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Forecasting an Inevitable Coalition Government at the National Level in South Africa: A New Path to Public Administration and Governance

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Abstract

Coalition administrations frequently occur in democracies and under all election systems. One of the key reasons that parties join coalition governments is to share power or to advocate about policy change or policy reform. Additionally, a national catastrophe can force political parties to form an alliance. This occurs whenever there is a disagreement of some kind, a crisis involving the constitution or the succession, or a dramatic upheaval in politics. As a result, the parties decide to work together as a coalition and establish official agreements to divide administrative authority or accountability. This paper analyses the literature on coalition governments and scenarios that foreshadow a coalition government in South Africa's upcoming 2024 elections. It suggests a framework that could facilitate to form a coalition government that may lead to the best interests of the country if no party wins the majority in the parliament.

Keywords

Coalition Government, Policymaking, Electoral Responsiveness or Openness, Accountability, Public Administration and Governance, Services Delivery

1. Introduction

A coalition government is a system of administration in which two or more political parties work together to establish a government (Longley, 2023). In various countries around the world, peculiar conditions can warrant the creation of

any kind of political alliance. In several European countries, coalition governments are typical (Longley, 2023). However, the main goals of forming a political or government coalition are to secure a majority for the government, establish a strong opposition to the government, and, during elections, to increase turnout. But one of the main issues that political parties frequently encounter while creating or committing to a coalition is competing policy viewpoints, and the relative influence of coalition parties is vitally dependent on institutional structure. Institutions, in particular, allow for the reliable implementation of agreements because policy must be a compromise reached by all governing parties (Martin & Vanberg, 2020). According to World Animal Net (2017), prior to forming a coalition, it is vital to consider research and risk assessments (benefits and downsides) into account. One must evaluate whether working with the coalition is the best course of action in order to address institutional crises or instability that could represent a serious risk to the country's administration. Political parties consequently consent to defend common ideologies and tactics in order to build coalitions. Longley (2023) asserts that the creation of a coalition government happens when no party wins a majority of seats in the legislature under a proportional representation electoral system. It can occur in an electoral system as well, albeit it occurs more frequently in proportional systems. The main causes of coalition governments are proportional voting processes, a thirst for power, and times of national emergency. As a result, coalitions may be helpful if they foster communication and consensus-building, offer a wider spectrum of representation, and encourage compromise as a method of resolving conflicts (Longley, 2023). A coalition may also be viewed negatively because it could dissolve at any time, which would make its mission impossible. Additionally, a coalition could break key election promises, leading voters to question the legitimacy of elections. In South Africa, there is a growing wave of coalition in local government, and it is predictable that the national elections of 2024 may lead to the formation of a national government coalition (Gumede, 2023; Joshua, 2022; Masina, 2021). This is because the ANC, the nation's main party, has seen a significant decline in support over the past three elections in 2016, whether they were local or national (Makgale, 2020). The disillusioned ANC voters have been extremely beneficial to opposition parties. In light of a potential coalition government at the national level, this study examines an alternative path for South African public administration and governance.

2. Background of Coalition Government in South Africa

Before analysing the creation of coalition in South Africa, it is crucial to realize that coalition governments have been established in numerous regions of the world in response to policy change or reform. Between policy change and policy reform, declares the OECD (2013), there are subtle differences. The literature commonly conflates the two concepts. As opposed to policy reform, which often refers to a large change in policy, policy change describes (minor) tweaks made

to established frameworks or the establishment of brand-new, innovative policies (OECD, 2013). In other words, policy reform refers to the process of making existing systems more effective and ensuring that they can respond to future changes in an equitable and efficient manner, whereas policy change may or may not be prompted by reform as an intentional policy intervention. The distinct political past history and political culture of each nation, however, has affected or is changing the way elections are conducted. As a result, some countries are more likely than others to have a coalition administration that successfully furthers the national goal. Coalition governments are most frequently formed on the African continent as a result of national crises, sharing of power, and proportional voting systems. As a result, the general African experience to date indicates that coalition politics is unlikely to be the political road forward until there is a significant change in attitudes, which is unlikely in civilizations where maintaining power is still regarded as the key to amassing riches (Walter, 2006). Political parties in Africa form coalitions before or after elections for a variety of reasons, including a perceived interest or political goal, such as to win an election and form a government or to establish a majority that can operate in parliament. Contrary to other continents, Africa has witnessed instability and a number of coalition administrations breaking up (Masina, 2021). The dissolution and wave of instability are not immune to the new coalition governance experience in South Africa. According to Walter (2006), the need to ease inherited ethno-regional tensions had an effect on the establishment of the first wave of coalitions, which appeared just before or soon after independence in nations like Congo-Kinshasa (DRC), Uganda, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. A second wave of coalitions appeared once multipartyism started to flourish once more in the early 1990s. These coalitions were always going to be fragile, and their vulnerability ultimately led to their instability and dissolution. Masina (2021) emphasised that countries like Kenya, Malawi, and South Africa have experienced instabilities in the formation of political coalitions due to post-election violence and instability, contestation and contested elections results, lack of ideological affinity, lack of ideological convergence, etc.

In addition, a few of the elements that contributed to the breakdown of coalitions in Africa include ethnic politics, personality conflicts, a lack of effective institutions for resolving disputes, a lack of a culture of trust in the political system, ideological dissonance, and a persistent fear of power-sharing reminiscent of the one-party political culture (Masina 2021; Walter, 2006). During the post-apartheid era in South Africa, the coalition government wave first started to take hold. According to Makgale (2020), coalition politics were used to dominate the City of Cape Town for 20 years under the leadership of Helen Zille and Kwa-Zulu-Natal. The 2016 local elections also marked a turning point in South African politics as a distinct political coalition wave could be visible.

The political landscape of South Africa saw a significant upheaval thanks to the African National Congress (ANC), which has had complete electoral domi-

nance and control since 1994 (Makgale, 2020). The national ruling party has lost support in the majority of major cities, including Nelson Mandela Bay, Johannesburg, and Tshwane. Opposition parties joined forces to oust the ANC in the three most crucial municipalities. In a similar vein, the coalition seized power in these important South African cities, including Ekurhuleni, the ANC's longtime stronghold. Sadly, it was also recognized that most administrative coalitions between competing political factions were undergoing bouts of instability and disruption. Levy (2022) claims that during the metro coalition administrations' unstable and conflict-ridden rule, governance and service provision were weakened. Because there are no laws governing coalitions in South Africa, these organizations frequently change their leadership. This suggests that the coalition government forming in South Africa is not fundamentally different from what has happened or is presently happening in other African countries (lack of agreement on values and strategies or on policies and protocols).

3. Materials and Methods

A variety of literature sources were investigated to analyse and comprehend the potential new direction that is anticipated to alter South Africa's public administration and government. The national and provincial elections in South Africa in 2024 are widely expected to present a realistic prospect for coalition governments to be formed in some provinces and at the national level. With coalition administrations now only being formed at the local level, this would represent a significant shift (Kotze, 2023). It is clear that the ANC seems to be steadily losing control of its own representatives as a result of various causes detailed further below. In order to create a coalition framework, a particular coalition arrangement is being looked at and developed. This framework will likely encourage coalition members to commit to shared values, such as socioeconomic stability, accountability, ethics, and integrity, which are lacking from the current public administration and government model.

3.1. Theories Supporting and Opposing Coalition as a New Path to Public Administration and Governance in South Africa

Since the ANC majority is dwindling, many South Africans think that a coalition government at the national level may be feasible following the 2024 elections. A major force in South African politics since the country's democratization in 1994, according to Levy (2022), is the African National Congress. Election outcomes since 1994 at the national, provincial, and municipal levels have validated the ANC's support and domination. The largest cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, and Ekurhuleni all saw a decline in ANC support during the 2016 local government elections. Therefore, currently, it seems like coalitions cannot be avoided as dissatisfied ANC supporters are transferring their interest in backing opposition parties, as many analysts forecast about a progressive collapse of the ANC at below 50% in the general elections of 2024. For instance, the

Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) formed a coalition with other smaller parties to overthrow the ANC in major cities like Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Nelson Mandela Bay Metros because of the results of the 2016 local government elections (Kotze, 2023).

As was previously mentioned, most African nations only allow national politicians to form coalition governments, and the agreements between political parties are not made public, which many analysts believe is the root of conflict between coalition members (Walter, 2006; Levy, 2022). In order to avoid instability and disagreement among coalition participants, this argues that a controlled structure should be created to oversee coalitions in South Africa. As a result, coalition theories should serve as a guidance for coalition participants when forging alliances to avert instability and war. Several theories are being discussed on the formation of administrative and governmental coalitions, according to Makgale (2020) and many other authors cited below. These theories include the Office-seeking theory, the Policy Approach or Policy-oriented theory, Collaborative governance and power sharing theory, Representation and Inclusivity theory, Stability and Consensus theory, Checks and Balances theory, Negotiation and Compromise theory, Instability and Gridlock theory, Accountability theory, Policy Compromise theory, Minor Party Influence theory, Election Outcomes theory, Universalism theory, and the Efficient theory. Not all these notions are covered in this essay. Table 1 looks at a few of these hypotheses in terms of those in favour of and against the creation of a coalition government.

As seen in Table 1, there are supporters and opponents of coalition governments, which are formed when many political parties work together to form a government. The arguments for and against coalition governments frequently center on the advantages and disadvantages of such arrangements. Depending on the particular political environment, the objectives of the parties involved, and the preferences of the electorate, support or resistance to coalition governments can vary. It is crucial to remember that depending on the legal and political system in existence, the effects of coalition administrations can vary greatly from one nation to the next. In light of the theories discussed above, a new direction in public administration and governance to be led by the likely coalition government of South Africa in the years following 2024 could have both benefits and drawbacks, and the effect of such a coalition on the nation will vary depending on the particular context in which coalition partners will operate. It is important to remember that theories and models are not a complete representation of what will occur on the ground, but rather are intended to help coalition members form and guide their actions.

3.2. Forecasting the Imperative for a New Path to Public Administration and Governance in South Africa

Khatun (2021) describes a new path to public administration and governance as an innovative approach of driving public administration. It involves administrative reform built on ideas to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and general

Table 1. Theories supporting and opposing coalition government.

Theories supporting coalition government	Theories opposing coalition government
Representation and Inclusivity: Coalition governments must be seen as a means to ensure better representation of diverse political ideologies and interests within the government. By including multiple parties, coalition governments can represent a broader spectrum of the population.	**Instability and Gridlock:** Critics argue that coalition governments can be unstable and prone to gridlock because parties with differing agendas may struggle to reach agreements on critical issues. Frequent disagreements and shifting alliances can hinder effective governance.
Stability and Consensus: Supporters argue that coalition governments can enhance political stability by forcing parties to work together and seek common ground. This can result in more moderate policies and reduce the risk of radical or extreme decisions.	**Lack of Accountability:** Some critics contend that coalition governments can result in a diffusion of responsibility, making it challenging for voters to hold any one party accountable for government actions. This can lead to confusion about who is ultimately responsible for policy decisions.
Checks and Balances: Coalition governments can act as a check on the power of any single party, preventing one party from dominating the political landscape and making unilateral decisions. This can help protect democratic principles and prevent authoritarianism.	**Policy Compromises**: Opponents argue that coalition governments may produce watered-down policies that fail to address pressing challenges adequately. Compromises made to maintain coalition unity can result in suboptimal outcomes.
Negotiation and Compromise: Supporters argue that coalition governments promote negotiation and compromise, which are essential skills in a democratic system. This can lead to better policy outcomes through consensus-building.	**Minor Party Influence:** In some cases, smaller parties within a coalition may exert undue influence on government decisions, potentially pushing policies that do not reflect the preferences of the majority of voters.
Policy-oriented theory: Political parties form coalitions primarily because of policy convergence and alignment, not necessarily to maximise power. Policy motives in coalition government formation require political parties to be ideologically aligned.	**Election Outcomes:** Critics may argue that coalition governments can lead to outcomes that do not align with the voters' choices in elections, as parties that did not win a majority of seats may still hold significant power in a coalition.

Source: Adapted from Levy (2022); Thijm (2021); Makgale (2020) and Walter (2006).

performance of public services, as well as of transparency and close attention on incentive structures. In South Africa, a new path to public administration and governance seems to be inevitable in the coming 2024 national elections. Opinions predicting a new path to public administration and governance suggest different perspectives. Some views consider coalition administration and governance as a move to a fresh and innovative approach to how governments and public organizations are expected to function, which implies a departure from traditional or outdated methods to a commitment to adopting innovative approaches and modern mechanismto drive public administration (UNDP, 2015).

In addition, a focus on making government more responsive to the needs and expectations of its citizens (to improve efficiency and service delivery) and direct citizen engagement through participatory decision-making processes are being forecasted as a possible new path to public administration and governance in South Africa. Masina (2021) supported a view that 2024 national elections could be a turning point in the political history of South Africa if all political parties, with the incumbent ANC included, fail to attain 50 plus1% of the votes. Consequently, the formation of political coalitions could be an inevitable option, which might generate new direction to the South African public administration and governance. Leaders to be forming political coalitions may need to be adaptive and open to change, able to navigate a rapidly evolving political, economic, and social landscape (new path). Most importantly, coalition at the national level could lead to a new path to public administration and governance in terms of the following (Gumede, 2023; Joshua, 2022):

- **Policy Shifts**: The outcome of the election may lead to shifts in policy direction. The winning party or coalition might prioritize different issues, economic strategies, social programs, and foreign relations.
- **Economic and Fiscal Policies**: A new government may implement changes to economic and fiscal policies, which could impact areas such as taxation, public spending, job creation, and economic development.
- **Social and Welfare Programs**: A change in leadership might result in adjustments to social programs, healthcare, education, and welfare policies. The focus on poverty alleviation and social inclusion could be redefined.
- **Governance Reforms**: The election outcome may lead to discussions and reforms related to the structure of government, decentralization, and the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration.

Considering the above description, the 2024 national elections could shape a new path to public administration and governance in a country like South Africa. Therefore, the forth coming elections in South Africa, like in many other democratic countries, could play a crucial role in determining the direction of public administration and governance.

3.3. Examining the Rationale for a New Path to Public Administration and Governance in South Africa

Majority of South African Black community are experiencing a situation of extreme poverty, joblessness, and inequality (Francis & Webster, 2019). The current government has failed to fulfil the expectations of South African citizens in term of providing their basic needs. The focus on examining coalition government as a new path to the South African public administration and governance is aligned to various analysis from experts in this field, which are observing the progressive decline of the ANC majority in key local, district and metropolitan municipalities in the period 2016-2018, and the rise of many oppositions' political parties. According to Masina (2021), coalitions are being formed to dethrone

the ANC due to poor public service delivery, corruption, abuse of political power, and several socio-economic crises, including unstable electricity supply. In addition, in South Africa, there is a strong political competition. Political parties, mostly in opposition, have started to build up pre-election coalition with the objective of rebuilding national unity and cohesion, and engaging the country in the path of socio-economic transformation.

Given the possibility of several coalitions emerging in the wake of the 2024 general election, the future of South Africa's public administration and government appears to be uncertain. South Africa may see significant changes in the ensuing years, claims Rautenbach (2022). Following the national and provincial elections in South Africa in 2024, coalition administrations may likely emerge in a number of the provinces as well as at the national level (Kotze, 2023). This would be a substantial change from the current situation, in which coalition administrations have only been established locally. Earlier, it was reported that South Africa's coalition government and administration was nothing new. In the years following apartheid, the first wave of coalition administration and governance took place (Makgale, 2020). The second wave started after the 2016 local government elections in Johannesburg, Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, and Ekurhuleni, which acted as a reflection of the ANC's waning support because no candidate stood out as the election's undisputed victory. In response to the results of the 2016 local government elections, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) joined forces with a number of minor parties in order to overturn the ANC in the cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Nelson Mandela Bay (Makgale, 2020). A coalition partnership oversaw the administration of these metros and a few other towns. The African National Congress, however, has dominated South Africa's political scene ever since the country's transition to democracy in 1994.

The ANC's support and dominance have been confirmed by election results at the national, provincial, and municipal levels since 1994 (Levy, 2022). The nation is currently laying the groundwork for a new route in public administration and governance. In light of this uncertainty, South Africa is expected to draft a new policy outlining how public administration and governance will function. This policy will serve as the foundation for any coalition that might be formed in the event that no political party is able to win a majority in the country's 2024 general election. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that depending on the unique setting, objectives, and coalition participants, the policies that direct coalition administrative and governance might differ dramatically. Organizations, governments, or other entities frequently establish coalitions to cooperate on a single project or tackle a common problem. Transparency, accountability, and productive collaboration among partners are guaranteed by the rules and governance frameworks established for a coalition (Kariuki et al., 2022). The following must be taken into account when developing common policies and values that could direct coalition governance (Beukes, 2021):

- **Mission and Vision Statement of coalition partners:** The coalition must articulate its mission, objectives, and desired results in a succinct statement that is published. It is also necessary to specify the membership requirements so that everyone who wants to join the coalition can, whether they are businesses, people, or governments.

- **Leadership Structure:** It will be necessary to design a leadership structure to specify roles and responsibilities for coordination and decision-making. The coalition must establish policies for decision-making procedures, whether by majority vote, consensus, or some other means. It is necessary to create protocols for resolving disagreements and conflicts among coalition members. It will be necessary to prepare crisis and contingency plans for handling unforeseen difficulties or crises that could affect the coalition's operations.

- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** A code of conduct describing acceptable behaviour and moral standards for coalition members must be created in order to guarantee that the coalition functions in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The success of any coalition would also be ensured by a commitment to openness and accountability in terms of decision-making and finances, as well as regular reporting to the appropriate structures.

- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** To guarantee representation from all pertinent stakeholders, policies encouraging inclusivity, diversity, and equity within the coalition must be drafted. It is necessary to specify tactics for including external stakeholders, such as members of the community, governmental bodies, and other organizations, in the coalition's activity.

Accordingly, coalition partners will need to consider additional alternative policy options in order to ensure the stability and effectiveness of their formation and operation. It is significant to remember that a coalition's precise policies and governance structure will rely on its goal, size, and member preferences. To maintain the coalition's efficacy and relevance, these policies should be outlined in a formal governance instrument, such as a constitution or bylaws, and periodically reviewed and revised. Table 2 lists some of the most important benefits and drawbacks of setting up a successful coalition government in the nation.

Table 2 demonstrates that coalition governments have both advantages and disadvantages. They can promote inclusivity and stability but may also face challenges related to compromise policy consistency, and accountability. The success of a coalition government largely depends on the ability of the participating parties to work together effectively and address these challenges. In addition, political coalitions in South Africa, like in many other countries, can offer several opportunities in the post-election period. The specific opportunities and benefits of political coalitions will depend on the context, the parties involve, and the issues at hand. Some potential opportunities that political coalitions can offer in the post-election period in South Africa include (Manyana, 2023; Cheeseman, 2019):

Table 2. Advantages and Disadvantages of New path to coalition government in South Africa.

Advantages of New path to coalition government in South Africa	Disadvantages of New path to coalition government in South Africa
Representation: Coalition governments tend to represent a broader spectrum of the population because multiple parties with diverse ideologies come together to form a government. This can lead to a more inclusive and balanced representation of various interests and viewpoints.	**Compromise and Gridlock:** Coalition governments often require compromise and negotiation, which can lead to slow decision-making and gridlock if parties cannot agree on key issues. This can hinder the government's ability to respond swiftly to crises.
Stability: In some cases, coalition governments can provide stability by preventing a single party from holding too much power. When no single party has an absolute majority, it often requires compromise and consensus-building, which can lead to more stable governance.	**Policy Inconsistency:** Different parties in a coalition may have conflicting policy agendas, leading to inconsistent or watered-down policies that do not effectively address pressing issues.
ConsensusDecision-Making: Coalition governments often require parties to work together and find common ground on important issues. This can promote consensus decision-making and reduce the likelihood of radical or extreme policies being implemented.	**Lack of Accountability:** With power divided among multiple parties, it can be challenging to assign blame or accountability for government actions or failures. This can lead to confusion among voters and a perception of a lack of responsibility.
Checks and Balances: The presence of multiple parties in a coalition can serve as a check on the power of the dominant party or parties. This can help prevent abuses of power and ensure accountability.	**Fragility:** Coalition governments can be fragile, as they depend on the continued cooperation of multiple parties. If a party withdraws from the coalition or if internal disputes arise, it can lead to the collapse of the government and the need for new elections.
Minority Interests: Smaller parties in a coalition may be able to push for policies that represent the interests of specific minority groups or communities, which might be overlooked in a single-party government.	**Ideological Differences:** Coalitions often consist of parties with different ideological positions. These differences can create tensions and make it difficult to maintain a cohesive and effective government.
	Policy Bargaining: Parties in a coalition may engage in horse-trading and policy bargaining, which can result in policies that prioritize political expediency over the best interests of the country.

Source: Adapted from Manyana (2023), Cheeseman (2019), Levy (2022), Thijm (2021), Makgale (2020) and Walter (2006).

- **Diverse Skill Sets:** Coalition governments can bring together people with different backgrounds and specialties, which may improve decision-making across a range of policy areas.

- **Public Confidence:** By displaying that political leaders are prepared to co-operate for the good of the nation, coalition governments can inspire trust in the public if they are properly handled.

- **Coalition Agreements:** Typically, formal agreements outlining the government's aims and policies serve as the foundation for coalition formation. These agreements offer a defined framework for governance and can help to guarantee that the coalition's members cooperate successfully.

- **Effective coalition governments:** As coalition partners hold each other to account for providing public services, effective coalition governance can strengthen monitoring of government administration. As a result, the coalition may serve as a structure for governance and oversight of the administration of government affairs. Partners in a coalition could be more receptive to complaints from other partners about poor performance, corruption, and dishonesty.

- **Coalition governance:** The adoption of policies that cater to marginalized constituencies is made possible by coalition governance, which enables minorities to participate more fully in the political process. Dominant governing parties frequently only serve their own constituencies and ignore the interests of those who do not support them. The most prosperous economies, inclusive progress, and lasting peace are those produced by coalition governments. It has sparked fast industrialization, economic success, and stability in many advanced democracies like Germany, Switzerland, and Finland.

However, coalitions have frequently failed in a number of other nations for reasons similar to those in South Africa. Ultimately, in South Africa, the failure of many coalitions is not coalition as a form of governance but how they are structured, managed, and nurtured (Gumede, 2023). Additionally, coalition governance is a useful institution for fostering trust across political, racial, and class divides, according to Gumede (2023), since it requires members to routinely engage with one another, get to know the other side, and develop relationships. Effective coalition government necessitates all partners' and parties' participation in governing in the interests of all the constituents of the partnership, as well as concessions for the greater good of public service delivery. Successful coalition governance culture also permeates the rest of society, promoting a culture of conflict resolution, fostering a culture of compromise among varied societies, and protecting the interests of all communities and stakeholders. This indicates that coalition government will probably result in more peaceful civilizations.

However, in light of the aforementioned, it is crucial to highlight that political coalitions also come with difficulties and potential negatives, such as the requirement for ongoing discussion and compromise, which can occasionally delay decision-making. The willingness of the participating parties to work together and identify common ground is a key factor in the success of a political coalition, election governance and policies in South Africa, because the political landscape

is defined by various parties and diverse interests. The coalition's make-up and the difficulties the country is dealing with at the moment will determine the unique opportunities and results. Manyana (2023) suggests that South Africa look towards creating coalitions with ideological underpinnings. Even though a coalition administration can have certain benefits and chances with careful planning, there are many obstacles that could prevent any coalition from being successful after the general elections of 2024. Desai & Acton (2023) claims that extensive and transparent agreements, mechanisms offering incentives to enforce agreements, internal conflict management mechanisms, and the processes to manage ministerial drift are all necessary for stable coalition governance to be formed. The following factors should also be taken into account when planning to form a stable and efficient coalition governance (Kotze, 2023; Manyana, 2023):

- **Ideological Differences**: Political parties in South Africa come in many different varieties, each with its own ideology and stances on various issues. It can be difficult to make decisions and formulate policies when opposing parties must cooperate in order to form a coalition government. In coalition governments, resolving ideological differences among the participating parties is one of the biggest issues. Political parties in South Africa, like many other nations, may have contrasting policy agendas and goals, making it challenging to reach consensus on significant issues.

- **Trust and Cooperation**: It can be challenging to foster confidence and collaboration among coalition members, particularly when the parties involved have a history of rivalry. It is essential for the stability of a coalition administration that all parties cooperate well and keep their promises.

- **Policy Disagreements:** Disagreements or tensions within a coalition can result from disagreements about the implementation and prioritization of policy. It can be difficult to strike a balance between the interests and aspirations of many groups, especially when it comes to matters like economic policy, social welfare, and land reform.

- **Leadership and Power Struggles:** Coalition governments are susceptible to power struggles and leadership conflicts as each party looks to increase its influence and further its own goals. The coalition's stability depends on how well these internal disputes are handled.

- **Voter Expectations:** Voters could have great hopes for coalition governments, believing they will affect positive change and deal with current challenges. It can be difficult to live up to these expectations, particularly when coalition partners are constrained by political restrictions and low financial means.

- **Accountability and Transparency:** It might be difficult to provide accountability and openness under a coalition government since certain parties might not be as committed to these ideals as others. Public trust and coalition stability can be damaged by corruption and unethical behaviour.

- **Electoral Dynamics**: The dynamics of coalition politics in South Africa are

subject to quick change, and this is especially true following each election. As new players enter the political scene and parties gain or lose seats, coalition makeup may change.

- **Minority Governments:** In South Africa, certain coalition governments lack the absolute majority of seats in the legislature, making them minority governments. This can make it more difficult to pass legislation and run the government efficiently.
- **Economic and Social Challenges**: High unemployment, inequality, and poverty are just a few of the many economic and social issues that South Africa is facing. Given the conflicting interests of the parties making up a coalition administration, it may be difficult for it to create and carry out policies that adequately address these problems.
- **Public Perception:** Coalition governments' stability may be impacted by how the public views them. Voters may regard a partnership as unstable or ineffectual, which could put the ruling parties in further trouble.
- etc.

Booysen (2021) claims that South Africa's political alliances were beset by a number of difficulties. Successful coalition administrations in South Africa must place a high priority on good communication, make concessions, and see to it that transparent governance systems are put in place to solve these issues (Joshua et al., 2022). To keep the government stable and successfully handle the urgent issues facing the nation, coalition partners must engage in continual discussion and negotiation. In several municipalities and provinces, but not at the national level, South Africa had a coalition government. Table 3 lists national-level variables that could influence whether South Africa will form a national coalition government following the 2024 elections.

In light of Table 3, it is important to highlight that coalition governments may encounter inherent challenges as a result of the range of parties involved. The ability of all parties to collaborate for the benefit of the nation and its people is essential to success. The success of any coalition government formed after the 2024 elections would also be heavily influenced by the unique political dynamics and setting of South Africa. Over time, coalition government dynamics may change. Table 3 clarifies the precise elements that can influence a coalition government's success in South Africa in the future. As a result, the formation of a coalition in South Africa following the 2024 general elections will be influenced by the election's outcome, the distribution of seats in the legislature, and the political parties' willingness to work together to achieve common goals. However, political party sizes and ideology can have an impact on the dynamics that result in a coalition government (Mokgonyana, 2023) as well as a number of other factors, such as:

- **Political landscape fragmentation:** It becomes more difficult for any one party to win a majority of seats if there are numerous political parties with sizeable followings.

Table 3. Factors that could contribute to the success or failure of a national coalition government in South Africa after the 2024 elections.

Successful factors to national coalition government	Factors that could affect national coalition government
Clear Policy Agreements: Coalition partners should have clear policy agreements and a shared vision for the country's future. A well-defined common agenda can help avoid conflicts and provide a clear direction for the government.	**Power Struggles:** Coalition governments often involve multiple parties vying for influence and control. Power struggles and competition for key positions within the government can create instability and hinder effective decision-making.
Leadership and Communication: Effective leadership and communication are vital. The leaders of coalition parties must be able to build trust among their respective supporters and within the coalition itself. Open and transparent communication is crucial to maintaining unity.	**Policy Disagreements:** Disagreements over policy decisions, especially on critical issues such as economic policies, social welfare, and land reform, can lead to gridlock and inefficiency within the government.
Compromise and Flexibility: Coalition partners must be willing to compromise on certain issues to reach consensus and maintain stability. Flexibility in negotiations is essential for resolving disagreements and finding common ground.	**Public Expectations:** Voters may have high expectations for coalition governments, expecting them to deliver on their promises while facing the complexities of managing a diverse coalition. Failure to meet these expectations can lead to public disillusionment.
Strong Coalition Agreement: A well-drafted coalition agreement outlining the roles, responsibilities, and policy commitments of each party is essential. This agreement can serve as a reference point for resolving disputes and ensuring accountability.	**Weak Leadership:** Leadership within the coalition can be a significant factor. If the leaders of the participating parties are unable to provide strong and stable leadership, it can contribute to the instability and failure of the coalition.
Inclusivity and Diversity: A successful coalition government should be inclusive, representing a broad spectrum of the population. Diversity within the coalition can help address the needs and concerns of various communities and interest groups.	**External Pressure:** External factors, such as economic challenges, international relations, and public protests, can add pressure to coalition governments and exacerbate their problems.
Effective Governance Structures: Clear governance structures and decision-making processes should be established to avoid gridlock and ensure efficient administration. This includes defining roles within the coalition and setting up mechanisms for conflict resolution.	**Changing Alliances:** The composition of coalition governments can change over time if parties switch allegiances or if new parties enter or exit the coalition. These changes can disrupt the balance of power and stability within the government.
Support from Civil Society: A coalition government's success can be bolstered by support from civil society organizations, which can help hold the government accountable and provide valuable input on policies and reforms.	**Corruption and Scandals:** Allegations of corruption and scandals involving coalition partners can undermine public trust and lead to internal conflicts within the government.

Continued

Economic Stability: Maintaining economic stability and addressing pressing economic issues, such as unemployment and inequality, is crucial. A coalition government must have a well-thought-out economic plan and the ability to implement it.	**Communication Challenges:** Effective communication and coordination among coalition partners are crucial. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and ultimately, the breakdown of the coalition.
International Relations: A coalition government should effectively manage its international relations, maintaining positive diplomatic ties and promoting the country's interests on the global stage.	
Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Anticipating and addressing conflicts within the coalition is essential. Having established conflict resolution mechanisms can prevent disputes from escalating and endangering the government's stability.	
Long-Term Planning: While dealing with immediate challenges is important, coalition partners should also engage in long-term planning to address structural issues and promote sustainable development.	

Source: Adapted from Booysen (2021) and Joshua et al. (2022).

- **Voter preferences:** Changes in support and voter preferences may prevent any party from winning a decisive majority.
- **Electoral system:** The possibility of a coalition government might vary depending on the election system in use. Comparatively speaking, first-past-the-post systems are less likely to produce coalition governments than proportional representation systems.
- **Party negotiations:** In order to achieve common policy objectives or prevent a certain party from gaining power, political parties may bargain and create coalitions; and
- **Regional and ideological differences:** Coalition-building may be more difficult in South Africa due to the country's diversified political environment, which includes parties from various areas and ideologies.

Therefore, it would be necessary to evaluate the political environment, polling results, and election outcomes closer to the actual date of the election in order to ascertain whether or not a coalition administration will be possible in the South African national elections of 2024. The outcome of the election and the possibility of coalition formation can be influenced by public opinion, party strategies, and unanticipated events. The solutions that could guarantee an effective new course in South African public administration and governance are explained in the part that follows.

3.4. Potential Strategies for an Effective new Path in Public Administration and Governance in South Africa

Mokgonyana (2023) claims that South Africa is currently experiencing a coalition government, and that the South African national election in 2024 is quite likely to witness a surge in coalitions due to the rise in varied viewpoints and interests, the need for moral and progressive leadership, and a desire for "change". Before proposing tactics to ensure an efficient new path in South Africa's public administration and government, a lesson from the appalling experience that weakened ANC support and redirected it to the emergence of opposition should be learned. Table 4 lists factors that weakened the ANC's power as well as methods that coalition members should take into account for effective coalition administration and national governance.

In case no party secures a majority in the upcoming general elections in 2024, Table 4 addresses causes that may have diminished voter support for the ANC as well as alternative solutions that can assure a successful new path in coalition administration and government in South Africa. It also reveals various factors that reduced its base of support. Since 1994, when apartheid came to an end, the ANC has controlled South African politics (Makgale, 2020). The ANC's election success in 2024, however, will be influenced by a complex interaction of these and other circumstances, as well as the political parties' respective agendas, it is vital to highlight. Future electoral prospects for the ANC will be influenced by both internal and external forces because the political environment is fluid. In South Africa or any other nation, forging a new course in public administration and governance frequently entails tackling current issues, boosting effectiveness, increasing transparency, and encouraging innovation.

Table 4 lists some ideas for new directions for South Africa's public administration and government. Recognizing that changing public administration and governance is a long-term, complex project is nevertheless crucial. Success frequently hinges on political will, the participation of civil society, and persistent attempts to overcome obstacles. Gumede (2023) asserts that coalition governments are required to develop a coalition policy platform based on the shared contributions of all partners, essentially developing a new policy program that is not an individual party program but a collective coalition program. Coalition members, as well as the coalition itself, must openly and honestly communicate with their supporters on coalition policies and provide updates on their progress. In order to guarantee that the new course of action is in line with the changing demands of the people of South Africa, constant evaluation and strategy modification are essential. The administration and governance of new coalitions, if they are well-built or established, may be able to foster the growth of new leadership qualities among coalition members, facilitate the sharing of knowledge, expertise, materials, and opportunities for collaboration, and bring together a wide variety of individuals and organizations (Manyana, 2023; Cheeseman, 2019). By fostering a broader viewpoint and comprehension of the problem, diversity

Table 4. Potential strategies for an effective new path in coalition administration and governance in South Africa.

Factors that could eroded the ANC support from voters in 2024 elections	Potential strategies for an effective new path in coalition administration and governance in South Africa
Corruption Scandals: The ANC has been plagued by allegations of corruption and mismanagement at various levels of government. If these scandals continue to be exposed and are not effectively addressed, it could lead to a loss of confidence among voters.	**E-Governance and Digital Transformation:** Invest in e-governance initiatives to digitize government services, making them more accessible and efficient for citizens. This can include online service portals, digital identity systems, and data-driven decision-making.
Economic Challenges: South Africa faces significant economic challenges, including high unemployment rates, poverty, and slow economic growth. If voters perceive that the ANC is not effectively addressing these issues, they may look for alternative parties with economic solutions.	**Transparency and Anti-Corruption:** Strengthen transparency measures and anti-corruption efforts. This may involve implementing open data policies, whistleblower protection laws, and independent anti-corruption commissions.
Intraparty Divisions: The ANC has experienced internal divisions and factionalism, which can weaken its ability to govern effectively and maintain a united front. Infighting within the party can also deter voters.	**Decentralization and Local Governance:** Empower local governments with more autonomy and resources to address community-specific needs effectively. This can lead to better service delivery and citizen participation in decision-making.
Youth Discontent: South Africa has a large youth population that faces high levels of unemployment and limited economic opportunities. Younger voters may seek alternative parties that they believe will better represent their interests and address their concerns.	**Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Encourage and regulate PPPs to leverage private sector expertise and resources in public service delivery while ensuring accountability and fairness.
Emerging Political Parties: Opposition political parties may emerge and gain more support, offering alternative visions and policies. If these parties can effectively tap into voter dissatisfaction, they could siphon off ANC support.	**Inclusive Governance:** Promote inclusivity and diversity in government institutions and decision-making processes to ensure that the interests of all South Africans are represented.
Voter Apathy: If there is widespread disillusionment among voters or a perception that elections do not bring about meaningful change, turnout may decrease, which could hurt the ANC's chances of maintaining its majority.	**Civil Service Reform:** Modernize the civil service by recruiting and retaining skilled professionals, implementing merit-based promotions, and enhancing training and development programs.
Changing Demographics: Shifts in demographics, such as urbanization and changing population dynamics, could impact the ANC's traditional support base and electoral strategy.	**Performance Management:** Implement performance-based budgeting and management systems to measure the effectiveness of government programs and allocate resources more efficiently.
Policy Failures: If the ANC fails to deliver on key policy promises or if its policies are seen as ineffective, it may lose support from key constituencies.	**Public Engagement and Participation:** Create platforms for citizen engagement in policy development and decision-making, such as citizen assemblies, public consultations, and feedback mechanisms.
Coalition Politics: In the event that the ANC does not secure an outright majority, it may need to form coalitions with other parties to govern. The dynamics of coalition politics could impact the ANC's ability to implement its agenda.	**Education and Capacity Building:** Invest in education and training programs for government officials to improve their skills in public administration, leadership, and problem-solving.
Voter Perception: Ultimately, the outcome of elections often comes down to voter perception and the ability of political parties to connect with the electorate. Factors such as effective campaign strategies and leadership can play a crucial role in the 2024 elections.	**Green Governance:** Incorporate environmental sustainability and climate resilience into governance practices, policies, and regulations to address pressing environmental challenges.
Dominant parties: dominant parties are not making enough compromises, smaller parties are often made to feel excluded, and coalition pacts are wrongly based on agreeing first on government positions or contracts each partner gets rather than on agreeing on a joint policy program first.	**Responsive Healthcare and Social Services:** Enhance healthcare and social service delivery to ensure that citizens receive the care and support they need, especially in underserved areas.

Continued

Coalition governance culture: South Africa has so far been unable to foster a coalition governance culture—which includes parties making compromises, coalition partners giving each individual party a success story to report back to their constituency and coalition partners seeing the coalition as almost a political party on its own, that needs to be nurtured, by all the members of the coalition.

Innovation Labs and Research: Establish innovation labs within government agencies to test and implement innovative solutions for public service delivery. Invest in research to inform evidence-based policymaking.

The challenge with coalitions is that they need compromises for the greater good of public service delivery, leadership maturity to rise above ego and pettiness, and self- or individual party interest Many of the leaders of parties in coalitions often lack maturity.

Fiscal Responsibility: Develop and adhere to sound fiscal policies to ensure long-term financial sustainability while addressing economic disparities.

Failed coalitions have not built conflict resolution mechanisms into their governance structures as part of their partnership deals. Coalitions should build a conflict resolution mechanism into their coalition agreement or as part of the coalition agreement, appoint an independent Ombud that will resolve conflicts.

Public-Private Social Partnerships: Encourage collaborations between the government, private sector, and civil society to address social challenges, such as poverty alleviation and education improvement.

Adaptive Governance: Implement flexible and adaptive governance mechanisms to respond to emerging challenges, such as pandemics or economic crises, with agility and resilience.

International Collaboration: Engage in international partnerships and knowledge-sharing initiatives to learn from the experiences of other countries and gain access to best practices.
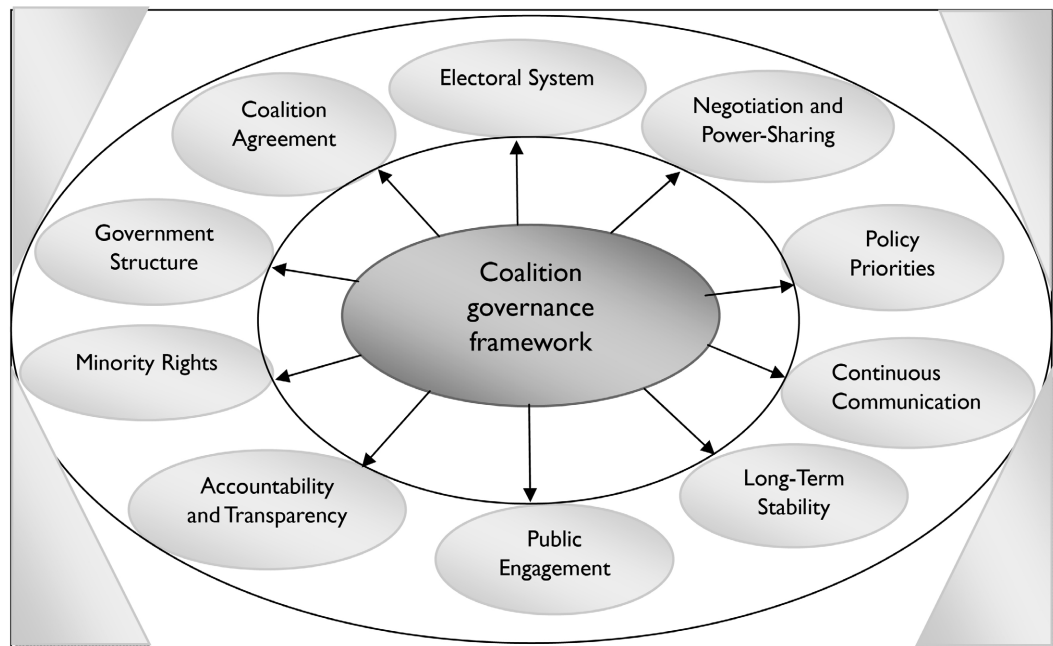
Source: Adapted from Mokgonyana (2023), Gumede (2023), and Beukes (2021).

helps build coalitions. By targeting a larger population with a range of objectives and interests, it can also help in outreach. Thus, a potential fitting framework for a coalition government in South Africa is discussed in the following section.

3.5. A Potential Fitting Framework for a Coalition Government in South Africa

Beukes & de Visser (2021) postulated that it is important to carefully evaluate the political environment, the parties involved, and the unique requirements and challenges of the country when developing a suitable framework for a coalition government in South Africa, or any other nation for that matter. Since there are multiple political parties in South Africa, coalition administrations have occasionally been formed at different levels of local government. The figure below depicts some of the key factors and elements that might make up a framework for potential coalition governance in South Africa at the national level.

Figure 1 shows that in order to address issues of instability and promote coalition cooperation, this framework offers realistic and doable rules to political parties participating in coalition governance. It lays out principles and presents tools that can be applied in practical coalition management. They have to do with both the coalition's creation and its administration or leadership. According to

Figure 1. Potential framework for a coalition government in South Africa. Source: Self-generated by the researcher.

(Vercesi, 2016), the state becomes unworkable when coalitions are unstable, which has a severe impact on service delivery. As a result, the country must provide a coalitions framework that political parties may use to build stable coalitions. Components of the potential framework for a coalition government in South Africa are described with regard to discussions from Beukes & de Visser (2021) and Vercesi (2016):

1) **Coalition Agreement:** Political parties will have to create a comprehensive coalition agreement that describes the objectives of the coalition, the organization of the government, and the obligations of each coalition partner. Define the processes for resolving disputes that might occur inside the alliance.

2) **Policy Priorities:** Achieve consensus among the coalition's members on common policy objectives and top priorities. This ought to be representative of the urgent problems that South Africa is currently dealing with, including social welfare, healthcare, and economic development. Recognize points of contention and permit the negotiation of compromises.

3) **Negotiation and Power-Sharing:** Create a transparent negotiation process that includes all parties involved. This procedure ought to spell out how authority will be divided, cabinet positions will be assigned, and policy priorities will be established. Make sure minority parties are given a significant voice in politics while also honouring the preferences of the majority of people.

4) **Accountability and Transparency:** Make sure that decisions are made transparently and that government actions are held accountable. Identify ways to regularly update the public and the legislature on the accomplishments and progress of the coalition government.

5) **Government Structure:** Describe the coalition government's organizational structure, including the number of ministries, their responsibilities, and the distribution of these roles among coalition members. They must promote justice and equity, think about implementing systems for sharing or rotating critical roles.

6) **Continuous Communication:** Encourage constant dialogue and teamwork among coalition members to tackle new issues and adjust to shifting conditions.

7) **Public Engagement:** Facilitate and support public involvement and participation in the decision-making process by using tools like open forums, town hall meetings, and public consultations. Encourage inclusion of all people and representation of underrepresented communities in policy deliberations.

8) **Minority Rights:** Assuring that minority parties' opinions are heard in the coalition government, protect the rights and interests of those parties. Establish measures to stop one party in the alliance from dominating the others.

9) **Long-Term Stability:** Consider tools that can strengthen the coalition government's stability, like fixed-term contracts and no-confidence vote thresholds, legislative strategy, independent audits, long-term vision, clear coalition agreement, effective leadership, policy compromises, shared decision-making, conflict resolution mechanisms, etc. To keep the coalition together and maintain stability, promote open communication and collaboration.

10) **Electoral System:** Due to South Africa's proportional representation (PR) voting system, coalition administrations are more likely to form, and the political environment is frequently fragmented. Any framework must consider this system's nuances. Think about implementing electoral reforms that support proportional representation and lessen the possibility of a hung parliament, as these measures can increase the stability of coalition governments.

In light of Figure 1 illustrated above, it is essential to not that the eventual coalition government structure in South Africa will be determined by the parties involved, their individual strengths and priorities, and the current political climate. Any coalition government will need to be flexible, willing to make concessions, and dedicated to serving the nation's interests. According to Beukes & de Visser (2021) and Vercesi (2016), in order to prevent and settle coalition conflict, coalition formation must be used as often as possible. The coalition members can accomplish this by compromising and making concessions to one another to win each other's cooperation. Therefore, transparency will have to be considered as a first step for the stability and success of any future alliance. In order to form a coalition, political parties must agree to differ on issues of national and regional importance and take local opinion into account during discussions. Additionally, political parties must hold internal consultations regarding coalition negotiations, develop a policy program, and create shared policy positions. They must also seek the counsel of experts and negotiate personnel choices, such as hiring staff members or making purchases.

4. Conclusion

This paper reviewed and examined literature aligned to coalition government in Africa. It focussed on a thinkable new path to public administration and governance at the national level in South Africa. Most literature reviewed and examined revealed that whether in Africa or in South Africa particularly, situations including financial mismanagement or poor public administration, toxic leadership or abuse of political power, corruption, political instability, or a failure to provide the population with basic services, lawlessness; and a plethora of political, economic, and social crises/crimes (load shedding or power blackouts, unemployment, bribery, poverty, etc.) are among the factors that are contributing to disruptive political or administrative power. Consequently, in South Africa, the number of African National Congress voters has substantially decreased since the past three elections in 2016, whether they were local or national, and opposition parties have greatly benefited from the disaffected voters of the nation's liberation party. The ANC has lost strength as a result of political, social, and economic flaws. Most specialists in this field are forestalling and envisaging that South Africa's public administration and government will eventually change path. One of the reasons for that projection is that the largest party in the country, the ANC, has suffered a sharp decline in popularity over the most recent elections in 2016. The ANC has faced allegations of corruption and poor leadership at various levels of government. As a result, the formation of coalition administrations both nationally and in some provinces is seen as an inevitable possibility for the forth coming national and provincial elections in South Africa in 2024.

Considering that coalition administrations have only ever been established locally up until now, this would be a huge development. Therefore, because coalition government seems to be inevitable in South Africa, the risk of eventual crises, collapse, or fragilize coalition development remains unavoidable. Consequently, building a solid coalition will require efforts to minimise the risk of issues affecting most coalition development in Africa. Aspects such as politicking of ethnicity, personality conflicts, lack of effective dispute resolution, lack of policy congruence and compliance, lack of a culture of trust in the political system, ideological divergence, etc., could constitute a strong barrier to the formation of coalitions. In addition, political parties in Africa form coalitions before or after elections based on a perceived interest or political goal, such as to win an election and form a government or to establish a majority that can operate in parliament. Contrary to democratic advanced countries, which encourage negotiation and compromise policies through consensus-building, as well as compromise policies for the greater good of delivering public services and involving all partners and parties in governing in the interests of all constituencies of the partnership; African countries, including South Africa, continue to experience volatility and several breakups in coalition politics and coalition governments. However, if properly established or formed, new coalitions' administrative and governing structures could support the growth of new leadership abilities among

coalition members, facilitate the sharing of knowledge, expertise, materials, and opportunities for collaboration, and bring together a variety of individuals and organizations. Coalition-building and sustainability may be more difficult in South Africa due to the country's diversified political environment, which includes parties from various areas and ideologies. Therefore, it is important to recognize that coalition success depends on everyone's desire to cooperate for the sake of the nation and its people. The ANC's electoral success in 2024 will be influenced by a complicated interaction of several circumstances as well as the political parties' agendas. Future electoral prospects for the ANC will be influenced by both internal and external variables because the political environment is dynamic. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that changing public administration and governance is a difficult endeavour that may take time. Accordingly, the results of the 2024 general election and the willingness of coalition partners to implement policies that will secure and guarantee sustained efforts to overcome ethical challenges and ideological differences will determine a new path to transforming public administration and governance in South Africa.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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