THE IMPACT OF COALITION POLITICAL PARTIES IDEOLOGIES IN LESOTHO, 2012-2020

9

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1 Introduction

Political party ideologies in Lesotho have changed over time as a consequence of coalition politics. In 2012, Lesotho saw an emergence of coalition politics. While coalitions are normal in other countries, it was the first time elections produced a hung parliament in Lesotho's political history. The 2012, 2015 and 2017 general elections were all inconclusive. No single political party could form the government on its own. When it came to coalition formation, none of these parties had prior knowledge about this, but they still formed coalitions nevertheless. Coalition governments, in most cases, are composed of political parties that share a similar ideology. Their shared policy outlook tends to form the basis of their agreement. The usual reason for such an arrangement is that no single party has achieved an absolute majority after an election.

Party coalitions have become very important in contemporary African politics, both in parliamentary and presidential systems. In the 1960s, multiparty politics were banned and immediately after independence, dominant one-party systems replaced them. In Lesotho, from 1970 to 1986, political parties were banned by the then ruling Basotho National Party (BNP) (Khaketla,1971). These parties were further banned from 1986 to 1993 during the era of military rule (Matlosa & Sello, 2005). Lesotho's political parties were only allowed to function after 1993 constitutional reforms, which allowed a free democratic process. Conversely, this period ushered in one dominant political party, Basotho Congress Party (BCP), until 1998 when electoral reforms were introduced, and a new electoral Model of Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) representation was introduced (Likoti, 2009).

In assessing political parties' ideologies on coalition parties in Lesotho, it is important to understand their role in influencing political parties to govern. Ideology as a concept is a very crucial aspect of politics. The French philosopher Destutt de Tracy was amongst the first to coin this term (ideology) (Heywood, 1997). He believes ideology refers to "a new science of ideas that set out to uncover the origins of conscious thought and ideas" (Heywood, 1997:40). Liberals and conservatives described it as an instrument of social control to ensure obedience and subservience. Ideologies provide an account of the current situation and foster a good future for society by illustrating how a desirable political change can be arrived at. Ideology as a comprehensive set of beliefs in a political world describes political goals and the means of achieving these desirable goals (Danziger, 1998).

Popper (1962) argues that it is a closed system of thought and, therefore, all-encompassing. According to this analogy, this concept has something to say about virtually all political issues: moral and social issues. It is practically impossible to disprove ideology because there is an almost possible explanation for any deviation. In most cases, ideology is opposed to scientific thinking, which always produces falsifiable hypotheses since it is a grand theory that explains everything.

Putnam (1973) described ideology as a set of beliefs, values and goals affecting style and action. For example, conservatism, socialism and liberalism all serve as a guide to their adherents. It serves a useful function by enabling society to explain, justify and order several issues which otherwise would have been a major challenge to explain. Thomson (2016) argues that ideology provides an explanation for current events and interprets history. It, therefore, provides a set of values that political supporters adhere to. It shapes how people identify themselves. Similarly, it can serve as an identity with certain political beliefs propelled by a particular political party. Since ideology is also a socialising force, it also provides the basis of social order.

It can also be argued that "ideology binds both the state and civil society together, and it provides governments with the mission, coherence and most importantly their legitimacy" (Thomson, 2016:31). Similarly, coalition governments, in most cases, are bound by similar ideology. Coalition governments tend to cooperate and defend each other to protect the coalition marriage. Therefore, "people with similar worldviews will cooperate to further mutual interests and defend this lifestyle against competitors" (Thomson, 2016:31). Conversely, where the ideology is weak, the likelihood of the collapse of that coalition is high. Ideology can also emerge during crises, and parties can coalesce to avert such crises. Ideology is commonly used to mean any more or less cohesive political principles such as liberalism, conservatism, Marxism or socialism (Tansey, 2008). Like other parties in Africa, Lesotho political parties follow their ideology depending on the then prevailing

political circumstances when they were formed. The historical formation of these parties reflects the then existing political environment in Lesotho. To conceptualise the ideology of Lesotho political parties, their origin forms a key aspect of that understanding.

Ideology binds people together, more especially those that share the same worldview. This stems from the fact that in people's understanding of politics, emotional identification with, and evaluation of political reality, ideology acts as a kind of radar that directs the practice of politics and their interpretation. It guides, supports, restrains and thus rationalises political action. As a systematic and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organisation of society as a whole, ideology looks into the past, explains the current political situation, and offers a vision of the future. It can be argued that "ideology is a persuasive argument designed to motivate active involvement on the part of its adherents … tends to be personalised and turned into a sacred belief similar to religious beliefs" (Nnoli,1986:150) like in Lesotho where some people believe in congress or nationalist parties. Ideologies are, therefore, action-oriented motivation and seek to promote a particular social and political order, which urge people to strive to achieve. Most ideologies such as socialism, conservatism, and liberalism overlap considerably (Garner, 2009).

This chapter is divided into five sections, including this introduction. The second section analyses the shifts in party ideology before the onset of a coalition government. The third section, borrowing from the above framework, illustrates the coalition government formation and shaping of party ideologies. The fourth section evaluates the impact of shifting ideologies on Lesotho's democratisation and stability. The section argues that the impact of the era of coalitions on political parties' ideologies can be measured in terms of several factors, specifically the ideological homogeneousness of these political parties. The conclusion forms the last section of this chapter.

2 Shifts in party ideology formation before the onset of coalition governments

The first pre-independence political party in Lesotho, Basutoland African Congress (BAC), which was later called the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), was founded in 1952, under the leadership of its founder Ntsu Mokhehle. The party "was the first to solicit a mass base and, its victory in Basutoland's initial local government election of 1960, seemed destined to lead the nation to independence" (Weisfelder, 1999:1). BCP became aggressive in pushing the political liberation agenda. Its Pan-Africanist ideological thrust became even more robust after Mokhehle had participated in the All African People's Conference in Ghana (Accra) in December 1958. During this conference, he was also elected as a member of this organisations' Executive under Nkrumah's leadership (Matlosa & Sello, 2005).

The BCP derived its inspiration and motive from the philosophy of egalitarianism and Pan-Africanist outlook. The philosophy of egalitarianism denotes that the party has a strong peasant base and obligation. Its leadership was uniquely of peasant origin and background, and its roots are firmly set in the harsh rural environment and experiences rather than in elitist and aristocratic circumstances and comfort. The BCP aimed to reduce inequality and promote egalitarian social communities (KymLicka, 1991; Giddens, 1989). During this period, both the chiefs and the powerful Catholic Church became suspicious of the BCP motives in leading Lesotho's independence.

These forces perceived Mokhehle then as a communist and against the churches in Lesotho. During the time when the movement towards independence gained momentum, suspicions also grew; hence, BCP mobilised the broad coalition forces to grumble (Weisfelder, 1999).

Mokhehle's party was soon followed by the formation of Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) in 1957. Chief Seepheephe Matete "together with other influential chiefs turned their backs on the BCP and formed the Marema-Tlou Party, which in 1962 merged with the Freedom Party" (Matlosa & Sello, 2005:20), under the leadership of Makalo Khaketla who was the Deputy President of BCP then. This was precipitated by "disagreement about the role of paramount Chief but came after long disillusionment with Mokhehle's authoritarian mode of operation" (Weisfelder, 1999:44).

To date, MFP is still pursuing its monarchist ideology and royalist agenda. Following the formation of MFP above, the BAC/BCP militancy motivated the formation of another political party, the Basutoland National Party (BNP) in 1959. This party was called Basotho National Party (BNP). It was under the leadership of Chief Leabua Jonathan (Sixishe, 1984). The party had strong backing from the Catholic Church, which ostensibly supported its establishment (Matlosa & Sello, 2005).

Apart from the party's (BNP) backing and "strong influence of the Catholic Church in the formation and ideological orientation of the BNP, other factors that triggered the emergence of this party emanated within the BAC itself" (Matlosa & Sello, 2006:21). The party promoted religious values and supported the Catholic Church in particular (Sixishe, 1984). It is important to note that the leader of BNP, "Chief Leabua had been a member of the Basutoland Congress Party, as indeed were most of the Chiefs" (Khaketla, 1971:18).

Weisfelder (1999) argues that most of the founders of BNP, including Leabua Jonathan, Gabriel Manyeli, and Patrick Mota, had originally been BAC members and sympathetic to its ideas. However, all these BNP founders were wary about the aggressive stance taken by BAC towards the Catholic Church and the Chiefs. Jonathan concluded to form the BNP with his colleagues after attending a Conservative party conference in Britain. He declared that "his participation in a Conservative party supporting the traditional way of life and

basic Christian values would have ample precedent in the British parliamentary pattern" (Weisfelder, 1999:26). It was these reasons, amongst others, that underpinned the BNP formation. Jonathan argued then that BNP would support this conservative ideological outlook from that period onwards.

It must also be noted that, in 1961, Mokhehle suspended and expelled some of the BCP members. He argued that communists in his party would not be entertained (Weisfelder, 1999). BCP stalwarts such as Robert Matji and others were ejected from the party. Matji and his group eventually formed the Communist Party of Lesotho (Khaketla, 1971). This party later breathed life into a new political party called Popular Front for Democracy in the early 1990s (PFD) (Matlosa & Sello, 2005).

These developments produced fragmented political parties and a weak democratic culture in Lesotho. All these fragmented parties have a direct and indirect link to the Basutoland African Congress (BAC) since Lesotho's pre- and post-independence period in 1966. The consequence of all these changes affected the democratic process and future prosperity of Lesotho.

3 Coalition governments and the shaping of party ideologies

The emergence of coalition governments has become a global phenomenon. The composition, nature and life expectancy of a coalition government varies from country to country, depending on specific political circumstances. However, coalition precipitants remain more or less the same. Some of these precipitants, motivating coalition formation, first and foremost, are related to political discontent (Yellappa, 2020). In fact, coalitions are a result rather than a cause of political unrest. The dissatisfaction with the single majority rule and its failure to respond to the changing public needs forces the electorate to resort to other alternatives. In Lesotho for instance, the formation of the coalition, which the ABC led in 2012, was motivated mainly by anti-Mosisili (then-Prime Minister and leader of DC) sentiments (Motsamai, 2015).

These parties feared congress dominance under Pakalitha Mosisili, especially his welfare policies of free education and old-age pension policy that appeared to be attracting more followers. Ironically, all Lesotho coalitions and political parties adopted these policies. Their fears were not grounded on ideology but motivated by an office-seeking mentality. This also proved that their ideological outlook (ABC, LCD and BNP) was not markedly different from the DC Leader's (Motsamai, 2015).

It can be argued that the emergence of the coalition was a direct reflection of "the failure of Lesotho's political elites to cooperate for the greater good, itself a manifestation of the historical legacy of elite fragmentation and mistrust produced what was described as the

assurance or coordination dilemma" (Monyake, 2020:3). This was a manifestation of a lack of trust amongst political elites where there was no coordination and reciprocity. The absence of compromise and collaboration between rival political elites has made it difficult for the emergence of consensus building. For this reason, among others, it made the era of coalitions in Lesotho very unstable.

In most cases, some members of the then ruling majority party were not content with the working of the party and consequently opted to break away and form smaller factions as demonstrated in Table 9.1. These factions then frame their own policies and developmental programmes, though not radically different from those of the parent party, having a somewhat different approach towards issues (Yellappa, 2020). This was because all these parties have a similar ideology and are fragments of one main political party, the BCP. Their shared origin, history and similar ideological outlook "can be characterised in the game-theoretic parlance as a zero-sum game, wherein winner takes all and attempts to vanquish the opponents either by fair or foul means" (Matlosa, 1999:176). This creates instability and crisis within the political spheres and confusion among the voters.

Coalition government under these circumstances becomes a prerequisite rather than an alternative. Since no country is static, the other reason for coalition formation could be traced to fundamental changes in the structure of the society (Yellappa, 2020). A developing country like Lesotho provides conditions most conducive for a coalition. Lesotho politics has faced fragmentation of political parties and socio-economic challenges. In such a political environment, a single political party can't cater to the variegated and heterogeneous needs of the people (Yellappa, 2020). The result is the mushrooming of a multitude of parties, each representing the interests of a particular section (Yellappa, 2020). Lesotho today, with a population of 2 million, has 41 political parties. With the current Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system (Likoti, 2009) it is clear that no single party will govern alone.

The emergence of pluralistic politics in the early 1990s motivated the emergence of coalition governments to secure sufficient seats in parliament to form stable governments. These power-sharing governments were so popular in most developing countries, especially in Southern Africa, where "others have been accused of being unprincipled because their members were ideologically remote and therefore perceived as political opportunists interested in short-term gains rather than long-term policy goals" (Kadima, 2006:1).

The end of the Cold War in Europe witnessed ideological shifts in most developing countries. Most countries in Africa went through ideological changes that were influenced by socio-economic changes:

> even in those few countries with relatively more delineated ideologies (eg, Mauritius and South Africa) high poverty levels have forced party leaders to grant the state a comparative large role in the market economy in order to fast-track national socio-

economic development. This convergence of the main priorities creates a degree of connection among the majority of mainstream political parties, thus justifying why most parties can compatibly share power. Divisions tend to be, in essence, personality-driven rather than ideologically based. (Kadima, 2014:5).

The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of coalition theories based on size and ideology (Kadima, 2006). Most of these theories drew their experience from Western Europe. These theories' main thrust was to explain coalition government formation in European parliamentary democracies. While these theories are important, they were limited in explaining coalition government formation fully in most African countries. That being the case, "they centre on the effects of a potential coalition size and ideology on its chances of formation and may be subdivided into office-seeking and policy-seeking theories" (Kadima, 2013:4).

The office-seeking theory assumes that political parties' major goal is to assume power. The formation of government is key to any political party, and cabinet positions are the ultimate payoffs. Government formation is a matter of a win and lose scenario. Since cabinet portfolios are very important to political parties, a majority coalition in parliament would not allow the existence of a minority government. Rather, it would take the spoils of the office itself. For this reason, office-driven theories are known as office-seeking or office-oriented (Kadima, 2006).

The theory assumes that it is more desirable for few political parties to form a coalition government. The numbers must be sufficient to guard against any contemplated vote of no confidence, which must be won. The 2012 coalition government of three political parties in Lesotho and the 2017 coalition of four parties were formed on this basis. The view here is that the fewer the parties that form a coalition government, the better the payoffs (Gamson, 1961; Riker, 1962). The propounders of this view argue that it's better to exclude more passengers. For them, it is easier for few political parties to reach a consensus as opposed to many parties.

The assumption on which the policy-oriented theories are based is that policy goals justify party coalitions. While these theories support some coalition formation in Lesotho, especially the 2012 and 2017 coalitions, they came short in explaining the seven parties' coalition of 2015 which was led by these parties and the May 2020 coalition led by ABC and DC which is formed by ten political parties.

Lesotho political parties are not markedly different ideologically. The articulation of ideology and similar policies by most political parties in their election manifestos (ABC 2012a, 2015b, 2017c; BNP, 2011-2012; DC & LCD, 2017) has influenced them to embrace not only neo-liberal ideology but also welfare policies. Lesotho today boasts a rich welfare system whereby there is free universal primary education and an old-age pension scheme

for citizens over seventy (70) years old (Likoti, 2008). This policy enjoys maximum support from all political parties. These parties embrace this ideological outlook and advocate for overcoming potential inequalities across the nation (ABC, 2007; Likoti, 2008).

The parties' recent manifestos indicated that BNP and other parties have become more similar in their current neo-liberal outlook (BNP, 2017; DC & LCD, 2017; ABC, 2017). Together with their fragments, these parties formed coalitions in Lesotho in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2020, as Table 9.1 below illustrates.

Table 9.1   Political parties that formed coalitions in Lesotho

POLITICAL PARTY	2012-2015 COALITION	2015–2017 COALITION	2017-2020 COALITION	2020- COALITION
ALL BASOTHO CONVENTION (ABC)				
LESOTHO CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRACY (LCD)				
BASOTHO NATIONAL PARTY (BNP)				
REFORMED CONGRESS OF LESOTHO (RCL)				
DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS (DC)				
LESOTHO CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRACY (LCD)				
POPULAR FRONT FOR DEMOCRACY (PFD)				
BASOTHO CONGRESS PARTY (BCP)				
LESOTHO PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (LPC)				
MAREMATLO FREEDOM PARTY (MFP)				
NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY (NIP)				
ALL BASOTHO CONVENTION (ABC)				
ALLIANCE OF DEMOCRATS (AD)				
BASOTHO NATIONAL PARTY (BNP)				
REFORMED CONGRESS OF LESOTHO (RCL)				
ALL BASOTHO CONVENTION (ABC)				
DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS (DC)				

Table 9.1   Political parties that formed coalitions in Lesotho (continued)

POLITICAL PARTY	2012-2015 COALITION	2015–2017 COALITION	2017-2020 COALITION	2020– COALITION
MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MEC)				
BASOTHO NATIONAL PARTY (BNP)				
POPULAR FRONT FOR DEMOCRACY (PFD)				
BASOTHO CONGRESS PARTY (BCP)				
REFORMED CONGRESS OF LESOTHO (RCD)				
NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY (NIP)				
MAREMA TLOU FREEDOM PARTY (MFP)				
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LESOTHO (DPL)				

Lesotho Coalition governments that were established since 2012 "are offshoots of either the BCP or the BNP. The BCP and BNP represent the two major streams in Lesotho politics – the congress and the nationalist movement formed in 1952 to lead the demand for independence from Britain" (Kabemba, 2003:27). However, from 2012 to date, ABC has grown exponentially to surpass both the BNP and BCP by winning 52 constituencies as compared to these parties, which failed to win even a single constituency.

The 2012 coalition government, which was led by the ABC, comprised parties that came directly from BCP. Those were BNP and LCD. The ABC and RCL, on the other hand, fragmented from LCD (Matlosa & Sello, 2005). Similarly, the 2015 DC-led coalition was composed of the same BCP and BNP family members as well. However, DC is another LCD fragment while NIP and DPL broke away from the BNP, which was also formed by former BCP stalwart Chief Leabua Jonathan.

In 2017, the ABC again repeated the same scenario of BCP direct and indirect affiliates coalition formation. However, a former Deputy Leader of DC who left the party in 2016 over their leadership squabbles formed another party, Alliance of Democrats (AD). In May 2020, the ABC leader resigned from the government, and a new coalition composed of ABC under the leadership of its former Minister of Finance, Moeketsi Majoro, and DC under the leadership Mathibeli Mokhothu, who was then the official leader of the Opposition, was formed. These parties have been able to coalesce with ease because Lesotho political parties are not markedly different ideologically.

It has been asserted that African political parties have "no significant ideological differences… surveys showed that voters could identify the parties as offering alternative policy issues" (Svasand, 2014:87). This has been the case with Lesotho's major political parties with similar ideologies and policies. One major political party, "the BCP, for example, has split five times, with no major ideological differences between the resulting parties" (Kabemba, 2003:28). Table 9.1 above demonstrated that it has been easy for these parties to form coalition governments. In 2003, for instance:

> … 19 parties that cover Lesotho political space show very little variation in ideological orientation, policy position, organisational structure or geographical dispersion, and they hardly present any alternative sets of policies for addressing the socio-economic challenges facing the country and for taking the country forward (Kabemba, 2003:27).

Nine years before the DC break-up from LCD, a direct descendant from BCP, all these parties still share a similar ideology. Therefore, Lesotho's political parties have no divergence in their ideological orientations. To a large degree, these parties embraced the now reigning hegemonic world's neo-liberal ideology (Kapa, 2013). This neo-liberal ideology refers to pluralistic politics and free-market-oriented reform policies of deregulation of capital markets, the elimination of price controls and lowering of trade barriers, amongst others. This neo-liberal ideology is sometimes referred to as "pluralism" since it focuses on the plurality of actors who play a major role within global markets (Tansey, 2008). These actors advocate for "free trade together with the minimisation of state intervention" (Garner, Ferdinand & Lawson, 2009:344).

Neo-liberals see the plethora of actors' roles as interdependent, hence the term "complex interdependence" within a given market environment. Since political parties are also interdependent within a country in terms of some policy outlook and their ideological similarities, they coalesce with each other, where the dominant goal is not security but the welfare of their citizens (Garner, et al., 2009).

A plethora of political parties dominate the current Lesotho political environment. These "parties only differ in names and colours … party manifestos are the same … the difference is only in language used in writing the manifesto and leadership" (Kabemba, 2003:27). It has been these similar ideological relations between parties that have created favourable working relations amongst them.

Most political parties in Lesotho, like liberal parties in Norway, represent egalitarian and nationalistic principles as expressed in the Constitution (Strom 2020, Constitution of Lesotho, 1983). They support small businesses, hence the recently established Ministry of Small Businesses and Enterprises (Coalition Agreement, 2015). Both the 2017 and 2020 coalition governments adopted this newly established Ministry without question. Similarly, these neo-liberal parties also made it clear in their manifesto above (ABC, 2017; BNP,

2017; LCD & DC, 2017) that they will support the public education system and protect the environment and freedoms as expressed in the 1993 Constitution of Lesotho, religion and gender equity.

What is explicit in all these coalition formations is that they have adopted similar political structures, ideology and analogous policies. It can be argued that ideology played no role in these coalition formations, but political spoils and office-seeking behaviour did. The manifestos of the above political parties do not reflect any variant ideology or policies. The only difference has been the utterances of the leadership of some of these parties who constantly complain about lack of service delivery by any party or, rather, the coalition in power at the time. Therefore:

> the only convincing explanation for the formation of coalitions seems to be the office-seeking motives of political elites. Both those elites within the ruling party and those in opposition were motivated by the desire for access to state power and, by extension, to the benefits that go with public office (Kapa, 2013:96-97).

Consequently, the formation of coalition governments in Lesotho is motivated by the office-seeking mentality of political elites and nothing else. For example, in Lesotho like, "in Mauritius, coalition formation and governance has been influenced by office-seeking strategy" (Sithanen, 2003:7) rather than other factors such as ideological considerations. Kapa (2008) observes that the leadership of most of these Lesotho political parties is just an instrument of elite circulation in power with no divergent policies. Party names may differ, but leadership faces have been seen in national politics before. Since their policies are the same, this thesis cannot be seen as a motivation for coalition formation just like in other African countries (Oyugi, 2006).

While Lesotho political parties have similar or convergent ideological orientations, this did not mean that their coalition formations derived from their ideology. Kadima, (2006) argues that, of the five countries studied – South Africa, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique and Malawi – ideological proximity of political parties in each of these countries was not a determining factor of coalition formation. He argues further that the embracing of neo-liberal ideology only moved these political parties to the centre (Kadima, 2006), which is a case in point with Lesotho political parties in Table 9.1. Therefore, "the ideological realignment of the main parties … towards the centre has reduced the importance of ideology as a differentiating factor for coalition building, collapse and revival (Kadima, 2006:229).

4 Impact of coalitions on parties' ideologies

Since neoliberal ideology emphasises the plurality of groups in the global environment, the impact of this ideology has necessitated the acknowledgement between political parties in Lesotho that "political elites compete for the consent of the governed; there may be no

equality in the distribution of power, but there is a plurality of competing groups" (Ball, 1991:231). As a result, party competition in Lesotho has become increasingly pluralistic. These parties can be categorised as falling under centre-left political cleavage.

The emergence of coalition politics in 2012, among other factors, brought political stability to Lesotho. What was more important was that "ideologies are as much a factor in the stability and political unity as a source of challenge to the existing political structures" (Ball, 1991:233). In 2012, LCD, ABC and BNP formed a coalition government. In May 2020, ABC, DC and BNP followed the same pattern of coalition formation as indicated in Table 9.1 above. Ideologies, therefore, "provide the language in which to conduct an examination of the political processes. They are a response to and a means of changing the existing political system" (Ball, 1991:233). Thus, the current consensual political system has been necessitated by the ideological proximity of these political parties.

Despite the collapse of several coalition governments in Lesotho, Basotho now believe strongly in an elected government. The era of coalition politics in Lesotho has strengthened voters' belief that coalition governments play a pivotal role in democracy. Furthermore, parties' ideologies have significantly impacted Lesotho polity by accelerating acceptance of the current political changes.

As Table 9.1 illustrates, these parties did not only form one coalition government but four coalition governments. In the past, it was argued that Lesotho's political parties had maintained adversarial relations with each other with no likelihood of establishing closed relationships and thus working together (Makoa, 2005). This thinking has disappeared. Parties, which had entrenched mistrust against each other, are now working together in a coalition government. This has been the greatest impact of ideological similarity amongst the political parties.

Martin and Vanberg (2003) argue that political parties are diverse institutions. They are, therefore, not unitary actors internally due to the size of the negotiation players with competing interests. Hence, negotiations for forming a coalition are not easy. Ideological impact on competing interests has been significant during coalition negotiation. These competing interests have shown that political leaders who are engaged in negotiations are not the only ones. A myriad of interested actors who have veto powers to influence decisions during the coalition negotiation process is also involved (Martin & Vanberg, 2003). The size of these actors also reflected their direct interests in coalition formation.

The May 2020 coalition formation in Lesotho was a case in point. The ABC faction that wanted to form a coalition government with the DC had to consult its Constituency Representatives for approval, while the other faction opposed this formation. The DC, on the other hand, had to hastily convene a congress in late March 2020 to convince the entire party leadership to approve the formation of the May 2020 Coalition. What was

very clear was that, despite the ideological closeness to these political parties, leaders who sit around a bargaining table are not the only decision-makers whose preferences are central to successful coalition bargaining. This has an important implication for coalition negotiations (Martin & Vanberg, 2003).

Another ideological impact on the speed of negotiation of coalition formation has been the number of parties engaged in bargaining. The higher the numbers of parties, the more likely the negotiations are to include party leaders who need to signal to their constituents that they are 'working hard' (Luebbert, 1986). The 2015 inconclusive elections produced a second coalition government composed of seven parties. Five of these parties had similar ideological orientations. The PFD and NIP on the other hand, had ideological proximity to these congress parties. The ideological closeness of these political parties' solidified their cooperation. During this technological era, information is easily accessible and shared easily among different political parties. Therefore, large numbers of political parties have access to correct information, whether seven in the case of 2015 or ten as in May 2020 does not affect bargaining duration, and negotiations conclude quickly as was the case in 2015 and May 2020 because they share information expeditiously. The presence of a larger number of parties implies that the number of alternative allocations of portfolios expands exponentially.

The ideological homogeneity and the size of these coalition supporters that have to be consulted have given most of them a sense of entitlement to the detriment of expertise and professionalism. In fact, "the focus on political appointments and absence of a detailed focus on policy gave rise to a cynicism that the coalition would not respond to the expectation that voters had for Lesotho's coalition government" (Prasad, 2014:28). Therefore, it can be argued that Lesotho coalition governments focused more on inclusiveness and working as one partner rather than working as partners in a coalition, which have negotiated the coalition agreement.

The ideological similarity of Lesotho political parties was also critical during coalition government formation negotiations. Martin and Vanberg (2003) argue that coalition negotiations conclude more quickly when bargaining parties are ideologically close than when they are ideologically distant. The speed within which negotiations in all four of Lesotho's Coalition governments (2012, 2015, 2017 and 2020) were concluded was indicative of the impact of ideological convergence. In alluding to the speed of Lesotho coalition formation challenges in Lesotho, Prasad (2014) argues that lack of preparedness by politicians to negotiate and cooperate, and the two weeks' constitutional requirement for the first meeting of parliament after elections precipitated rushed coalition formations without going deeper into the prerequisite of coalition formations (Constitution of Lesotho, 1993).

Despite the above ideological impact on negotiations and bargaining by many parties, Martin and Vanberg, (2003) argue further that coalition negotiations conclude more quickly the fewer the number of bargaining parties. The 2012 and 2017 Coalition governments demonstrated this. These authors demonstrated that, "a higher number of parties again reduces the winset and may therefore demand more detailed coalition agreements. Because crafting more detailed agreements will require more time, this creates the potential for delay" (Martin & Vanberg, 2003:327). The 2012 Coalition government was between the ABC, LCD and BNP. These Parties are known to harbour a long political history of acrimony against LCD even though they share similar ideologies. These parties had a history of mistrust and adversarial relations between those who left BCP in the late 1950s to form BNP and those who remained in the BCP. Despite having a history of mistrust amongst themselves (Monyake, 2020), they were able to conclude their coalition negotiations faster because they were fewer in number as opposed to the 2015 and the 2020 Coalition governments.

Their adversarial relations and mistrust were not a main feature during coalition negotiation. What was crucial for these parties was the fact that they were fewer in number and would maximise the share of benefits of incumbency. Luebbert's (1986) theory suggests that such coalitions are likely to be composed of the smallest number of political parties needed to consolidate a government majority. This presumption was based on the conjecture that the fewer the parties in a coalition the more they will maximise the share of the benefits of incumbency.

Another impact of coalition politics has been cooperation between former political adversarial (parties). In a functioning democracy, for a coalition government to be stable, it must coordinate and cooperate with all partners in the coalition marriage. Cooperating with partners who have different interests, goals, and similar policies can become the greatest challenge in the coalition between politicians, given the value and premium of cooperation in the coalition government. Additionally, conflict between political coalitions is a hallmark of vibrant democracies. To maintain a well-functioning democratic republic, individuals must negotiate with members of different political coalitions, make concessions, and ultimately cooperate. This process often unfolds in a suboptimal manner that can result in dramatic negative consequences to society, even to the point of government collapse (Balliet, et al., 2018:798).

It has been argued that "party leaders will, all other things being equal, prefer cooperation with a party whose preferences are tangential to cooperation than with a party whose preferences are convergent (Luebbert, 1986:64). In a competitive political environment, there is tension between compromising party identity and government participation. This environment opens the bargaining process and encourages parties with tangential or even conflicting policy interests to cooperate and join the government. The cooperation between these parties with similar ideologies has incentivised them to trust each other and cooperate to ensure the stability and sustainability of their coalition government. Therefore,

> ...trust and cooperation are essential to a healthy, vibrant, well-functioning democracy ... people with liberal, compared to conservative, ideologies tend to display greater concern for others' outcomes and equality in outcomes, both liberals and Conservatives tended to cooperate more with in-group, compared to out-group, member (Ballet, Tybur, Wu, Antonellis & Van Lange, 2018:815).

Since parties cooperate, especially after four and half decades of mistrusts, this is the most significant impact of coalition politics on parties' ideologies. These parties embraced neo-liberal policies because they have shifted to the Centre-left essentially because of their interests, policy similarities, and ideological convergence. Their differences have been tactical, not ideological, since they all adopted similar ideology.

Coalition governments are proving to be more radical in terms of excessive spending than the previous governments. The ideological impact of coalition governments' policy has become the modern feature of the day. Since the advent of coalition governments in Lesotho in 2012, public spending has increased considerably in areas such as old-age pension, health, education, school feeding programmes and other government intervention measures in the economy. During the beginning of the term in office, the policy positions of the cabinet reflect the overall cabinet ideology. This implies that the policy output of a coalition government reflects the coalition's preferences at the beginning of the legislative term. something that can be interpreted as a vote-seeking effort of the parties in government. The 2015 coalition government pledged to reduce poverty by addressing the plight of villagers (The Coalition Agreement for Stability and Reform, 2015). They argue that:

> The broad policy objectives and specific commitments of the Coalition Government, which are identified in this agreement, reflect its serious concerns about Lesotho's status of being a "least developed country". Despite the existence of the National Strategic Development Plan and Vision 2020, many Basotho, including those in villages and urban areas live in poverty, are unemployed, experience hunger, have no access to appropriate health services, and are serviced through poor infrastructure (The Coalition Agreement for Stability and Reform, 2015:6).

This cabinet ideology (policy) preference was to ensure that the plight of the poor and those living in villages and urban areas would be the priority of the Coalition Government. Unlike the right-wing policies, which aimed at cutting the budget, the ideological preference of this coalition government was to intervene massively in the national economy. They vouched to increase public spending to ensure maximum ideological impact and salvage the poor and the marginalised groups. Matlosa (2017) argued that, in the context of chronic unemployment and poverty, political survival easily translates into economic survival and the contestation over the control of the state, hence the rationale for coalition government intervention within the state.

The ideological impact of the coalition government in Lesotho was huge in the area of public spending. This impact motivated logrolling and sharing of spoils of the incumbency. Since the emergency of coalition governments in Lesotho, politicians have benefited immensely

from sharing the spoils of incumbency. Nowhere has the impact of ideology been more profitable than in the area of sharing the spoils of office (Sithanen, 2003; Kapa, 2008, 2013; Kadima, 2006). The benefit that goes with the office-seeking mentality has increased exponentially. Table 9.2 below illustrates that, since 2012, the first coalition cabinet posts have increased in order to accommodate political parties forming a coalition government.

Table 9.2   Composition of Lesotho Cabinets since 2012 to 2022

GOVERNMENTS	CABINET MINISTERS	DEPUTY MINISTERS	GRAND
Dominant Government 2010	18	1	19
Coalition 2012-2015	22	0	22
Coalition 2015-2017	28	7	35
Coalition 2017-2020	28	10	38
Coalition 2020-2022	28	8	36

During the era of single-party government, Lesotho had nineteen (19) cabinet ministers as opposed to 38 and 36 for subsequent coalition governments. The first coalition government in 2012 increased public spending in government to accommodate its coalition members by establishing twenty-two (22) cabinet positions. It can be argued that there is a high propensity to spend more when you have many parties in a coalition government than when you have fewer partners. This was a case in point with subsequent coalition governments.

Riker (1962) argues that political parties are office-seeking actors. They want to win elections to gain control over executive posts. They value political offices for intrinsic or instrumental reasons (Strom, 1990). The logical consequence is that public spending should increase as the number of parties forming the government increases. In terms of sharing better payoff of coalition formation (Gamson, 1961; Riker, 1962), the 2017 coalition had to provide 35 cabinet positions, the 2017 coalition government created 38 and 2020 coalition 36 cabinet positions, respectively. The presence of coalition governments fosters more logrolling and increased public spending than their one-party dominant government counterpart. Therefore, the ideological impact on public spending in Lesotho had considerably increased since the advent of coalition governments. Ministries had to be increased, and some Ministries such as Education had to be broken in two parts just to accommodate more partners in cabinet positions.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, ideology is a political thinking and new science of ideas. It is also important because it rationalises politics and activates people of similar ideological outlook to participate in politics and work together. These parties share a similar origin, and their

ideology serves as a guide to their adherents. This has been a case in point with Lesotho political parties. Despite their similar policies and ideological homogeneity, all political parties in Lesotho have embraced neo-liberal policies of the free market and minimal state intervention. They also support welfare and egalitarian policies. Therefore, forming a coalition has not been a hard and fast rule for these parties.

Coalition politics and political parties' ideologies had a profound impact on Lesotho's political landscape. This impact has produced pluralistic politics where many parties compete for state power. Therefore, pluralistic politics in Lesotho have now become the order of the day. The impact of coalition politics on political parties' ideologies have created much needed political stability and democratisation.

There has been an ideological impact on competing interests with veto powers during negotiations. Various actors have been involved during these negotiation processes. The 2015 and 2020 May coalition negotiations between DC and ABC were the cases in point. Ideology has been instrumental during bargaining between many political parties in determining the speed of negotiations and between few parties in quickly concluding coalition negotiations.

Political parties' ideological outlook has made them cooperate in coalition formation and, thus, govern together. This happened despite parties having had a history of mistrust and adversarial relations.

The other impact of ideology has been on social policy and public spending. The coalition governments have increased spending in order to salvage the poor from poverty and other marginalised communities. The coalition governments have also increased public spending in order to share the benefits of incumbency. Since 2012 to date, cabinet positions were increased from 19 to 38. This was done in order to accommodate coalition partners. The ideological impact on sharing the payoff and spoils of the coalition posts have increased logrolling and office-seeking motives among coalition government partners.

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