes for fragile government. He also mentioned that within administrative clusters that:

“The main part is in approval of municipal budgets as well as the approval of policies that are taken into council to enable city administration to do what they need to do as per their mandate/s. In the previous coalition (the initial coalition), it was almost difficult to approve budgets on time, which then affected procurement planning. When procurement planning gets affected, it means you cannot spend money on time”
(Interviewee 2- Gov).

Repercussions of not spending budgets on time, particularly government infrastructure grants meant to address service delivery backlogs, amount to revocation of funding. This then leads to delayed or unfulfilled crucial service delivery projects. (Parliament of South Africa, 2021).

Another interviewee indicated that:

“Coalitions delay service delivery in the sense that it's not easy to take decisions because you have to convince and consult various political parties so it can't be that , the direction of the municipality or the provision of service would be. Like, just move swiftly and fast because of those consultations and convincing that would have to be done on the various political parties. So, I think the perceived view would be that it delays service delivery and does injustice to service delivery. Many a times you'd find that actually, coalitions come up with problems because of the conflicting views, conflicting policies and the conflicting directions of the political parties, so that would be the perceived view”
(Interviewee 4- Gov).

Furthermore, the interviewee stated that:

“With the coalition you have what you call uncertainty. You cannot be sure that the budget that is presented now is going to be approved in May because there has to be some bidding here and there. You cannot put processes and policies and strategies in place that are aligned to a specific goal because you have all these people that you need to satisfy. The one advantage of a single party is certainty, and in our environment, certainty is very important because we work with timeframes, we work with budgets and those things need certainty so that we know that we are moving towards a certain direction. As project managers we are supposed to manage projects that provide service delivery. Once you are in the middle of a project, you are told that you must go in this direction (another direction) then the next month you get a council resolution saying something totally different, because it must please another coalition partner; it has to satisfy their needs, so it brings those kinds of problems” (Interviewee 4- Gov).

From the above statements, this much it can be deduced that the conflicting views can emanate from the differing ideologies of political parties thus Council decisions can sometimes also hinge on political parties’ ideological standpoint and policy positions on which projects must be prioritised.

While another interviewee stated that:

“Political parties would never fully agree on anything in as long as they are not from the same parties”, but interviewee also stressing that: “Every political party runs (for elections) hoping to come out victorious and each with its own policies, manifestos, philosophies and that it is imperative to look for common areas where you can cooperate” (Interviewee 7- Gov).

The findings of the study thus corroborate Kadima’s (2006) contention about African political parties’ forming of coalitions does not hinge on ideology. That, however, does not mean that forming ideologically divergent coalitions does not have negative connotations for decision making and by extension, public service delivery (Bogopa, Mofokeng and Ramolobe, 2024). Patterns of a shift from public service delivery to political ‘rivalry’ amongst political parties in coalitions tasked with the decision-making necessary to achieve the objects of local government, have been identified in the study.

It was uncovered during the interviews that the existence of the butting of heads ensues, despite councillors being in a 'coalition'. It brings forth how, while they are partners, their conflicting views can halt crucial decision making from progressing, meaning service delivery will be influenced. That means council budgets and policies cannot be passed or as in the case of eThekweni when the ABC and ANC were at loggerheads, a city manager could not be appointed (Singh, 2022). City managers are responsible for the implementation of council policies (De Visser, 2001) and the sustainable provision of public services to local communities (eThekweni Municipality, 2025). Interviewees expressed that decision making in council on matters of service provision is politicised, with political parties trying to benefit their parties. This manifests in parties trying to steer certain service delivery initiatives towards their own respective constituents, which causes disagreements. The act is equal to political patronage (Mabizela, 2024).

The administrative leadership, when asked to elaborate on the ease of access to tools and the necessary instruments to be able to effectively deliver public services in the varied municipal units under the current coalition government, as opposed to the past 'initial coalition', an interviewee stated that:

"Politicians are no different, whether independent or affiliated to a party. You cannot compare, factors that are external (that cannot be controlled) for instance, we had a road network plan in the works, as we were delivering that, the floods came and washed away the roads where we never assumed we would spend money, now you have to divert all you spending to fix something that is not the council's business but is an act of God. Where you had a transport problem, it is going sit to for another 20 years because you are doing remedial work instead of improving the network. I do not think any political party is any good anyway. Service delivery in an apolitical thing, it must be understood that at committee level or council level, that we are here for everybody" **(Interviewee 1-Gov).**

The above utterances can be interpreted to say, while not a 'fail-safe' plan, not all service delivery issues can be attributed to the current eThekweni coalition. Some of the problems stem from 'acts of God', while some, are an inheritance from the previous single party administration.

Conversely, there are also instances where there is consensus among coalition partners, with one of the interviewees mentioning that:

“Based on the service we render, there is little that is being experienced in terms of the effect of political coalitions. The mandate does not change with the changes in political coalitions. When needs are identified, if there are to be approvals for whatever tools that are needed to deliver emergency services, either administrative or to go the council route, when reports are submitted to council for approval” (Interviewee 6- Gov).

- ***Apolitical administration and political influence***

Apolitical administration and political influence relate to a non-partisan, free from party ideological bias approach to governance, as well as party interests vis-à-vis service delivery. For the purposes of this study, this concerns the significant role party interests and ideological standpoints play in influencing public service delivery. Particularly, the use of public service delivery as a tool by political parties in governing coalitions, to either retain power or gain favour with constituents.

An interviewee who is part of the administrative leadership expressed that:

“As a department or branch, what we find is that each party would want their party to benefit, it invariably goes back to party political lines. When you are doing service delivery, it transcends space and people, irrespective of what you believe in. We must see service delivery from an apolitical perspective. When we do service delivery, it is for the people but what we find is, when we have a plan and when it goes for approval, that is where the ‘tug of war’ happens – that the implementation will favour a particular ward or particular region because whoever’s political affiliation has got the flavour of the day in council will then determine whether your project will be successful or the budgets will be allocated appropriately” (Interviewee 1- Gov).

From the utterances of the interviewee on his experience within a service department, it is evident political parties wanted to steer service delivery towards their own constituents rather than all communities regardless of political affiliation. It must be stressed that while politicians each belong to their own different political parties with differing party mandates, they must always strive to be apolitical when it comes to public service provision and which communities, benefit.

The interviewee also stressed that as public servants, when they provide a service, they do not provide it according to what political party with which the community is affiliated. Rather, the municipality provides services based on need. He lamented that political parties want to provide services according to “*Party political lines*”.

The interviewee further stated that:

“It is unfortunate that at a council level, although it is a political formation of sorts, they don’t see it for the good of the people, but along party political lines. Sometimes the councillors vote in favour of certain things. If they don’t reach consensus, they do show of hands and who ever shows the most hands wins the vote, regardless of how the people are affected” (Interviewee 1- Gov).

Another interviewee hinted on the existence of a political divide, stating that:

“There are fractions on the ground. Councillors operate in the space where they want to earn glory for their constituencies. There is also political interference on the administrative space because councillors want to dictate how the bureaucrats must conduct their activities. Where parties are meant to provide service delivery, they fight party issues, even in council” (Interviewee 7- Gov).

When probed on the strategies that political parties can apply in coalition partnerships to improve public service provision in eThekweni an interviewee stated that:

“To have public interests as opposed to party political interests, means if you put the needs of the community first, you cannot disagree on the delivery of public services because the common goal is to improve the lives of the people out there. The strategy that must be adopted is that when it comes to service delivery, politics must be put aside and to have the public’s interest at heart so that improvements can be seen. But the ideal situation is not to have a coalition, it makes governance fragile, it is not ideal, however once there, we need to work around it. While another strategy would be to bring together coalitions of likeminded partners when forming the coalitions. Notwithstanding the fact that, it is a game of numbers, the same ideology may exist, but if the numbers are against this, it makes it difficult because numbers lead to more power in decision making” (Interviewee 2- Gov).

From the side of the political leadership, the following sentiments emerge from what was expressed, and the first interviewee indicated that:

“The coalition in eThekweni has assisted in speeding up service delivery and is also effective in council committees in playing a political oversight role. In the coalition, there has been much improvement on a number of areas. For instance, water and sanitation, the gaps in water and sanitation have been well managed in the City, follow up from recommendation from Auditor General of South Africa and the internal Audit. The coalition has worked effectively and there has been an improvement in the delivery of services. The second is seriousness from the code of both councillor and party in doing their work. Council is expected to lead agendas, conduct research so that they make meaningful contributions to meetings. There is competition between political parties, effective councillors who take work seriously; officials who take their work seriously hence through work of coalition they have improved” (Interviewee 3- Pol).

Another interviewee who is currently in council (also in political leadership) expressed that:

“The negative in the local coalition is that, if coalition partners do not get joy with you, they can always get into bed with other political parties. The positive is that, as the smaller parties, we can also persuade other parties to vote with us... the former ruling party has the tendency of not consulting with the coalition parties hence they make decisions and hope the partners will go along with it” (Interviewee 5- Pol).

While another interviewee expressed that:

“The initial 2021 coalition, because it was our first time under a coalition, was quite a shocker. In as much as one small party drove it mostly, it was more complicated in the sense that, the demands that came from that political party were a little too much. It came with a lot of demands, more wanting to be in actual power than being in coalition. Then you had the big parties that believed because they have the biggest number of seats, in as much as they are not constituting the majority in eThekweni, that they had to be the ones who were in control” (Interviewee 4- Gov).

The study's findings indicate that there have been instances where party interests have been put above service delivery. They also allude to the then incumbent employing 'bullying tactics' to the other parties because they have been in the business of governing longer. This can be further supported by the utterances of Thwala and Vilakazi (2024, p. 20) that after the monumental 2016 and 2021 LGE's, larger parties assumed the "big brother attitude" in coalitions, leading to government instability in Municipalities of Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Bay.

Beukes and De Visser (2021, p. 7) define a coalition agreement as a 'contract-like' document that outlines general rules of conduct by coalition partners; how cabinet positions are to be distributed; means of dispute resolution and allocation of positions, amongst other things. The absence of a formal coalition agreement opens opportunity for clashes as there is no formal document detailing how decision-making is manoeuvred nor which policies take precedence. In the case of eThekweni, when political leadership was questioned on the existence of a coalition agreement, they denied there being any formal coalition agreement document available with one expressing that:

"...basis of coalition were not formally formulated but decided to proceed with the coalition and try and shape them toward the direction" **(Interviewee 5- Pol).**

The absence of a coalition agreement allows political parties to 'agree' when it suits them as observed in the case of Tshwane where the EFF were voting partners with the DA but had no formal coalition agreement in place (Maserumule, 2020). The absence of a formal coalition agreement in eThekweni, substituting it rather with 'voting partners/blocs' creates an environment where bigger parties cannot be held accountable for deviating from an agreement and 'chopping and changing' whenever it suits.

Finally, another key issue raised in the interviews was councillors having decision-making power in subject matters about which they had limited knowledge. Councillors should hold knowledge about matters for which they are responsible to prevent cases of partisan decision-making regarding service delivery, for example. One should at least have sufficient knowledge to understand the repercussions of one's decisions.

4.4 Empirical contribution of the study

In accomplishing the objectives of this study, several matters have been established. The study established that squabbles, brought about by the different personality traits of individuals within the institution of coalitions are one of the barriers to reaching consensus in decision-making and by extension, service delivery. Coalitions, by design, are a power sharing tool to ensure government continuity in the case no party has obtained the requisite support of the electorate to constitute a majority. That then means, power must be shared for government to fulfil its mandate. If those entrusted with the power misuse it, it can be detrimental to service delivery. This may be observed in gridlock, preventing decision-making because of differing views. One interviewee stated:

“There are certain decisions that cannot be taken because the DA chair has or holds a different view from the ANC, and it conflicts with the main vision of council because this committee is being chaired by the DA, but the main council is being driven by the ANC, so you have these conflicting views when you are supporting this committee” (Interviewee 4- Gov)

The study also uncovered that political parties lack the know-how of coalition management. The electoral system of proportional representation has created more social dissolution than cohesion by perpetuating the level of political fragmentation being experienced. If all South Africans from the different social, demographic, region and ethnic groups can decide to form political parties according to cleavage, the rainbow nation’s problems would multiply.

The study also made an extension to the existing office-seeking theory that helps explain and understand coalition formation. The extension includes two elements: individualistic office-seeking and opportunistic office-seeking theories. Individualistic office-seeking suggest that political actors form coalitions in the name of the party but for individual benefit. Opportunistic office-seeking suggests that political party will avail itself of opportunities to exploit and maximise the office payouts.

4.5 Conclusion

The aim of Chapter Four was to provide an analytical and critical discussion of findings of the study. To do so, the primary data collected during the semi-structured interviews conducted with political and administrative leadership of eThekweni Municipality were analysed and

discussed. Secondary data, namely the literature from Chapter Two was juxtaposed against the empirical evidence. The study found that, apart from the electoral system in place in South Africa which encourages coalition, the flexibility of the electoral threshold in relation to how many votes equate to a seat in council needs to be re-visited. It is not disputed that coalitions aim to not only ensure government continuity in the case of a hung council but must also foster inclusivity from all groups within the rainbow nation. However, granting a party with one or two seats in council the power to make or break a coalition is detrimental to stability. The power they normally wield is disproportionate with their vote share. The presence of minority parties with one or two seats, especially in a setting where each party seeks to maximise their own benefits from the coalition has yielded conflict which has on more than one instance interrupted decision-making. The bigger parties also, particularly those that have been in government longer, can tend to apply bullying tactics to those smaller parties, highlighting the power dynamics. What stands out the most is that political parties do not prioritise service delivery, but what they can benefit either individually or for their party. The next chapter will provide conclusions to the study as well as recommendations on how findings of the study can be applied which would help remedy the research problem.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presents the conclusions and recommendations aligned to each research objective and in accordance with the findings outlined in chapter four. To recap, the study aimed to explore the influence of political coalitions on eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality's service delivery (in South Africa). The findings reveal that, amongst other things, political actors treat political coalition formation and governance as tools for maximising power and career advancement. There is more of a focus on "what it is in it for me?" or "for my party?" than a focus on "what is in it for the local communities?" The personality and ego clashes that occur precipitate coalition breakdown, halts crucial decision-making from continuing and impedes service delivery.

The chapter also serves as a submission of recommendations to address the pitfalls of political coalitions identified during the analysis of the research findings. This chapter likewise provides recommendations to aid improvement of political coalition governance, thereby minimising negative implications to service delivery.

Not unlike the layout in Chapter Four, this chapter is organised by research objectives followed by contributions from the study as well as its limitation. The conclusion of this chapter brings this study to a close.

5.2 Conclusions:

5.2.1 Short and long terms intentions for the formation of party coalitions in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

The purpose of this objective was to determine the intentions – short and long-term, for the formation of party coalitions in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. Indridason (2011) and Wurthmann and Krauss (2024) speak of ideological proximity being important in considering which coalitions to form. In contrast, Kadima (2014) and Kadima and Owour (2014) maintain that in African politics ideology is not a deciding factor on which coalitions are formed. It

might be a motivator (stimulus) but certainly not a deciding factor. It has been shown that ideological disparities can be overlooked in coalition formation in South Africa (Sebola and Tsheola, 2024), thereby hinting to power acquisition and/or maximisation being the main factor. The Democratic Alliance and the ANC do not agree on the Employment Equity Act's (EEA) affirmative action, which allows for the prioritisation of previously disadvantaged groups for employment opportunities in the country. The DA terms it an imposition of "race quotas" (ANC Parliamentary Caucus, 2025; SABC News; 2025). That is just one of the areas in which they are misaligned. Yet, a grand coalition, driven by these two (2) parties is leading national government (Sebola and Tsheola, 2024). The ANC and DA are also part of the provincial coalition government in KwaZulu-Natal together with the IFP and National Freedom Party (NFP) (Goba, 2025). The study also found undercurrents/nuances of individualistic and opportunistic office-seeking in South African political coalitions, including in the study's focus area, eThekweni Municipality.

5.2.2 The views of political and administrative leadership on factors that determine the local political coalition and local service delivery nexus in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

The intention of the second objective was to explore the views of political and administrative leadership on the factors that determine the nexus between local political coalitions and service delivery provision. The themes that emerged on the findings under this objective are power interplay dynamics and personality traits. The local political coalition is determined by the power dynamics, often power imbalances brought about by the system of proportional representation (Chigova and Hofisi, 2023) and the allocation of seats to political parties with insignificant support from the electorate. Placing a political party with one or two seats in the position for them to negotiate themselves into positions of power (often through kingmaker status). This negotiation could allow such a party to gain a mayoral position. Such a party, as a coalition member could use their power to destabilize government by withdrawing support suddenly. The destabilisation of government can set off a chain reaction which can result in crucial decision-making being halted - for instance, budgets may not be passed and service delivery being impeded. The dysfunctionality experienced by the cities of Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg and Tshwane as a result of political infighting within coalitions exposes the connection between the local political coalition and the provision of services, hence the perceived nexus in eThekweni.

5.2.3 The influence of political coalitions on local service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

The intention of this objective of the study was to establish the influence of political coalitions on local service delivery in the Metro of eThekweni Municipality. The local political coalition in eThekweni started off on shaky ground with some disagreements ensuing with a previous coalition partner, a kingmaker in the 2021 election. Some of these disagreements spilled to decision-making being stalled, one of them being the appointment of a city manager for the Metro. The study also revealed that politicians in the coalition tried to advance the policy preferences of their own political parties by steering decision-making on service delivery initiatives towards their own constituents. It also highlighted the “big brother” approach by the ANC to lead decisions due to their long-standing experience governing alone and the smaller parties trying to “cut them down to size”. While there have been times of turbulence, the coalition has remained relatively stable, and it is on its fifth (5) and final year where the 2021 LGE results are concerned. That then suggests, it is not the institution of political coalitions per se that impact service delivery negatively but individual actors within the coalition (political parties) and poor coalition management. When willing, political parties can co-exist as seen in Belgian coalitions (among linguistically diverse parties) and Finnish municipal coalitions. Even in SA, parties can co-exist.

5.3 Recommendations:

5.3.1 Short and long terms intentions for the formation of party coalitions in the eThekweni Municipality.

The gaining of power seems to top the list of reasons for political coalition formation. Service delivery appears to come as an afterthought at times. South African coalitions at all levels of government, particularly those formed in the period between 2016 and 2025 were formed to usurp power. This is evidenced by the over-excessive use of the weapon of choice to eliminate competition in South African coalitions, (i.e.) motions of no confidence. The following is therefore recommended:

- *Institute quotas on motions of no confidence*

It is therefore recommended to have quotas for motions of no confidence that can be tabled at any given time to prevent misuse (De Visser, 2023). The dire situation of the misuse of motions

of no confidence is supported by the event where former mayor of Johannesburg, Mpho Phalatse had three (3) motions tabled against her at the same time in 2023 (Patrick, 2023b). In eThekweni Municipality, before his recalling by his political party, then Mayor Mxolisi Kaunda survived several motions of no confidence with the Times Live (2023) reporting in 2023 that *‘eThekweni mayor Mxolisi Kaunda has survived another urgent motion to remove him from the council’*. It is proof that it is the weapon of choice in political coalitions.

- ***Introduce electoral thresholds for seat allocation in municipal councils***

The system of proportional representation has created an environment where a political party with one or two seats wields tremendous power. This means that a party with 1% of the vote share and 1 seat can swing a vote. The DA is proposing a threshold of at least 2% and has filed a bill for comment to this effect (Thorne, 2025). Political parties have found ways to leverage this with smaller parties aiming for power acquisition by negotiating themselves into big positions (ABC getting deputy mayorship although they had only two seats) and the bigger parties using the smaller parties to retain power, for instance the ANC going into coalitions with smaller parties like the ABC (2 seats) and NFP (1 seat) in eThekweni, so they are not out of government altogether.

5.3.2 The views of political and administrative leadership on factors that determine the local political coalition and service delivery nexus in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

Political parties must always be reminded of the social contract between themselves and the electorate. Government is obligated to provide sustainable public services to the public and personalities. Power dynamics should not impede their duty. There have been growing calls for professionalisation of the public service, aimed at creating a public service that is skilled, qualified and comprehends that it is liable to provide efficient service to the public (National School of Government, 2022). The same can be said about the side of the political parties. Politicians need to be capacitated in what it entails to provide effective governance as well as how to manage coalitions. Former member of parliament Ahmed Munzoor Shaik Emam in 2016, advocated for capacity building for politicians in coalitions, aimed at creating competence in governance and coalition management (COGTA, 2023).

Another recommendation is to make coalition agreements legally binding. The nature of coalition agreements being what 'Nyane (2019, p. 97) refers to as 'gentleman's agreements' and Bergman, Angelova, Bäck and Müller (2024, p. 31) term 'cheap talk'. These termed as such due to their unenforceability. These non-binding agreements create a revolving door type of setting where coalition parties come and go as they please. The publicising of coalitions also allows the electorate to be privy of the terms of the coalitions so that should any one party of the coalition break it, the public know who to hold accountable.

5.3.3 The influence of political coalitions on local service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

Political parties would rather engage in petty squabbles than put citizens above all. The poor behaviour of political parties and poor coalition management and governance negatively influences service delivery. Some of the spats among coalitions parties have been very public making it inescapable that the country will see it. However, although that serves to erode public trust, South Africans have been very tolerant according to Amashabalala (2023). It is time voters ceased being tolerant and held politicians accountable for their behaviour by enhancing political will through voting retrospectively (based on previous performance of political parties where governance and service delivery is concerned). One can say the declined support for the former ruling party is evidence that citizens are starting to vote according to how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with political parties.

- ***Enhancement of political will***

Brinkerhoff (2010, p. 1) defines political will as "the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives and to sustain the costs of those actions over time". The context of the definition related to reducing corruption, the researcher recommends adding mutual respect and consensus amongst coalition partners, accountability, and a commitment to prioritising service delivery. Politicians must have the willingness to want to make a change.

- ***Formation of ideologically inclined coalitions***

South Africa is a diverse country with equally diverse community groups which has created political proliferation (Kelly, 2020). The proliferation incentivises the sprouting of political parties each with their own ideology. After elections, this then spreads out voter support between too many parties, making it highly improbable that any one party will gain a majority thus governing coalitions emerge. When ideologically distant political parties form, the

probability of conflict is increased (Beukes and Visser, 2021; Khumalo and Netswera, 2020). Notwithstanding the fact that coalitions may be formed even in the absence of a shared ideology (Kadima, 2014; Mngomezulu and Phetha, 2025), it is recommended and ideal to have coalitions amongst parties with shared ideology. It minimises gridlock in decision-making and fosters stability (Beukes and Visser, 2021; Khumalo and Netswera, 2022). This would then positively influence public service provision. The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality coalition

The nature of coalitions in South Africa is office-seeking and the current grand coalition governing the country, although dubbed the “GNU”, and the provincial “GNU” in the province of KwaZulu Natal are evidence of their office-seeking nature (Mngomezulu and Phetha, 2025). In such a case, where ideology has no bearing, the researcher recommends that coalitions should at least seek to foster inclusivity by including all parties as a GNU seeks to do (Maswanganyi, 2025; Mngomezulu and Phetha, 2025). The DA was explicit in the barring of the MKP and EFF from the “GNU”, going against social cohesion.

- ***Move from the executive mayoral system to the executive committee system***

Under the executive mayoral system, the removal of a mayor results in the dissolution of the council in its entirety whereas in the executive committee system, the removal of a mayor, through a motion of no confidence or whatever means, does not affect the municipal council’s continuity. This would then ensure that service delivery is unhindered (Bregman, 2023, De Visser, 2011). A change to the executive committee system is thus recommended. In 2024, then Mayor of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, Mxolisi Kaunda survived a motion of no confidence () that, had it been successful, would have seen Council dissolved and service delivery disrupted.

- ***A framework for with guiding principles for coalitions embedded in the Constitution***

In Kenya, the Political Parties Act makes certain provisions for coalition formation and management and dispute resolution (PPA, 2011). A framework for coalitions with guiding principles for coalition formation and management has been developed in South Africa (COGTA). However, it would be beneficial if it was embedded into the Constitution.

5.4 Contributions of the study

The study provides empirical evidence about eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality in terms of political coalition formation, the nexus between political coalition and service delivery as well as evidence of the influence of coalition governance on public service provision. The researcher empirically observed the interaction of municipal public officials and political leadership in the coalition governed eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. Data now reflect how decision-making pertaining to service delivery is experienced and the influence of the imposition of coalitions on local government service delivery. The research discerned that chosen theories fall short of accounting for factors such as social cleavages which are highly pronounced on the African political landscape and in SA. For example, emergence of themes such as personal interests and personality traits lay the foundation for context-specific theoretical propositions. In collecting and analysing data, the study revealed the office-seeking nature of individual politicians and the opportunistic office seeking nature of political parties. Hence, this enabled the researcher to conceptually expand office-seeking theory to include individualistic office-seeking and opportunistic office-seeking – therefore contributing to theory and practice.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The unavailability of two participants could be seen as a limitation to the study. The study originally planned a sample size of nine (9). Five (5) were to represent public administrators from five different units of Metropolitan eThekweni and these interviews were conducted. The other four (4) participants were to be drawn from a past and current political coalition. Of those, two (2) were interviewed while another two were unavailable. Unavailable were the previous ABC president and a member of the current ANC-led coalition. Hence, the sample size was seven (7). However, this did not detract from accomplishing the objectives, answering the research questions and providing findings, conclusions and recommendations to help address the research problem.

5.6 Areas for further research

Studies on political coalitions have been largely centred around political actors, the type of coalitions they organise or join and the benefits attained by selecting certain political coalitions over others. Political actors have also focused on the interaction with bureaucrats and how the latter are influenced by the politics of parties in government. The reality imposed is that political coalitions have become a permanent feature. There is need then for further studies to explore how communities, mainly local, view coalitions. This would include whether citizens

have a preference for which coalitions should be formed or not formed and whether they resonate at all with political coalitions. The applicability of the theory of retrospective voting needs to be tested on the South African case to ascertain whether South Africa communities are moving towards voting based on previous performance (in terms of service delivery), social status or loyalty.

5.7 Concluding remarks

Chapter Five provided conclusions and recommendations in relation to each objective outlined in this study on local political coalitions and public service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The study revealed that one of the greatest hurdles in local political coalitions are the personalities that spill into governance; the gains politicians seek by running for office; the refusal to share power; blatant mistrust amongst existing or would be coalition partners, lack of political will to change the status quo and overall poor coalition management rather than the institution of coalition governance itself. Taking into consideration that coalition politics are here to stay, political parties need to find ways to foster consensus, practice mutual respect and prioritise public service delivery rather than gains. That way, the citizens can take centre stage, service delivery can be efficient and effective and public trust can be restored.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear Participant

My name is Zinhle Immaculate Portia Gumede (223127314) from Westville as a Master of Public Governance (MPG) Student at University of KwaZulu-Natal College of Law and Management Studies (CLMS) and my contact details are as follows, phone number (031) 311 7790 and my email address is 223127314@stu.ukzn.ac.za. I am currently employed by eThekweni Municipality as an Administrative Assistant for Land Use Management Services.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research. The aim and purpose of this research is to explore what are the perceived causes of political coalitions hindering eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality's service delivery in South Africa. The study is expected to enroll nine (9) participants in total, in eThekweni Municipality's units of Human settlements, Engineering and Transportation; Economic Development, Planning, and Invest Durban; Trading Services; Community and Emergency Services and Operations. It will involve having interviews as its data collection procedure. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 60 minutes or less.

The study may involve no risks and/or discomforts. We hope that the study will create the following benefits: using the case of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, understanding coalition governance at local government level as local government is the coal face of service delivery and is closest to the people.

No compensation is for participating in this study hence it voluntary and additional information can be obtained from my supervisor: Dr. S.A Mthuli, on mthulis@ukzn.ac.za

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 223127314@stu.ukzn.ac.za or call (031) 311 7790 or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

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Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and that participant you may withdraw participation at any point, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants you will not incur penalty or loss of treatment. Hence there is no potential consequences to you participant for withdrawal from the study.

No costs will be incurred by you as a result of participation in the study. There are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

Careful considerations will be taken to ensure participants' rights and wishes when presenting data and respect for participant's anonymity. The researcher of this study will abide by this ethical principle while conducting this study.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled: **Local political coalitions on public service delivery: The Case of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality - South Africa** by Zinhle Immaculate Portia Gumede (223127314).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study, which is: “exploring what are the perceived causes of political coalitions hindering eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality’s service delivery in South Africa”.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 223127314@stu.ukzn.ac.za or (031) 311 7790.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

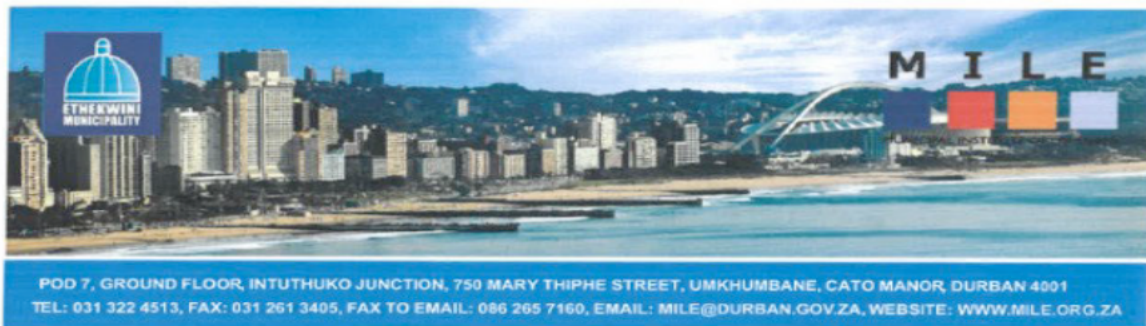
Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Appendix B: Gatekeepers letter



For attention:
Chair of Research Ethics Committee
University of KwaZulu-Natal
School of Management, IT & Governance
Durban
4001

11 October 2024

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT TO Z.I.P GUMEDE STUDENT NO: 223127314 - GRANTING PERMISSION TO USE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY AS A STUDY SITE

The Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) in eThekweni Municipality, has considered a request Zinhle Immaculate Portia Gumede (Ms.) to use eThekweni Municipality as a research study site leading to the awarding of undertaking a research study entitled: *Local political coalitions on public service delivery: The Case of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality – South Africa* - leading to the awarding of Master of Public Governance degree.

We wish to inform you of the acceptance of her request and hereby assure her of our utmost cooperation towards achieving her academic goals; the outcome which we believe may help this municipality. improve its evidence-base on political coalition. The student is reminded of the ethical considerations and regulations when conducting this research. The student must take all necessary measures to ensure her personal safety during the research period as eThekweni Municipality indemnifies itself from any incidental claims that may arise. In return, we stipulate as mandatory that the student contacts sthabile.mbongwa@durban.gov.za to present the preliminary results and recommendations of this study to the related unit/s.

Wishing the student all the best in her studies.

[Redacted Signature]

Mr. Sbu Ndebele
Head: Development Planning
eThekweni Municipality

[Redacted Signature]

Dr. Collin Pillay
Program Manager: MILE
eThekweni Municipality

I, Zinhle Immaculate Portia Gumede, hereby accept as mandatory that I will comply fully as per the [Redacted] stated above.

Signed: [Redacted] Date: 11 October 2024

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Questions: Government Officials and Politicians

No.	Main objectives	Sub-interview questions
1.	To explore the elaborate impact of the coalitions to the local service delivery in eThekweni Municipality.	1. Elaborate on your experience in your current position/role in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality? (P and Gov) 2. Elaborate on your perceived effect of the local coalition on service delivery in eThekweni Municipality? (P and Gov) 3. In eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality having worked under both the previous and current administrations (both coalition governments), if so, in comparison, elaborate on your access to the necessary tools/instruments to be able to provide public service delivery effectively in both administrations? (Gov) If not, elaborate on the access to the necessary and or vital tools/instruments to be able to provide public service delivery effectively in the current coalition government? (Gov) 4. What has been your experience working under a coalition governed administration in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, instead of working under a single party administration? (Gov) 5. In municipalities a council, council setting and adopting of budgets as well as other vital policies remain imperative, hence in your tenure(s) under a coalition government in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, has there been a case where your unit's ability to meet basic service delivery has been hampered as a result of the Council? (Gov) 6. When your coalition was still intact in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, was there ever a time when personal and/or party interests affected or undermined the coalition's continuity and local service delivery? (P) 7. What coalition strategies do you think should be employed in the coalition partnership to improve public service provision in eThekweni Municipality and possible impact on your unit? (Gov) 8. What coalition strategies do you think should be employed by coalition partners to improve public service provision in eThekweni Municipality and possible impact on your community – constituency? (P)
2.	To explore the views of the political and administrative leaders on the factors that determine the local political coalition as well as the local service delivery nexus (connection) in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.	1. Elaborate on the local coalition volatility's effect on public services provision in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality? (Gov) 2. What challenges, if any, in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality have you experienced in your endeavour to cater to the service delivery needs of the local communities and stakeholders in a local coalition government? (Pand Gov) 3. What are your perceived reasons of the failure of the previous local coalition government - between the African National Congress (ANC) and Abantu Batho Congress (ABC), and its effects on effective service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality? (Pand Gov) 4. Elaborate on disintegration of the relationship between former local coalition partners, the ANC and ABC and its impact on the provision of effective public services in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality? (P)

		5. Elaborate on the relationship with your current local coalition partners and impact on effective service delivery in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality? (P and Gov) 6. Elaborate on accountability and mechanisms as a result of ineffective service delivery in local coalition partnership (s)? (P)
3.	To determine intentions the (short and/or long-term) behind the formation of party coalitions in the eThekweni Municipality.	1. What does your role in your political party entail and its influence on the local coalition in eThekweni Municipality? (P) 2. What were/are reasons (short and/or long-term) behind local coalition formations in eThekweni Municipality? 3. Why politics for you? (P) 4. What was your main objective in running for office/ applying for the position hence partaking in the local government elections and link to intentions of the local coalition in eThekweni Municipality (P and Gov)? 5. What are your political party's the short and/or long-term policy positions/views on local service delivery in eThekweni Municipality? (P) 6. Elaborate on forming again a local coalition with a political party with diverting political notions and/or differing policy views in eThekweni Municipality? (P)

Appendix D: Editor's Certificate



The Language Editing Spirit

Editor's Report

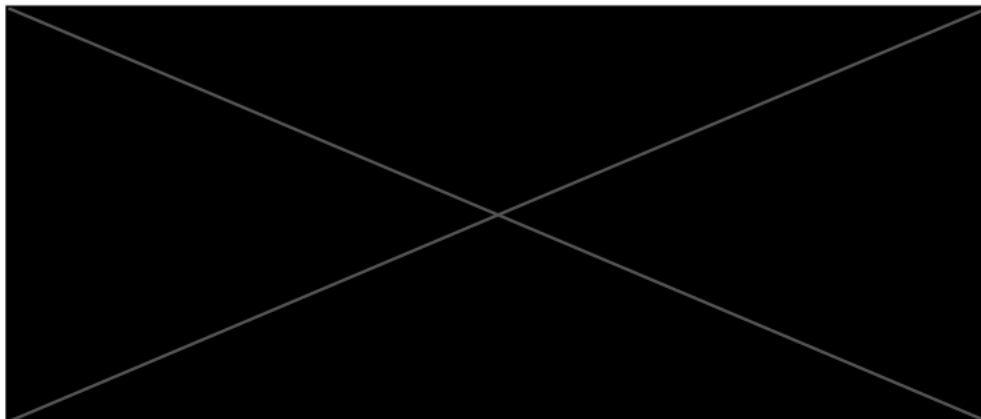
Master's Candidate: Zinhle Immaculate Portia Gumede (UKZN 223127314)

Title of Dissertation:

**Local political coalitions on public service delivery:
The Case of eThekwin Metropolitan Municipality – South Africa**

Approach to editing

Whilst a proof-reader is primarily concerned with misspellings, punctuation and overall inconsistencies, an editor does so as well but will also go further to get at the core of the writing experience. My approach to editing focuses upon sentence construction, language clarity, tone to help generate cohesive and coherent scholarly work with smooth narration. I critically analyse your writing tendencies and highlight these for you with a view towards enhancement of your overall writing style. The power to accept or reject suggestions lies with the masters/doctoral candidate and the supervisor.



This draws the report to a close. Further notes about grammar, spelling, syntax, and rewrites are made on the face of the thesis. There are also comments to be addressed – but not many since I requested them as they emerged.

Respectfully submitted,

Prof Ruffin

Appendix E: Ethical clearance



07 February 2025

Zinhle Immaculate Portia Gumede (223127314)
School of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear ZIP Gumede,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00007974/2024

Project title: Local political coalitions effect on public service delivery: The case of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality – South Africa

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 11 November 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 07 February 2026.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/nng

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

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