COALITION POLITICS IN LESOTHO

A Multi-disciplinary
Study of Coalitions and
their Implications for
Governance

Editors

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PREFACE

The scope of *Coalition Politics in Lesotho* extends far beyond the borders of this small and frequently overlooked country. It offers a wealth of insights worth noting by scholars studying the complex interactions among constitutional principles, electoral systems, governmental structures, executive powers, judicial independence, political party organization, voting patterns and gender equity that constitute key issues in national political cultures.

When doing my doctoral research in Lesotho in 1965-6, there were few scholarly texts on Basotho political development and institutions, none of which were by indigenous authors. With the ground-breaking exception of B.M. Khaketla's, *Lesotho 1970*, major studies of Basotho politics in the following decade were written by white, foreign authors and appeared in journals and books not easily accessible in Lesotho. But by the late 1970s a significant cadre of social science scholars had emerged at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). Wary of Leabua Jonathan's regime and inspired by Umkhonto we Sizwe leader, Chris Hani, who was exiled in Lesotho, they often used pseudonyms in their political commentaries. While giving a talk at the NUL in the late 1970s, I quoted one such author, which prompted unexpected laughter around the table. Unbeknownst to me, I was sitting next to him!

When the restoration of democratic government in 1993 failed to yield political stability, a new generation of Basotho scholars at NUL came into prominence. They created several noteworthy journals, including the *Lesotho Law Journal: A Journal of Law and Development* and *Lesotho Social Science Review*, *Review of Southern African Studies* and *National University of Lesotho Journal of Research*. The liberation of South Africa gave them greater access to many regional journals as well as continent-wide publications. Their scholarship played a key role in shaping the mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system that emerged in 2001.

Coalition Politics in Lesotho embodies an interdisciplinary third generation of scholars drawn primarily from NUL faculties, Basotho scholars from outside the country and Lesotho's non-governmental organizations. It addresses the challenges created by the emergence of coalition governments from the MMP electoral system since 2012. Written amongst the isolation and devastation wrought by the global pandemic, it is a tribute to the depth and resilience of Basotho scholarship. Hopefully, the publication of this book will attract global attention to the talents of these writers, drawing them into greater future interaction with scholars around the African continent and the world when the pandemic

subsides. To flourish as a national university, NUL, its faculties and students will greatly benefit from exchanges of its scholars with universities around the world and from the resultant greater visibility of the political innovations in Lesotho detailed in this important book.

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