



**Conceptual understanding of political coalitions in South Africa: An integration of concepts and practices.**

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## **Abstract**

The paper revisits the topic of South African coalition politics by analyzing the ideological and theoretical underpinnings behind this universally accepted democratic convention. The paper aligns the coalition theory (the theory of how and why coalitions form), its definitions/concepts, with coalition practices both past and present pursued by South African political parties. The patterns of coalition politics in South Africa are briefly mentioned to offer empirical evidence, though preliminary, in support of the theories. It merely attempts to provide a conceptual understanding behind some of the more recent voluntary power-sharing partnerships formed in the South African political milieu. To put it simply this is a wide-ranging, all-encompassing analysis mostly on coalition theories, but it also links it with an analysis on the politics of South African coalitions. The paper will include topics on the following themes: types, functions, coalition governance and formation processes.

### **South Africa's history and experiences with consensus democracy and coalition politics:**

Before the paper dives into the topic of coalition per se, it is important that some space is given to explain the political evolution/development of coalition practices in South Africa. Consequently an examination of the South African political system that was established after apartheid, and hence the political processes that recognized political coalitions as essential features in the wider political system, is a necessary starting point.

In order to capture the effects of South Africa's choice of democracy on the development of coalitions in this country, this section directly delves into the topic of consociational democracy; the form of democracy South Africa chose to be associated with after apartheid; it is a brief reference to the features of the consociational model. Although to this day there is still debate about the extent to which South Africa after apartheid is/was a consociational democracy, the extent to which consociational democracy promoted and entrenched the culture of power sharing and coalition building in this country deserves some attention. Naturally, when the topic of consociational democracy appears in any paper, there needs to be some reference to the theorist who may not have conceived/hypothesized this logic but shaped and formulated it into the concept it is known today; Arend Lijphart, and thus propound the political logic implicit in the thinking behind **consensual/consociational democracy**.

Consociational/power-sharing democracy as interpreted by consociationalists is a form of democracy that guarantees effective representation for all groups in a system that enables them to enforce their interests with vetoes<sup>ii</sup>. The four main principles of consociational democracy are executive power sharing among representatives of all significant groups; proportional representation, a high degree of internal autonomy for groups that wish to have it, and a minority veto<sup>iii</sup>, and according to Lijphart the South African constitution in 1994 embodied all four principles of consociational democracy.

Despite the shortcomings associated with consociationalism, the new South Africa led by the ANC adopted some elements that seemed feasible and even necessary for an ethnically divided South Africa. And given the gravity of South Africa's problems, consociationalism presented the best possible solution at the time.

One of the main features that the political system inherited under consensual democracy was the principle of executive power-sharing which was observed through the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Through the GNU, power sharing in South Africa's transitional democracy was seen as the only viable and acceptable system to all sides.

After the institution of the permanent constitution of 1996, which no longer made power sharing arrangements in the government permanent and compulsory, voluntary coalitions emerged. For instance the ANC and other parties continued to embrace power sharing cabinets voluntarily, and the following words/remark of the ANC give evidence to this acceptance "majorities take decisions; minorities receive the opportunity to win the majority to their side and, in the meantime, enjoy constitutional protection"<sup>iv</sup>. Political coalitions in the new transformed South Africa became entrenched as a necessary institution. And simultaneously existing political institutions were organized and new ones recommended intended to promote and enshrine the practices of voluntary coalitions and the associated principles of participatory democracy. Needless to say, proportional representation has also helped make coalition governments in South Africa the norm. Historically, power-sharing coalitions in South Africa metamorphosed/alterd from being instituted as mandatory government coalitions to voluntary coalitions that have become a leading feature and practice in everyday South African politics.

Furthermore, South Africa's unguided experiment with consociational democracy, as anticipated obliged it to institute other consociational

principles; specifically it needed to “ensure a high degree of autonomy for those that wished to have it”. One way of doing this was to impose a federalist state, a special form of segmental autonomy and one that is seemingly most suitable for divided societies. With the introduction of a federalist state/federalism, provinces had independent executive or legislative authority to establish their own elected institutions. As with the GNU, the provincial governments also took on similar power sharing arrangements, known as Governments of Provincial Unity (GPUs). According to Lijphart this complements the power sharing principle and thereby setting the groundwork for coalition practices to be pioneered not only at the national level but also within provincial legislatures. As a result provincial legislative coalitions have become continuous and common events in present day politics of South Africa.

Despite the accusations by several theorists that the changes that occurred after the second democratic elections in South Africa, specifically through the adoption of the permanent constitution that took effect in 1999, indicated a profound shift away from pure consociationalism, South Africa has nonetheless managed to remain more of a consociational democracy than a majoritarian one. And although the government is no longer prescribed to govern through a GNU, it still governs as a coalition as a result of its various partnerships. Furthermore, pure consociationalism, quasi, or whatever level of consociationalism that featured in post apartheid democracy, introduced an essential collaborative form of political behavior (coalition practices), that is now firmly entrenched in the political system of the country. Whether it is at the national or provincial level, voluntary coalitions have become pervasive in the politicking of today’s South Africa.

### **I. Definition:**

Building political coalitions is described as a process of organizing parties collectively in pursuit of a common goal. The elements or actions that entail this process include among others the pooling of resources in pursuit of this goal, communication about the goal, forming binding commitments concerning this goal and an agreement on the distribution arrangement of the product/booty that may result from achieving this goal.<sup>v</sup> The precise actors that make up such political coalitions consist mainly of individual legislatures and political parties seeking purposely/explicitly to control the executive.

### **II. Types of coalitions**

The literature on this topic suggests that coalitions form in a number of political situations. Specifically in the case of political party coalitions, they form in legislatures and party coalition cabinets. There are however others

that are slightly different from being thought of as purely either legislative or cabinet/executive coalitions. However in trying to understand the South African processes/practices, this section pays particular attention to inter-party executive/cabinet coalitions and legislative coalitions.

In its simplest form cabinet coalitions are defined as agreements between political parties that seek to control a cabinet that is responsible to a parliamentary majority. A most fascinating example of a cabinet coalition is the South African constitutionally required Government of National Union at both national and provincial level. There are many different types of executive/cabinet coalitions; the GNU is commonly referred to as a majority executive coalition. As it consisted of only parties, which had gained the majority of seats; cabinet seats were in fact given to parties in proportion to their seats in parliament.

This implies that minority executive coalitions also exist. This type of a coalition cannot rely on the support of a majority in parliament, where as majority executive/cabinet coalitions can. Examples of minority executive coalitions are many; they are particularly common in Scandinavia and some countries that have been strongly influenced by the British parliamentary tradition.

The other main type of coalition is termed a legislative coalition. These are coalitions that do not share cabinet responsibilities but nonetheless support the various cabinet parties in parliamentary debates and votes. Such legislative coalitions are becoming increasingly common in South Africa, most recent examples of which are the DA/IFP alliance in Kwazulu Natal provincial legislature and the continual support the ANC receives both nationally and provincially from the Minority Front Party led by the charismatic Amichand Rajbansi. Legislative support coalitions need not include the same parties on all issues, in most cases parties shift their loyalty and alliances in accordance to issues they pledge support to, hence the term shifting legislative coalitions. Further, these types of coalitions are usually most useful to parties that are a minority in cabinet/executive coalitions; these coalitions usually rely heavily on support of their legislative partners in parliament.

When examining coalition practices in South Africa, the analyst is forced to make a distinction between political party alliances/merges also known as electoral coalitions, legislative coalitions and simply cabinet coalitions. Although there is very little academic thinking on coalition practices in this country, most coverage of this topic has in fact been on the media rather than academic interpretation/analysis; the little that has been done concludes that political parties in this country coalesce with

one another regularly for a number of reasons. It is important to make a distinction between such alliances/working relationships, legislative coalitions, and cabinet coalitions that are based on distinct structures and accommodate different management arrangements, and political party mergers. Political mergers within the South African context are defined as parties that band together under a set of identical/single structures, whereas coalition government/cabinet coalitions and similarly with 'alliances'/legislative coalitions, these are party relationships that are in partnership and in agreement for a particular purpose but still maintain their identity at party level and maintain separate party structures.

An example of a coalition that is both cabinet and legislative is the ANC/NNP alliance in the Western Cape. Both parties work together and share committees under strict equitable representation at the cabinet level. On the legislative level, both parties work together but maintain their own identities and structures.

The literature on coalitions also distinguishes between minimal winning, oversized and undersized coalitions. "Minimal winning coalitions are coalitions that have no unnecessary members – that is members whose defection would not cause the coalition to be defeated. Oversized coalitions have one or more unnecessary members; these are coalitions that could lose a member and still retain their majority, whereas undersized coalitions have fewer members than are necessary to win"<sup>vi</sup>. With the recent passing of the floor crossing legislation and the various defections that followed, with members of parliament setting up camp with other parties, coalition sizes are becoming more and more relevant.

### **III. Functions of coalitions – Why Coalition Building?**

Coalitions form and survive under different conditions; there are no standardized circumstance/provisions that act as a catalyst in coalition formation. Invariably actors who participate in coalitions commit resources such as votes, money and so forth to goals; a process by which all players involved are compelled to follow. However some of the goals to which they commit themselves, may not be entirely their own. Similarly there are many instances where individual legislatures take action together on a certain piece of legislation but may find themselves disagreeing significantly/considerably over what result they want<sup>vii</sup>. This illustrates that political coalitions occur for a number of reasons; students of political coalitions are then confronted with the issue to theoretically analyze the conditions under which political coalitions usually operate and thereby understanding the different functions of political coalitions.

One of the paper's aims is to make an analysis of the functions of coalitions in the South African context. The analysis will attempt to investigate some fundamental questions; such as why and under what conditions coalitions form and survive in South Africa. Democratic analysts have promulgated three principal functions of coalitions. Firstly, coalitions arise in the form of power sharing alliances, as the name suggests, this occurs when two or more parties, none of which is able to gain a majority on its own, combine to form a majority government<sup>viii</sup>. Secondly, coalitions are structured purely for the sake of strengthening an opposition. In the case of South Africa, the political forces and challenges currently facing the opposition converge in calling for an opposition coalition. The third circumstance that may also give rise to coalitions occurs when there is an overwhelming emergency, such as civil/political conflict. In such circumstances, political parties work together to form coalitions that are governed by a common objective, and that is to mediate conflicts. The following is a detailed analysis of these three principle functions/purposes and others. 'Coalitions are only as good as the results they produce' – essentially parties must be sure of the purpose/intention for coalescing in order to attain those results.

- **Opposition Coalitions – The realignment debate**

Coalitions help consolidate democracy by creating a viable alternative in opposition to a ruling majority. In the case of South Africa, opposition coalitions have been recognized as the most realistic and best short term hope for consolidating opposition politics<sup>x</sup>. Many observers of the 1999 pre election environment noted that the pre 1999 patterns of opposition political realignment was very disappointing, with regards to providing a strong and effective challenge to the ANC electoral strength. No profound opposition coalition had been formulated to contend with the ANC. Judging from the pre-election events, opposition coalition formation was in fact seen as more of a post election trend and necessity. The formation of the Democratic Alliance (DA) in July 2000 attempted to fill this gap. To prevent the ANC from obtaining a strong political position in the Western Cape after the 1999 general election, the NNP, DP and the Federal Alliance thought it necessary to form the Democratic Alliance. However, since its collapse, a viable question needs to be asked at this point, a year before the third multi party elections, whether opposition parties will sufficiently align to act as a strong battering ram against the hegemonic ANC in the upcoming elections?

The DA alliance was formed due to the simple fact that its parties were committed to acting as an effective opposition party to the dominant ANC. They further anticipated that such an opposition alliance would

offer all parties involved a broader resource base that would help to strengthen/build the alliance's electoral and in turn, its opposition strength. The DA/IFP legislative alliance is also a collaborative relationship that is strictly a commitment by these parties to undermine the ANC's electoral strength in Kwazulu Natal. It is a legislative alliance with a working relationship that allows the DA to occupy seats in the Kwazulu Natal legislature.

- **Ideological partnerships/policy viable alliances**

Cooperation with parties with similar interests is not an uncommon phenomenon in South Africa. Cooperative agreements authorized through legislative coalitions are an everyday occurrence between political parties. The uncomplicated coalition that the ANC appears to be involved with the Minority Front, is inherently premised on this main function. The Minority Front in particular, believes that cooperative agreements with a party that claims some degree of an electoral majority automatically gives a small party such as theirs a leverage of negotiation on certain key issues. "Politics as this party postulates; is a number scale – the best way for a small party to work effectively is to work together with the government on some vital issues"<sup>x</sup>. Such sentiments are shared and expressed by others too, mostly by those that seem to enjoy the fruits of this practice. The ANC chief whip, Nkosinathi Nhleko, recently declared that the survival of minorities "depends on a good and positive inter-relationship with the majority..."

Among the arguments propounded by protagonists in their support of this practice, is the idea that coalitions, if operated on fair grounds, can broaden the policy base of governance and help secure the vital interests of minorities. Furthermore they emphasize that cooperative arrangements on vital issues between parties should be particularly endorsed, in order to promote development. Rightly so, as some of the developmental challenges that some provinces in South Africa face today call for a bipartisan approach and party consensus.

Conversely there are some examples of political mergers and alliances that could be considered as partnerships and function much less as ideological partners and more as vote pooling arrangements. The end of the DA political alliance may be thought of as a partnership that was in the least, based on shared ideological vision, and one of the reasons, it is argued, responsible for the breakup of the NNP from the DA alliance.

- **Majoritarian coalitions**

Another occasion which may give rise to a coalition occurs when no political party wins a majority in parliament. In a circumstance such as this, the party with the largest share of votes is given the chance within a limited time frame- usually in practice it is less than ten days after the election date – to attempt to form a coalition government with other parties, whose members agree to vote in accordance with whatever common principles may exist among their collective platforms. Should it fail, the party would publicly announce that it could not form a government and thus leaves the initiative to other parties, who may be able to form a government with a working majority. One of the most obvious reasons for parties to join together under these conditions is to help and support one another.

When the 1999 general elections produced a hung parliament in the Western Cape, the confusion that followed the stalemate results called for something to be done, in order to prevent the potential social instability.<sup>xi</sup> Control of the Western Cape provincial legislature and thereby the Executive administration of the province during this period provided the political space for the NNP, FA and the DP to come together under the Democratic Alliance.

- **Pre election coalitions/vote pooling coalitions**

This type of an alliance/coalition is made up of separate organizational parties that function as a unity in the context of competitive multi-party elections. Such an alliance aims to gain an electoral majority and it does so by organizing the exchange of votes across ethnic lines among constituents. As Horowitz's model of vote pooling posits - partnerships solely partner up on the basis of pooling votes<sup>xii</sup>. These become highly effective schemes in gaining an electoral majority and usually guarantee success. South African opposition political parties clearly have the need to form alliances on the basis of vote pooling, however, there have been no demonstrated coalitions of this kind in any of the previous general elections, only at the municipal elections of 2000. Although at the time of its formation in 1999, the Democratic Alliance had hoped to contest the 2004 General Elections as a unity under the aegis of a single Democratic Alliance, with the view of obtaining an electoral majority and acting as the most dominant/effective opposition party to counter ANC dominance. However, the unexpected, problematic breakup of the alliance prevented the allied parties from doing so.

The downturn to forming vote pooling coalitions is that it encourages pre election alliances between parties with very different ideologies.

When parties coalesce solely for the purpose of winning elections, these differences soon begin to take their toll making their collapse once in power, imminent.

- **Conflict resolution coalitions**

One of the circumstances that may lead parties to enter into a governing coalition is that of an overwhelming emergency. Examples could be anything from an economic disaster, natural catastrophe, to a type of disaster that aims to threaten a state's existence. It is in such circumstances that coalitions can develop, and parties work together to achieve a common objective. The IFP/ANC alliance at provincial level emanated/developed mainly for the purpose of resolving the political tensions that were becoming an everyday phenomenon in Kwazulu Natal. The party leaders of both parties saw their reconciliation in the form of a coalition as a necessary resolution. Knowing the dynamics involved in Kwazulu Natal for it to operate effectively, and for its leadership to create peace, the rivalry between the ANC and IFP needed to develop into a more constructive direction, and cooperative politics provided the necessary space. Ironically, the alliance is viewed by outsiders as a contentious one, overly hostile and constantly at each others necks. Nonetheless it is a relationship that both parties cannot do without; a necessary feature of governance that has long been cultivated in Kwazulu Natal politics.

#### **IV. How coalitions form:**

##### **Coalition formation and Coalition governance ((Processes, Rules and Structures)**

In most cases the process that parties follow in forming coalition governments is spelled out by some basic agreed-upon rules. Firstly, the process entails a formal bargaining stage, which some theorists have divided into two parts: the policy stage and the portfolio stage. The final phase of the coalition formation process is the ratification of the coalition agreement by each of the partners, and this is usually followed by the allocation of portfolios. A number of organizational stages exist in between this process.

The allocation of cabinet portfolios is an important part of coalition formation. Theorists have promulgated several different theories or models that have served to assess how coalition parties usually influence policy and distribute cabinet portfolios to one another. Briefly as noted in a study on "policy outcomes of coalitional politics", there is the median voter theorem which theorizes that the median party will be able to impose its own policies for as long as it holds this status. Another portfolio allocation theory stipulates/indicates that each party in a governing coalition is able

to implement its own policies in the areas under its jurisdiction. Conversely, a third model proposes that usually, parties see influence over policies as shared responsibilities, with the party in charge of administering the policy taking the leading role. <sup>xiii</sup> The trend in South Africa so far regarding government/cabinet coalitions however, has been to follow neither of the above models, but alternatively, parties influence over government policy and the allocation of cabinet portfolios usually reflects the legislative sizes of the members of the governing coalition. Indeed the evidence from the GNU suggests just that; parties were allocated cabinet portfolios in accordance with their legislative strengths/position.

#### *Coalition governance*

Coalitions are not only formed but they need to be maintained. <sup>xiv</sup> This maintenance is usually made available through two main factors. The first concerns the ability of a party to discipline its coalition members, and the second is through various conflict resolution and management mechanisms; the most important being the common planning committees, coalition agreements and an appeal system. The appeal system as its name suggests, is required to adjudicate disputes within the coalition. Similarly the committees are also from time to time, utilized to solve disagreements, most importantly, however it's a practical structure necessary to watch over the different portfolios. Coalition agreements, although their presence do not necessarily ensure stability, can be seen as a coordinating device; a drawing of the parties' policy. Coalition agreements and policy agreements are often only promises of future action, thus their role is minimal but seemingly necessary within the bargaining process leading to coalitions.

Examining the poverty/development local government agreement for the Western Cape signed between the ANC and NNP in June 2002, provides an illustrative evidence of the role these agreements play in coalitions and provides the opportunity to observe the matters that usually take center stage in these agreements. This agreement was a natural consequence of the National Cooperation Agreement and embodies the cooperation agreement between the two parties within the local sphere of government. It is interesting to note that the specific issues discussed in the agreement include among others, the principles of cooperation under which the ANC/NNP function, the values that underpin this coalition and types of policy frameworks that are signed by all parties in partnership. In addition, the agreement has provision for the establishment of a Provincial Dispute Resolution Committee consisting of three representatives from each party, to ensure that proper cooperation exists and that the overall policy framework referred to in the agreement is properly implemented. These are without a doubt, very relevant areas of

discussion for any coalition, as an agreement between political parties that has the intention in particular, of pursuing a set of goals, will entail such essential/necessary structures. Further analysis on cooperation principles, policy framework and so forth, of the ANC/NNP coalition is made possible by the information provided from the National Co-operation Agreement signed by these two parties. Although the ANC/NNP coalition declaration provides evidence only of what the coalition will do and not what they actually do, nonetheless it is still a satisfactory indicator of various governance mechanisms that need to be in place for effectively instituting a coalition.

Such structures and frameworks are extremely relevant and significant for the survival of any voluntary cabinet coalition or electoral coalition. Coalitions as a matter of fact, are usually faced with many challenges. The building of structures and strategies therefore become an essential part of any coalition, to allow its partners to deal effectively with these challenges. The Democratic Alliance is an enlightening illustration of the damaging effect of such a lack of structure and it became one of the principal reasons for the DA's collapse. As the alliance was experiencing internal strife from several angles after only two years of their marriage, the more damaging aspect of this strife was the lack of a recognizable party management system and management protocol for the administration of party affairs. The few structures that the alliance succeeded in instituting for management purposes soon proved to be ineffectual in party affairs. For example, several arguments and differences among party heads have remained unresolved by the three-person dispute resolution committee created for this purpose. Furthermore, critics of this alliance pointed at the inadequacy of their policy proposals, as the principal contributing factor to the collapse of the alliance. To quote a representative from the IEC "the alliance's principles and policies were too fluid and unable to withstand the challenges that laid ahead for the parties under the merger".<sup>xv</sup> In addition it is arguable however, that the alliance's policies were inadequate in not only addressing the racial inequalities that are pervasive in South Africa but equally, its emergent policies were also inadequate in addressing the dismal poverty levels that continue to exist along racial lines in the Western Cape in particular.<sup>xvi</sup> Notwithstanding, the shared commitment by all parties of the alliance to act as an effective unity and challenge the government as the only viable opposition force, the alliance's lack of appropriate institutions/structures, and party hierarchies, among others inhibited it from fulfilling its goals.

A distinction however, needs to be made here, such structures become more relevant for parties that decide to join together under a single entity

(i.e. electoral political mergers/alliances). These alliances do indeed need a new set of structures and frameworks to operate under/with whereas shifting legislative coalitions, and cabinet coalitions have no need to establish new management structures and often maintain their own identities and structures. Having said that, however, certain mechanisms need to be put in place in cooperative coalitions as well; the ANC/NNP provides a good case study. It's an illustration of the usual/generic mechanisms that are required in keeping such coalitions together.

In conclusion, both fluid and concrete structures are necessary in ensuring that a political party coalition can adequately contribute to the political environment either via policy changes, or acting as an effective opposition to the government. It is therefore required that parties in partnership need to operate through well thought out frameworks. Political parties need to determine the workings of a political coalition: these should at least include common political/ideological interests, clarity in the name of a political party and stipulated principles must be agreed upon, specific mechanisms such as conflict resolution mechanisms and day-to-day organizing is also required to keep coalitions together. "A party's policy comes into effect if it participates in government in national and provincial and local level. In an alliance, the parties have to face every issue together and the decision making processes will be the place where the parties' roles will be decided"<sup>xvii</sup>

#### **IV. Implications of coalition practices for South Africa's nascent democracy**

The theoretical arguments propounded by both supporters and antagonists of coalitions are many and convincing. In short, the protagonists of coalitions do not believe that electoral competition should be allowed to be stifled in the name of consensus. They strongly view this practice, though legitimate, as a means of rigging and monopolizing the electoral market place. Electoral competition offers voters a choice between alternative governments, giving the public their right to decide on who governs them, and thus this right deserves to be upheld. The proponents of coalitions on the other hand promulgate that consensus democracy can be more democratic than majoritarian democracy. In a consensus democracy, government is not in the hands of a single party; it is shared by a coalition of parties, that engage in continuous negotiations with one another about the appropriate course that the government should take<sup>xviii</sup>

The emergence of ANC's hegemony and the return to majoritarian government is the very issue that Lijphart and the others warned against; they demonstrated and epitomized the virtues of consociational

democracy, and the necessity for such a system in an ethnically divided South Africa. They warned that in a majoritarian government for a divided society like South Africa's, elections would invariably be contested on a group basis with the largest group ending up as the monopoly holders of state power and thus winning one election after the other. It does not need to be said that consistent holding of power by one group has the effect of dis-empowering those that are not part of the hegemony/dominant group and thus creating political instability.<sup>xix</sup> Ironically the practice of coalition formation has played its role in reinforcing the ANC's hegemony. The involvement of the ANC with other parties by forming governing coalitions over the years has given the ANC an opportunity to create a governing monopoly for itself.

Currently the political debate is focused on the necessity for a viable parliamentary opposition in South Africa. Theorists on this topic have postulated/demonstrated that there are a number of reasons why the existing parliamentary opposition parties have remained in the periphery and thus are unlikely to develop into effective opposition challengers to the ANC's dominance and hegemony. Other than the racialised structure of South African politics that some analysts believe to be the main reason for the substantial electoral support that the ANC enjoys, and the limited policy choices that minority parties offer and their interest to continue to serve minority and ethnic groups<sup>xx</sup>, there is strong consensus among these analysts that the coalition tendencies of the ANC to ensure it is a party of strong governing coalitions and associations both in the provincial legislatures and at national level has restrained the development of a viable opposition. Throughout the years the ANC has ensured that it remains in coalitions with parties such as the NNP and the IFP in the Western Cape and in Kwazulu Natal respectively. Clearly, any possibilities for strengthening opposition politics either via collaboration between opposition parties or through other more profound strategies are reduced by the luring prospects of collaboration with the ANC. This "pull of political power" to which some analysts refer, acts as a consistent barrier to opposition cooperation<sup>xxi</sup>.

Other than the argument expounded in the preceding paragraph, that coalitions seem to reinforce South Africa's political image as a one party dominant state, these coalitions have other implications, however. The disrespect that voters' choices endure as a result of parties coalescing with one another is one of them. Just as floor crossing is being undermined on this similar criticism/charge, so are political coalitions. Coalitions are said to be undesirable in this respect due to the fact that political parties make these choices without being accountable to their voters. Although coalition parties in opposition to this criticism claim that

coalition governments are far more representative than a single-party government, they monopolize the electoral market place. This effectively deprives voters the chance to vote them out, even if some coalition parties lose their seats in an election; because of the huge numbers of MPs in some coalitions, they cannot be turned out of office.

In effect these coalitions too, have positive implications. Lawrence Schlemmer notes that coalitions do not necessarily need to be intrinsically undesirable "if a party's supporters endorse the arrangement, if the parties involved can defend their constituency's interests within the cooperation and if there is a genuine give and take on policy issues, a coalition can broaden the policy base of governance and help secure the vital interests of minorities"<sup>xxii</sup>. He continues to say, however, that the likelihood of these conditions being met is remote. It is not what is happening with any of the ANC's alliances. The trend has often been that the ANC imposes itself policy wise on its alliance rather than subjecting itself to a degree of give and take. In provinces like Kwazulu Natal, co operations, alliances, coalitions or any other form of these have had little impact in uniting the differences between the two main parties; the ANC and the IFP. Instead in the words of the Kwazulu Natal King "democracy has split the Zulu nation into two".

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<sup>i</sup> Johannes Althusius, a German Calvinist political theorist is noted as the originator of the theory of consociationalism (1557-1638). He introduced the consociational model of society and politics, one with a federal political structure based in succession. He is rightly considered a forerunner of the many later advocates of federalism, pluralism, and other forms of power sharing.(The Encyclopedia of Democracy, Vol. 1, first published 1995 in UK by Routledge)

<sup>ii</sup> Michael Macdonald, The Siren's Song: The Political Logic of Power-Sharing in South Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, December 1992, Vol.18, Issue 4

<sup>iii</sup> Arend Lijphart, Power Sharing in South Africa Institute of International Studies, University of California  
NO DATE

<sup>iv</sup> As quoted in "the Siren's Song: The Political Logic of Power Sharing in South Africa", Michael Macdonald, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 18, Issue 4, December 1992

<sup>v</sup> The Encyclopedia of Democracy, Vol.1 first published 1995 in UK by Routledge

<sup>vi</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vii</sup> *ibid*

<sup>viii</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, *Coalition Government in Western Europe*, London: Heinemann, 1983, p.12

<sup>ix</sup> Susan Booysen, Election 1999 and Scenarios for Opposition Politics in South Africa, *South African Journal of Political Studies (POLITIKON)*, Vol 26, No.2 November 1999

<sup>x</sup> Mrs Rajbansi, in a meeting with EISA researchers May 2003

<sup>xi</sup> Election Watch 1999 Elections, Legislative Training Programme School of Government University of the Western Cape, No.3, 15 July 1999.

<sup>xii</sup> Donald L Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engine in a Divided Society*, Berkley: University of California Press,1991

<sup>xiii</sup> Paul V. Warwick , *Coalition Policy in Parliamentary Democracies: Who Gets How Much and Why*, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.34 No.10, December 2001 pp. 1212-1236

<sup>xiv</sup> Indridi H. Indridason, *A Theory of Coalitions and Clientalism: Coalition Politics in Iceland 1945 – 2000*,

<sup>xv</sup> quoted from an interview with Ms. Thomasi Phillips, the political party analyst at the South African Electoral Commission in Pretoria

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<sup>xvi</sup> Divorce for the DA? Issue briefing from the *Epolitics: The Political Intelligence Service* (IDASA), Issue 34, 19 October 2001

<sup>xvii</sup> Minority Front Leader in an interview held in Pretoria, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2003

<sup>xviii</sup> Richard Rose, The End of Consensus in Austria and Switzerland, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 11, April 2000

<sup>xix</sup> *ibid*

<sup>xx</sup> Adam Habib & Rupert Taylor, Political Alliances and Parliamentary Opposition in Post Apartheid South Africa, paper presented at a conference on “Opposition in South Africa’s New Democracy”, hosted by Rhodes University and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation June 2000

<sup>xxi</sup> Susan Booyesen, Election 1999 and scenarios for opposition politics in South Africa, *South African Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 26, No.2 November 1999

<sup>xxii</sup> Lawrence Schlemmer Director of the Helen Suzman Foundation, *Focus* (Helen Suzman Foundation), 28 December 2002