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PARTY COALITIONS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA AND THEIR IMPACT ON NATIONAL COHESION AND IDEOLOGICAL RAPPROCHEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of party alliances has become a regular feature of the political landscape of post-apartheid South Africa, evolving from a forced marriage under the constitutionally entrenched governments of national and provincial unity to various marriages of convenience. This development became commonplace particularly after the second democratic general elections, in 1999, when political parties increasingly came together at national, provincial and local levels to achieve some common political goals.

Some party coalitions were formed for the purpose of either strengthening the governing party or creating a viable and stronger parliamentary opposition. Others were aimed at ensuring that partner parties did not compete with each other in their respective strongholds. In some cases, especially at local government level, coalition or multiparty governments were formed to ensure that the business of government was carried out.

Although some coalitions undoubtedly contributed, through power-sharing arrangements, to consolidating South Africa's initial steps towards democracy, other, 'unprincipled', coalitions have resulted in political opportunism and short-term political manoeuvring. There has been a tendency for political parties to coalesce in order to serve the particular short-term interests of the key players. Undoubtedly, alliances and other forms of inter-party agreements have significantly directed the politics of post-apartheid South Africa.

The formation and collapse of coalitions and their reconstruction in new forms has been symptomatic of the nature of party coalitions in South Africa. The country's political environment has seen racially and ethnically configured coalitions, ideologically matched or disconnected coalitions, as well as politically opportunistic ones. Essentially, the tradition of coalition building has become firmly entrenched. South African coalition politics is an interesting case on which to reflect and from which to draw lessons.

This chapter reviews some of the major political party coalitions formed in the post-apartheid era, that is, from 1994. Pre-1994 alliances of various faith-based organisations, civic organisations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, like the United Democratic Front (UDF), which worked towards ending apartheid and introducing universal suffrage in South Africa, are not studied systematically.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is an exception. Although it is a trade union umbrella body and therefore has the ultimate mandate of protecting and advancing workers' rights, COSATU participates in government as one of the partners in the African National Congress (ANC)-led Tripartite Alliance and includes national and provincial government ministers and members of the national Parliament and provincial legislatures and local councils. It is therefore justifiable to include it here.

The chapter devotes equal attention to the history of both governing and opposition coalitions in South Africa from April 1994 to March 2006. Specifically, it examines:

- the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU;
- the ANC, National Party (NP), renamed later New National Party (NNP), and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) Government of National Unity;
- the Democratic Alliance (DA) in its initial configuration, which included the Democratic Party (DP), the NNP and the Federal Alliance (FA);
- the ANC and IFP coalition governments at the national level and in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province;
- the ANC and the NNP cooperative arrangement at the national level and in the Western Cape province;
- the DA-IFP Coalition for Change; and
- the coalition government between the DA, the African Christian

Democratic Party (ACDP), the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) and others in the Cape Metropolitan Council.

It also makes cursory observations about other opposition and government alliances and cooperative arrangements that existed in the same period.

The study seeks to document this under-researched yet crucial aspect of the political process in South Africa and describes and explains how a variety of factors determine the longevity and effectiveness of party coalitions as well as the impact of these groupings on South Africa's national cohesion and ideological harmony. Apart from this introduction and the conclusion, this chapter is divided into six sections. The first gives a detailed overview of political coalitions in South Africa, offering the necessary backdrop to the understanding of the nature of party coalitions in South Africa's political landscape. The second examines the impact of ethnicity, race, class and ideology on party alliances. The constitutional and legal framework governing political party coalitions is covered in the third section. The fourth describes the formation of party coalitions, including issues such as the choice of coalition partners, the driving forces, the selection of candidates, and the allocation of important portfolios. The fifth section analyses the management and maintenance of coalitions and the sixth draws conclusions about issues pertaining to the survival, effectiveness and collapse of political coalitions in the country.

The research was based on information collected through interviews with key party representatives on the basis of a pre-established questionnaire, verbal and written submissions by party leaders at an EISA roundtable on 'Strengthening Democracy through Party Coalition Building' held in Cape Town on 19 June 2003, a review of relevant literature on political party alliances and the author's direct observation of day-to-day events in South Africa.

It is worth pointing out that, in spite of his efforts to get the views of the ANC, SACP and COSATU on the Tripartite Alliance and more broadly regarding party coalition politics in South Africa, the author did not succeed in securing interviews with the representatives of these organisations. The author assumes that there were mitigating factors in their reluctance to make themselves available for an interview. These factors may include their focus on the 2004 and 2006 elections and the stepping down of the deputy president and the resultant political tensions within the alliance and its individual affiliates. Much of the information on the ANC, SACP and COSATU and the Tripartite Alliance was therefore drawn from secondary and informal sources.

OVERVIEW OF PARTY COALITIONS

The Governing Tripartite Alliance: An Enduring Marriage Despite Deep Divergences

The alliance between the ANC, COSATU, and the SACP started well before the end of apartheid. In fact, the alliance, known as the Tripartite Alliance, was initiated with a view to ending apartheid by whatever means and establishing a non-racial, inclusive and democratic political and socio-economic dispensation. Eventually, the alliance succeeded in achieving this outcome when the struggle in the factories (Friedman 1987), combined with other forms of resistance, played a substantial role in forcing the NP to renounce apartheid as the system became increasingly counter-productive in relation to the economy, and thus unsustainable. The alliance became more formalised and better structured and organised after the unbanning of the ANC and the SACP in 1990. The ANC and its alliance partners have governed South Africa since 1994. The SACP and COSATU have visible influence on the conceptualisation, formulation and implementation of policies. Owing to its unique role in policy-making in the country since 1994, the Tripartite Alliance is deliberately and justifiably studied here under 'post-apartheid coalitions'.

The alliance also includes the once highly effective South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), an association of civic groups which, through the UDF, staged a decade-long fight against apartheid at local government level. But SANCO has remained largely a relatively minor player because of its failure to reposition itself strategically in the post-apartheid era as well as because of the 'brain drain' it suffered with the advent of democracy, compounded with leadership infighting and frequent allegations of corruption. Nonetheless, SANCO tends to resuscitate itself at the approach of elections. At times the alliance is referred to as the 'Tripartite Alliance plus 1', a recognition of SANCO.

As soon as it assumed power, the ANC government launched the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a programme conceived ahead of the first democratic elections of April 1994 by the Tripartite Alliance partners, with COSATU playing a leading role. The RDP was aimed at uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the historically marginalised poor, through massive public spending. It soon became obvious that the ANC had to make some serious choices given the potential strain of the RDP on South Africa's macroeconomic balance and uncertainty about its sustainability as well as the government's objective of making South Africa

attractive to foreign investment. As the government of the day, the ANC had to consider the needs and interests of a much larger constituency than its traditional one – the black poor – and to choose between implementing its then leftist ideology, on the one hand, and adopting more market-oriented policies, on the other. In mid-1996, the ANC adopted the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, a macro-economic programme that espouses neo-liberal policies. This phase marked the beginning of open tensions between the ANC and its alliance partners, who opposed GEAR publicly, condemning privatisation, jobless growth and the ever-decreasing role of the state in the economy in a country characterised by striking inequalities and where large segments of society live below the poverty line.

The divisions between the ANC and its partners have been deepening since that time. The ANC is increasingly perceived by its partners as catering excessively for the middle and upper classes, while the SACP and COSATU cast themselves as representing the black poor and the working classes. In 2002 President Thabo Mbeki referred to those members of COSATU and the SACP opposed to the ANC's macro-economic policies as the 'ultra-left', and invited them to leave the alliance or align themselves with the views and policies of the ANC. This was not the first time an ANC President had made a similar demand – in July 1998, at the tenth national congress of the SACP, then President Mandela 'castigated the SACP for ridiculing government programmes and told the party openly to toe the ANC line or get out of the Tripartite Alliance' (*Sunday Times* 27 November 2005).

At the ANC's December 2002 congress many observers expected further divisions between the Tripartite Alliance partners, with some predicting that the alliance would not survive, given the extent of the divergences. In the event, COSATU and SACP representatives did not leave the alliance.

Dale McKinley (2001) is of the opinion that there is a deficit of democracy within the Tripartite Alliance. He argues that 'the ANC's pursuit of an elite-led liberal democratic and deracialised capitalism has precipitated serious ideological opposition, class confrontation, and more general political debate and dissent within its own ranks and those of its alliance partners [and] through a combination of outright political intimidation, ideological mysticism and the co-option [...] of key ANC "trouble-makers" and COSATU/SACP leaders into his governmental inner-circle, Mbeki had largely succeeded in quashing genuine opposition and controlling the boundaries of debate'. In the same article McKinley gives an account of summits and meetings at which robust written and verbal exchanges took place, sometime

publicly, between the Tripartite Alliance partners, contradicting his main argument that an absence of debate and political intolerance and intimidation are rife in the alliance. It is, however, true that government has made some decisions unilaterally – such as the introduction of GEAR and the subsequent declaration by former President Mandela that GEAR was sacrosanct – before they have been debated even at party level, much less within the alliance. This development was the result of a new reality, the emergence of government as a new centre of power, in addition to the ANC party structures.

Is it unacceptable for the ANC leadership to assert itself as the main alliance partner and resist attempts by its ‘junior’ partners to revert to what it sees as budget straining socialist policies? Is such assertiveness undemocratic? Can COSATU and the SACP claim more space in the alliance than the ANC itself? If they really need such space to criticise the ANC’s policies and, more importantly, to advance effectively the legitimate interests of the working classes and the poor whom they claim to represent, should not they consider other options? The left wing of the alliance has at least three choices: to capitulate and align itself completely with the ANC’s neo-liberal policies, to quit the alliance and form a new left-wing party, and to remain in the alliance in the hope of influencing policy-making from within. The SACP and COSATU seem to have opted for the last option. At this juncture this is a wise strategy, despite the inherent tensions that it entails.

The failure of the left-wing members of the alliance to achieve some of their objectives should not be seen as a reflection of a lack of inner democracy in the Tripartite Alliance but as the increased determination of the ANC to play by its own rules as the government of the day. The dynamics within the alliance should not be seen as proof that intra-alliance democracy is being undermined. It is important to see the contradictions within the alliance as a natural evolution. The centrists or reformists, led by the ANC and, more precisely, by the President of the Republic, Thabo Mbeki, and the leftists vocally represented by the SACP and COSATU are, currently, essentially two sides of the same coin. Fundamentally, they share similar convictions about the ultimate goals and vision of the alliance, but differ on the strategies for achieving them.

The reformists believe in ‘redistribution through growth’, while the leftists hope to achieve ‘growth through redistribution’. In other words, the ANC prefers to spend only the wealth government has created while its partners argue that the state must stimulate growth through massive public spending for the poor. Despite the fact that the centrists are seen as focusing on consolidating the emerging black middle and upper classes through

affirmative action and black economic empowerment (BEE) frameworks, among other things, while the left prefers a working-class-oriented strategy, these standpoints could be reconciled. Indeed, the two sides could define priorities and determine, on the one hand, areas where public spending should necessarily wait for growth to take place and, on the other, those areas where public spending can inevitably precede growth. This can be achieved without causing macroeconomic instability and imbalances while addressing in a sustainable manner the daily hardships faced by large segments of the South African population.

Contradictions within both the Tripartite Alliance and the ANC itself are not atypical. Even old political parties in stable Western democracies, such as the French Parti Socialiste, have different tendencies within themselves. At this stage, the reformists in the ANC have the upper hand. The less the governing party needs its left wing to maintain power, the less attention it will pay to that group's demands. The reformists are using their position of influence, which is derived from the posts they occupy in government and the current economic world order, which favours neo-liberalism, to advance their agenda.

As for the ANC itself, Mbeki and his technocratic government, supported by international consultants, have been accused of undermining the long tradition of internal debate which, for decades, has characterised the ANC. Good governance practice recommends that policy-making should ideally involve broad consultation within the party from the grassroots to the top levels, so, while acknowledging that the ANC should revert to its old consultative approach for the sake of democracy and for its own survival as a democratic organisation, it must also be acknowledged that when the party came to power on 27 April 1994 only a few of its members had the necessary expertise and experience to articulate economic and social policies beyond the socialist rhetoric in the face of post-apartheid era challenges. Resorting to technocrats and outside expertise was a logical approach and the reliance on them should naturally and gradually diminish as the party and the alliance build their own internal capacities.

Equally important, before it came to power the ANC was used to having a single centre of power, namely the party. After its electoral victory in 1994 it faced a new situation where the party apparatus was no longer the only structure which provided vision, leadership and strategy. The ANC-led government came into being with extensive executive powers and, for the first time, there were two centres of power – the party and the government. Because President Mandela chose to be a quasi-ceremonial president, focusing

on nation-building and national reconciliation, the existence of the two centres of power was not as divisive during his tenure. President Mbeki has fully exercised his prerogatives both as head of state and as leader of the governing party. In this new context Mbeki enjoys considerable power; more than any ANC President in history, a situation justified by the contextual change.

At the same time the ANC government's constituency grew beyond its traditional boundaries. Governments worldwide have a responsibility to consult with and take into consideration the views of all the major sectors and segments of society. The ANC had, therefore, to take into account not only the needs and expectations of its traditional constituents, namely the historically disadvantaged, but also those of the business sector, the international community, and even South Africa's opposition parties. The party's policies tend to reflect these views, including those of its partners and of its adversaries, a fact that has often displeased the SACP and COSATU.

With its mammoth task of meeting the expectations of the poor, the dispossessed and the working class while appeasing the fears of the business community and the country's international partners, the new government did not have an easy choice to make. The decision to shift the party to the centre through the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies with strong similarities with the structural adjustment programmes recommended by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, was essentially an elite decision and did not involve broad consultations with ordinary members, and even many party cadres were unaware of the development of a new economic plan to replace the RDP (Gumede 2005). While the ANC itself, as a party, is not fundamentally opposed to its new centrist stance, its critics have attacked what they term Mbeki's unilateralist and elitist approach in closing the RDP office and formulating and implementing GEAR and other important policies. In reality, the ANC had to provide leadership and exercise its executive prerogative as the government of the day in the face of the complex and often contradictory needs and expectations of various constituencies. In this case, the challenge facing the ANC government was essentially to strike a balance between, on the one hand, demonstrating leadership and pragmatism by acting on the pressing issues confronting the country as a whole and, on the other, seeking consensus through time-consuming consultative processes within such heterogeneous groups as the party and the Tripartite Alliance.

It must be admitted that the government has introduced important pro-poor policies and invested massively in health, education, housing, and

access to potable water, electricity and social security. The party has also helped enact pro-worker legislation, like the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. However, these achievements are not always acknowledged, not only by opposition parties but also by the SACP and COSATU. Yet they are the direct result of the collaborative efforts by all three Tripartite Alliance partners.

In addition, in the last several budget cycles government has increased its public expenditure component and relaxed deficit targets. Apart from the fact that 2004 and 2006 were election years in South Africa, which might have resulted in the government trying to please the electorate by increasing social spending, and the fact that higher growth rates were recorded in 2005, another reason for this shift might include the fact that the alliance left is undeniably influential in the policy-making process.

It should be clearly understood and accepted that, as long as it is in power, the ANC will have centres of power at both party level and in government and there could even be a third centre of power if Parliament developed its independence and oversight function more effectively. The ANC therefore needs to review its policy development and coordination processes in the new context, bearing in mind the possible limitations of each of these individual centres of power.

So, what is the glue that keeps the Tripartite Alliance together despite deep ideological cleavages and divergent class interests? There are several explanations for its survival. One is that it is a principled alliance, initially formed to fight a common enemy, the apartheid system, and eventually working towards the transformation of South African society into a non-racial, non-sexist one characterised by equal rights and opportunities for all. With respect to transformation, the coalition has largely been effective and this joint achievement by the alliance partners has contributed to the alliance's survival despite the deep cleavages and related pressures.

The longevity of the alliance can also be explained by the long historical association among the partners, which has resulted in the formation of strong bonds. The SACP and the ANC have been working together since the 1920s, under difficult circumstances characterised by repression and oppression. Their partnership was reinforced during decades of exile when the ANC looked to the SACP for intellectual guidance and the financial support provided by the then Eastern European Communist Block. Similarly, the alignment of COSATU's predecessor (the South African Congress of Trade Unions – SACTU) with the ANC in the 1950s and of COSATU itself from

its creation in 1985 explains the strong bonds between the trade union umbrella and the ANC. On 4 December 2005 ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma acknowledged these bonds and encouraged their strengthening as follows: 'I urge the leadership and membership of COSATU to continue to claim the ANC as your own, and to stand guard over our Movement, never allowing the things we hold sacred to be sacrificed at any cost. In the same way, the ANC must claim COSATU as its own and play an active role in the life of our trade union federation (Zuma 2005).'

It is worth noting that the SACP and COSATU have built a strong relationship since the creation of the trade union federation and the relationship has grown stronger as the ANC has moved further right. This closeness was praised by SACP Secretary General Blade Nzimande when he affirmed, on the occasion of COSATU's 20th Anniversary in 2005, that 'together we have taken up the battle against an economic system based on exploitation of the majority and private profits for the few. Together we have opposed privatisation. Together we have sought to highlight the job-loss blood bath that has engulfed our country over the past decade. Together we have embarked on struggles for gender transformation. Together we have endeavoured to fund programmes to address joblessness, casualisation and underdevelopment. Together we have committed ourselves to making the second decade a decade of workers and the poor (Nzimande 2005).'

Equally important is the fact that COSATU officials are members of the ANC and/or the SACP just as many cadres of the SACP are also members of the ANC and vice versa. It is reported that Thabo Mbeki only resigned from the SACP's Central Committee in the late 1980s with the collapse of the Eastern bloc, and ended his membership of the SACP following the unbanning of the ANC in the early 1990s. The co-option of communist leaders to the ANC government has deprived the SACP of its best minds, including Jeff Radebe, Alec Erwin, Charles Nqaula, Essop Pahad, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Sydney Mufumadi, and Ronnie Kasrils. Although many communist leaders are still with the SACP, their allegiance is divided between it and the ANC. COSATU has also lost leaders to the ANC government, the most prominent of these being Mbhazima Shilowa, the former secretary general of the trade union federation, who is the ANC provincial premier for Gauteng. In 2005 Shilowa went as far as to terminate his membership of the SACP. These developments have caused a crisis of loyalty and have ultimately divided the ANC's partners. Clashes between these cadres and their original organisations have undermined the SACP and COSATU's ability to counter some of the ANC-led government's policies. Like the ANC,

COSATU and the SACP are not monolithic groups and are divided on policy matters and on their stance vis-à-vis the ANC's policies. In such circumstances, splitting from the ANC might not be seen as easy or desirable at present because of a lack of cohesion among themselves.

Another reason for the survival of the Tripartite Alliance is that the alliance's MPs and members of the provincial legislatures were elected on closed electoral lists under the ANC. As such they are 'stuck' with the ANC and, should any of them leave the alliance, they would lose their seats, unless they quit during the floor-crossing window period. If the SACP and COSATU were represented directly in the chambers they might have taken different positions on a number of policies, including GEAR. The alliance would then have faced even greater tensions and its survival might have been compromised.

On many other occasions the divisions within both the ANC and the other alliance partners have been exposed publicly. Two examples are the ANC government's handling of the HIV/AIDS and Zimbabwe crises. These intra-party and intra-alliance divergences are most clearly illustrated by the political polarisation engendered by the Jacob Zuma arms deal corruption case and his subsequent sacking by President Mbeki as the country's deputy president, a development that has caused divisions not only within the alliance as a whole but also within each of its affiliated components and some of their sub-structures. Two opposing camps have emerged in each of the three organisations – the pro-Mbeki group and the pro-Zuma group – against any ideological logic. The Zuma case provided an opportunity for various sides to fight over the ANC's economic policies and succession in the governing party. *The Star* reported that the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), some members of the ANC itself, the Young Communist League (YCL), and COSATU's leadership were clear that the fight over the Zuma saga was all part of the succession battle: 'the SACP has implicitly argued that its Zuma crusade was aimed at recapturing the ANC from the Centre-Right and Zuma happened to be a central rallying point'. The newspaper noted that, interestingly, 'all the deputies in the pro-Zuma bloc have rebelled against the pro-Zuma stance' (*The Star* 5 December 2005). This viewpoint was substantiated by the *Mail & Guardian* when it published an extract from a paper written by Mazibuko Jara, Deputy National Secretary of the YCL, questioning what he saw as the SACP's uncritical and unprincipled support for Zuma. Asking what Zuma's role was in the rightward shift of the ANC and what political programme Zuma stood for, Jara argued that 'the communist party has an opportunity to use its political and organisational

preparations for its 12th congress in 2007 to revisit all key issues of strategy, programme and tactics, including a debate on the contestation of elections by a working-class socialist party, hopefully the SACP' (*Mail & Guardian* 25 November-1 December 2005). Clearly, a split in the Tripartite Alliance is likely to lead to a split in each of its individual affiliated organisations as well, a prospect most of the partners would not wish to contemplate seriously at this point.

Another important reason for the longevity of the Tripartite Alliance is the relatively small support bases of the SACP and COSATU, which tends to discourage any attempt to stand on their own for election. If they were bigger and able to win more seats they would be more vocal and rebellious and, possibly, go it alone. Presently, they are likely to win far fewer seats than they have done under the secure ANC umbrella. COSATU's leadership is convinced that most COSATU members would vote for the ANC rather than support a new left party, should one emerge from the alliance. The alliance, therefore, has afforded COSATU and the SACP more influence, even if the ANC has the final say.

For its part, the ANC endeavours to keep the SACP, COSATU and SANCO on its side rather than have these powerful mass-based organisations outside its influence, which might render the country difficult to govern, especially if they were in opposition to the ANC government.

As is the case with any other coalition government, a strong incentive for cooperation is that, through their association with the ANC, some SACP and COSATU leaders have been redeployed to powerful and lucrative government jobs. Others have won important contracts through BEE opportunities. A break-up might compromise access to lucrative business deals.

All the above factors constitute the glue that helps keep the Tripartite Alliance together. But like any glue, it will not last forever, unless it is renewed, a renewal which will essentially be determined by South Africa's basic economics as well as by politics within the Tripartite Alliance and in its individual affiliated organisations.

The Government of National Unity: A Forced Marriage

The Government of National Unity (GNU) was not a voluntary coalition but a multiparty government entrenched in the transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1993 and based on the electoral performance of parties in the 1994 national and provincial elections. However, since it comprised three parties it is worth including it in this study in order to

understand the inter-party relationships it represented. South Africa's transitional Constitution of 1993, negotiated at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), provided that any party which secured a minimum of 5 per cent of the national vote (20 seats) was entitled to be part of the GNU, which would govern the country in the first five years of democracy. This mechanism was intended to ensure, *inter alia*, continuity, political inclusiveness, and racial and ethnic reconciliation.

The transitional Constitution provided that a party that held a minimum of 80 seats in the 400-member National Assembly (20%) should be entitled to designate an executive deputy president from among the members of the National Assembly, and that a party holding at least 20 seats (5%) should be entitled to be allocated one or more Cabinet portfolios in proportion to the number of seats it held relative to the number of seats held by the other parties. Similarly, the Constitution stipulated that 'a party holding at least 10 per cent of the seats in a provincial legislature shall be entitled to be allocated one or more of the provincial government portfolios in proportion to the number of seats held by it in the provincial legislature relative to the number of seats held by the other participating parties'.

Accordingly, the ANC, the NP and the IFP formed the first democratic, non-racial Government of National Unity in 1994 at both national and provincial levels. Parliament elected Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic assisted by Executive Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. Former President Frederik de Klerk became the second Executive Deputy President in the GNU. IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi was appointed Minister of Home Affairs. In addition, each of the government partners held a number of ministerial positions calculated pro rata to the number of seats won in the 1994 elections (See Table 1).

In addition, various political parties participated in provincial government in several provinces based on their performance in the elections for the provincial legislatures. Accordingly, 'governments of provincial unity' were formed in several provinces, including the Free State, Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Northern Cape, essentially between the ANC and the NP. In KZN, the government included the IFP, the ANC and the NP.

From the beginning tensions emerged between the ANC and the NP. Differences in ideology and social background and the weight of history haunted the 'coalition government'. Personal animosity between President Mandela and Deputy President De Klerk did not help the situation. This was not a coalition but a cohabitation, or even a forced marriage. As such it did not last in its initial form.

The NP had a dilemma. It was not certain whether to remain in a government where it had reduced room for manoeuvre or to quit in order to play fully its role in Parliament as the official opposition. As a minority party in the government, the NP could not always influence policy in the face of the ANC's massive representation. In addition, the ANC's adoption

Table 1
1994 Election Results: National Assembly

Party	% votes	No. of votes	No. of seats
African National Congress (ANC)	62,65	12 237 655	252
National Party (NP)	20,39	3 983 690	82
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	10,54	2 058 294	43
Freedom Front (FF)	2,17	424 555	9
Democratic Party (DP)	1,73	338 426	7
Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)	1,25	243 478	5
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	0,45	88 104	2
Africa Muslim Party	0,18	34 466	0
African Moderates Congress Party	0,14	27 690	0
Dikwankwetla of SA	0,10	19 451	0
Federal Party	0,09	17 663	0
Minority Front	0,07	13 433	0
SOCCER	0,05	10 575	0
Africa Democratic Movement	0,05	9 886	0
Women's Rights Peace Party	0,03	6 434	0
Ximoko Progressive Party	0,03	6 320	0
Keep It Straight and Simple (KISS)	0,03	5 916	0
Workers' List Party	0,02	4 169	0
Luso-SA Party	0,02	3 293	0
Total		19 533 498	400

Source: Independent Electoral Commission October 1994

of neo-liberal policies made the NP redundant. On the other hand, the NP's apartheid baggage, its background of racial injustice, largely unaccountable governance, and human rights abuses reduced its respectability as a value-based opposition. De Klerk and the NP resigned from the GNU late in 1996.

The withdrawal of the NP did not affect the marriage of convenience between the ANC and the IFP. Indeed, the two parties consolidated their collaboration in KZN with a view to preserving peace in a province traumatised by years of so-called black-on-black violence which had led to the killing of thousands. The KZN government of provincial unity served essentially as a conflict management mechanism. Inaugurated under the auspices of the transitional Constitution, the IFP-ANC coalition government lasted for a decade at national level and continued in KZN beyond the 2004 elections. The ANC-IFP post-election coalition in KZN is the second longest-lasting coalition government in post-apartheid history, after the Tripartite Alliance.

The GNU provided an opportunity for very dissimilar political parties to work jointly in the Cabinet. Within two years of the cohabitation, the three parties had harmonised their views on a number of policy issues. P Eric Louw (2000) affirms that 'GEAR was sold to the ANC by the NP during the GNU-period when the NP controlled the Ministry of Finance under the power-sharing arrangement'. This ensured smooth economic continuity between the NP and the ANC and demonstrated that the former ruling party had, to some extent, inspired the ANC in this regard. This influence probably started during the negotiations over a transition pact and culminated during the cohabitation in the GNU when the NP acted as the protector of the interests of the business community. The adherence by the ANC to neo-liberal policies made the presence of the NP in the GNU irrelevant.

The Democratic Alliance: A Failed Marriage

The results of the 1999 election (see Table 2) confirmed the gradual demise of the NNP. Dropping from 20,39 per cent of the national vote in 1994 to 6,87 per cent in 1999, the party lost its place as South Africa's official opposition in favour of the DP. Almost extinct after receiving only 1,73 per cent of the national vote in the first democratic election, the DP took stock of its performance and the political situation in the country and concluded that, because of its apartheid past, the NP was an impediment to effective opposition, and decided to destroy it. The DP's strategy included vigorously opposing the ANC and repositioning itself to reassure and attract the NP's

Table 2
1999 Election Results: National Assembly

Party	% of votes	No. of votes	No. of seats
Abolition of Income Tax and Usury Party	0,07	10 611	0
African Christian Democratic Party	1,43	228 975	6
African National Congress	66,35	10 601 330	266
Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging	0,29	46 292	1
Azanian People's Organisation	0,17	27 257	1
Democratic Party	9,56	1 527 337	38
Federal Alliance	0,54	86 704	2
Inkatha Freedom Party	8,58	1 371 477	34
Minority Front	0,30	48 277	1
New National Party	6,87	1 098 215	28
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania	0,71	113 125	3
The Government by the People Green Party	0,06	9 193	0
The Socialist Party of Azania	0,06	9 062	0
United Christian Democratic Party	0,78	125 280	3
United Democratic Movement	3,42	546 790	14
Vryheidsfront / Freedom Front	2,17	424 555	3
Total			400

Source: www.eisa.org.za/WEP/sou1999results1.htm

Table 3
The Western Cape Provincial Legislature, 1999

Party	No. of Seats
African Christian Democratic Party	1
African National Congress	18
Democratic Party	5
New National Party	17
United Democratic Movement	1
Total	42

supporters. As demonstrated by the results of the 1999 election the strategy worked and the DP secured 38 seats in Parliament (from 7 in 1994) while the NNP won only 28 seats compared to its 82 in the previous election. In addition, in 1999, the DP won more seats or votes than the NP in six of the nine provincial legislatures – the exceptions were the Northern Cape, Northern Province and Western Cape.

The outcome of the 1999 election in the Western Cape, as indicated in Table 3, led to a hung legislature, making it impossible for one party to govern the province alone. The NNP was divided about the choice of a coalition partner. The majority of NNP members were in favour of entering a coalition with the DP, with only a few preferring to work with the ANC. A coalition was finally formed between the NNP, the DP, and, initially, the ACDP, which eventually withdrew, reportedly under pressure from former President Mandela. The DP-NNP coalition aimed to keep the ANC out of government in the Western Cape and ultimately to run the province. Following mass demonstrations by COSATU against what it termed the Western Cape's 'white government' Mandela is reported to have stepped in and convinced the ANC to accept the NP-DP provincial government (Louw 2000).

The Democratic Alliance (DA) was formed on 14 June 2000 and initially comprised the DP and the NNP. It was later joined by the FA. Its short-term goal was to ensure that the DP and the NNP would jointly fight the local government elections in December 2000. The DA's medium-term objective was to become a strong opposition party which would contest the national and provincial elections in 2004.

Although the preamble of the outline agreement between the DP and the NNP states, *inter alia*, that the two parties share the desire to build a political movement that is 'home to South Africans from all communities' (see Appendix 4), the gradual fusion of these two historically white political parties was widely viewed as a racial reconfiguration, a prelude to racial polarisation in South Africa's politics (Habib and Taylor 2001). The alliance partners campaigned under a single banner in the 2000 local government elections and planned to transform the coalition into a political party by the 2004 general election. The DP leader, Tony Leon, became the DA's national leader in recognition of the fact that his party had come second to the ANC in the 1999 national elections. NNP leader Marthinus van Schalkwyk became deputy national leader.

In the December 2000 local government elections the DA received 22,1 per cent of the proportional representation (PR) ballot, a great achievement

given that the combined results achieved by the DP, NNP and FA in the 1999 general election represented only 17 per cent of the national vote. The DA won the Cape Metropolitan Council by 53,49 per cent, beating the ANC (38,54%). The alliance was determined to make Cape Town and the Western Cape the showpiece of the DA's ability to govern and deliver (*Africa Research Bulletin* 2001) but ultimately infighting and animosity between the two leaders of the alliance prevented it from achieving its objective.

Coalitions are temporary and necessary in order to make government or opposition work but the concept of them turning into a permanent relationship requires that there be fundamental agreement on, among other things, ideological principles, and that they share the same kind of constituency and political culture. Historically, the DP and NNP were archrivals in the apartheid Parliament. The former (and its predecessor, the Progressive Federal Party) was home primarily to English-speaking South Africans and the latter to Afrikaans-speakers. The two parties also had different political cultures, structures and procedures, and their leaders had different, if not incompatible, leadership styles. According to an NNP member, the integration of the two entities proved to be difficult, even impossible, because Van Schalkwyk professed moderation vis-à-vis the governing ANC while Leon believed in aggressive opposition politics, as demonstrated in his 'Fight Back' election campaign in 1999 and his constant criticism of the ANC government, which alienated the majority of the black electorate. This opinion is echoed by William Gumede when he argues that 'Mbeki and the ANC leadership believe that Leon's criticism of the government has racist undertones, and that he personifies the condescending viewpoint that blacks cannot govern, and that a black South African government must necessarily be as corrupt as any other in Africa' (Gumede 2005).

With regard to the differences between the two parties in terms of structure and political culture a DP member explained that the DP was open, critical and liberal, while the NNP had a background of patriarchal leadership, and argued that the NNP had no principles and was focused on acceding to power. He illustrated his point with the example of recruitment strategies, saying the DP recruited activists while the NNP's strategy was mass-based. In addition, the NNP started meetings with prayers, while the DP refused to do so.

Equally important, perceptions that the ANC government's affirmative action and black economic empowerment policies were leading to the disempowerment of Afrikaners justified their rejection of the NNP's

cooperative opposition in favour of Leon's confrontational style (Snyman 2005). The majority of Afrikaans voters, therefore, approved of Leon's approach; hence their massive support for the DP in the 1999 election, and their subsequent shift to the DP/DA after the collapse of the DP-NNP alliance.

The continued existence of the NNP caucus within the DA made Leon nervous as it retarded the speed of integration of the two parties into a single political party. On the other hand, Leon's leadership was questioned by the NNP faction of the DA in the Western Cape, where Van Schalkwyk's party had received more votes than Leon's in the 1999 provincial election. Furthermore, coloured segments of the alliance, who constituted the power base of the NNP, complained that the DA leadership lacked political will and thus failed to deal with 'the complex and contradictory questions of race and class as they permeate South African society (Faull 2003)'. Tensions between the two leaders were palpable and the final clash was unavoidable.

Another contentious matter within the DA was that the DP group wanted to promote one leader and one image by elevating Leon. In 2001, a strategy aimed at portraying Leon as the key leader of the DA was exposed when DP key strategist Ryan Coetzee's lap top computer was stolen and documents leaked to the media. What became known as the Coetzee Papers were written in August 2000, only a month after the formation of the DA. In these papers Coetzee wrote to Leon complaining that Van Schalkwyk was more prominent than Leon in the DA. The papers also alleged that there was a conspiracy in which former President F W de Klerk, then patron of the NNP and the DA, was promoting the NNP within the alliance as the most important partner, through the F W de Klerk Foundation and an international touring campaign. As a way forward, Coetzee offered a strategy for Leon to strengthen his image. He also indicated that he believed the ANC was conspiring to break up the new political organisation.

In an attempt to maintain his image as a national leader, Van Schalkwyk, accompanied by his NNP constituency and staff, started a reconciliation tour to boost support (*Africa Research Bulletin* 2001). One element of this campaign was a symbolic visit to Robben Island undertaken without consulting his DP partners, an act that caused tensions. The DP found him divisive and undisciplined.

After becoming the official opposition in the National Assembly in 1999 and following its coalition with the NNP, the DP reinforced its strategy of destroying the NNP by 'hugging him around the neck and boxing him in the stomach', as it was eloquently put by a DP member during an informal interview. Clearly this strategy had the effect of winning substantial numbers

of NNP members to the DP, but it also had the side-effect of causing divisions and factionalism in the DA. In the latter half of 1999 and early 2000 the DP encouraged NNP members to defect to the DP and the fact that it spared no effort to give these defections the maximum publicity resulted in the NNP feeling undermined. Intra-coalition defections can only be detrimental to the relationships between coalition partners.

A controversy over the renaming of streets saw Leon and Van Schalkwyk calling each other names in public. The saga started soon after then Cape Town Mayor Peter Marais, who originated in the NNP faction, initiated a process aimed at renaming Adderley and Wale streets in Cape Town after Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk respectively. Marais was accused of lack of transparency and vote rigging. In July 2001, a commission, headed by Judge Willem Heath, was set up and recommended disciplinary action against Marais and his accomplices. Despite the fact that in October 2001 the Cape Town Council Rules Committee cleared Marais, Leon insisted that he be expelled for causing controversy within the party. Van Schalkwyk vehemently opposed the move. The animosity and the leadership struggle between the DA's two national leaders reached new heights and led to an irreversible polarisation within the alliance, essentially along DP-NNP lines. According to analysts Leon's aggressive and abrasive style did not help contain the crisis. The *Africa Research Bulletin* notes that Leon had 'stirred considerable dislike in the breasts of diehard Nationalists – and those who, on cultural and language grounds, dislike what they perceive as English liberal arrogance' (2001). Eventually, Marais resigned from the DA and formed his own party, the New Labour Party, after having reportedly tried unsuccessfully to join the ANC. The alliance split in October 2001 and now consists only of the DP, significant numbers of NNP dissidents, and the FA.

Several writers had predicted that the DA would be affected by the deep differences in the personal political aspirations of its two leaders (Booyesen 1999, pp 249-25), their different values and styles of opposition, and the lack of mutually agreed political strategy (Kotzé 2001). None had, however, envisaged that a matter as trivial as the street-naming controversy would inflict such disproportionately high damage on the alliance. Like the United Democratic Movement (UDM) in 1997-1998, which had two leaders, Bantu Holomisa and Roelf Meyer, the DA was a two-headed monster. The lifespan of such a monster is naturally short. The only way for it to have a more or less normal life beyond the critical first year is to separate the two heads. The ANC 'helped' perform the 'surgical operation' through the enactment of the floor-crossing legislation.

The disintegration of the DA disenchanted segments of the electorate nationally and, more particularly, in the Western Cape. The DA and its leader also lost some credibility in the process. After the split Van Schalkwyk was able to ask his MPs to follow him back to the NNP, but the councillors could not change parties because they had been elected under the DA umbrella. The enactment of the floor-crossing legislation made it possible for them to move. It was estimated that of 1 400 DA councillors, some 800 originated from the DP and 600 from the NNP. During the September 2002 window period for crossing the floor, the NNP lost 200 of the 600 to the DP and, essentially, the remaining 400 either stayed with the NNP or joined the ANC.

The subsequent formation of an ANC-NNP coalition (*Africa Research Bulletin* 2001) allowed the ANC and the NNP to win Cape Town and the Western Cape. In March 2003, the floor-crossing period in Parliament and the provincial legislatures, the NNP lost eight of its parliamentarians and some NNP provincial ministers (Members of the Executive Council – MECs) in the Western Cape left the NNP for the DA, thus moving into opposition.

Though this was an impressive achievement by the DA, the developments in the DP-NNP alliance had a devastating effect on the party system in South Africa, furthering the fragmentation of the opposition and contributing to the erosion of trust in opposition politics by demonstrating their inability to unite and work together. The DP-NNP coalition was a marriage of convenience because it was not principled but focused only on ganging up on and opposing the ANC. As a result, the glue holding the two parties together was not strong enough to compensate for the divisions between them.

The ANC-IFP coalition: A Lasting Marriage of Convenience

The Inkatha Freedom Party was formed on 21 March 1975 at KwaNzimela in what was then northern Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) by Mangosuthu Buthelezi (Jeffery 1997) as a Natal-based Zulu cultural organisation. Eventually the organisation was opened to other groups but it has remained essentially a Zulu movement. Unlike the liberation movements like the ANC/SACP and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which advocated armed struggle and economic, political and cultural boycotts of the South African racist regime, Inkatha highlighted the dangers of resorting to violence and opposed sanctions. ‘These differences were brought into sharp relief by the Soweto revolt of the mid-1970s – particularly in the varying responses to these events by the ANC-SACP alliance on the one hand, and Inkatha on

the other' (IFP website 2004). The indelible marks left by this divergence still characterise the relationship between the ANC and the IFP.

The IFP came into conflict with ANC-affiliated organisations during the apartheid era and into direct competition with the ANC after the liberation movements were unbanned as the two organisations struggled for control of KZN. The contest led to acrimonious relationships between the two organisations, which culminated in high levels of violence leading to the death of thousands of people, especially in KZN and, to a lesser extent, in parts of Gauteng. It was consistently reported, and eventually proved that some of the violence was fuelled by the apartheid intelligence and military services referred to as the 'third force'. From 1994 the two parties learnt to work together in the GNU.

After the withdrawal of the NP from the GNU elections, the IFP continued to work with the ANC at both national and KZN government levels. On several occasions Buthelezi was appointed acting president when President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki were both out of the country. This symbolic gesture contributed to a gradual building of trust between the leaders and increased peace and political stability in KZN. Jacob Zuma, later to become the country's deputy president, was credited with involving himself in peace efforts in the province.

Despite the fact that the final Constitution of 1996 did not provide for power sharing, the ANC and the IFP chose to continue their coalition after the 1999 national and provincial elections, a decision motivated by their willingness to consolidate peace in KZN in order to facilitate development in the province. The arrangement allowed Buthelezi to continue to improve his image as a national leader by virtue of being a minister in the national government, and gave opportunities to IFP cadres to become ministers and deputy ministers as well as to secure posts in parastatals and in the diplomatic corps. The same arrangement also allowed the ANC to hold executive positions in the IFP-led provincial government in KZN from 1994 to 2004.

The ANC-IFP coalition faced many difficulties. The IFP experienced an identity crisis because it was part of the national government but still wanted to maintain its status as an opposition party. As a result, at times it would support the ANC-led government's policies and at others would oppose them, which caused tensions within the coalition. Some of the legislation initiated by the ANC was adopted by Parliament with robust resistance from the IFP. Among this legislation were laws relating to the power and functions of traditional chiefs, the immigration laws and the floor-crossing legislation. A more fundamental difference between the two parties has been the IFP's

advocacy of federalism while the ANC has always preferred a unitary state.

Interestingly, while in coalition with the ANC, the IFP had a separate practical arrangement with the DP/DA in KZN in order to ensure that a one-party system did not evolve at every level of government with the ANC controlling the central government, all nine provinces and the metropolitan councils.

The floor-crossing legislation, which allowed some IFP Members of Parliament, provincial legislatures and local councils to join the ANC without losing their seats, strained the coalition and was one of the direct factors which precipitated its collapse at the national level. The government's policy and law-making processes heightened the divergences between the coalition partners, almost irreversibly affecting the relationship. The handling of the Immigration Bill was one occasion when the divergences between the two parties were publicly displayed. Buthelezi wanted to establish an immigration board with executive powers chaired by himself as the Home Affairs Minister while the ANC preferred to have these powers remain vested in the ministry's administration. Buthelezi took the government to court, aggravating the crisis.

In the 2004 national and provincial elections the ANC won a relative majority of seats in the KZN legislature (see Table 4). Initially the IFP disputed the results and lodged a complaint with the Electoral Court in Bloemfontein, accusing the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of declaring the elections free and fair without investigating alleged electoral irregularities such as political intimidation and violence in some areas and reports that 367 731 votes in KZN were cast by unregistered people. Laurence Piper (2004a) dismisses the seriousness of these claims arguing, among other things, that it would be unreasonable to assume that all 367 731 votes were illegal and that they would all have benefited the ANC. He also argued that 'the allegations around significant levels of fraud are implausible. Such allegations are better seen in the light of post-election disappointment and perhaps jockeying for position. This is especially the case with the IFP's allegations and court case – the timing of which coincides with negotiations over power-sharing in KZN and nationally. 'The withdrawal by the IFP of its court case two days before the Electoral Court was to hear it was seen as a proof that the party was not serious about the allegations and wanted only to strengthen its position at the negotiating table' (Mottiar 2004a).

President Mbeki did not invite Buthelezi into his national government in 2004, instead he appointed two moderate senior IFP members, Musa Zondi and Vincent Ngema, as the Deputy Minister of Public Works and the Deputy Minister of Sports and Recreation respectively. Because Buthelezi

had been excluded from the national government, the IFP's National Council rejected these appointments, accusing the ANC of trying to 'divide and rule'. President Mbeki replaced Zondi and Ngema with Ntopile Kganyago (UDM) and Gert Oosthuizen (ANC). It was argued that by choosing who to appoint to government the ANC was sending 'a clear message that the age of coalition government was over and that the ANC is no longer under any obligation to make appointments in response to the threat of conflict or violence' (Piper 2004a).

South Africa's national government thus comprised the ANC, with its Tripartite Alliance partners; the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), the UDM and the NNP, until the disbanding of the latter and its integration

Table 4
Results of the 1994, 1999 and 2004 General Elections in KwaZulu-Natal

Party	Votes			Percentage			Seats		
	1994	1999	2004	1994	1999	2004	1994	1999	2004
ACDP	24 690	53 745	48 892	0,49	0,67	1,78	1	1	2
ANC	1 181 118	1 167 094	1 287 823	32,23	39,38	46,98	26	32	38
DP/DA	78 910	241 779	228 857	2,15	8,16	8,35	2	7	7
IFP	1 844 070	1 241 522	1 009 267	50,32	41,90	36,82	41	34	30
MF	48 951	86 770	71 540	1,34	2,93	2,61	1	2	2
NNP	410 710	97 077	14 218	11,21	3,28	0,54	9	3	0
PAC	26 601	7 654	5 118	0,73	0,26	0,19	1	0	0
UDM	–	34 586	20 546	–	1,17	0,75	–	1	1
Total seats							81	80	80
Total valid votes		3 664 324		2 963 358			2 741 264		
Spoilt ballots		39 369		46 141			41 300		
Total ballots		3 703 693		3 009 499			2 782 565		
Registered voters		4 585 091		3 443 978			3 763 406		
Percentage poll		80,78		87,38			72,84		
Quota for a seat		44 687		36 585			34 782		

Source: Laurence Piper (2004b)

into the ANC. Interestingly, while the ANC-IFP coalition collapsed at the national level, it continued at the provincial level, where the two parties finally reached an agreement – the IFP would have three of the ten MEC positions and the position of deputy speaker in the provincial legislature. The IFP agreed that the newly-appointed premier, Sibusiso Ndebele, would make the final announcement of the appointments, departing from the tradition of parties nominating their own representatives to the provincial government (Piper 2004a).

The greatest achievement of the ANC-IFP coalition has been to end the systematic politically motivated violence in KZN. Essentially, there were no ‘no-go areas’ in the 2004 elections. Conflict management initiatives put in place by the IEC in collaboration with political parties, mainly the ANC and the IFP, as well as civil society organisations, with technical assistance provided by the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), contributed to peaceful elections and the ultimate acceptance of the election results by all in the province.

The ANC-NNP: United for Life

As the break-up in the DA in 2001 deepened, the NNP and the ANC became closer. Talks between the two parties culminated in a collaborative agreement in 2001. Of all the coalitions in post-apartheid South Africa, the ANC-NNP coalition has been, to date, the most opportunistic – based as it was on the short-term selfish interests of the two parties. The NNP switched allegiances in order to continue to enjoy some political power in the Western Cape and so that Van Schalkwyk would become premier of the province. By focusing on provincial matters in the Western Cape, the NNP became a mere provincial party. In the same way, an excessive focus on KZN matters affected the IFP, transforming it essentially into a provincial party.

The ANC’s wish to decapitate the DA and thus control the Western Cape was realised. The argument advanced by the NNP and the ANC for their alliance – that the intention was to minimise racial polarisation – was regarded by many as a smokescreen. The realignment initially caused discontent in the Tripartite Alliance because of the baggage carried by the NNP. It also so disturbed the IFP that it initiated discussions with the DA, which culminated in the formation of the short-lived DA-IFP Coalition for Change in 2003.

History repeats itself. During the negotiations that led to the 1994 elections and the formation of the GNU, the NNP influenced the crafting of a constitution that ensured its continued participation in government in the

new South Africa in the name of national reconciliation and economic stability. Admittedly, at that time, such a view was justified by the need to ensure continuity and reassure investors, given that the ANC was still a novice in the area of governance. So, there was a sense of *déjà vu* when the NNP again played the anti-racial-polarisation card in 2001.

In their submission to EISA's 2003 round table in Cape Town on 'Strengthening Democracy through Party Coalition Building', the NNP representatives argued that a small party is in a much better position to deliver to its constituents when it works hand in hand with the governing party. They argued that when the NNP opted to work together with the ANC to improve the quality of life of the people the ruling party was receptive and willing to assist the party to achieve its goals. Voters judge parties on whether or not they deliver and there were concrete examples of delivery as a result of the collaboration between the ANC and the NNP.

The NNP's arguments in support of its concept of cooperative political opposition were that this 'was in line with African tradition, where discussion and communication, as part of negotiation to come to an agreement, is valued much more highly than the Westminster opposition model. The DP/DA tends to practise conflict politics in line with the Westminster model ... The intention was not to antagonise the ANC by robust and frequently intemperate attacks, but to encourage the government to moderate policies which the NNP regards as unwise' (Snyman 2005).

Subsequently, the ANC initiated the enactment of the controversial floor-crossing legislation, supported by the NNP, which hoped that the new provisions would help it remain in power in the Western Cape. The legislation, among other things, made it possible for members of a local council, provincial parliament or the National Assembly to quit their party for another without losing their membership of the legislature. Interestingly, during the parliamentary debate on this issue, parties' arguments tended to be motivated more by partisan interests than by a long-term vision of a stable and accountable representative democracy and party system. Ironically, the DP/DA which had proposed the introduction of such legislation several years earlier, initially supported its passing because it saw an opportunity to consolidate its membership with defectors from the NNP.

The floor-crossing legislation has weakened the party system and has the potential to destabilise the country, especially if the governing ANC were to experience a major split from its own ranks. This could easily lead to a constitutional crisis. The impasse in the KZN legislature after the IFP threatened to call for early elections after losing a number of its MPs to the

ANC in 2003 was only resolved through eleventh-hour negotiations between the two parties.

The extent to which the legislation affected the party system in 2003 can be seen in the example of parties such as the NNP, deserted by a substantial number of its MPs, who moved to the DA, and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which lost one of its three MPs, Patricia de Lille, who formed a new party, the Independent Democrats (ID). The UDM lost the

Table 5
2004 Election Results: National Assembly

Party	% Votes	No. of Votes	No. of Seats
African National Congress (ANC)	69,69	10 880 915	279
Democratic Alliance (DA)	12,37	1 931 201	50
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	6,97	1 088 664	28
United Democratic Movement (UDM)	2,28	355 717	9
Independent Democrats (ID)	1,73	269 765	7
New National Party (NNP)	1,65	257 824	7
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	1,60	250 272	6
Freedom Front +	0,89	139 465	4
United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)	0,75	117 792	3
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)	0,73	113 512	3
Minority Front (MF)	0,35	55 267	2
Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)	0,25	39 116	2
Christian Democratic Party	0,11	17 619	0
National Action	0,1	15 804	0
Peace & Justice Congress	0,1	15 187	0
Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA)	0,1	14 853	0
New Labour Party	0,09	13 318	0
United Front	0,08	11 889	0
The Employment Movement of SA	0,07	10 446	0
The Organisation Party	0,05	7 531	0
Keep It Straight and Simple (KISS)	0,42	6 514	0
Total		15 612 671	400

Source: www.eisa.org.za/WEP/souresults2004.htm

majority of its parliamentarians to the ANC, who thus succeeded in gaining a two-thirds majority (68%) in the National Assembly between elections.

It is clear that one of the most damaging party coalition building exercises in the post-apartheid history of South Africa was the alliance between the ANC and the NNP because it took place at the expense of the consolidation of representative democracy and a stable party system.

The results of the 2004 national and provincial elections (see Table 5) confirmed the demise of the NNP. The NNP, which had won 20,39% of the national vote in 1994, and 6,87% in 1999, received only 1,65% in 2004, that is, 257 815 votes. Apart from its excessive focus on the Western Cape and, to a lesser extent, on the Northern Cape, at the expense of the rest of the country, the NNP failed to explain to its electorate what its cooperation agreement with the ANC entailed and what value it had for the party's constituents. By the 2004 general elections there was little evidence that the agreement between the two parties was bearing any fruit, an argument used by the dissident NNP MPs who crossed to the DA (Snyman 2005).

Tables 7 and 8 show the party reconfigurations in the national Parliament after the 2003 and 2005 floor-crossing windows elapsed. On 7 August 2005 the Federal Council of the NNP decided to join the ANC and contest future elections under its banner. Van Schalkwyk took advantage of the floor-crossing legislation to join the ANC formally in September 2005. This was his last action as NNP leader – an action which led to the demise of the NNP, which has now been integrated into the ANC. Time will tell the extent to which the alliance contributed to its ultimate objective of de-racialising South Africa's politics.

The DA-IFP Coalition for Change: A Short-Lived Union

In 2003 the DA and the IFP entered into a coalition they named the 'Coalition for Change'. According to the IFP, the intention was not to oppose the ANC, it intended to maintain its relationship with the ANC while trying to affirm that it was part of the opposition. The DA, which had apparently hit its ceiling and was struggling to penetrate the black electorate, hoped that the coalition would help change its image as a political organisation concerned exclusively with white interests and position it as a party that also cares for blacks.

In 2003 the DA and the IFP signed an agreement providing that the two parties would contest the 2004 national and provincial elections separately, refrain from attacking one another, not stand in one another's strongholds, share campaign costs such as the training of party agents and

not poach one another's members. Within the DA, as in the IFP, were members opposed to the coalition. Some IFP members were seduced by the DA's robust approach to the ANC, wanting the IFP to emulate it. Others did not appreciate the fact the DA invariably criticised the ANC and would have preferred the IFP to respond to the needs of poor rural people by means of a constructive approach which would entail agreeing with the ANC where necessary.

It was anticipated that the Coalition for Change would help to contain the dominance of the ANC by reducing its election margins as well as expanding the collaboration between the DA and the IFP after the elections. But the coalition did not last. Soon after the 2004 elections it became inactive, thus failing to deliver on its promises. There were several reasons for the failure. First, the two parties have different political cultures. The IFP carries the negative image of a backward and patriarchal organisation characterised by ethnic chauvinism, political patronage, and an absence of a culture of internal debate. Critics have argued that Inkatha has been dominated by one leader, the firebrand Mangosuthu Buthelezi, since its creation more than three decades ago. Buthelezi has been accused of stifling inner democracy, thus preventing the emergence of young blood and fresh ideas. On the other hand, the DA has built an image of a very well organised and modern party with clear structures, procedures and principles. The party enjoys relative open debate internally. However, what is perceived as its sectarian politics in favour of its essentially white constituents has alienated black voters, who tend to reject all criticism of the ANC government by the DA as racially motivated.

Second and more importantly, though the two parties are close ideologically they have different constituencies with different needs. The IFP focuses on a single province – KZN – and is essentially concerned with the interests of traditional leaders and their poor rural constituents, while the DA is home to the urban white middle and upper classes in all nine provinces. Stuck in its minority-based politics with controversial election slogans like 'fight back' and 'Mugabe has 2/3 majority' seen as an affirmation that blacks cannot provide clean governance, today's DA will essentially be unable to grow beyond 15 per cent of the national vote unless it improves its image among large segments of the electorate.

The DA and IFP had different views on some key issues and, as a result, their priorities not only differed but were, at times, contradictory. The example of the choice of a capital city for KZN illustrates these contradictions. The IFP strongly advocated that the provincial capital remain

in Ulundi and not be returned to Pietermaritzburg, while the DA expressed, somewhat timidly, its preference for the capital to be transferred back to Pietermaritzburg. The ANC was unequivocal about its wish to reinstall Pietermaritzburg as the capital.

Shauna Mottiar (2004b) noted that the Coalition for Change partners lost about 50 000 votes – representing up to two provincial seats in KZN, where ‘a Capital Coalition backed by the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business and more than 50 leading businesses in the Midlands had placed adverts in newspapers and distributed pamphlets calling on people to keep Pietermaritzburg as the capital of the province by voting for the ANC at provincial level’. Laurence Piper (2004b) gives a different view, pointing out that there was little difference between the election results at municipal level in 1999 and in 2004. He notes, however, that in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding municipalities the ANC did better, at the expense of the DA, but points out that the number of votes involved amounted to only a few thousand.

The author believes that the shortcoming of these two views is that they are both based on the assumption that voters in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas were the only ones in the province to be concerned about the issue of the capital, hence they have considered only the number of votes secured by the parties in these specific areas. It is important to note that this was a provincial election and the issue was of a provincial rather than a local nature. It can be expected that voters in other parts of KZN, including Durban, which is only 90km away from Pietermaritzburg, might have cast their ballots with the provincial capital issue in mind. Also important is the fact that the total number of votes in an area depends on various factors, such as success of voter registration. Therefore an increase or decrease in votes for a political party or a coalition of political parties might relate to such factors, unless the variance in the results is substantive. Unless a survey of voter behaviour is conducted, it would be difficult to know with certainty whether there was strategic voting on the Pietermaritzburg/Ulundi matter or not and whether, as a result, the DA lost support because of its alliance with the IFP.

Thabisi Hoeane (2004) argues that

the rejection of the IFP and the DA by the electorate, especially the black majority, can be directly attributed to policies that do not resonate with the interests of the largest segment of the South African electorate, the black voters. For example, their insistence

on unbridled privatisation, a factor that is seriously contested within the Tripartite Alliance and has arguably made the ANC tread cautiously, clearly pits the DA/IFP alliance against the majority of voters.

After failing to reach its ultimate objective through its alliance with the DA, the IFP joined the ANC-led KZN government after protracted negotiations. The Coalition for Change brought no change and was short lived.

The DA-ACDP-FF+ Coalition Government in the Cape Metro: Another Marriage of Convenience

In the 1 March 2006 local government elections the ANC won all but one of the metropolitan councils in the country, namely, Johannesburg, Tshwane, the Nelson Mandela Metro, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni. The DA won a majority of votes in the Cape Metropolitan Council. Given that there was no clear winner in the Cape Metro, political parties entered into cutthroat negotiations with a view to forming a government. Table 6 shows the number of votes and council seats the various parties won in both the ward and proportional representation ballots.

From the results it seemed that the ID would hold the balance of power in the city and was likely to be the 'kingmaker'. However, De Lille remained intransigent, refusing to make deals with either the DA or the ANC and insisting on doing away with the executive mayoral system in favour of a collective executive committee in which there would be a non-executive mayor and parties would be represented in proportion to the seats won in the elections. The ACDP was not prepared to support the ANC mayoral candidate, Nomaindia Mfeketo (*Cape Times* 16 March 2006). The formation of the ACDP-led 16-member forum of seven smaller parties changed the dynamics. Despite the eventual withdraw of the one-seat PAC, the forum, which favoured working with the DA, became a player to be taken seriously.

After two weeks of unsuccessful negotiations only an election in the council would determine who would occupy the posts of mayor, deputy mayor, speaker and other positions on the city's executive committee. The election took place in the council on 15 March 2006.

By the time the secret ballot was held two blocs had emerged. On the one hand there was the ANC and the ID, on the other the DA, the ACDP, the FF+ and the forum of smaller parties. This realignment favoured the DA, especially since the PAC councillor chose to abstain from the first vote, in which the speaker was elected, and eventually left the hall.

The results were as follows:

- FF+ Jacob Derek Smit received 105 votes against the ANC's candidate for speaker, Gavin Paulse (104 votes).
- DA mayoral candidate Helen Zille secured 106 votes against ANC former executive mayor, Nomaindia Mfeketo, who received 103 votes.
- ACDP deputy mayoral candidate Andrew Arnolds won against the ID candidate, Simon Grindrod, by 105 votes to 104.

The DA-ACDP-FF+ post-election coalition is likely to be fragile because its survival depends on the collaboration of each of the disparate smaller parties. These smaller parties were impressive as they voted en bloc throughout the ballot in the council. The challenge is to maintain that cohesion during the lifespan of the council. Subsequent to the vote the DA offered two posts to

Table 6
Results of the 2006 Local Government Elections in Cape Town

Party	Valid Votes	% Votes	Ward Seats	PR Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
DA	609 545	41,85	61	29	90	42,86
ANC	552 105	37,91	41	40	81	38,57
ID	156 550	10,75	3	20	23	10,95
ACDP	46 902	3,22	0	7	7	3,33
Independent candidates	24 151	1,66	0	0	0	0,00
Africa Muslim Party	19 316	1,33	0	3	3	1,43
Other parties	15 735	1,08	0	0	0	0,00
UDM	11 950	0,82	0	2	2	0,95
FF+	7 170	0,49	0	1	1	0,48
PAC	7 108	0,49	0	1	1	0,48
United Independent Front	3 472	0,24	0	1	1	0,48
Universal Party	2 346	0,16	0	1	1	0,48
Total	1 456 350	100,00	105	105	210	100,00

Source: <http://www.eisa.org.za>

the ID, which the latter turned down, sticking to its demand for a non-executive mayor with a multiparty executive committee. It is worth pointing out that, later, the ID maintained that its decision to vote with the ANC in the council did not mean that the two parties had entered into a coalition but was justified by the fact that the ANC was amenable to the ID's proposal of a collective executive system, which the DA had strongly rejected.

Interestingly, while in fierce competition for control of the Cape Metropolitan Council, the ANC and the DA entered into what they refuse to call coalition governments but term, instead, power-sharing arrangements, in a number of hung municipalities in the Western Cape. A controversial former ANC Central Karoo Chairman, Truman Prince, and his populist Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA), performed well in those municipalities, winning a number of seats almost equal to that of the ANC in Laingsburg, Beaufort West, the Central Karoo District Municipality, Knysna and Prince Albert. This allowed the DA to hold the balance of power.

Since neither the ANC nor the DA wanted to see these municipalities fall under the control of Prince, the ANC and the DA traded senior municipal posts. In Laingsburg, where the two parties had the same number of seats, the mayor and deputy mayor came from the DA and the speaker from the ANC. In Beaufort West, the ANC had the mayoral and deputy mayoral posts and the DA the speaker and one post on the executive committee. In the Central Karoo District Municipality and Knysna respectively the ANC had the posts of mayor and the DA got the deputy mayorship (*Sunday Times* 12 March 2006).

THE IMPACT OF ETHNICITY, RACE, CLASS AND IDEOLOGY ON PARTY COALITIONS

Race and ethnicity have pervaded South African politics for centuries. The country essentially has four main racial groups: African (largely unmixed people of African descent, essentially the Bantus), white (largely unmixed people of European descent), coloured (a mix of various African groups, whites and Indonesian Malays) and Indian (people who originated from India, or what is known today as Pakistan). There are subdivisions within each of these groups. For example, among the Africans there are subgroups such as Khoisan, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu while the white group consists essentially of Afrikaans- and English-speaking people.

The prevalence of racial and ethnic politics in South Africa is not the result of the existence of many ethnic and racial groups in the country but a direct consequence of politicians' exploitation of racial and ethnic identities as the basis for political, economic and socio-cultural inclusion or exclusion. As a result of this racial segregation and discrimination, which marked the country for centuries, wealth and the lack thereof coincide with race. The majority of the population lives below the poverty line and the bulk of unskilled workers are Africans, whereas the rich and the employer class are essentially whites. Coloureds and Indians are, by and large, skilled workers and a sizeable number of Indian people are involved in small, family-owned businesses.

Political parties are formed essentially in order to express the needs and expectations of their constituents and to advance their interests. In South Africa the majority of political parties are racially or ethnically based. Even those parties professing to be issue rather than identity based tend to find support, ultimately, among members of the racial or ethnic group to which their leader belongs. As a result, the articulation of ideologies and policy formulation and implementation by political parties has been fundamentally influenced by race, ethnicity and class. Contrary to Hoeane's categorical view that 'ethnicity and race do not play a central role in explaining voting behaviour and the performance of parties' (Hoeane 2004, pp 1-26), the author argues that a combination of identity and issue considerations is taken into account by voters when making their choices. Most South African voters would vote on a racial basis when they have to choose between the DA and the ANC, but on an ideological or issue basis when deciding between the ANC and the PAC or between the NNP and the FF+.

The NP-NNP was essentially a home for the Afrikaners. The party introduced apartheid in 1948 in order to protect and advance the interests of its various Afrikaans constituents. Ideologically, the NP was a rightwing Christian Democracy party which evolved towards the end of the apartheid era to become a centrist party, attracting a majority of coloured voters. Coloured people share with white Afrikaners several cultural features, especially the use of the Afrikaans language. In 1994, the NP managed to attract substantial support from coloured voters, came second in the national elections and won the Western Cape province, where the coloured people constitute the major racial group. Beyond the cultural similarity between the Afrikaner and coloured people, it must be said that the latter group feared the advent of an inexperienced, leftist and black African government and felt more reassured by the NP than by the ANC. The situation changed

in 1999 when, after five years of ANC rule, these fears proved to have been essentially groundless. In 1999 the ANC won a majority in the Western Cape with massive support from segments of the coloured community but not enough to allow them to form the provincial government alone. As detailed above, the DP-NNP post-election coalition government kept the ANC out of power in this province. However, developments in the Democratic Alliance and the ultimate collapse of the DP-NNP coalition made it possible for the ANC to win the province in 2004 following a cooperative arrangement between it and the NNP. However, the decline in support for the NNP resulted, in the last few years of its existence, in its constituents being divided between the DP/DA, the ANC, the ID and the ACDP.

Since its inception the ANC has attracted Africans from all ethnic groups. The party's African nationalism combined with a leadership drawn from all the African ethnic groups proved attractive to African voters. It can be argued that the ANC's relatively successful management of the country during the critical first term of office, from 1994 to 1999, and its unequivocal embracing of neo-liberal policies reassured new groups of voters. Thus, in 1999 and 2004 the ANC won a substantial number of coloured votes in the Western and Northern Cape. Interestingly, because of the provincial capital issue detailed above, the ANC in KZN also received a boost (at the expense of the DA and the IFP) from white business, which would not normally support it. Whether this support translated into more votes for the ANC or not, it was an interesting case of issue-based voting patterns in an identity-oriented electorate. In addition, tactical alliances have allowed the ANC to be the only party able to grow its support beyond ethnicity and across all racial groups, though this increase has been slow among white and Indian voters.

The ANC adopted its famous Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955. In its preamble, the charter declares 'that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people' (ANC Department of Information and Publicity 1993). The Freedom Charter decrees that all the people of South Africa shall enjoy equal rights and opportunities without reference to colour, race, sex or belief.

The IFP focuses on Zulu nationalism and its politics centre on the advancement of the interests of the Zulu nation, traditional leaders and their rural constituents in KZN. While enabling the party to remain strong in the province, this stance has prevented it from expanding its base beyond KZN and it is viewed essentially as a provincial party.

The growth of the DP/DA has been impressive – from 1,73 per cent of the national vote in 1994 to 9,56 per cent in 1999 and 12,37 per cent in 2004. During the apartheid era, the party essentially provided a home for English-speaking South Africans and it failed to position itself well during the first democratic elections, when it was all but extinguished. A change of leadership and, more specifically, the advent of Tony Leon brought a fresh perspective and attempts have been made to attract non-African voters – white, Indian and coloured. The DP's aggressive opposition politics vis-à-vis the governing ANC echoed with the sentiments of those segments of the electorate, particularly with white voters. In 1999 the DP attracted most of the support the NP had enjoyed in 1994 and became a home for almost all white voters, both English and Afrikaans speakers, and the official opposition in the national Parliament. Its coalition with the NNP and the eventual integration of many NNP members into the Democratic Alliance, consolidated its support in 2004. Ironically, the policy that helped the DP-DA to grow substantially in 1999 and 2004, its attraction as a non-African niche, is now the reason for its inability to grow beyond this niche. The formation of alliances and coalitions may be one of the strategies it could use to get out of this trap but the DP-NNP saga is still too fresh and any alliance will need to be well thought out if it is to be effective.

The realignment of all the major South African political parties at the centre of the left-to-right spectrum saw the ANC, the UDM and the ID to the centre-left, the DP/DA, the now defunct NNP, IFP and the ACDP to the centre-right and the FF+ moderately to the right. This realignment pushed most of the other parties to the peripheries of the political debate and the policy-making processes in the country. These peripheral parties, both left- and rightwing, have been ineffectual probably because of their narrow outlook in relation to the new political order in South Africa. Among the rightwing parties is the Afrikaner Eenheidsbeweging (AEB). The far rightwing political organisations such as the Conservative Party have simply disappeared. Leftwing parties are essentially the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA).

Given the limitations of identity-based politics, opposition fragmentation, and the loyalty of voters to their chosen party, many party leaders have resorted to party coalitions and alliances as a way of broadening their support base. In reality, most political party coalitions have in fact been nothing more than a weak juxtaposition of parties with major differences between them – different constituencies and political cultures,

and different, if not conflicting, constituency interests. As a result, the minor election alliances formed in 2004, among them the IFP-FF+, the IFP-Alliance for Democracy and Prosperity (Limpopo), the FF+-Cape Coloured Congress (Western Cape), and the New Labour Party-Christian Democratic Party, have proved futile.

On the other hand, it seems that the relative effectiveness and longevity of the ANC-IFP coalition government in KZN has been made possible by the essential similarities and convergence of interests of the two parties, which outweigh their differences. The similarities include the realisation that they should put an end to political instability in order to improve the quality of life of the rural poor in KZN. In the same way, there was a substantial convergence of interests between the constituencies of the NNP and the DP in the new South Africa, including their fear of the over-dominance of the ANC and worries about the affirmative action policy and black economic empowerment. These affinities would theoretically have made it possible for the alliance to survive and be effective. But the leadership crisis made the coalition unworkable.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF PARTY COALITIONS

The Constitution and the Electoral System

Several provisions in South Africa's 1993 transitional Constitution and in the 1996 Constitution and its subsequent amendments provide for political parties to come together in order to form a government at national, provincial or local level.

Section 83 of the transitional Constitution provides that 'every party holding at least 80 seats in the National Assembly shall be entitled to designate an Executive Deputy President, from among the members of the National Assembly'. Moreover, this section stipulates that 'should no party or only one party hold 80 or more seats in the National Assembly, the party holding the largest number of seats and the party holding the second largest number of seats shall each be entitled to designate one Executive Deputy President from among the members of the National Assembly'. Section 88 of the same Constitution states that 'a party holding at least 20 seats in the National Assembly and which has decided to participate in the government of national unity, shall be entitled to be allocated one or more of the Cabinet portfolios [...] in proportion to the number of seats held by it in the National Assembly relative to the number of seats held by the other participating parties' (1993). The section details a formula for the allocation of Cabinet portfolios to the

participating parties. It also makes it clear that the president of the republic must consult with the executive deputy presidents and the leaders of the participating parties before allocating Cabinet portfolios.

With regard to the provincial government, section 149 provided that ‘a party holding at least 10 per cent of the seats in a provincial legislature and which has decided to participate in the Executive Council, shall be entitled to be allocated one or more of the Executive Council portfolios in proportion to the number of seats held by it in the provincial legislature relative to the number of seats held by the other participating parties’ (1993). The section provides a formula for the allocation of ministerial posts in the provincial government.

The 1996 Constitution requires a candidate to win an absolute majority in order to be elected president of the country or premier of a province. It states that ‘if no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the candidate who receives the lowest number of votes must be eliminated and a further vote taken on the remaining candidates’. In order to receive a majority of the votes and govern, coalitions of political parties are formed when no candidate has secured 51 per cent or more. With the exception of the 1994 national elections, when the transitional Constitution provided for a government of national unity, the Tripartite Alliance has been able to secure more than 51 per cent at national level and has therefore not needed to enter into a coalition with any other political group in order to form a government. However, in the Western Cape, the ANC won the 1999 elections with a relative majority of 42 per cent but lost the province to the NNP and the DP after they formed a coalition government. Similarly, in 2004 the ANC won 46,98 per cent of the provincial vote in KZN against the IFP’s 36,82 per cent, which was not sufficient to form a one-party government. After protracted negotiations with the Minority Front (MF), UDM and ACDP, the ANC settled for a coalition with the IFP, which also included the MF.

In terms of the closed list PR system seats are allocated to the contesting parties according to their share of the vote. South Africa uses the Droop formula, also known as the highest remainder method, to allocate seats. ‘This system means that there is no formal threshold for parliamentary representation’ (Lodge 2004). Unlike the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, the list PR makes every vote count. As a result, parties do not necessarily have to enter into pre-election alliances but tend to build post-election alliances in accordance with the number of seats secured by each party. The cases of the coalition governments in KZN from 1994 to 2004 and the Western Cape in 1999 and 2004 illustrate this.

Floor Crossing

The PR system means the electorate votes for parties on the basis of their politics – candidates must be sponsored by a party and are not voted in as individuals, as is the case with a constituency-based FPTP system.

According to Jonathan Faull (2004), ‘a bill to allow for floor-crossing started as a DA backed initiative to bring South Africa into line with other established democracies and allow for more fluid politics’. This position was confirmed by veteran DP/DA politician Colin Eglin, who was among those who, as far back as 1994, championed the floor-crossing tradition. The DP/DA itself submitted proposals to Deputy President Jacob Zuma and the Speaker’s Office in 2001 on how best to remove the anti-defection clause from the Constitution. At the time, the ANC did not see the need for such legislation but the DP-NNP saga changed its view on the matter.

A set of laws introduced in 2002 governs floor crossing in South Africa. These laws include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Amendment Act 18 of 2002 and the Constitution Second Amendment Act 21 of 2002 as well as the Local Government Municipal Structures Amendment Act 20 of 2002 and the Loss or Retention of Membership of National and Provincial Legislatures Act 22 of 2002. These provisions enable an elected representative in Parliament, the provincial legislature or a local council to become a member of another party while retaining membership of the legislature. It also makes it possible for an existing political party to merge with another party or to subdivide into more than one party while allowing an MP affected by such changes to retain membership of the legislature. This law has changed South Africa’s party system and political representation as substantial realignments take place between elections, affecting the initial choice of the electorate.

It is important to note that for the floor-crossing legislation to apply, the number of members leaving the original party must represent not less than 10 per cent of the total number of seats held by the original party in that legislature. It has been argued that this provision is aimed at preventing solo, unprincipled departures. In reality, it effectively protects large parties at the expense of smaller ones, given that the smaller the party, the easier it is for those who wish to defect to achieve the required 10 per cent threshold.

On 15 September 2005, floor crossing affected a major political party, the DA, adversely, when five of its MPs left the party. Four of them joined the ANC, while one, Craig Morkel, formed his own political party, the Progressive Independent Movement. The fact that all the defectors were black raised the interest of the media (*The Citizen*, 27 September 2005).

After the Speaker of the National Assembly, Baleka Mbete, rejected the DA's request to reverse the losses, the party took the matter to the Cape High Court, requesting it to declare unlawful and invalid the defection of the five MPs, arguing that the defectors had failed to reach the statutory 10 per cent threshold. The DA's argument was that by the time the members defected on 15 September 2005, the last day of floor-crossing window, the party had boosted its parliamentary representation from 50 to 52 seats after two MPs joined the party after leaving the UDM and the IFP respectively (*Sowetan* 22 September 2005). The five MPs therefore constituted only 9,615 per cent of the party whereas, according to the DA, six MPs would be the minimum required for floor-crossing to be valid. The Cape Town High Court dismissed the DA's application, with Judge Burton Fourie stating that 'if the DA's construction were to be adopted, the threshold rule of 10% would be subject to constant change as and when members left and joined a party' (*Business Day* 4 October 2005). The DA did not appeal against the judgement.

The floor-crossing legislation has led to a flurry of defections by elected representatives either to join other parties or to form new ones. This legal yet unprincipled practice has been decried for several reasons. Admittedly, floor crossing gives effect to freedom of association, expression and conscience and reduces the party leadership's control over MPs. However, the disadvantages offset the advantages. The extent to which the legislation has affected the party system can be seen in the example of parties such as the NNP, deserted by a substantial number of its MPs and councillors; the PAC, which lost one of its three MPs; and the tensions running high in KZN threatening to undo the gains of the past in relation to peace consolidation when the IFP lost some of its elected representatives to the ANC. The UDM lost the majority of its parliamentarians to the ANC, who, as a result, and between elections, achieved and exceeded a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. At times the floor-crossing practice had all the elements of a farce, as in 2003 when the sole national representative of the AEB, Cassie Aucamp, chose to quit and form a new party, the National Action, probably to represent himself.

The legislation undoubtedly undermines democracy by ignoring the choice of voters and weakening small parties as the 10 per cent clause is too high to protect them from defections. In addition, floor crossing creates the potential for political corruption with, for example, promises of jobs, money or other political or financial privileges, thus damaging the political integrity of the country. Indeed, smaller parties, among them the IFP, the UDM and

the ID, suffered the greatest losses, although, in the opinion of one analyst, the common feature of those three parties was that they were personality driven. ‘So they have suffered internal democracy crises’ (*The Star* 30 September 2005, interview with independent analyst Aubrey Matshiqi).

The experience of Lesotho in 1997 where the governing Basotho Congress Party (BCP) lost its majority in Parliament through floor crossing to the benefit of the then newly formed Lesotho Congress for Democracy

Table 7
Configuration of Party Representation in Parliament Before and After the Floor Crossings in 2003

Party	Seats Before (1999)	Seats After (2003)
ACDP	6	7
AEB	1	0
ANC	266	275
AZAPO	1	1
DP	38	0
DA	–	46
FA	2	2
FF	3	3
IFP	34	31
MF	1	1
NNP	28	20
PAC	3	2
UCDP	3	3
UDM	14	4
African Independent Movement (AIM)	–	1
Alliance for Democracy and Prosperity (ADP)	–	1
ID	–	1
National Action (NA)	–	1
Peace and Justice Congress (PJC)	–	1
Total	400	400

Source: IEC 2003; various media sources in 2003 adapted by the author

(LCD), and the chaos that ensued after the May 1998 elections, illustrate the unfairness of the system. This lack of fairness is even more striking when applied in a party list PR system as used in South Africa. In the extreme case of Lesotho, the BCP was reduced to a mere official opposition and the newly born LCD became Lesotho's governing party overnight, which caused extreme tensions in the tiny kingdom. The post-election crisis of 1998, which resulted in the South Africa-led military intervention under the banner of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was an indirect consequence of the frustration caused by the 1997 floor-crossing saga.

Table 8
Configuration of Party Representation in Parliament Before and After
the Floor Crossings in 2005

Party	Seats Before (2004)	Seats After (2005)
ANC	279	293
DA	50	47
IFP	28	23
UDM	9	6
ID	7	5
NNP	7	0
ACDP	7	4
FF+	4	4
National Democratic Convention (NADECO)	–	4
UCDP	3	3
PAC	3	3
MF	2	2
United Independent Front (UIF)	–	2
AZAPO	1	1
United Party of South Africa	–	1
Federation of Democrats	–	1
Progressive Independent Movement	–	1

Source: *City Press* 18 September 2005

Many politicians, political analysts and the media have raised serious concerns about floor crossing, which is seen as a threat to the country's democracy. The IFP has referred to it, cleverly, as 'crosstitution'. More explicit condemnation came from the media. One newspaper described floor crossing as daylight robbery – the theft of party seats by politicians (*City Press* 4 September 2005). The newspaper stated 'As the main beneficiary of floor-crossing, [the ANC] is unlikely to move with speed to repeal the floor-crossing legislation. The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, [...] accuses the ANC of entrenching its one-partyism by dangling carrots to floor-crossers. On the other hand, [the DA] welcomes those who have joined it from other parties, saying that it is consolidating the opposition. This is hypocrisy.' The newspaper called for the ANC to repeal the legislation, claiming that it had served its purpose. Indeed, it 'helped' end the marriage between the DP and the NNP as well as facilitating a new one, between the ANC and the NNP, which has been so 'successful' that the two parties have become one. For the sake of democracy and the credibility of politicians, indeed, this legislation should be abolished without further delay.

In general, South Africa has a sound legal framework for the formation of party coalitions. The repeal of the floor-crossing legislation will go a long way towards reversing its adverse impact on public perceptions of the integrity of politicians, the general disillusionment about politics and the value of elections, as well as the weakening of the party system and representative democracy.

THE FORMATION OF PARTY COALITIONS

This section draws extensively on two complementary documents, drawn up by the DP and the NNP, which formed the basis of the Democratic Alliance. The documents are the Outline Agreement and Clause 14 (see Appendices 4 and 5), the only agreement documenting a party coalition in South Africa that was available to the author. The section also draws on the responses of party representatives who made themselves available for an interview.

The Objectives of and Driving Forces Behind Party Coalitions

The many party coalitions formed in South Africa since 1994 have taken various forms. As indicated above the constitutionally entrenched GNU was intended to guarantee that all races and ethnic groups participated in government at national and provincial levels in order to ensure political

cohesion and stability, inclusiveness and continuity. The long-lasting coalition government in KZN between the IFP and the ANC was established in order to end the recurrent violent conflicts, to consolidate peace and to reduce poverty in the province among the rural poor, who constitute the common constituency of the two parties.

The Democratic Alliance was formed to create a stronger opposition in Parliament as well as governing the Western Cape to showcase what the DA was capable of. After the collapse of the DA in its initial form, the 'new' DA and the IFP entered into the short-lived Coalition for Change, also formed to strengthen the opposition in order to reduce the dominance of the ANC.

The object of the Tripartite Alliance was to end apartheid and create a new dispensation in order to redress the imbalances of the past and give equal rights and opportunities to all. This is being achieved through government's affirmative action and black economic empowerment policies and law reforms in areas such as labour and the Bill of Rights. Ironically, government policies to empower blacks have been perceived and presented by some politicians as reverse racism against whites. Therefore, beyond the short-term goals of winning/keeping the Western Cape, the ultimate object of the ANC-NNP cooperative arrangement was to initiate a rapprochement between blacks and whites in order to reassure the latter that the new South Africa belongs to all.

The instigators of these coalitions have, in most cases, been the party leaders. The GNU did not require particular negotiation as it was entrenched in the transitional Constitution. Nonetheless, before it was formed there were discussions between the leaders of the constituent parties. The DA was negotiated essentially by Leon and Van Schalkwyk.

As for the driving forces behind the successive coalitions between the ANC and the IFP, leaders at national and provincial levels led the negotiations and helped keep the coalitions together. Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, and Sibusiso Ndebele were among the ANC leaders who engaged in the successive negotiations while Mangosuthu Buthelezi was the driving force behind the IFP's role, assisted by senior party cadres such as Albert Mncwango, Musa Zondi and provincial leaders and past IFP premiers in KZN. Both Buthelezi and Leon played leading roles in the negotiations between the IFP and the DA for the formation of the Coalition for Change.

The driving forces behind the ANC and NNP cooperative arrangement were, on the ANC's behalf, then Safety and Security Minister, the late Steve Tshwete, and later ANC National Chairman and Defence Minister, Mosioua Lekota. The NNP was represented by Van Schalkwyk.

*Selection of Coalition Partners, Candidates and Sharing of Positions***– Selection of Coalition Partners –**

South Africa has experienced both pre-election and post-election alliances. The two major pre-election alliances were the Tripartite Alliance, which has seen the ANC, SACP and COSATU joining forces in every national, provincial and local election since 1994 and the Democratic Alliance, formed ahead of the 2000 local government elections. The 2004 pre-election alliance between the DA and the IFP had relatively few consequences, especially as it did not have integrated electoral party lists. The other pre-election alliances were just too insignificant for lessons to be drawn from them.

The selection criteria for pre-election coalition partners vary and are not always straightforward. The Tripartite Alliance partners have come together at each election essentially because of their shared vision of a new South Africa in which people enjoy equal rights and opportunities, as well as the guarantee through the ANC-led government of access to and maintenance of positions of influence in government, Parliament, parastatals the diplomatic corps. Equally, it is in the interests of the ANC to have the SACP, COSATU and SANCO on its side rather than in opposition.

The main reason for the formation of the DA was to increase the size of the opposition, its representation in selected executive positions at local and metropolitan councils and, where possible, to keep the ANC out of power, as was the case in the Cape Metro. The Coalition for Change was formed for similar reasons. It was hoped that, together, the IFP and the DA would control an absolute majority of votes in KZN and keep the ANC out of power there but this objective was not reached because of the relatively poor performance of the IFP in 2004.

A fundamental criterion common to all these pre-election alliances is what each partner could potentially bring to the grouping in terms of votes. Local government elections are based on a mixed electoral system where half of the representatives are elected on the basis of proportional representation and the other half through the first-past-the-post system. In this context, a pre-election alliance is desirable because otherwise parties would waste votes in the constituency ballots. A party therefore enters a coalition to maximise overall votes by calculating the value to the parties of the combined votes of a particular constituency.

A few political party coalitions in South Africa have been formed after elections by parties which have combined their seats. Among the main post-election coalitions are the IFP-ANC national and KZN coalition governments

in 1994, 1999 and 2004; the short-lived NNP-DP government coalition in the Western Cape in 1999; and the ANC-NNP coalition governments in the Western Cape and Cape Metro in 2002 and 2004 as well as the DA-led Cape Metro government of 2006.

Post-election coalitions in South Africa are essentially based on the number of seats secured by each party. While at national level it has not been important to form such coalition governments because of the overwhelming majority won by the ANC, since 1994 in KZN and the Western Cape the main parties have had to engage in negotiations for the formation of provincial governments. The same has occurred at local government levels in areas such as the Cape Metropole and individual municipalities throughout the country.

It is worth noting that ideology has not been the defining element in the selection of potential coalition partners because of the centrist stance taken by most of the main political parties represented in the South African Parliament. As a result, any coalition is possible because of the ideological affinities between most of the parties.

Radical parties such as the AEB, PAC and AZAPO were too insignificant in terms of number and influence nationally and too ideologically skewed to be taken into account in coalition formation consultations. An exception has been the hung metropolitan council in Cape Town after the March 2006 local elections, which forced the major parties to negotiate with the numerous small parties that hold one or two seats in the council.

In addition, AZAPO has secured a separate arrangement with the ANC which has enabled its leader, Mosibledi Mangena, to be appointed to the national government since 2001. The UDM has had a deputy minister in the ANC-led national government since the 2004 elections.

– Selection of Candidates –

The problem of selecting candidates is only relevant to pre-election alliances when at least two parties must agree on their electoral lists.

The ANC selects candidates according to guidelines issued by its National Executive Committee (NEC). These guidelines involve primary elections at branch level followed by adjustments made by the party leadership with a view to ensuring that the list is representative of the party's constituents. In substance, the selection criteria are as follows (Thomas 2004):

- Geographical representivity in that the list reflects the different regional structures of the party.
- A minimum of 30 per cent of women in order to comply with Rule 6 of the party's constitution.
- A fair reflection of South Africa's racial and ethnic groups.
- A balanced representation of current members of Parliament or provincial legislatures to ensure continuity.
- The inclusion of members from COSATU, the SACP, SANCO and other organisations sympathetic to the ANC.
- A balanced blend of youth, the aged, and people with disabilities.
- An attempt to acquire appropriate skills and experience, especially in critical areas such finance and economic development.

With regard to the DA, Clause 14, an expansion of Article 14 of the 2000 Outline Agreement between the DP and the NNP which formed the basis of the creation of the DA, was an elaborated provision which defined the approach to and criteria for the selection of candidates. It stipulated that the selection of candidates for the municipal elections was to be determined on the basis of relative voting strength (as indicated by the election results in the national ballot in 1999) taking into account the availability and suitability of candidates and subject to the right of appeal to provincial management committees (PMCs). Variations of the arrangement could be negotiated on a consensus basis.

In allocating wards to a DA partner party, Clause 14 classified wards within each municipality in three groups. A ward was considered to be safe when the sum of the votes cast for the NNP and the DP together in the 1999 national parliamentary elections was equal to, or greater than half the total votes cast in that ward. A ward was considered to be winnable when the sum of the votes cast for the DP and the NNP together in the 1999 national parliamentary elections was less than 50 per cent but exceeded the number of votes cast for any other single party. A ward was considered a standard-bearer ward in all other cases. In determining the allocation of a ward to a party the local management committee (LMC) or the PMC concerned used, *inter alia*, the following criteria:

- Individual meritorious councillors or candidates.
- The need to maximise the DA vote.
- The need to promote representivity or to augment the skills base.

Various articles in Clause 14 describe in some detail the procedures for allocating positions on the lists to the parties as well as the basis on which a partner party qualifies to submit a candidate for a local or metropolitan municipality or mayoral post. Positions on the lists were allocated to the parties based on their relative strength within a particular municipality, and were divided proportionally and regularly throughout the list. Some list candidates were also allowed to stand in wards.

In metropolitan municipalities the first position on the list was drawn from the party with the greater relative strength, and the second from the other party. The balance of the list tended to reflect the relative strength of the parties in a given metropolitan municipality. Mayoral candidates came from the ranks of the party with greater relative strength in the municipality and were nominated by the PMC concerned.

The DP-NNP and the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance are among the few party coalitions to have well-defined written criteria and procedures for the selection of candidates.

– The Sharing of Positions –

The sharing of positions is very much linked to the selection of candidates and the results obtained by each party. Most coalition partners might have discussed and agreed on a formula before an election, but very few have had the opportunity to win a province, a metropole or even a municipality. For this study, the sharing of positions would therefore apply only to the Tripartite Alliance, the ANC-IFP coalition governments, the ANC-NNP national, Western Cape and local governments and the DP-NNP Western Cape and local governments. There have also been many arrangements between various parties at local government level, including the ANC and the DA, especially in the Western Cape, as detailed above.

For the ANC-IFP coalition governments, for example, the basis for the sharing of governmental positions is first and foremost the number of seats secured in an election and the subsequent negotiations between the two parties. Thus, following the 2004 provincial elections, in which the ANC secured 38 seats and the IFP 30 in KZN, the ANC had, for the first time, the upper hand in the negotiations. However, because the IFP had won the elections in 1994 and 1999, the party got the lion's share.

The same criteria applied to the 1999 coalition between the DP and the NNP in the Western Cape and to that between the ANC and the NNP in the same province in 2002.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PARTY COALITIONS

Coalition Management Procedures

Some political party coalitions are formed without a written agreement. Examples of these are those between the ANC and the IFP and the Tripartite Alliance where coalition management procedures have developed over time.

The ANC and the IFP also set up ad hoc structures where an equal number of representatives from each of the two parties would meet to discuss specific matters and make recommendations. The number and calibre of participants in these meetings depended on the nature and importance of the issues being discussed. Since the coalitions between the ANC and the IFP were either in national government or in the KZN provincial government, such meetings tended to take place at national and provincial levels. This mechanism has also been used extensively by the two parties to resolve conflicts.

The Tripartite Alliance has a similar arrangement, with an equal number of representatives from the ANC, the SACP and COSATU coming together to hold ad hoc meetings with a view to reaching agreement on a given matter and making recommendations to the relevant organs.

Some coalition partners sign memoranda of agreement which form the basis of their collaboration and define coalition management procedures. This was the case with the Democratic Alliance and the Coalition for Change. In the latter case, a joint DA-IFP committee was formed to implement the agreement.

The outline agreement between the DP and the NNP is, as stated above, an elaborate document which describes in some detail the nature, objectives, values and principles of the alliance between the two parties as well as the management procedures. The ultimate goal of the alliance was to establish a new political party to be known as the Democratic Alliance and the agreement clearly defines the relationship between the two affiliated parties.

The organ responsible for managing the alliance until the first ordinary congress of the DA was the National Management Committee (NMC), which consisted of the leader (the DP leader), the deputy leader (the NNP leader) and the federal chairperson (the DP chairperson), as well as a number of representatives from each party in proportion to the relative voting strength of the two parties as indicated by the election results in the 1999 general election.

The NMC was to seek to reach consensus in all decisions. If consensus could not be reached in a particular matter it was to be resolved by the

leadership (that is, the leader, deputy leader and chairperson). Given that the DP had more representatives than the NNP in the various deliberative organs of the alliance this provision naturally gave it the upper hand.

The NMC was responsible for the establishment of provincial management committees (PMCs) constituted on the same principles as those at national level. Decision-making at provincial level was to be reached by consensus, failing which the majority would prevail, subject to appeal to the NMC.

It must be recalled that the DP and the NNP received respectively 9,56 per cent and 6,87 per cent in the 1999 national parliamentary elections. The DP therefore enjoyed a higher representation in the NMC than the NNP, and was entitled to have the final say when consensus could not be reached. However, in the Western Cape, the NNP enjoyed a much larger representation (17 out of 42 seats) than the DP (5 seats). The NNP attempted to use its strength in the Western Cape to redress to its advantage the balance of power in the coalition, even for national matters.

The Challenges of Sustaining Party Coalitions

Party coalitions face many challenges. Some relate to inter-party relationships and others are caused by intra-party challenges within the individual parties.

In the case of the ANC-IFP coalition governments, for example, because the ANC is a broad church encompassing many different ideologies and tendencies, some members of the party and of its partners were not in favour of the coalition and made it difficult for the two parties to work harmoniously, putting pressure on President Mbeki to end the coalition. Similarly, there were IFP members who opposed the coalition and placed considerable pressure on Buthelezi to terminate it.

Other tensions between the IFP and the ANC were caused by factors such as deep mistrust between the leaders as a result of a long history of violent conflict between the two parties and policy differences on matters like the immigration bill, the floor-crossing legislation, the status of traditional chiefs, incompatible approaches to local government and the IFP's support for federalism versus the ANC's preference for a unitary state. In addition, competition between the two parties for the control of KZN, even while they were in coalition, and the perception that the ANC wanted to swallow the IFP by means of mechanisms such as the floor-crossing legislation, have made it difficult to sustain the coalition. President Mbeki's unilateral appointment of Zondi and Ngema to the national government

in lieu of Buthelezi was interpreted by the IFP as an attempt by the ANC to divide and rule.

As a result of its coalition with South Africa's governing party, the IFP suffered from a crisis of identity – it was part of the national government but it wanted to maintain its status as an opposition party in the national Parliament. This contradiction was illustrated by its conflicting signals as it selectively supported and opposed the government's policies, confusing its supporters and placing considerable strains on the coalition. The situation was further complicated by the absence of a coalition agreement and the fierce competition between the two parties at local government level, where they frequently found themselves on opposing sides.

The DP and NNP also faced serious challenges in sustaining their alliance. Among the factors that affected the alliance were the long history of mistrust between the Afrikaner constituencies and their English counterparts, the unhappiness of some coloured members with the DP's approach to issues of class and race in South Africa, differences in leadership, opposition styles and political cultures, and competition and rivalry between their leaders.

A crucial factor which should, in theory, have made the DA-IFP Coalition for Change work much more smoothly than the IFP-ANC and DP-NNP alliances was that the two parties did not have to compete for support from the same constituents and should therefore have complemented one another. The reality was that, because their constituencies were so different – the DA's being urban, affluent and largely white, the IFP's traditional chiefs and the black rural poor – they had little in common in terms of priorities. Ironically, this meant that the IFP had more in common with its archrival, the ANC, than with the DA, and partially explains the dissolution of the Coalition for Change in favour of the resumption of the ANC-IFP coalition government in KZN.

More importantly, if the IFP were to become a mere opposition party in KZN for five years it would lose its influence in the province. As a corollary, the attraction of the powerful positions the ANC was offering in the KZN government was a strong incentive for IFP leaders to join the ANC-led provincial government and for the continued coalition between the two parties in the province.

The challenges that affect the sustainability of party coalitions differ from one coalition to another. They include differences in policies, political culture and constituencies; intra-party pressures; competition between coalition partners; and the conflicting personal ambitions of party leaders.

Consequences of Coalitions for Affiliated Parties

The formation and collapse of party alliances have consequences for the affiliated parties. Some of these are direct, others are implied and difficult to demonstrate without conducting a scientific survey of voter behaviour. For example, the participation of the IFP in the coalition government with the ANC in KZN from 1994 to date and in the national government from 1994 to 2004 is said to have caused some confusion among the party's supporters about the status of their party, with many unsure whether the IFP was an opposition or a governing party. An IFP member claimed that, because of its association with the ANC, the IFP had lost considerable support as some voters might have chosen to vote for the governing party rather than for its junior partner.

Similarly, the belief that the DA/IFP stand on the question of the KZN capital caused DA voters in Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg to turn to the ANC should be tested scientifically beyond a simple comparison of the total votes received by each of the parties in the concerned areas in 1999 and 2004.

In 1994, the Freedom Front had a cooperative arrangement with the ANC similar to the one that emerged between the ANC and the NNP in 2002. The FF thought that if it worked with the dominant party rather than opposing it, it would be able to achieve more for its constituents. The agreement resulted in two members of the party being appointed ambassador and in ministerial positions in the Northern Cape and Limpopo provinces until 1999. The then FF leader, General Constand Viljoen, was also given the opportunity to take a Cabinet post, which he declined. The party paid the price of this collaboration in the 1999 national and provincial elections when its representation in the National Assembly shrank from nine to four seats. A study commissioned by the FF reportedly showed that voters felt that General Viljoen was 'sitting in the lap of the ANC' and they would rather support a party that would fight the ruling party. As a result, the FF withdrew from the cooperative arrangement with the ANC in 1999. Another coalition with negative consequences for the affiliated parties was that between the DP and the NNP. It was clear that the DP's ultimate goal was to swallow the NNP, while the latter saw the coalition as a survival mechanism, given the decline in its electoral support since 1994. The widely publicised defections of NNP members to the DP during the alliance were undoubtedly part of the DP's strategy to consolidate the balance of power within the grouping in its favour. Contradictions and incompatibilities between the two partners resulted in the collapse of the alliance, accelerated the demise of the NNP and further fragmented the party system in South Africa. The

most remarkable consequence of this coalition and its collapse was the massive floor crossing to the DP/DA by NNP members in the national Parliament and provincial legislatures in 2002 and in local councils in 2003 as well as the substantial decline in the NNP's electoral support in the national and provincial elections in 2004.

The NNP's decision to enter into an alliance with the ANC, as a result of which Martinus van Schalkwyk became premier of the Western Cape, not only reduced the NNP leader's status from that of national leader to provincial leader, it also, and more importantly, made large segments of the disillusioned NNP support base query the motivation and relevance of such alliances.

These developments marked the demise of the NNP, which was formalised with its incorporation into the ANC in 2005.

The consequences for South Africa's party system of the DA experience are serious. Formed to strengthen the opposition in the face of the ANC's increasing domination of the country's politics, the alliance had the short-term result of growing the DP support base but the long-term result of furthering the fragmentation of and therefore weakening the opposition. As a result the main South African political parties have become reluctant to enter into coalitions and parties are likely to be more prudent in the future about forming alliances. Already Patricia de Lille, leader of the Independent Democrats, has taken a strong stance against coalition politics, declaring that her party will remain independent as, indeed, it did in the negotiations over the formation of the Cape metropolitan government after the 2006 local government elections.

COALITION SURVIVAL AND EFFECTIVENESS

South Africa's experience with political party coalitions demonstrates that the survival of a coalition depends on a number of factors, among them the existence of an agreement in which issues of commonality are the basis of cooperation while areas of divergence are isolated. The successive post-election coalition governments formed by the ANC and the IFP illustrate this eloquently. The two parties have not only fought each other violently over many years in an attempt to control the province of KZN but also have some substantial policy differences in areas such as the devolution of powers from the central government to provinces, local government and traditional chiefs. However, the ANC and the IFP coalition at the national level lasted for more than a decade and the one in KZN, which was formed in 1994,

has entered its twelfth year because of the focus by the two parties on areas of convergence. The IFP claimed that even in those areas of divergence, and thanks to the coalition, it played a persuasive role and led the ANC to change some of its positions on issues like privatisation, the powers and functions of provinces and the decentralisation of local government. Similarly, the NNP noted that a coalition should not be created for wrong reasons such as 'building a strong opposition', as advocated by its former partner, the DP/DA. Such logic would result in opposition parties engaging in unsustainable politics of opposition just for the sake of opposing.

Most of the respondents interviewed have pointed out that honesty is crucial in party alliances as it helps build trust among the leaders of the affiliated parties. The NNP and the IFP noted that they were conscious that the hidden intention of their respective coalition partners, the DP and the ANC, was to swallow them and therefore render them irrelevant, if not redundant. The defections of NNP and IFP members to the DP and the ANC respectively put considerable strains on the relationships between the coalition partners.

The existence of an integrated policy platform would help the various political parties in a coalition develop and adopt common policies which would contribute to ensuring cohesion and a shared vision and objectives. The Tripartite Alliance has struggled in this area as its junior partners, who were influential in the early stages of the ANC government, as demonstrated by the role played by COSATU in the development of the RDP, have complained that they were not informed about the development of GEAR, which replaced the RDP. COSATU and the SACP have nonetheless been in a position to influence workplace-related lawmaking processes such as the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. As for the DA, the DP-NNP outline agreement provided for the appointment of a policy review commission but stated that, in the interim, existing DP policies would be accepted as the basic policy framework of the DA. Clearly, in the final analysis, the DA's ideology and policies were not only shaped by the DP but were, in fact, the DP's pre-alliance policies.

Among the factors which impact on the survival of a party coalition are the personalities of the leaders and the political cultures of the partner parties, both of which must be accommodated if the coalition is to function smoothly. Linked to the personalities of the leaders are leadership styles. Incompatible leadership styles may render the partnership unworkable and cause its collapse.

The electoral model also has a great impact on the survival of party coalitions. The representatives of the Tripartite Alliance at all levels of government were elected on an ANC ticket and could therefore not easily leave the alliance, except in terms of the floor-crossing legislation, because they would lose their seats.

By contrast, the representatives of the 1999 DP-NNP coalition were elected on their respective parties' lists, and a party could quit the coalition without losing its seats. Unable to transcend its first significant political hurdles, the DP-NNP coalition collapsed easily. From this perspective it can be argued that pre-election alliances in a system of integrated closed electoral lists stand a better chance of lasting than post-election alliances. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that the floor-crossing window period has weakened pre-election alliances just as the individual parties have become more vulnerable.

The longevity and effectiveness of the ANC-SACP-COSATU alliance can be explained by the fact that it was a principled grouping aimed at fighting apartheid and transforming South Africa. By contrast, the DP-NNP was formed essentially to gang up against the ANC, without specifying which of the ruling party's policies it wanted to oppose. Alliances will therefore last longer and be more effective if they are based on fundamental principles and are therefore born out of conviction rather than convenience.

Finally, a strong incentive to keeping coalitions together has been the possibility for coalition partner representatives to be appointed to powerful and lucrative jobs in government and parastatals as well as to gain access to economic empowerment schemes. It is believed that these opportunities have contributed to keeping the Tripartite Alliance together even in the face of serious intra-alliance crises, just as they have contributed to ensuring the survival of successive ANC-IFP coalitions.

Interestingly, not all partners have been seduced by such incentives. Some independent-minded leaders from the ANC, COSATU and the SACP have not sought to access the opportunities provided by the ANC government beyond their parliamentary seat, and have been among the most vocal opponents of some of the government's policies and their consequences for the livelihood of the populace. Similarly, the fact that some of the NNP's MECs left the provincial government in the Western Cape to join the DP/DA during the 2003 floor-crossing window, thus becoming opponents, means that, in South Africa, the office-seeking explanation is important but not a sufficient requisite for the formation and longevity of a party coalition.

CONCLUSION

One of the most obvious effects of coalition building in South Africa has been the gradual growth of ideological and policy rapprochement within the South Africa polity. Accordingly, in today's South Africa neo-liberalism has undoubtedly become the dominant ideology, a development that suggests that there is likely to be continuity in macroeconomic policy-making in the foreseeable future, even in the unlikely event that there is a change of government. Indeed, party coalitions in post-apartheid South Africa have contributed to further reducing the ideological gap between the country's main parliamentary parties. Whether the choice of neo-liberal policies is good or bad is not the subject of this section. This evolution has naturally made the major opposition parties unattractive as a political alternative to the governing ANC because they have been unable to offer policy options other than neo-liberalism. The dominance of neo-liberalism in South Africa has transformed the political debate among the country's main political parties into a sort of monologue, which has resulted in large segments of the population, especially the poorer majority, being somewhat inadequately represented.

On the other hand, the split within the largest opposition coalition ever, the DA, has disillusioned many about the ability of (opposition) parties to present a viable and sustainable alternative to the ANC. More importantly, the most damaging party coalition has been the 2002 cooperative agreement between the ANC and the NNP. These two parties initiated the controversial floor-crossing legislation for their own short-term self-centred gain, thus undermining representative democracy and the party system in the country (Kadima 2003).

Beyond ideological convergence, party coalitions tend to begin and end at the elite level. Yet what matters is not the bringing together of the elites but the coalition of the constituents they represent. Coalitions work when the leadership of the parties brings those constituents together to meet their common needs. If the coalition is formed solely to serve the interests of the elites, it will simply not be sustainable.

One of the most successful coalition experiences in South Africa has been the successive post-election alliances between the ANC and the IFP which have undoubtedly contributed to a substantial decrease in the political violence which characterised the province of KZN for some two decades. Through the arrangement, the leaders of the two parties have learnt to work together for the benefit of their constituents, particularly the rural poor, and

to resolve their differences peacefully through dialogue. The leaders seem to have successfully explained to their constituents in the province the *raison d'être* of the coalition government and the majority of people in their constituencies have renounced political violence for the sake of peace, a prerequisite for socio-economic development.

The future of representative democracy and the party system in South Africa will depend heavily on the emergence of political parties that will come together to form principled, viable, well-structured and organised coalitions aimed essentially at safeguarding the welfare of the poor majority, whose interests are currently inadequately represented.

In the final analysis, South Africa's experience with political party coalitions is rich and offers many lessons about the way factors such as race, ethnicity, class, ideology, electoral system, constitutional framework, political cultures, leadership style, personality of leaders, intra-party dynamics, mechanisms for the management and resolution of conflicts at inter-party level as well as the country's own context all have a bearing on their formation, survival and effectiveness.

