Chapter 1
Factors and Conditions Triggering the Formation of Political Coalitions

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ABSTRACT

Party coalitions have become very important in contemporary African politics in parliamentary and presidential systems. The dawn of democracy in the third world, and Africa in particular, witnessed significant democratic developments. African political parties have increasingly seen the value of co-operation and have built coalitions and alliances to achieve similar goals. Key amongst these developments have been the formation of political coalitions. Several factors and conditions have triggered the formation of political coalitions and alliances in most African countries. A coalition is a grouping of rival political parties that, in most cases, are motivated by the perception of a common threat or recognition that their goals cannot be attained by not coalescing. The management of a coalition is also critical in order to attain stability. The rationale is that stability becomes important to parties when they enter their coalition pact.

INTRODUCTION

A Coalition government is a democratic mechanism through which willing parties come together to power to lead the Nation. Their agreement is usually based on a shared policy agreement they want to pursue in government. The critical aspect of Coalitions is that they enhance democracy. When political players work together, the net results benefit the broader electorate. The rationale for forming Coalitions was to strengthen democracy. It can also be argued that democracy is unthinkable without democratic parties, and we cannot have political parties without democracy. Additionally, "political parties created modern democracy, and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties." (Schattsch-

neider,1942, pp. 1-2). Therefore, political parties and democracy are mutually inclusive. You cannot have one without the other.

Diamond (1995 and 1999) defines democracy as the best form of government, better than any imagined option. He views it as the only business in town. In any democracy, political parties are critical for entrenching democratic culture and practice. Democracy has given political parties a high premium of cooperating and strengthening democracy by forming Coalitions. For instance, some parties at the "local government level, Coalition or multiparty governments were formed to ensure that the business of government was carried out" (Kadima, 2006, p.15).

Since independence, most African countries, such as Mauritius, have been governed through Coalition governments. In other countries like Kenya," the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) won the 2002 elections, giving meaning, for the first time in nearly 40 years, to democratic alternation" (Kadima, 2006, p. vii). In South Africa, alliances were formed amongst opposition parties and Coalitions during the first democratic elections to strengthen democracy in governing the country and, thus, contribute to nation-building and reconciliation. These alliances and Coalitions formed by different political parties within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and throughout Africa were instrumental in triggering democratic consolidation. It must be stated that "some party Coalitions were formed for either strengthening the governing party or creating a viable and stronger opposition" (Kadima, 2006, p.15). Therefore, democracy is strengthened more by the establishment of Coalition governments.

In most African countries in the 1960s, multiparty politics were banned, and immediately after independence, they were replaced by one-party dominant systems. In Lesotho from 1970 to 1986, political parties were banned by the then ruling Basotho National Party (BNP) (Khaketla, p.1971). During military rule, these parties were banned from 1986 to 1993 (Matlosa and Sello, 2005). Political parties in Lesotho were only allowed to function after the 1993 Constitutional reforms, which allowed a free democratic process. Conversely, this period ushered one dominant political party, the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), until 1998, when electoral reforms were introduced, and a new electoral Model of Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMP) was introduced (Likoti, 2009).

This chapter is divided into five sections, including this introduction. The following section defines a Coalition government. This section forms a framework for understanding Coalition governments. Section three discusses the various reasons for forming Coalitions. It presents an overview of the constellations of factors that provide a rationale for forming Coalition governments. The fourth section discusses the management of Coalitions to ensure their stability and efficiency. The sections emphasise stability as one of the prerequisites for managing this cooperation, amongst other factors. The section put forward some essential factors which must be considered in managing a successful Coalition government that will strengthen democracy. The conclusion forms the last section of this chapter.

BACKGROUND

Towards Definition of Coalitions Governments

The advent of Coalition governments has become a global phenomenon. The composition, nature and life expectancy of Coalition government varies from country to country, depending on specific political circumstances. 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,p.1).

While Coalitions have been defined differently by various authors, what is important to note is that Coalition governments are always composed of two or more parties that come together to form a stable and efficient government. A Coalition government is, therefore, a form of government representing political parties with diverse interests. Coalition governments aggregate diverse interests and manage them to stabilise their government. These political parties are "broad governing Coalitions that had the job of aggregating interests and a whole package of policies into programmes" (Dearlove and Saunders, 1991, p.131). These types of government consist of two or more political parties that must compromise on principles and shared mandates to govern the country (Finley, 1984).

Coalition parties, therefore, work on mutual trust and agreed procedures that encourage collective decision-making and responsibility while respecting each party's identity (Finn, Mike., Seldom, Anthony., Finn, Michael, 2015). Furthermore, Coalition partners, individually and collectively, must display strong unity to forestall any latent fragmentation. That notwithstanding, Cabinet parties must still adhere to the concept of collective responsibility. Cabinet decisions remain binding to all Coalition partners, and consultation forms the hallmark of this vital agreement to maintain the stability of the government. This type of government usually comprises different parties, sometimes different ideologies. A Coalition government, therefore, leads to consensus-based politics and reflects the popular opinion of the electorate within a country.

A Coalition government, on the other hand, takes time to form a government. Parties must subject themselves to a laborious and lengthy negotiation process to plead with other partners to downgrade their demands and expectations. Israel has gained notoriety for taking months to negotiate to form Coalitions. After the April 9, 2019, elections, it took five months for Israel to form a Coalition government on September 17, 2019 (Levush, 2019). Despite these limitations, Coalition governments play a pivotal role in democracy.

Factors and Conditions Triggering the Formation of Political Coalitions

The world has witnessed several Coalitions since the Second World War. Nigeria has since 1954 seen most governments based on one form of Coalition or the other (Nnoli, 1986). While factors and conditions triggering the formation of Coalitions vary globally, Coalition precipitants remain the same. Some of these precipitants motivating Coalition formation, the first and the most apparent cause, are related to political discontent (Yellappa, 2020). 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 was led by the All-Basotho Convention (ABC) in 2012, was motivated mainly by anti-Mosisili (Then Prime Minister and leader of Democratic Congress (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 in ideology but motivated by an office-seeking mentality. This also proved that their ideological outlook (ABC, LCD and BNP) was similar to that of the DC Leader (Motsamai, 2015).

In Lesotho, for instance, it can be argued that the emergence of Coalition governments 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,p.3). This manifested a lack of trust amongst political elites without coordination and reciprocity. The absence of compromise and collaboration between rival political elites has made the emergency of consensus-building difficult. It was for this reason that, the Coalitions in Lesotho became so unstable (The Post newspaper, 2015).

Political parties form Coalitions for various reasons. In Germany, as elsewhere in Europe, political parties chose to be in power rather than in opposition. The 2010 Coalition government in the UK was motivated by a similar argument of being inside rather than outside (Martin and Vanberg, 2011). Political parties form Coalitions because they are interested in supporting an existing cabinet or party or fear that other opposition parties will form an alternative government.

Parties in Coalition tend to search for a common ground rather than conviction and politics of principle (Heywood, 1997). For any successful formation of a Coalition government, the politics of principles had to be conveniently abandoned to achieve this project. While this realism can be regarded as "implicitly corrupt, in that parties are encouraged to abandon policies and principles in their quest for power" (Heywood, 1997, p.246), this does not mean parties will conduct themselves politically incorrectly.

Rational for Coalition Formation

Political parties are rational and goal-oriented. They all seek to be elected to office. Coalition stability and partners' cooperation incentivise office-seeking parties to maintain the Coalition to avoid the loss of executive posts. Therefore, these parties have strong incentives to avoid activities that might risk the government's break-up. This office-seeking behaviour drives their interests and, if not well managed, can easily risk the Coalition's stability and cause the government to collapse. Riker (1962) saw this office-seeking mentality as instrumental in winning elections to control the Executive offices. This forms the primary motivation for being in politics in the first instance.

Similarly, Anthony Downs (1957), in his celebrated work, 'An Economic Theory of Democracy', argues that parties are political firms selling policy packages to maximise votes to win and enjoy the fruits of government office (Likoti, 2008). These two imperatives of winning votes and policy prioritisation have made it difficult for Coalition parties to ensure their government's stability. To ensure stability, Coalition partners must coordinate their efforts.

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 mainly aimed to explain Coalition government formation in European parliamentary democracies. While these theories are critical, they could have been more comprehensive in explaining Coalition government formation 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, 2014, p.4). Therefore, office-seeking theory assumes that political parties' primary goal is to assume power. This is derived from the belief that government formation is vital, especially with ample seats.

The theory assumes that it is more desirable for a few political parties to form a Coalition government. The number of members of Parliament must be sufficient to guard against any contemplated vote of no confidence, which must be won. The 2022 Coalition government of four 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 is better to exclude more passengers. For them, it is easier for a few political parties to reach a consensus than many parties.

Government formation is critical 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 essential to political parties, a majority Coalition in Parliament would not allow the existence of a minority government. Instead, it would take the spoils of office itself. For this reason, office-driven theories are known as office-seeking or office-oriented (Kadima, 2006).

When political parties enter a Coalition government, they gain power, and more political benefits are guaranteed with power. The most central benefit is enacting policies and controlling the entire state apparatus (Lynch and Fairclough, 2010). However, unlike political parties in single-party governments, which can independently decide legislation, political parties in Coalition governments are constrained by their Coalition partnership.

The central dilemma of Coalition parties has been the governance of the Coalition government itself. Once in a Coalition, political parties must demonstrate unity to govern together. They cannot independently select and prioritise their issues, unlike when they are outside the Coalition partnership at will. In a Coalition, they are constrained in their selective issue emphasis once they enter a Coalition government. They should align their issue priorities with those of other Coalition partners (s). They cannot make unilateral decisions, unlike in a single-party government, where political parties can make decisions of their own free will.

Most major parties tend to dislike Coalitions because the grouping tends to overstate the strength of minor parties. For instance, the 2015 Coalition government in Lesotho was a composition of seven political parties. Four parties won one proportional seat each, while the fifth got three seats. Each of the four political parties had to be given a Ministerial position, and the fifth party was given two Ministers: a cabinet Minister and a Deputy Minister. Additionally, the leading parties had to treat these minor parties as if they had won more seats. It was clear that the strength of these minor parties had been overrated.

Homogeneous Ideology

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 socioeconomic changes,

Even in those few countries with relatively more delineated ideologies (e.g., Mauritius and South Africa), high poverty levels have forced party leaders to grant the state a comparatively large role in the market economy to fast-track national socioeconomic 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, p.5)

It has been asserted that African political parties have "no significant ideological differences" (Svasand, 2014, p.87). Surveys showed that voters could identify the parties as offering alternative policy issues. This has been the case with Lesotho's major political parties, which have similar ideologies and policies. One major political party, "the BCP, for example, has split five times, with no major ideologi-

cal differences between the resulting parties" (Kabemba, 2003, p.28). This demonstrates that it has been easy for these parties to form Coalition governments. Kabemba (2003) notes that:

… 19 parties that cover Lesotho's political space show minimal variation in ideological orientation, policy position, organisational structure or geographical dispersion, and they hardly present any alternative sets of policies for addressing the socioeconomic challenges facing the country and for taking the country forward. (Kabemba, 2003.p.27)

Therefore, Lesotho's political parties have remained consistent in their ideological orientations. Several political parties dominate the current Lesotho political landscape. Lesotho has over 54 political parties with similar ideologies originating from the first political party in Lesotho, the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), which was established in 1956. These "parties only differ in names and colours … party manifestos are the same … the difference is only in the language used in writing the manifesto and leadership" (Kabemba, 2003, p.27). Arguably, their ideological similarity has made it easier for these parties to coalesce. Additionally, Coalition formation in Lesotho, Mauritius and Kenya presents one similar feature of insuring elite circulation and cooperation in Coalition governments. Political parties in these countries are governed by people from one major political party in each of these polities.

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, eliminating price controls and lowering trade barriers. This neo-liberal ideology is sometimes called "pluralism" since it focuses on the plurality of actors who play a significant role within global markets (Tansey, 2008). These actors advocate for "free trade together with the minimisation of state intervention" (Garner, Ferdinand and Lawson, 2009, p.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 regarding some policy outlook and ideological similarities, they coalesce with each other, where the dominant goal is not security but the welfare of their citizens (Garner et al., 2009).

While Lesotho political parties have convergent ideological proximity, this (ideology) does not mean that the trigger for their Coalition formation derives from this ideology. Kadima (2006) maintained that in countries like Kenya, South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi and Mauritius, their ideological orientation did not determine Coalition formation. Their neo-liberal orientation only moved them to the center, a factor like that of Lesotho Coalition parties. Therefore, "the ideological realignment of the main parties … towards the center has reduced the importance of ideology as a differentiating factor for Coalition building, collapse and revival" (Kadima, 2006, p.229). This ideological realignment of political parties has also been a significant factor in Coalition formation, which the existing electoral system has reinforced, among other factors.

The Electoral System

There is a major interplay between the electoral system and Coalition formation. One of the most interesting political developments in Lesotho has been the issue of electoral system. This aspect was brought to bear as a result of major political conflict in 1998 in Lesotho, where the First Past the Post Electoral System (FPTP) that the country used since independence kept on producing one dominant political party. This conflict precipitated the review of this electoral system from majoritarian to a mixed member

electoral system (MMP). It was this electoral system (MMP) that facilitated the emergence of Coalition governments and political alliances in Lesotho. This model was more appreciated that the previous winner-take-all model since it was a transformational model away from the previous FPTP into the current Mixed member proportion representation that cater for both party Alliances and Coalition governments.

Lesotho adopted a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) Representation Electoral system or what is known as the Compensatory Model (Likoti, 2009). The MMP environment encourages political parties to form Coalitions, just like the PR system used in Germany. However, this does not mean that the Fist-Past-the-Post (FPTP) or Majoritarian system used in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK/ Britain) cannot countenance Coalition formation. The MMP electoral system in force in Lesotho is founded on the principle that governments are formed by an agreement of willing parties. These parties' main interest is influencing government policies and programmes in the direction favoured by their political philosophies. These perspectives are crucial when comparing Coalition stability in Lesotho, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Coalition governments require coordination and compromise among Coalition parties. Jones and Baumgartner (2005) have referred to this coordination requirement as institutional friction caused by PR electoral systems such as the one practised in Germany and the MMP Electoral System used in Lesotho.

Coalition formation has been a successful concept in countries like Germany and Britain. In Germany, Coalition formations have become a custom. This can be seen by the Proportional Representation (PR) Electoral system that Germany has adopted. The European countries have a long and vibrant history of Coalition governments. For instance, "all Belgian cabinets since 1954 have been Coalitions of two or more parties with more than merely a bare majority of Legislative seats" (Lijphart,1984,p.24). The 2010 British Coalition government between the Conservative and Liberal Democrats is a case in point of a successful Coalition formed on trust, respect, consultation, and shared political mandate. Negotiations and reconciliation typically characterise Coalition politics.

Nnoli (1986) argued that three distinct features characterise Coalition government or multiparty system; firstly, the legal framework between three or more parties. Secondly, the high degree of the fragmentary electoral basis of each of these three or more political parties; finally, the political parties" inability or any single one of them to form a government on its own, thus giving rise to the emergence of Coalitions of several parties to form government"(Nnoli, 1986,p.143).

In most multiparty systems where PR and MMP systems are used, none of the political parties can win a majority of legislative seats, as has been the case in point with recent Lesotho and Germany elections. In these cases, Coalition governments of at least two or more different political parties must consult their Coalition partner (s) before deciding not to risk the government's instability and premature collapse (Warwick, 1994; Lupia and Strom, 1995). The PR electoral system and MMP in South Africa and Lesotho respectively, can be construed as triggers for Coalition formation in these countries.

Hung Parliament

In most cases, election results tend to produce a hung Parliament where significant parties failed to gain most seats. Lesotho has had five successive Coalition governments since 2012 as a result of hung parliament. In all these elections no party was able to gain the minimum requirement of 50 plus one seats to form government on its own. The formation of these governments, were based on coalition agreements. However, a comprehensive analysis of these agreements reveals in adequate preparation or vague understanding as to how the said agreement had to be drafted. There was lack of understanding as

to how these agreements which forms the basis of these Coalitions resulting from hung parliament had to include or not include. It was for this reason that the split was bound to emerge between the partners sooner than later.

This hung Parliament has often been utilised as a trigger for Coalition formation and as a factor to prevent some political parties from forming a Coalition of their own with the pretext that they threaten democracy. The 2005 German Federal elections produced Parliament, where traditional Coalition partners needed more seats to form a government. While another Coalition led by SPD, Greens, and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor party to East Germany and a former partner of the then East German ruling Socialist Unity Party, could be formed, this was strategically and politically prevented by the leaders of the SPD and the CDU/CSU. These leaders conveniently agreed to form a Grand Coalition with CDU leader Angela Merkel as chancellor with an equal number of cabinet seats for each party. This was another testimony that parties with similar ideological outlooks could work together and exclude a party that does not share their ideological outlook, such as PDS above. Merkel was elected Chancellor on November 22-2005 (Gallagher et al., 1992).

The next regular election in September 2009 led to another change in the composition of the German government as the CDU/CSU coalesced with the liberal FDP (Koalitionen, 2021). The 2009 Federal elections saw the end of the Second Grand Coalition in German history and the formation of another Coalition of CDU/CSU and the FDP under the leadership of Merkel as Chancellor for the second term. The 2013 elections saw another successful effort that prevented the formation of a centre-left (successor party to the PDS) Coalition government with the SPD and the Greens. The Grand Coalition was strategically formed once again.

These left parties have been left out of government by all these major Coalition partners. Grand Coalitions of 1st, 3rd and 4th Merkel cabinets (2005–2009, 2013–2018, 2018) strategically prevented these left parties from forming a Coalition government or participating in these Grand Coalitions. The Coalition was composed of many political parties with diverse interests. What brought all these political parties together was said to safeguard democracy that was threatened by radical political parties such as the KPD and NSDAP.

Britain had a Coalition government in 2010 after the elections that brought about a hung parliament, which was the first in Britain in 36 years (United We Stand, 2021, p.1). In their Coalition agreement of 2010, David Cameron, Leader of the Conservative Party and Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, argued that "we share a conviction that the days of big government are over; that centralisation and top-down control have proved a failure" (The Coalition,2010,p.7). The two parties committed themselves to liberal values that they shared. They listed 31 policy areas to govern and guide their Coalition government (The Coalition, 2010). They vowed not to establish a big government or grand Coalition like their predecessors during the war period but a consensual Coalition government that would open opportunities for both the rich and the poor to practice their talents and improve their capabilities (The Coalition, 2010). The rationale for forming this Coalition was to have many seats in parliament and break, the Labour party 13-year control over the British Parliament, and dislodge it (Labour) from power. Conversely, national crisis in Britain has been able to bring these parties (Conservative and Labour parties) together and force them to form a Coalition government.

National Crisis (War)

National crisis, primarily (war) has arguably been one of the triggers of Coalition formation. From 1954 onwards, Coalitions were formed after elections and during political crises, predominantly during significant conflicts such as war. During this crisis (war), Coalitions are considered to be favourable option to keep the nation united against a foreign enemy (Finley,2012).

Unlike the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom has no long tradition with Coalition governments. While Germany often entered Coalition governments, Britain, on the other hand, was not persuaded to follow this route (Kuttner, 2021). Grand Coalitions were, however, formed only occasionally during the national crisis. The reason was that British political parties come from different ideological traditions. The two main parties which dominated the political landscape since the Second World War did not trust each other because of their different political outlook. The Labour Party was more socialist in orientation, while the conservative party adopted a Liberal ideological outlook. Coalition governments in the UK are commonly known as National Governments. These Coalitions were formed during the First and Second World Wars.

The most prominent Coalition in British political history was the National Government of 1931 to 1940. This was regarded as the most successful wartime Coalition in British political history. It was forged during wartime by Winston Churchill and Labour Leader Clement Attlee as Deputy Prime Minister. Churchill was the Prime Minister, and several Labour and conservative personalities occupied critical positions in this wartime government. Churchill's Grand Coalition government saved Britain from Hitler (Kuttner, 2021). Unfortunately, in 1945, voters punished him at the polls, and the Labour Party won the elections massively (Kuttner, 2021). Labour and Conservatives have always been arch-enemies pursuing different ideologies. Therefore, it was easier for their marriage to collapse once the war ended. This was because they were brought together by this crisis (war), not policies or ideological outlooks. Despite the British having an antipathy towards the National government (Coalition), on average, they formed them when it was expedient to do so and, most importantly, when it was in the national interest. This was another trigger of Coalition formation. However, for these Coalitions to be sustainable, good leadership and management skills are required from the political leadership of the Coalition government itself.

Management of Coalition Government

Those who led successful Coalitions agree that the most significant contribution to a successful Coalition is stability, trust, respect among leaders and good relationships amongst political parties in the Coalition marriage. This is why Coalition stability is so crucial in consolidating democracy. Efficiency and stability are the essential characteristics of a Coalition government management strategy. For the Coalition to be stable, it must have more robust parliamentary support. Coalition control of many seats in Parliament is linked to consensus decision-making.

Kostova (2004) argued that the presence of a Coalition agreement, where available, serves as a mechanism to overcome the mutual mistrust amongst parties and to create a definite certainty. In a Coalition government formation, the issues that divide the partners are the ones to be discussed rather than the ones that unite them. While parties concern themselves with giving and taking, this does not eliminate tensions that may crop up between the parties. One way to ensure Coalition stability is the partners' ability to manage many of the challenges of Coalition governments through adherence to Coalition agreements. Coalition agreements are agreements on policies and procedures entered into by cabinet

parties. These agreements foster Coalition stability since all partners will know from the onset what can reinforce the Stability of their Coalition (Kostova, 2004). From an agenda-setting perspective, Coalition agreements set the government's policy agenda, determining which issues it should try to promote (and avoid) during its governing period.

A Coalition agreement is a contract constraining the behaviour of individual party supporters, cabinet parties, and Ministers' behaviour, preventing the Coalition enterprise's destabilisation. The contract also constitutes a vertical constraint. It constrains all party levels, from Ministers to Members of Parliament and ordinary rank-and-file members. Hence, one crucial aspect of Coalition agreements is that they promote stability and regulate relations between and within parties. In this sense, Coalition agreements are pre-commitments, by which the parties bind themselves to the mast so that when they go through unpleasant situations, the Coalition government does not meet a premature death (Kostova, 2004).

It (Coalition agreement) is a viable document that provides Coalition leadership with the mechanism by which they can resist temptation and pressure from their respective parties to renege on their agreements. This agreement serves as radar that guides the ship through troubled waters (instability). The nonexistence of this Covenant can bring about unpalatable consequences. The stability of the Coalition government depends on a Coalition agreement. This agreement must meet the partners' expectations. Expectations on Ministerial positions and government seats commensurate to the number of resources brought into the Coalition by each partner must be spelt out.

Coalition governments are interested in prioritising their unity rather than managing their diversity. Coalition governance is a mixed-motive game in which Coalition parties must reconcile the tension between policy compromise to maintain government stability and policy differentiation to ensure electoral success (Thies, 2001, Martin and Vanberg, 2011, Falco-Gimeno, 2014).

For Kostova, (2004,a), the formation and management of a successful Coalition depend on maintaining strong party discipline and loyalty. He observed that when party discipline is weak, rebellions and party divisions will likely cause the Coalition to collapse. He stressed that the Coalition will weaken if party loyalty and divisions are not managed and controlled by the party leadership. This was a case in point in Lesotho when the seven-party 2015 and four parties 2017 Coalition governments collapsed, respectively. In 2015, the leading Coalition party, the Democratic Congress (DC), fragmented, and in late 2016, the rebellion within DC necessitated a vote of no confidence that precipitated the collapse of that Coalition government in February 2017. In 2017, the leading Coalition party suffered the similar fate like Democratic congress. During the elections of its National Executive Elections (NEC), All Basotho Convention (ABC) also engaged in factional conflicts that collapsed their Coalition government in May 2020.

Even though Coalition parties often have diverging preferences, they must portray and demonstrate unity to remain stable. To achieve stability, research on Coalition governance has demonstrated that Coalition parties use control mechanisms such as Coalition agreements, conflict management committees within their members, especially those outside government and portfolio committees to keep their Coalition partners on track (Thies, 2001, Muller and Strom, 2008a, Muller and Meyer, 2010, Martin and Vanberg, 2011, Falco-Gimeno, 2014).

Stability is a vital ingredient for the durability of Coalition governments in parliamentary democracies. The Coalition leadership must ensure that the Coalition marriage is stable. Without stability, Coalition government termination is almost inevitable. The key to Coalition governments' sustainability has always been their stability and efficiency in government. Coalition governments are usually volatile and collapse easily. There are various reasons for this instability. In most cases, parties that coalesce with each

other tend to disagree on many policy areas. Therefore, the Coalition government tends to be fractious and prone to disharmony since some partners may hold differing views. Some of them may not have a history of working together, as it has been stated with political parties in Lesotho that formed Coalitions.

While these parties may find themselves compelled to work together due to election outcomes or circumstances beyond their control, establishing trust and unity may necessitates a lot of work. The Coalition collapses quickly because some partners may not agree to sacrifice for a policy they think will cost them at the next elections. In most cases, some of these parties developed hostility towards each other before forming the Coalition government itself.

Under the Westminster parliamentary system that Lesotho and Britain have adopted, governments are invariably formed by a party that controls most seats (Read, 1993). When the Coalition enjoys the most seats in Parliament, its legislative programme usually needs not be met with challenges. Similarly, consensus decision-making in the Cabinet is also closely linked to the majority of parliamentarians they have. Greater consensus can also stabilise the Coalition during political and economic instability. For this consensus to endure during these crises, strong social support is also needed to stabilise the government (Kostova, 2004). Each party needs the support of partners, and without it, a Coalition could break down since parties have diverse interests.

Cooperation in this regard pays dividends. Therefore, the value of cooperating in government is much greater than differences, as government stability ensures control over state resources. Partners outside the Coalition government usually manage conflictual issues. Parties' primary priority has been to minimise the ferocity of conflict from not spilling into cabinets. This ensures that, these conflicts are managed and resolved elsewhere, not within the Cabinet (Lynch and Fairclough, 2010). Parties look for compromise on potential issues and ensure that the Stability of the Coalition is sustained. This is how the Coalition builds consensus policies amongst themselves. Coalition parties, therefore, place more premiums on dealing with global Coalition issues that gain support from all partners rather than focus on their narrow partisanship priorities (Muller, 2008b, Muller and Meyer 2010). Therefore, partners' demonstration of unity has become a prerequisite for government stability.

The Coalition government needs strong leadership of the cooperative type of the President, who can fully use his office's powers to secure the Coalition (King, 1993). The President's political and individual sources of authority are crucial in reinforcing his or her leadership style. Constantly seeking support from other Ministers can significantly benefit him or her and the Coalition's Stability (Blondel, 2001). The other strategy the President can adopt to stabilise the Coalition is the persistent usage of his or her position of controlling information. The President controls the communication and policy of the government. He or she has the authority to control many policy areas. The President can use critical roles and information networks to stabilise the Coalition Kostova (2004).

The critical role of the President, amongst others, is to preserve harmony between partners and manage Coalition conflicts successfully. Coalition stability depends on the leadership's ability to manage differences that may emerge from time to time. Management of Coalition priorities requires hierarchy. The President must use his or her primary sources of authority extensively. These sources include his or her right and duty to chair the Cabinet and use his or her influence to stabilise the Coalition. Since this type of government was formed through negotiations, the President is well placed to utilise this skill to stabilise the Coalition (Blondel, 2001). Cabinet stability is vital for the Coalition to succeed and govern effectively. Coordination of cabinet efforts must be maintained at all times.

King (1993) argued that, for the Coalition government to be stable and efficient, it must overcome barriers that can hurt it. First, it must overcome weak leadership. The leader must be strong and be a

skilled negotiator. Secondly, it must guard against the substantial interference of political parties in government business. When these are present, the government may be stable but needs to be more compelling. Cabinet conflicts are typical in Coalitions. If the leadership is weak, these conflicts can spiral out of control and collapse the Coalition. Thirdly, the Coalition must eliminate politicised programmes because they threaten the Coalition itself (King, 1993).

Coalition unity forms "an important precondition for the functioning and the survival of a Coalition government" (Martin and Vanberg, 2008, Martin and Vanberg, 2011). Unity is achieved by prioritising policy issues supported by all Coalition members while avoiding issues on which they disagree. Despite parties having different policies, they must compromise to achieve stability by collectively adopting joint policy initiatives. Since the benefits of cooperation outweigh its costs, Coalition parties must focus on common issues of mutual interests. It can be argued that once a Coalition government has been formed, the partners' priority is strengthening government stability and cohesion to effectively pursue their legislative agenda (Lynch and Fairclough, 2010). The legislative programme must accommodate the views and demands of other partners. This is done notwithstanding the parties' divergent policy goals. By demonstrating unity, the stability of the government is assured. Coalition partners must also maintain their independence by signifying their profile. They must reconcile the tension of building their profile and ensuring that they do not temper with government stability and thus break the government.

The strength of political parties is also vital in determining the stability of the Coalition government (King, 1993). Most European political parties, especially in Germany and Britain, have a long history and tradition of forming sustainable Coalition governments, unlike Coalition governments in Lesotho. The strength of the Coalition depends on internal parties' cohesion, which Lesotho political parties need to improve, unlike their European counterparts. Because of their unity, trust among themselves and vast experience in Coalition formation, European parties can negotiate quickly with aspirant Coalition partners. Their ability to negotiate and balance the interests of the Coalition during formation is critical. Prasad (2013) argued that forming Coalitions in Lesotho does not allow thorough negotiations to flourish. He observed that the two-week Constitutional requirement of forming a government after "election day resulted in a rushed Coalition formation" (Prasad, 2013, p.28), where even trust, respect and unity cannot be developed between parties.

Additionally, the Stability of the Coalition, according to Kostova (2004), depends on creating a collegial environment. A collegial environment built integrity, teamwork, and decision-making style amongst Coalition partners. The principle of collegiality means that

The 'best', the most authoritative, decision in the British government must be collective decisions of the whole Cabinet, not just of one member of it or of any group of members…; if the best decision were to be collective decisions, then the collective's members had the right to be consulted about the most important of them and to participate in the taking of them.., collective decisions having been taken, all the members of the Cabinet and the government had the duty to defend them publicly. Political strength lies in unity. (King, 1993, p.53)

For Coalition government to be stable, cabinet decisions must be made collectively. The success of any Coalition depends on all partners participating in the decision-making process. This decision must be taken in the Cabinet. If the President has strong negotiation skills, the Coalition will be more effective, and conflicts between partners will be well-managed and less explosive. Therefore, the less conflictual the Coalition, the more effective and stable it will be (Blondel, 2001).

Like elsewhere, Coalition governments in the above three countries have significant internal and external challenges. The reason is simple: Coalitions can make government more fractious and unstable. Conversely, as has been argued in Coalition literature, "it would nevertheless be a mistake to suggest that Coalitions are always associated with instability, as the record of the stable and effective Coalition government in Germany and Sweden demonstrates" (Heywood, 1997, p.246).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore, it can be argued that, Coalitions are crucial in strengthening democracy. Through Coalitions, political parties coalesce together to enrich democracy to be sustainable. Coalitions are like marriages; parties must work at them to keep them stable. All parties come together in good faith. Coalitions always require compromise and negotiations to steer successful pathways that meet the aspirations of the electorate, which did not give any party the mandate to govern on its own. The importance of Coalition stability in a democracy cannot be overemphasised.

There are several conditions which form primary triggers for Coalition formations. These are not limited to policies, ideological homogeneity, and factors such as national crises or even conflicts among political parties, which, in the end, produce a hung Parliament. Electoral systems such as proportional representation, mixed member proportion, or events first past the post-electoral system could trigger Coalition formations. In most cases, these factors can be crucial in enhancing and consolidating democracy. It should also be noted that some of these factors can weaken democracy in some cases, predominantly where a Coalition government is composed of many parties with fewer seats who may demand more than their share of their electoral outcome (fewer seats), as in the case of 2015 Lesotho seven-party Coalition demonstrated.

Since the gestation period of Coalitions, as discussed above, can be very short, this calls for proper management of Coalitions themselves. This means that Coalition arrangements must be well thought-out. With proper management of Coalition government, democracy is strengthened and becomes sustainable. Political parties can only play this game (democracy) if they manage Coalition arrangements, as discussed above. As a result of proper management, Coalition stability can create sustainable conditions that enhance democratic sustainability.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Coalition Government: Where more than one political party after winning seats in Parliament come together to form government.

Hung Parliament: Where election results did not give any competing political party an outright majority to govern alone.

Ideology: A set of beliefs that binds people together. It, therefore, provides a set of values that political supporters adhere to. It shapes how people identify themselves.

National Crisis: A situation whereby a sovereign state is facing external aggression from another state.

Political Alliance: A situation where political parties outside Parliament group together to fight government policies.

Rational Choice: It is a theory which states that individual have the right to choose who rule them and why in a democratic system.

Stability: A situation whereby government governs without intra or inters governance challenges, from any political party or individuals within itself or outside it.