

Coalition Governance and Administrative Capacity: Lessons from South Africa's Government of National Unity

Lehlohonolo Josiaya Malope^{1*}, France Khutso Lavhelani Kgobe²

¹University of the Free State, Department of Public Administration and Management, Bloemfontein, South Africa, MalopeLj@ufs.ac.za

²Varsity College, The Independent Institute of Education, Pretoria Campus, City of Tshwane, South Africa, Fkgobe@iie.ac.za

**Corresponding Author: MalopeLj@ufs.ac.za*

DOI : <http://doi.org/10.29240/negrei.v6i1.13973>

Submitted: Juni 23, 2025; Reviewed: Dec 3, 2025; Accepted: Feb 9, 2026

Abstract: Coalition governance has emerged as a defining feature of fragmented democracies, raising critical questions about its implications for public administration performance. In South Africa, the establishment of a Government of National Unity (GNU) following the 2024 elections represents a significant departure from decades of dominant-party rule and presents a unique opportunity to examine how power-sharing arrangements affect administrative coherence and service delivery. Drawing on the literature on consociational democracy and governance capacity, this study employs qualitative document analysis and thematic analysis to examine the administrative dynamics of coalition governance under the GNU. The findings reveal that while coalition arrangements promote political inclusion, they also generate fragmented executive authority, intensified politicisation of administrative processes, weak conflict-resolution mechanisms, and adverse consequences for service delivery and public trust. These outcomes highlight a critical limitation of consociational democracy: its insufficient attention to administrative performance. Through an integration of power-sharing theory with perspectives on governance capacity, the study contributes to public administration scholarship by shifting the focus from coalition politics to coalition administration. The article argues that coalition governments require explicit administrative design features, such as clear authority structures and institutionalised coordination mechanisms, to translate political inclusion into effective governance. The findings offer broader lessons for coalition governance in fragmented democracies beyond South Africa.

Keywords: Government of National Unity; Coalition Governance; Municipal Coalitions; Inclusive Governance; Power-sharing.

A. Introduction and Backgrounds

Following the end of apartheid, South Africa underwent a significant transition to democracy, characterised by an inclusive electoral system that empowered every citizen to have a voice at the polls¹. This electoral framework was designed to unite various political factions within a collaborative governance system, promoting national cohesion and stability during the initial phases of the democratic nation^{2,3}. Today, the dynamics of coalition governance, particularly at the municipal level, have once again become a prominent aspect of South Africa's political landscape^{4,5}.

The turn toward coalition governance in fragmented democracies represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary public administration. In recent years, many democracies have transitioned from dominant single-party systems to multiparty coalitions that reflect deeper political pluralism and fragmentation. South Africa's 2024 establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU), following decades of ANC dominance, exemplifies this trend and raises fundamental questions about the administrative capacity of coalition governments to deliver public services effectively. The phenomenon extends beyond South Africa: coalition governance arrangements in Europe, Africa, and Asia have served as both tools for political stability and sources of administrative complexity⁶. Consociational democracy, originally articulated by Arend Lijphart as a power-sharing mechanism designed to manage deep societal cleavages through elite cooperation, grand coalitions, proportional representation, mutual vetoes, and segmental autonomy, offers a foundational theoretical lens for examining coalition governance arrangements⁷. However, while consociationalism was conceptualized principally within the context of deeply divided societies (such as the Netherlands and Belgium), its applicability to contemporary coalition systems, particularly those where administrative performance and service delivery are core concerns, remains under-explored. Most public administration literature emphasizes the politics-administration dichotomy and the inherent tensions between political coalition dynamics and bureaucratic efficiency^{8,9}. Despite its intuitive appeal, the assumption that coalition governance enhances inclusion does not automatically

¹ Powell, D.M. 2024. The Idea of Power-Sharing in South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Constitutional Democracy (1983–1993). In *Power-Sharing in the Global South: Patterns, Practices and Potentials*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

² Yimenu, B., 2024. Federalism and state restructuring in Africa: a comparative analysis of origins, rationales, and challenges. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. 54(1):6-33

³ Steytler, N. 2024. A Century of South African Constitutional Identities. *Constitutional Identity and Constitutionalism in Africa*, 139

⁴ Shai, K. 2024. Local Experiences of Local Government's Coalition Politics in South Africa. In *Enhancing Democracy with Coalition Governments and Politics* (pp. 112-123). IGI Global.

⁵ Kikasu, E.T. and Pillay, S.S. 2024. Forecasting an Inevitable Coalition Government at the National Level in South Africa: A New Path to Public Administration and Governance. *Open Journal of Political Science*. 14(01):28-51

⁶ Rudy B. Andeweg. 2000. Consociational Democracy. *Annual Review Political Science*. 3:509-536. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.509>

⁷ BOGAARDS, M. (2026). Consociationalism in Belgium. *The Oxford Handbook of Belgian Politics*, 80.

⁸ Svara, J. (2020). Woodrow Wilson and the tradition of dualism in public administration. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

⁹ Svara, J. H. (1998). The politics-administration dichotomy model as aberration. *Public administration review*, 51-58.

translate into administrative coherence. Recent empirical work on coalition arrangements in South African local government illustrates persistent conflicts among coalition partners, weak institutional conflict-resolution mechanisms, and blurred boundaries between political authority and administrative responsibilities, all factors that impede policy execution and service delivery¹⁰. This raises critical questions for public administration: How does the logic of power-sharing affect the capacity of public institutions to deliver services? Are traditional power-sharing theories sufficient for explaining administrative outcomes, or do they require augmentation with governance capacity frameworks? To address these gaps, this article examines South Africa's 2024 GNU through the lens of consociational democracy, but critically engages with its implications for administrative performance, governance capacity, and public service delivery. By identifying patterns of coalition behaviour and analyzing policy and institutional documents, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how coalition arrangements shape administrative outcomes in fragmented democratic contexts. The findings advance public administration theory and practice by demonstrating the limits of conventional power-sharing models when applied to coalition governance systems that prioritise both political representation and administrative functionality.

Coalition governments have become an increasingly common feature of democratic governance in fragmented political systems. While political science scholarship has extensively examined coalition formation, stability, and elite bargaining, significantly less attention has been paid to the administrative consequences of coalition governance. In particular, there is limited empirical and theoretical understanding of how coalition arrangements affect governance capacity, policy coordination, and service delivery, which are central concerns of public administration. In South Africa, the emergence of coalition governance, first at the municipal level following the 2016 local government elections and later at the national level through the establishment of the GNU after the 2024 elections, has exposed profound tensions between political power-sharing and administrative effectiveness. While coalition arrangements are normatively justified on grounds of inclusivity and representation, evidence from local government suggests that such arrangements may also produce administrative fragmentation, weakened accountability, and policy paralysis. Existing theoretical frameworks, particularly consociational democracy, emphasise elite accommodation and power-sharing as mechanisms for stability in divided societies. However, these frameworks offer limited guidance on how coalition dynamics translate into day-to-day administrative performance, bureaucratic coordination, and service delivery outcomes. This creates a critical gap in public administration scholarship, where the relationship between political coalition logic and administrative capacity remains under-theorised and empirically under-examined. This study addresses this gap by critically examining South Africa's GNU through a public administration lens, asking how coalition governance shapes administrative coherence and institutional performance. Through integrating consociational theory with governance capacity perspectives, the study seeks to advance understanding of coalition governance beyond political stability, toward its implications for effective public administration in fragmented democracies.

¹⁰ Makubalo, X., Rulashe, T., & Gwala, N.N., 2025. An Exploration of Political Polarisation and Coalition Governance in South African Local Government: Stability and Service Delivery Considerations. *Journal of Current Social and Political Issues*. 3(1); 15-32

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative document analysis approach complemented by thematic analysis to systematically examine the institutional and administrative dynamics of South Africa's GNU. Qualitative research in public administration enables the contextualized exploration of complex governance phenomena and contributes to theory building through revealing patterns, meanings, and structures that are not readily captured through quantitative measures. Robust qualitative design and transparent analysis are critical for generating credible and replicable insights¹¹. Given the aim of understanding how power-sharing arrangements influence administrative outcomes, a document analysis approach was selected because it allows for the systematic examination of relevant official records, policy documents, coalition agreements, and public statements to trace institutional logic and operational practices. Document analysis is widely recognized as a valid qualitative method because it provides rich contextual data and is particularly suited for governance and policy studies where direct observation or interview access may be limited. Thematic analysis was chosen to identify recurring patterns and interpretive themes within the document corpus¹².

The empirical corpus includes: official coalition agreements of the GNU, obtained from parliamentary records and political party communications; Government policy documents and administrative guidelines relating to coalition implementation and governance frameworks; Parliamentary proceedings and ministerial statements that illustrate governance priorities and administrative directives; and Public audit reports assessing administrative performance, where available. The documents were selected based on relevance to coalition governance structures, administrative mandates, and policy implementation processes. Selection criteria required that each document: were produced by an official source (government, parliamentary committee, political party office); directly relate to the formation and functioning of South Africa's GNU; and share insight into either political or administrative arrangements. The time frame for document inclusion spans from the formal announcement of the GNU in 2024 to the latest available policy reports available at the time of writing. Thematic analysis was conducted following established practices for qualitative research, which involve iterative reading, coding, and theme identification. Each document was read multiple times to ensure familiarity with content and context. A coding framework was developed to capture both deductive categories (e.g., coalition coordination mechanisms, administrative delegation, conflict resolution structures) and inductive themes that emerged from the data. Codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflect institutional dynamics and governance processes. To enhance analytic rigor, the study adhered to the reflexive thematic analysis framework, which emphasizes transparency in code generation and interpretation. This includes: detailed documentation of coding decisions; reflexive memos describing how themes were developed and interpreted; and attention to divergent cases where

¹¹ Cheng, Y. D., Pandey, S., & Hall, J. (2022). Introduction to the Virtual Issue: Advancing Public Policy Research through the Lens of Public Administration.

¹² Saunders C H, Sierpe A, von Plessen C, Kennedy A M, Leviton L C, Bernstein S L et al. Practical thematic analysis: a guide for multidisciplinary health services research teams engaging in qualitative analysis *BMJ* 2023; 381 :e074256 doi:10.1136/bmj-2022-074256

documents present conflicting signals about governance behaviour. The analysis was reviewed periodically to ensure coherence, consistency, and alignment with research objectives. The final thematic constructs were interpreted in light of consociational theory and public administration frameworks, enabling a synthesis that bridges political power-sharing logic with administrative outcomes. This study acknowledges inherent limitations in relying solely on document analysis. While documents provide official perspectives and institutional records, they may not fully capture informal practices or bureaucratic perceptions. Additionally, public documents may reflect aspirational language rather than actual administrative behaviour. However, combining systematic sampling, transparent coding procedures, and thematic interpretation enhances the credibility and relevance of the findings. Future research incorporating interviews with administrators and coalition actors would further corroborate the patterns identified here.

Theoretical Framework – Consociational Democracy & Governance Capacity Theory

This study is anchored in consociational democracy, complemented by governance capacity theory, to examine the administrative implications of coalition governance under South Africa's GNU. While consociational democracy provides a foundational framework for understanding political power-sharing in divided societies, governance capacity theory is employed to address its limitations in explaining administrative performance. The integration of these two perspectives enables a more comprehensive analysis of coalition governance from a public administration standpoint. Consociational democracy, most prominently articulated by Lijphart (1969, 1977), was developed as a normative and institutional response to deep societal cleavages. The model rests on four core principles: grand coalitions among political elites, proportionality in political representation and resource allocation, mutual vetoes to protect minority interests, and segmental autonomy. Together, these mechanisms are intended to promote political stability by encouraging elite cooperation and preventing the marginalisation of significant social groups. Consociational arrangements have been widely applied in contexts characterised by ethnic, linguistic, or ideological divisions, and they have been credited with fostering political accommodation in countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands^{13,14}. In the South African context, the GNU reflects key elements of consociational logic. Following the 2024 elections, no single party secured an outright majority, necessitating a power-sharing arrangement among ideologically diverse political actors^{15,16}. Normatively, the GNU is justified as a mechanism for inclusion, reconciliation, and political stability in a society marked by historical divisions and contemporary political fragmentation. From this perspective, consociational democracy offers an appropriate starting point for analysing the political rationale underpinning coalition governance. However, consociational theory exhibits a significant limitation when applied to public

¹³ Caluwaerts, D., & Reuchamps, M. (2020). Still Consociational: Belgian Democracy, 50 Years after 'the Politics of Accommodation'. *Politics Low Countries*, 2, 28.

¹⁴ Grofman, B. (2013). Electoral rules and ethnic representation and accommodation: Combining social choice and electoral system perspectives. *Power sharing in deeply divided places*, 67-93.

¹⁵ Ihembe, M. A., Isike, C., & Onwuzuruigbo, I. (2024). Coalition or Government of National Unity? Critical reflections on the 2024 elections in South Africa. *Politikon*, 51(3-4), 163-184.

¹⁶ Beukes, J. (2025). *Coalition governance in South Africa's local government: law and practice* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).

Lehlogonolo Josiaya Malope, France Khutso Lavhelani Kgobe
Coalition Governance and Administrative Capacity: Lessons from South Africa's Government of National Unity

administration. Its analytical focus is overwhelmingly placed on elite bargaining, institutional design, and political stability, with limited attention to the administrative processes through which policy decisions are implemented. As a result, consociational democracy tends to assume that once political accommodation is achieved at the elite level, administrative systems will function effectively. This assumption is problematic in governance contexts where administrative capacity is uneven, service delivery demands are acute, and bureaucratic institutions are already under strain.

To address this limitation, the study draws on governance capacity theory, which foregrounds the ability of public institutions to coordinate actors, implement policy, and deliver services effectively¹⁷. Governance capacity emphasises factors such as clear authority structures, institutional coherence, leadership stability, and coordination mechanisms across organisational boundaries. From this perspective, effective governance is not solely a function of political inclusion but depends on the institutional conditions that enable administrative systems to operate coherently. Integrating governance capacity theory with consociational democracy allows for a critical examination of coalition governance as both a political and administrative phenomenon. While consociational arrangements may reduce conflict at the political level, they can simultaneously introduce multiple centres of authority within the executive, complicate decision-making processes, and blur lines of accountability. These dynamics pose significant challenges for public administration, particularly in coalition systems where ministers from different parties oversee interconnected policy domains. This theoretical synthesis is particularly relevant to South Africa, where public administration is tasked with addressing persistent service delivery backlogs, socio-economic inequality, and declining public trust^{18, 19, 20}. In such contexts, coalition governance may intensify existing administrative challenges by politicising bureaucratic processes and weakening coordination across departments. Governance capacity theory thus provides the analytical tools necessary to assess whether the institutional arrangements underpinning the GNU are adequate for translating political power-sharing into effective administrative outcomes. Through the combination of consociational democracy with governance capacity theory, this study advances a public administration-oriented framework for analysing coalition governance. Rather than treating coalition arrangements as inherently stabilising or destabilising, the framework emphasises the conditions under which coalition governance can function effectively from an administrative perspective. This approach shifts the analytical focus from coalition politics to coalition administration and enables a more nuanced understanding of how power-sharing arrangements shape governance performance in fragmented democracies.

¹⁷ Bouckaert, G., Peters, B. G., & Verhoest, K. (2010). *Coordination of public sector organizations* (pp. 13-33). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

¹⁸ Mamokhere, John. "Understanding the Complex Interplay of Governance, Systematic, and Structural Factors Affecting Service Delivery in South African Municipalities." *Commonwealth Youth & Development* 20.2 (2022).

¹⁹ Kgobe, F. K. L. (2024). *Assessing the efficacy of public participation in the enhancement of public service delivery planning in Polokwane local municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).

²⁰ Tsheola, J., & Sebola, M. (2023). Public trust deficit in democratic state and political institutions: Ominous Signposts for South Africa. *International Journal of Research in Business & Social Science*, 12.

Literature Review

Coalition Governance: From Political Stability to Administrative Performance

Coalition governance has emerged as a defining feature of South Africa's evolving political landscape, particularly at the local government level, following the erosion of single-party dominance after 2016 and more decisively after the 2021 municipal elections. Scholarly literature increasingly frames coalition governance not merely as a political arrangement but as a determinant of administrative performance and institutional stability^{21, 22}. In the public administration discourse, coalitions are understood to introduce complex coordination challenges that directly affect policy continuity, budgeting processes, and service delivery outcomes. South African scholars argue that while coalitions may enhance political inclusivity, they often destabilise administrative systems that were designed around majoritarian governance assumptions^{23, 24}. Empirical studies of metropolitan municipalities such as Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Nelson Mandela Bay demonstrate how coalition instability translates into frequent changes in mayoral committees, senior management turnover, and disrupted administrative planning cycles²⁵. The repeated motions of no confidence undermine the authority of municipal managers and weaken the bureaucratic insulation necessary for effective administration. This literature highlights a shift in analytical focus from coalition survival to coalition functionality, emphasising administrative performance indicators such as audit outcomes, infrastructure delivery, and financial governance. From this perspective, coalition governance becomes a structural variable shaping bureaucratic effectiveness rather than a purely political phenomenon. South African public administration scholars also interrogate the tension between political accountability and administrative continuity under coalition arrangements²⁶. While coalition politics may enhance council oversight, it often produces blurred lines of authority between political principals and administrative agents. Studies indicate that coalition partners frequently intervene in administrative appointments and procurement decisions as part of inter-party bargaining, thereby eroding professional norms and compliance with the Municipal Systems Act²⁷. This politicisation of administration is particularly pronounced in hung councils, where

²¹ Makole, K. R., Ntshangase, B. A., & Adewumi, S. A. (2022). Coalition governance: Unchartered waters in South African political landscape. *Business Ethics and Leadership*, 6(4), 23 -37. [http://doi.org/10.21272/bel.6\(4\).23-37.2022](http://doi.org/10.21272/bel.6(4).23-37.2022)

²² Sokani, A., Yende, N., & Thwala, S. (2024). (Not) Learning From Experience: Coalition Government in South African Municipalities From the Perspective of Context-Based Theory. *Journal of Public Administration*, 59(3), 516-531.

²³ Maneng, N. S. (2022). Power-sharing in South Africa's municipalities: The case of Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan municipalities from 2016. Master's Dissertation. University of Free State

²⁴ Pholoma, M., Lubinga, S. N., Masiya, T., & Madumo, O. S. (2024). The influence of unstable coalition governments in Gauteng metropolitan municipalities. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 5(0), a195. <https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgr.v5i0.195>

²⁵ Olver, C. (2021). The impact of coalitions on South Africa's metropolitan administrations. *Marriages of inconvenience: The politics of coalition South Africa*, 267-302.

²⁶ Du Plessis, A. R., & Lues, L. (2024). Uncovering the Nexus Between Coalition Theory and the Political-Administrative Dichotomy: In search of a South African multiple approach framework. *Administratio Publica*, 32(2).

²⁷ Beukes, J. (2025). Coalition governance in South Africa's local government: law and practice (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).

administrative stability becomes a bargaining chip rather than a governance objective²⁸. The literature further suggests that coalition governance exacerbates pre-existing capacity constraints within municipalities. Coalition instability compounds skills shortages by discouraging long-term planning and deterring qualified professionals from senior administrative roles. Frequent leadership changes disrupt institutional memory and weaken performance management systems. Consequently, administrative performance under coalition governance must be understood within a broader context of structural inequality, fiscal stress, and uneven bureaucratic capacity across municipalities.

Recent analyses advocate for institutional reforms to align South Africa's administrative architecture with coalition realities. Scholars propose mechanisms such as coalition agreements with administrative clauses, strengthened roles for speakers and municipal managers, and clearer delineation of political-administrative boundaries²⁹. The literature thus converges on the argument that coalition governance, while democratically legitimate, requires adaptive administrative frameworks to mitigate instability and safeguard service delivery. In this sense, coalition governance marks a transition point in South Africa's public administration, demanding a reconceptualisation of stability as an administrative rather than purely political outcome.

Consociational Democracy and Power sharing

Consociational democracy provides an important theoretical lens for examining coalition governance and power-sharing in South Africa, particularly in deeply divided societies. Originating from Lijphart's theory, consociationalism emphasises elite cooperation, proportional representation, and mutual vetoes as mechanisms for stability³⁰. South African scholars have revisited this framework to assess whether contemporary coalition arrangements reflect consociational principles or represent a departure from negotiated power-sharing traditions established during the democratic transition³¹. The literature suggests that while South Africa was not formally consociational post-1994, informal power-sharing norms shaped early governance practices^{32, 33}. In the contemporary period, coalition governments, especially at local and provincial levels, have revived debates on institutionalised power sharing. It is argued that post-2016 coalitions lack the elite consensus and shared commitment to governance that characterised transitional arrangements. Instead, coalitions are often transactional and short-term, prioritising office-seeking over policy coherence. Public administration scholars caution that this form of

²⁸ Dladla, K. F. (2018). The impact of the legal framework for local government on building and sustaining coalitions in municipal councils.

²⁹ Saul, T. F., & Maleka, M. C. (2025). The Effects of Coalition Governance on Municipalities in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 60(1-1), 408-426.

³⁰ Lijphart, A. (2007). *Thinking about democracy: Power sharing and majority rule in theory and practice*. Routledge.

³¹ Dlamini, S. (2017). Historical analysis of power-sharing and consociational democratic practice in South Africa. *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation*, 6(1), 7-35.

³² Dlamini, S. N. (2015). *The Theory and Application of Consociational Democracy in South Africa: A Case Study of KwaZulu-Natal* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg).

³³ Mileji, G. (2011). 'Power-Sharing Government Mechanisms' are they a Solution or an Obstacle to Democratisation in Africa? a Focus on South Africa and Zimbabwe (Master's thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa)).

fragmented power sharing undermines bureaucratic coordination and weakens the state's developmental capacity. Unlike classical consociational systems, South African coalitions operate without entrenched administrative safeguards or consensus-oriented political culture.

Empirical case studies illustrate how power-sharing arrangements affect administrative decision-making. In Nelson Mandela Bay, coalition agreements repeatedly collapsed due to disputes over mayoral authority and administrative appointments, leading to governance paralysis³⁴. It is noted that power sharing without clearly defined administrative rules generates ambiguity over decision rights, particularly in procurement, performance management, and intergovernmental relations. This ambiguity compromises the predictability required for effective public administration and fiscal discipline. The literature also interrogates the limits of consociational theory in explaining South Africa's coalition experience. Consociationalism presupposes strong, disciplined parties and elite cooperation, conditions largely absent in fragmented local councils. Furthermore, the absence of institutionalised veto mechanisms shifts conflict into administrative arenas, where officials are pressured to align with competing political principals. This dynamic undermines bureaucratic neutrality and exacerbates administrative instability. Recent scholarly contributions call for a contextualised application of power-sharing theory to South Africa's governance realities³⁵. Rather than importing consociational models wholesale, scholars advocate for hybrid arrangements that combine proportional representation with administrative professionalisation and legal safeguards. The literature thus positions power sharing as a necessary but insufficient condition for stability, emphasising the centrality of administrative institutions in mediating political fragmentation³⁶. In doing so, it re-centres public administration as the critical site where power-sharing arrangements succeed or fail.

Governance Capacity and Coalition Administration

Governance capacity has become a central analytical category in assessing the performance of coalition administrations in South Africa. Defined as the state's ability to formulate, coordinate, and implement policy effectively, governance capacity is shaped by institutional design, human resources, and political leadership³⁷. The literature consistently finds that coalition governance places additional strain on already fragile administrative systems, particularly in municipalities characterised by fiscal distress and limited technical expertise^{38, 39}. Coalition administrations must therefore be assessed not only in political terms but through their impact on state capacity. Studies

³⁴ Olver, C. (2017). *How to steal a city: the battle for Nelson Mandela Bay, an inside account*. Jonathan Ball Publishers.

³⁵ GUMBO, B. (2022). *Power sharing and political stability: Creating inclusive governance for development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Free State, Faculty of Humanities).

³⁶ Lehmbruch, G. (2019). *The organization of society, administrative strategies, and policy networks: Elements of a developmental theory of interest systems*. In *Political Choice* (pp. 121-158). Routledge.

³⁷ Williams, M. J. (2021). *Beyond state capacity: bureaucratic performance, policy implementation and reform*. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 17(2), 339-357.

³⁸ Pholoma, M., Lubinga, S. N., Masiya, T., & Madumo, O. S. (2024). *The influence of unstable coalition governments in Gauteng metropolitan municipalities*. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 5(0), a195. <https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v5i0.195>

³⁹ Sokani, A., Yende, N., & Thwala, S., (2024). *(Not) Learning From experience: Coalition Government in South African Municipalities From the Perspective of Context-Based Theory*. *Journal of Public Administration*, 59(3), 516 – 531

of municipal performance under coalition rule reveal a correlation between coalition instability and declining governance indicators. Auditor-General reports repeatedly show regression in audit outcomes in coalition-led municipalities, citing leadership instability and weak oversight as key drivers⁴⁰. Scholars argue that frequent changes in political leadership disrupt strategic planning and weaken accountability chains, reducing the effectiveness of senior managers. This erosion of governance capacity undermines service delivery, particularly in infrastructure maintenance and the provision of basic services. The literature further highlights the role of administrative leadership in mediating coalition pressures. Municipal managers and department heads are often caught between competing coalition partners, leading to risk-averse behaviour and delayed decision-making⁴¹. Public administration scholars note that governance capacity is compromised when administrators lack protection from political interference. This is exacerbated in coalition contexts, where political principals lack unified authority, leading to contradictory directives and weakened performance management systems.

At the provincial and national levels, emerging coalition dynamics following the 2024 electoral shifts have renewed concerns about administrative coherence. Scholars warn that coalition governance at higher spheres could strain intergovernmental relations and policy coordination, particularly in sectors such as housing, health, and infrastructure⁴². The literature emphasises that governance capacity is cumulative and relational; instability at one sphere reverberates across the intergovernmental system. Coalition administration thus poses systemic risks to South Africa's developmental state ambitions. In response, the literature proposes capacity-enhancing reforms tailored to coalition governance. These include professionalising senior administrative appointments, strengthening statutory protections for officials, and institutionalising coalition agreements that explicitly address administrative stability. It can be argued that without deliberate capacity-building interventions, coalition governance will continue to erode state effectiveness. The literature, therefore, converges on the conclusion that governance capacity is both the most vulnerable and the most critical dimension of coalition administration in South Africa.

Theoretical Findings and Discussion

Fragmentation of Executive Authority

Consociational theory holds that deep divisions require inclusive power-sharing (grand coalitions, segmental autonomy) to maintain stability. In South Africa's emerging coalition era, however, analysts warn that excessive fragmentation has undermined effective governance. Surveys and studies note that the proliferation of small parties has produced "fragmented councils,

⁴⁰ Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA). (2022). MFMA Consolidated general report on local government audit outcomes: MFMA 2020 - 21. <https://mfma-2021.agsareports.co.za/>

⁴¹ Olver, C. (2021). Power, institutions and rents in two South African cities. *Area Development and Policy*, 6(3), 250-270.

⁴² Kanyane, M. (2016). Interplay of intergovernmental relations conundrum. *State of the Nation South Africa 2016: Who is in Charge?: Mandates, Accountability and Contestations in the South African State*, 92-106.

unstable coalitions, and weakened governance”⁴³. Legally and politically, this has resulted in what some describe as executive ambiguity: no single party holds clear authority, and leadership posts rotate frequently.

Theories of governance capacity echo this concern: when executive authority is divided among many actors, coordination and collective action suffer⁴⁴. Recent analyses of the 2024–25 government similarly warn that over-fragmented coalitions lead to “revolving-door executives and paralysed administrations”. In practice, ideological splits between the ANC and DA in government have led to frequent cabinet deadlocks and uncertainty over who is accountable for decisions. From a consociational perspective, such gridlock indicates that the necessary elite coalition compromise has faltered. Governance-capacity theory likewise suggests that fragmented leadership blurs responsibility and drains resources because effective governance requires clear coordination among actors⁴⁵. In sum, both theories help explain why South Africa’s multi-party coalitions have struggled: the consociational promise of inclusiveness has been offset by a diffusion of authority, while low governance capacity has prevented coherent collective leadership.

Fragmentation of executive authority has become a defining feature of coalition governance at the municipal level in South Africa, particularly in metros like the City of Johannesburg. In a coalition context, the diffusion of power among multiple political actors creates overlapping and often conflicting lines of accountability⁴⁶. This phenomenon weakens the municipality’s executive cohesion and obstructs decisive leadership. As various coalition partners vie for strategic positions and control over key departments, executive authority becomes fractured, leading to inconsistent policy implementation and administrative inertia. The problem is especially acute when coalitions are unstable or lack a shared policy agenda, leading executive office bearers to operate in silos and pursue divergent priorities. Coalitions may formally distribute power across executive portfolios to reflect proportional representation among parties, but this division often lacks coordinated oversight⁴⁷. Instead of functioning as a unified leadership body, the executive becomes a fragmented arena of competing interests.

This diffusion of authority compromises collective accountability, as no single actor or office can be held responsible for failures or misdirection. As a result, policy coherence is weakened, and leadership paralysis becomes increasingly common. Departments under different political banners struggle to align, and strategic planning is subordinated to inter-party negotiations⁴⁸. From a theoretical perspective, fragmentation directly undermines a municipality’s governance capacity. The importance of strong vertical and horizontal coordination in public administration, both of which are significantly disrupted in a coalition setting marked by executive fragmentation. Instead of facilitating collaborative governance, coalitions often institutionalise

⁴³ Pildes, R. H. (2023). Political Fragmentation in the Democracies of the West. *BYU J. Pub. L.*, 37, 209.

⁴⁴ Howlett, M., & Ramesh, M. (2016). A chilles' heels of governance: critical capacity deficits and their role in governance failures. *Regulation & Governance*, 10(4), 301-313.

⁴⁵ Corbett, J., Veenendaal, W., & Connell, J. (2021). The core executive and small states: Is coordination the primary challenge?. *Public Administration*, 99(1), 103-117.

⁴⁶ Hess, D. J. (2018). Energy democracy and social movements: A multi-coalition perspective on the politics of sustainability transitions. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 40, 177-189.

⁴⁷ Krauss, S., & Kluever, H. (2023). Cabinet formation and coalition governance: The effect of portfolio allocation on coalition agreements. *Government and Opposition*, 58(4), 862-881.

⁴⁸ Vercesi, M. (2016). Coalition Politics and Inter-Party Conflict Management: A Theoretical Framework. *Politics & Policy*, 44(2), 168-219.

division by entrenching partisan control over specific sectors, with little incentive for interdepartmental collaboration. This obstructs the pursuit of integrated development strategies, weakens fiscal discipline, and delays municipal responses to pressing service needs.

Moreover, the fragmentation of executive authority intensifies political instability, as parties frequently threaten to withdraw from coalitions or trigger motions of no confidence to renegotiate their standing within the executive. This leads to frequent leadership reshuffles, which compromise institutional memory and derail long-term planning. Transitional political systems are particularly vulnerable to these disruptions, as the absence of mature coalition conventions or binding agreements exacerbates fragmentation⁴⁹. The result is a municipality caught in a cycle of leadership discontinuity, policy inconsistency, and diminished public confidence. Within coalition-governed municipalities, executive fragmentation is not merely a by-product of democratic diversity but a structural weakness that inhibits governance continuity and undermines administrative efficiency. It reflects a failure to consolidate authority in ways that promote policy alignment, strategic vision, and institutional accountability. In the absence of a coherent and stable executive, local government becomes reactive, politicised, and increasingly incapable of delivering on its developmental mandate.

Politicisation of Administrative Processes

Consociational theory does not directly prescribe how bureaucracy should operate, but South African experience shows the ruling party's influence over the civil service has been profound. Aligning municipal officials with ANC ideology was seen as "inevitable" in the new democracy⁵⁰. This politicisation, while intended to advance development goals, has raised critical concerns. Empirical studies find that party interference in appointments, budgets, and procurement has bred administrative dysfunction, weakening institutional competence (Balducci et al., 2021). For instance, local officials often admit they struggle with accountability practices, and political infighting between councillors and administrators is blamed for repeated service failures. Governance-capacity theory explains this as a loss of institutional resources such as expert personnel and reliable procedures, upon which administrative capacity depends (Popering-Verkerk et al., 2022). Without a neutral, skilled bureaucracy, policy implementation is disrupted. From a consociational standpoint, extensive politicisation means that political actors dominate administrative levers rather than sharing power with technocrats. In South Africa, this has meant that the ideal of consensual governance is compromised by partisan management of public administration. The result is a vicious cycle: administrative mismanagement and financial missteps heighten dissatisfaction, while administrations lack the autonomy to counteract it (Mamokhere, 2025). Thus, both theories illuminate the problem consociational logic cautions that overly party-driven coalitions weaken implementation, while governance-capacity theory predicts erosion when bureaucracy is politicised rather than meritocratic. The politicisation of administrative processes

⁴⁹ Stephen, M. D., & Parížek, M. (2019). New powers and the distribution of preferences in global trade governance: From deadlock and drift to fragmentation. *New Political Economy*, 24(6), 735-758.

⁵⁰ Nzo, T. Z. L. (2019). Local government party politics and ANC councillor representation: the dynamics of council decision-making in South Africa. Doctoral Thesis, University of Edinburgh.

has emerged as a critical fault line in coalition-governed municipalities, revealing deep tensions between democratic representativity and functional institutional performance. In coalition contexts such as the City of Johannesburg, the blurring of lines between political leadership and administrative authority has intensified. As different coalition partners compete for influence, the public service becomes entangled in partisan struggles, reducing its ability to act autonomously, coherently, and professionally. In transitional democracies, some level of politicisation is anticipated; however, the degree and persistence of interference observed under coalition arrangements suggest a more systemic erosion of bureaucratic integrity. Rather than enabling cooperative governance, coalitions often fragment decision-making authority. Competing party agendas, frequent leadership changes, and pressure to distribute municipal posts as political rewards foster an environment in which technical qualifications and institutional memory are subordinated to short-term political interests.

This dynamic undermines administrative impartiality, disrupts service delivery continuity, and limits strategic planning capacity. These challenges are amplified in municipalities lacking clear governance norms, where coalition politics create ambiguity in the delineation of roles between councillors, executives, and senior bureaucrats⁵¹. At the heart of this issue lies a fundamental governance tension: the democratic imperative for inclusive representation versus the functional need for stable, rules-based administration. Coalition governments, particularly those formed without a coherent policy platform, often resort to interference in administrative appointments and decision-making to consolidate control or reward loyalty. This not only weakens performance but also distorts institutional accountability mechanisms. The politicisation of bureaucracies under coalition rule severely compromises coordination, as different departments become aligned with distinct political agendas, fragmenting implementation efforts⁵².

The result is a deterioration in the overall governance capacity of local municipalities. Municipal managers and senior officials operate in an environment of political volatility, where their tenure and autonomy are increasingly subject to coalition shifts and intra-party negotiations. This instability stifles initiative, discourages skilled professionals from entering the public service, and undermines the development of a consistent organisational culture. Over time, the administrative apparatus becomes reactive rather than strategic, further diminishing its ability to deliver on core mandates. In coalition-led municipalities, therefore, politicisation is not merely an administrative problem it is a systemic feature that reflects the fragility of institutional boundaries and the struggle to uphold meritocratic governance under political pluralism.

Weak Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Lijphart's consociational model emphasises formal mechanisms such as mutual vetoes, grand coalitions, and joint decision-making bodies to resolve inter-group conflict. In South Africa's coalition governments, however, such mechanisms remain underdeveloped. Newly formed

⁵¹ Reddy, T. (2010). ANC decline, social mobilization and political society: Understanding South Africa's evolving political culture. *Politikon*, 37(2-3), 185-206.

⁵² Sweeney, K. (2025). *Party Systems and Bureaucratic Politicization: The Coalition Effect*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Chicago.

coalitions have often lacked clear rules for resolving disputes, and many conflicts escalate into litigation or governmental collapse. Coalition partners “lack the internal capacity to manage coalition disputes,” which frequently escalate into legal battles. This aligns with consociational theory’s warning that without institutionalised negotiation forums, tensions can lead to gridlock, diminished effectiveness, and erosion of public trust. Governance-capacity theory similarly stresses the need for resilience and coordination in the face of conflict. The absence of reliable dispute processes undermines system resilience—the ability of governance structures to adapt during crises⁵³. Calls are therefore growing for formal dispute-resolution clauses, as current practices lack effective deadlock-breaking mechanisms. Both theoretical lenses diagnose the same challenge: coalitions cannot operate sustainably without agreed conflict-management rules.

Weak conflict-resolution mechanisms constitute a core structural deficiency in South Africa’s coalition-governed municipalities, where political instability increasingly undermines local government’s functioning. In contexts like the City of Johannesburg, coalitions are often formed out of necessity rather than ideological compatibility, leading to fragile and transactional political alliances. These arrangements are frequently marked by competing interests and intra-coalition rivalries, with ineffective channels for dispute resolution. The absence of institutionalised mechanisms to manage these conflicts exacerbates instability and routinely derails governance continuity. Coalition politics inherently require coordination, compromise, and ongoing negotiation. However, in the South African municipal context, disputes between coalition partners are frequently escalated to the courts or played out in public forums, indicating a lack of internal resolution capacity. This adversarial dynamic generates persistent uncertainty in municipal leadership, disrupts programme implementation, and slows service delivery. The current political landscape is ill-equipped to manage such tensions constructively, with limited emphasis placed on consensus-building frameworks or formalised mediation processes within coalitions.

The resulting volatility is not merely a political inconvenience—it directly undermines institutional performance. Coalition disagreements often spill into administrative processes, delaying council decisions, budget approvals, and the execution of key mandates. This friction is particularly damaging when disputes result in motions of no confidence, executive reshuffles, or prolonged stalemates. From a theoretical standpoint, both Consociational Democracy and Governance Capacity Theory underscore the need for structured political arrangements that can absorb and manage dissent. The former insists on institutional mechanisms for elite accommodation, while the latter stresses the functional need for coherent decision-making in complex governance systems. In their absence, municipalities are vulnerable to paralysis, factionalism, and administrative inefficiency. This has become a recurring feature of coalition-led local governments in South Africa, where unresolved disputes not only fracture political partnerships but also corrode public perceptions of municipal legitimacy.

Service Delivery Backlogs and Declining Public Trust

⁵³ Demchak, C. (2021). Achieving systemic resilience in a great systems conflict era. *The Cyber Defense Review*, 6(2), 51-70.

Effective delivery of public services is fundamentally a test of governance capacity. Numerous South African studies find that enduring backlogs in water, electricity, and sanitation stem primarily from institutional weaknesses rather than resource scarcity. That “bureaucratic inefficiencies, financial constraints and mismanagement, [and] lack of institutional capacity and resources” are the principal barriers to municipal service delivery⁵⁴. This aligns strongly with governance-capacity theory: without adequate organisational capability, governments fail to meet public needs. Auditor-General findings cited in Mamokhere (2025) further indicate that only about 13% of municipalities achieve clean audits, highlighting pervasive governance failures. Weak accountability and administrative neglect have, in turn, left citizens “with no choice but to resort to mass protests” for basic services⁵⁵. Although consociational theory assumes that inclusive coalitions should stabilise policymaking, South Africa’s experience suggests that fragmented coalitions and politicised administrations frequently delay service initiatives. Even consensus cannot overcome structural deficits without sufficient capacity.

Public trust is a linchpin in both consociational and governance-capacity frameworks. Consociational democracy assumes that broad power-sharing enhances legitimacy; conversely, ineffective coalitions erode public confidence. In South Africa, trust indicators are increasingly troubling. Governance-capacity theory explains this as a byproduct of persistent institutional underperformance: trust emerges when citizens perceive government as competent and fair. Experts emphasise that transparency and tangible improvements are essential to restore credibility. Institutionalising public coalition agreements and demonstrating measurable service gains may help rebuild trust. Without clearer accountability and effective governance outcomes, public confidence is likely to continue declining. Service delivery backlogs in South African municipalities, particularly in major metros like the City of Johannesburg, have been exacerbated by the rise of unstable coalition governance. While capacity challenges have long undermined service delivery outcomes, the fragmentation of executive authority under coalition arrangements introduces new layers of complexity that compromise the planning and execution of basic services. Coalition governments often struggle to develop unified priorities or coherent operational strategies, resulting in paralysed decision-making and blurred lines of accountability. In such settings, critical administrative functions may be politicised or subject to contestation between coalition partners, thereby slowing the responsiveness and effectiveness of service delivery systems⁵⁶. One key issue is that coalition arrangements often involve political actors with divergent ideologies, interests, and constituencies. Rather than coordinating around a shared developmental vision, coalition parties may engage in internal bargaining that prioritises political survival over service delivery imperatives. This often leads to inconsistent implementation of municipal plans, contested appointments to administrative posts, and the rerouting of resources to politically strategic areas—all of which undermine the efficient provision of services. Such instability intensifies existing capacity deficits

⁵⁴ Mamokhere, J. (2025). Service delivery conundrums in South African municipalities. *Insights into Regional Development*, 7(2), 30-42.

⁵⁵ Mamokhere, J., & Kgobe, F. K. L. (2023). Service delivery protests in South African municipalities: Trends, factors, impacts and recommendations. *social sciences and education research review*, 10(2), 49-59.

⁵⁶ Mamokhere, J. (2025). Service delivery conundrums in South African municipalities. *Insights into Regional Development*, 7(2), 30-42.

by introducing uncertainty into institutional planning cycles and deterring long-term infrastructure investment.

The instability inherent in many local coalitions also leads to frequent changes in leadership and administrative appointments, disrupting the continuity of service delivery initiatives. Key senior managers and technical staff may be replaced as coalitions shift, further eroding institutional memory and technical expertise. This high turnover rate affects everything from procurement processes to service delivery timelines, making it difficult for municipalities to meet targets or respond to emerging needs. Moreover, coalition fragmentation can obstruct budget approval processes or delay infrastructure roll-outs when political disputes override developmental agendas. This environment of political volatility ultimately distorts administrative priorities and weakens institutional focus. Service delivery, particularly in marginalised communities, becomes inconsistent and vulnerable to politicisation. Residents are often left in limbo as essential infrastructure projects stall or collapse due to political interference and lack of coordinated oversight. The resulting backlogs deepen socioeconomic inequalities and erode public confidence in municipal leadership. These outcomes reflect a growing governance crisis in which coalition dynamics hinder, not help, municipal responsiveness, with serious implications for local development and public trust.

This opacity creates a disjuncture between political elites and the electorate, undermining the inclusive intent at the core of consociational arrangements. In contexts where coalitions are unstable or frequently reshuffled, institutional unpredictability becomes a compounding factor. Citizens are left uncertain about policy direction, service delivery consistency, and the longevity of political leadership. Public trust in government institutions continues to decline, driven largely by perceptions of inefficiency, corruption, and a lack of responsiveness⁵⁷. Governance Capacity Theory further highlights how diminished trust impairs the state's ability to govern effectively. When citizens view institutions as unresponsive or politically captured, their willingness to cooperate with or support municipal initiatives diminishes. This has implications not only for service delivery but also for compliance with regulations, civic participation, and the broader legitimacy of governance itself. In this context, public trust becomes both a barometer of institutional performance and a determinant of future administrative success.

Moreover, the symbolic value of political trust cannot be understated. In a post-apartheid democratic state still grappling with inequality, the perception that political elites are colluding in self-serving arrangements, especially within fractured coalitions, exacerbates feelings of exclusion and alienation. These dynamics are particularly pronounced in highly unequal and diverse urban spaces like Johannesburg, where service delivery failures are interpreted not merely as administrative shortcomings but as signs of systemic disregard for certain communities. Therefore, declining trust reflects a complex interplay of structural governance weaknesses, political fragmentation, and historical legacies of marginalisation.

Conclusion

⁵⁷ Bhutto, F. (2024). Trust in public institutions: Causes of decline and ways to restore it. Research Consortium Archive, 2(3), 123-131.

This study examined the administrative implications of coalition governance in South Africa through the lens of the GNU, drawing on consociational democracy and governance capacity theory. The findings demonstrate that while coalition arrangements may enhance political inclusion and representation, they do not automatically translate into administrative coherence or effective service delivery. Instead, the GNU illustrates how power-sharing arrangements can generate fragmented authority, politicised administrative processes, and weakened coordination, thereby undermining governance performance. From a theoretical perspective, the study advances public administration scholarship by highlighting a critical limitation of consociational democracy. Although consociational theory provides a robust framework for understanding elite accommodation and political stability in divided societies, it offers limited insight into the administrative consequences of coalition governance. The South African case demonstrates that political inclusion alone is insufficient for effective governance when administrative systems must operate under conditions of shared authority and ideological diversity. Through the integration of governance capacity perspectives, the study shows that coalition governments require institutional arrangements that explicitly support coordination, accountability, and policy implementation.

Empirically, the findings contribute to the growing body of literature on coalition governance by shifting attention from coalition formation and stability to coalition administration. The analysis reveals that coalition governance reshapes the role of public administrators, often positioning them as intermediaries between competing political principals. This dynamic increases the risk of administrative paralysis and undermines public institutions' ability to deliver services consistently. These challenges are particularly pronounced in contexts such as South Africa, where historical inequalities, service delivery backlogs, and capacity constraints place additional pressure on the administrative system. The study has important implications for policy and practice. Coalition agreements should not be treated solely as political instruments but as administrative frameworks that define authority, coordination mechanisms, and conflict-resolution procedures. Strengthening institutional safeguards for bureaucratic autonomy and clarifying lines of accountability are essential for mitigating the risks associated with coalition governance. Without such measures, coalition arrangements may erode public trust and weaken democratic legitimacy. Finally, while the analysis focuses on South Africa, the findings offer broader lessons for fragmented democracies globally. As coalition governance becomes increasingly prevalent, public administration scholarship must move beyond normative assumptions about inclusion and critically examine the administrative conditions under which coalitions can govern effectively. Future research should extend this analysis through comparative studies and incorporate the perspectives of public officials to deepen understanding of coalition administration in practice.

Bibliography

- Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA). (2022). MFMA Consolidated general report on local government audit outcomes: MFMA 2020 - 21. <https://mfma-2021.agsareports.co.za/>
- Beukes, J. (2025). Coalition governance in South Africa's local government: law and practice (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).

Lehlogonolo Josiaya Malope, France Khutso Lavhelani Kgobe
Coalition Governance and Administrative Capacity: Lessons from South Africa's Government of National Unity

- Beukes, J. (2025). Coalition governance in South Africa's local government: law and practice (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).
- Bhutto, F. (2024). Trust in public institutions: Causes of decline and ways to restore it. *Research Consortium Archive*, 2(3), 123-131.
- BOGAARDS, M. (2026). Consociationalism in Belgium. *The Oxford Handbook of Belgian Politics*, 80.
- Bouckaert, G., Peters, B. G., & Verhoest, K. (2010). Coordination of public sector organizations (pp. 13-33). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Caluwaerts, D., & Reuchamps, M. (2020). Still Consociational: Belgian Democracy, 50 Years after 'the Politics of Accommodation'. *Politics Low Countries*, 2, 28.
- Cheng, Y. D., Pandey, S., & Hall, J. (2022). Introduction to the Virtual Issue: Advancing Public Policy Research through the Lens of Public Administration
- Corbett, J., Veenendaal, W., & Connell, J. (2021). The core executive and small states: Is coordination the primary challenge?. *Public Administration*, 99(1), 103-117.
- Demchak, C. (2021). Achieving systemic resilience in a great systems conflict era. *The Cyber Defense Review*, 6(2), 51-70.
- Dladla, K. F. (2018). The impact of the legal framework for local government on building and sustaining coalitions in municipal councils.
- Dlamini, S. (2017). Historical analysis of power-sharing and consociational democratic practice in South Africa. *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation*, 6(1), 7-35.
- Dlamini, S. N. (2015). *The Theory and Application of Consociational Democracy in South Africa: A Case Study of KwaZulu-Natal* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg).
- Du Plessis, A. R., & Lues, L. (2024). Uncovering the Nexus Between Coalition Theory and the Political-Administrative Dichotomy: In search of a South African multiple approach framework. *Administratio Publica*, 32(2).
- Grofman, B. (2013). Electoral rules and ethnic representation and accommodation: Combining social choice and electoral system perspectives. *Power sharing in deeply divided places*, 67-93.
- GUMBO, B. (2022). *Power sharing and political stability: Creating inclusive governance for development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Free State, Faculty of Humanities).
- Hess, D. J. (2018). Energy democracy and social movements: A multi-coalition perspective on the politics of sustainability transitions. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 40, 177-189.

- Howlett, M., & Ramesh, M. (2016). A chilles' heels of governance: critical capacity deficits and their role in governance failures. *Regulation & Governance*, 10(4), 301-313.
- Ihembe, M. A., Isike, C., & Onwuzuruigbo, I. (2024). Coalition or Government of National Unity? Critical reflections on the 2024 elections in South Africa. *Politikon*, 51(3-4), 163-184.
- Kanyane, M. (2016). Interplay of intergovernmental relations conundrum. *State of the Nation South Africa 2016: Who is in Charge?: Mandates, Accountability and Contestations in the South African State*, 92-106.
- Kgobe, F. K. L. (2024). Assessing the efficacy of public participation in the enhancement of public service delivery planning in Polokwane local municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).
- Kikasu, E.T. and Pillay, S.S. 2024. Forecasting an Inevitable Coalition Government at the National Level in South Africa: A New Path to Public Administration and Governance. *Open Journal of Political Science*. 14(01):28-51
- Krauss, S., & Kluever, H. (2023). Cabinet formation and coalition governance: The effect of portfolio allocation on coalition agreements. *Government and Opposition*, 58(4), 862-881.
- Lehmbruch, G. (2019). The organization of society, administrative strategies, and policy networks: Elements of a developmental theory of interest systems. In *Political Choice* (pp. 121-158). Routledge.
- Lijphart, A. (2007). *Thinking about democracy: Power sharing and majority rule in theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Makole, K. R., Ntshangase, B. A., & Adewumi, S. A. (2022). Coalition governance: Unchartered waters in South African political landscape. *Business Ethics and Leadership*, 6(4), 23 - 37.[http://doi.org/10.21272/bel.6\(4\).23-37.2022](http://doi.org/10.21272/bel.6(4).23-37.2022)
- Makubalo, X., Rulashe, T., & Gwala, N.N., 2025. An Exploration of Political Polarisation and Coalition Governance in South African Local Government: Stability and Service Delivery Considerations. *Journal of Current Social and Political Issues*. 3(1); 15-32
- Mamokhere, J. (2025). Service delivery conundrums in South African municipalities. *Insights into Regional Development*, 7(2), 30-42.
- Mamokhere, J., & Kgobe, F. K. L. (2023). Service delivery protests in South African municipalities: Trends, factors, impacts and recommendations. *social sciences and education research review*, 10(2), 49-59.
- Mamokhere, John. "Understanding the Complex Interplay of Governance, Systematic, and Structural Factors Affecting Service Delivery in South African Municipalities." *Commonwealth Youth & Development* 20.2 (2022).
- Maneng, N. S. (2022). Power-sharing in South Africa's municipalities: The case of Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan municipalities from 2016. Master's Dissertation. University of Free State

Lehlogonolo Josiaya Malope, France Khutso Lavhelani Kgobe
Coalition Governance and Administrative Capacity: Lessons from South Africa's Government of National Unity

- Mileji, G. (2011). 'Power-Sharing Government Mechanisms' are they a Solution or an Obstacle to Democratisation in Africa? a Focus on South Africa and Zimbabwe (Master's thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa)).
- Nzo, T. Z. L. (2019). Local government party politics and ANC councillor representation: the dynamics of council decision-making in South Africa. Doctoral Thesis, University of Edinburgh.
- Olver, C. (2017). *How to steal a city: the battle for Nelson Mandela Bay, an inside account.* Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Olver, C. (2021). Power, institutions and rents in two South African cities. *Area Development and Policy*, 6(3), 250-270.
- Olver, C. (2021). The impact of coalitions on South Africa's metropolitan administrations. *Marriages of inconvenience: The politics of coalition South Africa*, 267-302.
- Pholoma, M., Lubinga, S. N., Masiya, T., & Madumo, O. S. (2024). The influence of unstable coalition governments in Gauteng metropolitan municipalities. *Journal of Local Government*
- Pildes, R. H. (2023). Political Fragmentation in the Democracies of the West. *BYU J. Pub. L.*, 37, 209.
- Powell, D.M. 2024. The Idea of Power-Sharing in South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Constitutional Democracy (1983–1993). In *Power-Sharing in the Global South: Patterns, Practices and Potentials*. Cham: Springer International Publishing
- Reddy, T. (2010). ANC decline, social mobilization and political society: Understanding South Africa's evolving political culture. *Politikon*, 37(2-3), 185-206.
- Rudy B. Andeweg. 2000. Consociational Democracy. *Annual Review Political Science*. 3:509-536. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.509>
- Saul, T. F., & Maleka, M. C. (2025). The Effects of Coalition Governance on Municipalities in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 60(1-1), 408-426.
- Saunders C H, Sierpe A, von Plessen C, Kennedy A M, Leviton L C, Bernstein S L et al. Practical thematic analysis: a guide for multidisciplinary health services research teams engaging in qualitative analysis *BMJ* 2023; 381 :e074256 doi:10.1136/bmj-2022-074256
- Shai, K. 2024. Local Experiences of Local Government's Coalition Politics in South Africa. In *Enhancing Democracy with Coalition Governments and Politics* (pp. 112-123). IGI Global.
- Sokani, A., Yende, N., & Thwala, S. (2024). (Not) Learning From Experience: Coalition Government in South African Municipalities From the Perspective of Context-Based Theory. *Journal of Public Administration*, 59(3), 516-531.

- Stephen, M. D., & Parízek, M. (2019). New powers and the distribution of preferences in global trade governance: From deadlock and drift to fragmentation. *New Political Economy*, 24(6), 735-758.
- Steytler, N. 2024. A Century of South African Constitutional Identities. *Constitutional Identity and Constitutionalism in Africa*. p.139
- Svara, J. (2020). Woodrow Wilson and the tradition of dualism in public administration. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.
- Svara, J. H. (1998). The politics-administration dichotomy model as aberration. *Public administration review*, 51-58.
- Sweeney, K. (2025). *Party Systems and Bureaucratic Politicization: The Coalition Effect*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Chicago.
- Tsheola, J., & Sebola, M. (2023). Public trust deficit in democratic state and political institutions: Ominous Signposts for South Africa. *International Journal of Research in Business & Social Science*, 12.
- Vercesi, M. (2016). Coalition Politics and Inter-Party Conflict Management: A Theoretical Framework. *Politics & Policy*, 44(2), 168-219.
- Williams, M. J. (2021). Beyond state capacity: bureaucratic performance, policy implementation and reform. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 17(2), 339-357.
- Yimenu, B., 2024. Federalism and state restructuring in Africa: a comparative analysis of origins, rationales, and challenges. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. 54(1):6-33