COALITION POLITICS IN LESOTHO

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

Editors

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABC	All Basotho Convention
ACP	Alliance of Congress Parties
AD	Alliance of Democrats
AG	Attorney General
AJA	Administration of the Judiciary Act
AMHC	All Mauritian Hindu Congress
ANC	African National Congress
BAC	Basutoland African Congress
BAP	Basotho Action Party
BBDP	Basotho Batho Democratic Party
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party
BDNP	Basotho Democratic National Party
BNP	Basotho National Party
CAM	The Comité d'Action Musulman
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CID	Criminal Investigation Division
CMW	Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
CORD	Coalition for Reforms and Democracy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DC	Democratic Congress
DCEO	Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences
DPL	Democratic Party of Lesotho
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
ECF	Extended Credit Facility

ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
EMB	Election Management Body
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FORD	Forum for Restoration of Democracy
FPTP	First-Past-The-Post
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
HRC	Human Rights Committee/Council
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	Interim Political Authority
JIMC	Monitoring and Implementation Committee
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KSC	Kenya Social Congress
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LCN	Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
LCS	Lesotho Correctional Services
LDF	Lesotho Defence Force
LHWC	Lesotho Highlands Water Commission
LLA	Lesotho Liberation Army
LMPS	Lesotho Mouted Police Service
LP	Labour Party
LPC	Lesotho People's Congress
LPF	Lesotho Para-Military Force
LWP	Lesotho Workers Party
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account

MEC	Movement for Economic Change
MFP	Marematlou Freedom Party
MMM	Mouvement Militant Mauricien
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
MPs	Members of Parliament
MSM	Mkenya Solidarity Movement
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NASA	National Super Alliance
NDPC	National Dialogue Planning Committee
NEC	National Executive Committee
NIP	National Independence Party
NLF	National Leaders' Forum
NRA	National Reforms Authority
NSS	National Security Services
NUL	National University of Lesotho
NYS	National Youth Service
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFD	Popular Front for Democracy
PM	Prime Minister
PMSD	Parti Mauricien Socialiste Democrate
PMU	Police Mobile Unit
PNU	Party of National Unity
PR	Proportional Representation
PSIC	Public Sector Investment Committee
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme
RCL	Reformed Congress of Lesotho
RLDF	Royal Lesotho Defence Force

SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SGR	Standard Gauge Railway
SMM	Single Member Majoritarian
SMMEs	Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises
SMP	Single Member Plurality
SOMILES	SADC Observer Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho
SOU	Special Operations Unit
TNA	The National Alliance
TRC	Transformation Resource Centre
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Forum Party
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
URP	United Republican Party
WDM	Wiper Democratic Movement

TRACING REASONS FOR COLLAPSE OF COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN LESOTHO, 2012-2020

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Mokete Pherudi

1 Introduction

After the 1998 general elections, the Interim Political Authority (IPA) recommended departure from the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) model as it contributed to instability in the country with endless rejection of the election outcomes, sometimes coupled with violence. Subsequently, the country adopted the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) model which is a combination of Proportional Representation (PR) and FPTP. After its incorporation in the Constitution, the MMP was tested during the 2002 elections, and it delivered on its intended objectives including broadening representation in parliament (Pherudi, 2016:51-53; Rakhare, 2019:16). Elections after 2012 produced hung parliaments, with no outright winner and the political parties resorted to alliances or coalitions to form governments. Consequently, three coalition governments: 2012-2015, 2015-2017, 2017-2020, and the 2020 grand coalition came into being. The first three coalitions were formed within a short period, without considering essential factors such as policy convergence and programmes and could be termed “quick-fix products”. Likoti (2021) shared a similar view that the lack of preparedness by politicians to negotiate and cooperate after the elections precipitated rushed coalition formations. Managing the coalition governments presented a challenge because of individual sentiments and political party preferences. In most instances, political parties were more interested in serving their party interests than the national development agenda. This chapter traces the reasons for the collapse of the coalition governments in Lesotho from 2012 to 2020.

This chapter contends that Basotho accepted coalitions with great expectations that they would end instability, redress the economy, fight corruption, and serve the national development agenda. The majority were disappointed when coalitions collapsed one after the other due to conflicting ideologies and policy standstills (Mahlakeng, 2016). This disadvantageous dilemma is evidenced by the collapse of the three coalition governments and resurfaced to haunt the 2020 grand coalition government. There is cynicism about the political process, lowering trust in legislative leaders and their ability to solve problems for Basotho, especially creating job opportunities for the unemployed youth and the nation in general.

There are generic intra-party factors that contributed to the collapse of the coalition governments, including heightened corruption, the enhanced politicisation of the public sector, the misuse of the motion of no-confidence in the Prime Minister (PM), and undue judicial interference in political matters. Inter-party factors such as misuse of floor-crossing are also explored. The unique factors for the collapse of each of the coalition governments are also discussed. The first coalition government led by Thomas Thabane comprised All Basotho Convention (ABC), Basotho National Party (BNP) and Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). The political cracks became evident from day one when they contested the ministerial spoils, and there were personality stand-offs between ABC and LCD (Pherudi, 2016:198-204; Salomao, 2019:164). The second coalition led by Pakalitha Mosisili comprised seven political parties, namely: the Democratic Congress (DC), LCD, Maramatlou Freedom Party (MFP), Basotho Congress Party (BCP), National Independent Party (NIP), Lesotho People's Congress (LPC) and Popular Front for Democracy (PFD). The coalition collapsed due to a motion of no-confidence in the Prime Minister (Southall, 2020) and the reign of terror perpetuated by some rogue members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) under the command of Retired Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, who once referred to himself as "The Right Honourable" (Matlosa, 2020:6).

The third coalition government led by Thabane comprised four political parties, namely: ABC, BNP, Reform Congress of Lesotho (RCL) and Alliance of Democrats (AD). Its demise was mainly due to an intra-party conflict within ABC following its February 2019 elective conference. The ABC's new national executive committee (NEC) was elected with Nqosa Mahao as the deputy leader. The old NEC refused to recognise the new NEC, and they fought battles in the courts of law. Even the party leader Thabane could not reign over the party factions. Two prominent blocs emerged from within the ABC: the State House faction supporting Thabane and the *Likatana* supporting Mahao, the then deputy leader. The name *Likatana* was coined after Thabane savaged Mahao, saying he was "just a rag"-*sekatana* who should not be elected to deputise him. Thabane later apologised but the supporters of Mahao were referred to as *Likatana* (Mohloboli, 2019). The State House

and *Likatana* factions held different rallies arguing their cases, respectively. The allegations of murder against Thabane and his wife 'Maesaiah Thabane compounded matters that resulted in the third coalition's collapse.

The grand coalition government led by Moeketsi Majoro came about because of Thabane's resignation on 19 May 2020. It comprised two large political parties, ABC and DC. Other smaller political parties such as Movement for Economic Change (MEC), BNP, Democratic Party of Lesotho (DPL), PFD, BCP, RCL, NIP, and MFP supported them. The grand coalition was threatened with being collapsed two days after its inauguration (Lesotho Office of the Prime Minister, 2020). Barely two months into its tenure, the grand coalition was beset by serious problems. Majoro's own ABC party remained deeply divided. Some members were livid at being overlooked for cabinet posts, while others were pressuring Majoro to violate the Constitution by ordering charges against Thabane and 'Maesaiah to be dropped. The infighting within ABC heightened when some NEC members wanted Thabane to be the face of the party's 2022 elections, a proposal that was rejected by Mahao and his supporters. Subsequently, Majoro fired Mahao, the then Minister of Justice including Police Minister Mamoipone Senauoanae, Forestry Minister Motlatsi Magelepo and Health Deputy Minister Nto Moakhi. This move was seen as an attempt to purge his cabinet of potential detractors. In response, Mahao formed a new party called Basotho Action Party (BAP) (Moffat, 2021). The breakaway of Mahao from ABC clearly demonstrated that the infighting within the party was far from over.

Expressing his view about the coalition governments, Likoti (2007:10) asserts that coalition politics are usually prone to a pernicious combination of ideological incoherence and policy stalemate. At the same time, Mohlamanyane (2018:48) describes them as "marriages of convenience" that cannot stand the test of time. To support the first coalition government to understand the coalition governance system, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned Rajen Prasad, who, together with some members of the first coalition government and civil society, undertook a mission to New Zealand to learn more about coalition politics. Prasad produced a report titled *Governance in Lesotho: Repositioning for success – report on the study visit to New Zealand by delegation from Lesotho* (2013). However, the first three coalition governments made no efforts to implement Prasad's recommendations. The collapse of the first three coalitions could mainly be attributed to what Retired Major-General Metsing Lekhanya (2002) described as "*motho le motho o batla matla a puso*" which is translated as: "each person wants governing power".

The methodology of data collection applied is qualitative and aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the reasons leading up to the collapse of the coalitions. The current literature on political coalitions such as newspapers, journals and archival sources were used. To supplement information from these sources, interviews were also conducted.

2 Generic reasons for the collapse of the coalition governments and the key role players

2.1 Heightened corruption

Chikane (2013:219) describes corruption as a universal problem and a highly contagious disease. It goes deeper and involves the awarding of tenders, contracts etc. Therefore, Lesotho is no exception to this universal problem. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2020), Lesotho ranked number 83 out of 180 countries in 2020; an improvement from the ranking of 85 in 2019. Since the return of multi-party democracy to Lesotho in 1993, successive governments have shown a sustained commitment to combating corruption and extending participatory rights to citizens. The successful trial of several senior public officials and various multinational companies for their alleged involvement in bribery and embezzlement proved to be an important milestone in the country's fight against corruption. The Lesotho government tried to address corruption through several laws over the past decades, including the anti-corruption law that requires public officials to disclose their assets (Ardigó, 2014:1). In 2020, the grand coalition government also emphasised the need for disclosure of assets by ministers and senior government officials.

The ABC gained more votes during the 2012 elections due to its anti-corruption drive (Smith & Aerni-Flessner, 2014:3). Thabane also identified corruption as Lesotho's worst enemy after HIV and AIDS (Motsoeli, 2013:2). After he took office in 2012, the Directorate for Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) brought criminal charges against then Minister for Natural Resources and Deputy Leader of DC, Monyane Moleleki; then Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), Mothejoa Metsing and former Minister of Natural Resources, Timothy Thahane. The LCD perceived the charges as a political witch-hunt targeting only LCD ministers. However, Thabane and his ABC disputed the claim, saying that the crusade targeted anybody who engaged in corruption, regardless of his or her political background (Pherudi, 2016:208). The Moleleki and Thahane cases were withdrawn due to a lack of sufficient evidence. The temporary suspension of Metsing's prosecution was a result of an agreement between the third coalition government and the opposition parties facilitated by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) through Clause 10 as a way to ensure that a national dialogue takes place (Ngatane, 2018).

After the passing of the SADC Clause 10, the families of the late Maaparankoe Mahao, Mokheseng Ramahloko and others, challenged it successfully after arguing that it violated a number of constitutional provisions (Ngatane, 2018). After Metsing and Selibe Mochoboroane, leader of the MEC, were charged with treason (Phakela, 2020), they challenged the High Court's decision on the same and on 26 November 2020, the High Court upheld its initial ruling that Clause 10 remained unconstitutional (*Metsing v The Director of Public Prosecutions*, 2020).

Not all the parties to the coalitions had a common strategy to redress corruption in the country, hence intra-party differences. Despite public exposure by some rogue businesspersons, no action was taken against those implicated. In Lesotho, rogue Chinese-born businesspersons included Messrs. Yan Xie and Stone Shi, as well as British businessperson Arron Banks had allegedly bankrolled some politicians in the country. According to Sejanamane (2019), Xie, Shi, and Banks found a haven in Lesotho as long as self-seeking politicians whose primary concern is to use public office for primitive wealth accumulation govern the country. Xie allegedly sponsored politicians who mattered most in Lesotho through Jackpot Supermarket, where some ministers got free groceries. In return, Xie was well looked after with government tenders and the acquisition of government businesses. Sejanamane (2019) also opined that the picture, which emerges out of Xie's dealings, is of a highly devious person whose business *modus operandi* is that of a corruptor and ruthless "tenderpreneur". The free offering of groceries resonated with the view of Chikane (2013:238) that in many instances, bribes in all disguises are paid to influence the decision-making process. The benefit of the bribe may not be immediate between the corrupted and the corruptor. It becomes evident when tenders are advertised or to be advertised that the corrupt would provide an early warning to the corruptor on the tender requirements. Corruption, therefore, becomes an intractable part of life to the detriment of the poor.

This situation also heightened when the third coalition led by Thabane embraced Xie and appointed him the head of Special Projects and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy and Trade Adviser on the China-Asia Trade Network. Opposition parties objected and accused Xie of wielding too much power and using his influence in the Prime Minister's office to advance the interests of the Chinese community at the expense of indigenous Basotho. In an interview published by *Amabhungane* in 2018, Xie boasted of bankrolling almost every political party or politician in Lesotho, including the weddings of Thabane to 'Maesaiah, and that of Thato Nkhahle (née Mosisili), the daughter of Mosisili respectively when Mosisili was still Prime Minister. He also allegedly funded Metsing's birthday party held in Ladybrand; allegedly accommodated Thabane in his Hillview mansion after returning from exile in 2017, and offered financial assistance to Thabane and some members of the ABC while in exile in South Africa (Ntsukunyane, 2020). So far, none of the implicated politicians have disputed these allegations. It is also unclear whether the DCEO is following these public pronouncements for verification and possible prosecution. Following Thabane's resignation in June 2020, Xie fled the country to Australia. The DCEO and the Financial Intelligence Unit started investigating him on several criminal issues, including the construction of Thabane's house in Makhoakheng, Maseru (Kabi, 2020e).

Some government officials who are tired of glaring corruption are on the crusade of exposing it. For example, in November 2019, Khothatso Tšooana, former Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship, reported to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that two former Cabinet Ministers, Mahala Molapo (Local Government and Chieftaincy) and Chalane Phori (Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing) and 'Maesaiah persuaded him to award a M340 million Mpilo Boulevard tender to Xie's company (Kabi, 2019b). The ministers should take cognisance that they are not Chief Accounting Officers. They should at all times avoid invading the territory of the Principal Secretaries (Sejanamane, 2017:296).

Shi allegedly convinced the third coalition government to make regulations that gave his company, Maseru Dawning Company, monopoly in the trade of wool and mohair to the detriment of a South African broker, BKB, which had traded with Lesotho farmers for 44 years (*The Post*, 2018). Shi delayed the payments and paid far less than BKB, and that resulted in the unpopularity of the third coalition government. In 2019, thousands of farmers marched to Maseru to force the government to repeal the controversial Regulations (*The Post*, 2018).

In 2012, Arron Banks allegedly bankrolled Maseribane's BNP election campaign to the tune of £350 000. He also allegedly bankrolled both Maseribane and Thabane while in exile in South Africa in 2015. They admitted to receiving funding from Banks but denied that the money was meant to influence the government to favour him (*Lesotho Times*, 2020:9). In 2014, Banks was allegedly granted a mining license after paying £65 000 into Maseribane's personal account. Part of £16 000 was allegedly paid to Maseribane a few weeks before processing the license (*Lesotho Times*, 2020:9). Interestingly, on 21 September 2018 the DCEO reported that it had found no evidence of malpractice or use of any undue influence from Maseribane as minister (Matlosa, 2018). The bankrolling of the key political figures often denies local entrepreneurs an opportunity to compete favourably for business opportunities in the country. It is for this reason that some politicians use being in government as an opportunity for self-enrichment.

The effect of corruption is felt everywhere, including Lesotho, where it has ravaged the social fibre of society. It gnawed away public confidence in the state because of the decay of morality and ethical practice among those who have been entrusted to manage and run public affairs. As a political commitment to combating this vice, Lesotho has signed a number of protocols, including the 2006 African Union Convention on Combating Corruption and has established internal entities such as the DCEO to deal with corruption. However, some politicians and their fellow economic saboteurs continue to undermine these efforts. Consequently, they contribute to bad governance and the collapse of the coalition governments.

High levels of corruption threatened stability of coalition governments and resulted in the misuse of the anti-corruption entities in the country. The DCEO was abused as a tool against political opponents. It became functional and alive when detecting and investigating money deposited in Metsing accounts, yet it could not investigate an obvious link between a donation to a politician and his influence in organising a mining lease for the donor (Matlosa, 2018). When there is no clarity about who is responsible for tenders, the struggle about tenders continues and inevitably that would be the beginning of the fall of government (Sejanamae, 2017:296-297).

After opening a corruption docket for Metsing, an attempted coup was launched on 30 August 2014, threatening the first coalition government. The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Advocate Hlalefang Motinyane, has alleged that Sub-Inspector Mokheseng Ramahloko was killed after he failed to produce dockets regarding fraud and corruption charges levelled against the then DPM Metsing. Metsing was accused of corruption in which Big Bravo Pty Ltd was awarded M120 million contract to refurbish roads in Matala Ha Leqele, Maseru in 2013 (Phakela, 2020). Had the coup been successful, the likelihood is that the dockets would be destroyed and there would be no case. Therefore, Metsing was allegedly determined to topple the first coalition government in order not to face the law. He is currently facing treason charges with Mochoboroane in relation to an attempted coup.

2.2 *The abuse of floor-crossing*

In the southern African region, countries such as Botswana and South Africa had legislated floor-crossing, and it has contributed to destabilising parliaments (Carter, 2008; Lephogole, 2020). Botswana had a floor crossing clause after independence while South Africa introduced floor-crossing in 2002. In 2020, Botswana passed a constitutional amendment to put an end to floor crossing. A key proviso for MPs is to cause a vacancy in the seat of an elected member of the National Assembly who, having been elected to the National Assembly as a candidate for a political party, resigns from the political party. This applied to councillors who wished to cross the floor (*Government Gazette*, 2020). In 2009, South Africa passed the Constitution Fifteenth Amendment Bill that proposed abolishing floor crossing in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures. It was accompanied by the Constitution Fourteenth Amendment Bill which abolished floor crossing in municipal councils (Constitution Fourteenth Amendment Bill, 2009; Constitutional Fifteenth Amendment Bill, 2009), as it disadvantaged smaller political parties such as Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Its former leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi described those who crossed the floor by joining other parties as “crosstitutes” (*Sunday Express*, 2020). They were no different from prostitutes who cast aside morality and principles to sell themselves to whoever offered them powerful posts and material riches. His party and small others suffered greatly due to poaching by the majority African National Congress (ANC).

Makoa has opined that floor-crossing is a nuisance because it destabilises governments and exacerbates turmoil rather than stability (*Sunday Express*, 2020). Makoa also observes that in most cases, those who ditched their parties were enticed with various inducements dangled in their faces. Consequently, the practice is not good for any country as it erodes development and allows a party to have parliamentary seats even where voters had rejected it. It led to the break-up of parties and the subsequent political dysfunction in parliament. This dysfunction often leads to a crisis of legitimacy for the parties in government (Motsamai, 2015:7).

Various factors contributed to floor-crossing in Lesotho, including a lack of democratic culture among the politicians. It is seen as a license to access state resources and has been used to address intra-party fights. Matlosa and Shale (2006:10-11) argued that floor-crossing, among other things: (i) changed the political character of the parliament by altering the outcomes of the general election results; (ii) weakened political parties and undermined the country's democracy; and (iii) created mistrust of both MPs and the political parties, particularly when voters vote for a representative who constantly switches political allegiances.

After the establishment of the grand coalition government on 20 May 2020, legislators Sello Mooki and Mokherane Tsatsanyane ditched the ruling ABC for the opposition AD. They expressed grief that Majoro overlooked them for positions, instead of rewarding them for getting rid of Thabane.

Due to endless differences between ABC and LCD during the first coalition, in June 2014, LCD signed a new coalition deal with DC. That same year, Thabane prorogued parliament out of fear of the collapse of his government. These differences led to SADC intervention and the ultimate demise of the first coalition government and then the snap elections were held in February 2015. In 2020, ABC formed a grand coalition with DC, which was supported by other small parties and that marked the collapse of the third coalition.

2.3 Enhanced politicisation of the public sector

The other factor that complicated the coalition governments was the politicisation of the public sector. Politicians, in their effort to retain state power, often politicise social identities and ethnic cleavages. Consequently, the fierce elite struggle for state power and the battle over state resources marked post-election conflicts in Lesotho (Matlosa, Khadiagala & Shale, 2010:197). Such conflicts continue even during the era of coalition governments in the country. Consequently, almost all political parties that come to power feel immense pressure to favour their supporters in public service appointments and award public sector contracts. More often, little or no consideration is given to qualifications and

experience. This contributes to persistent political instability in Lesotho in two ways. First, the public service is destabilised each time a different party comes into power. Secondly, appointments are done to serve the ruling party, and public servants appointed by previous ruling parties see themselves as part of the opposition against the newly elected ruling party, so they participate in political and other activities intended to undermine the newly elected government (Thabane, 2016:313). Party membership and loyalty, not merit, play a critical role in securing a job in the public service.

According to Kapa, the politicisation of the public service started when the country shifted from a merit-based recruitment system to political appointments (Ntaote, 2017). In 2013, Thabane differed with the LCD Minister, then Foreign Affairs Minister Mohlabi Tsekoa, one of the partners in the first coalition, over diplomatic posts to foreign missions. The ABC leader wanted the lion's share of his party's postings (Weisfelder, 2015:63). For his part, Seabata Motsamai said political patronage practices were meant to deepen political parties' influence in the public service and should be abolished (Ntaote, 2017). Such practice crippled the civil service and state bureaucracy performance.

In early 2017 Moleleki, as former Minister of Police, admitted that he was part of a corrupt act of recruiting police and correctional service officers along party lines during the second coalition government (Ntaote, 2017). The recruitment of public servants on political party lines and admission by some high-ranking politicians showed the country's deep-rooted politicisation of public service.

In March 2021, the ABC and the DC were at each other's throats. The ABC-controlled Ministry of Police and Public Safety recruited 200 trainee Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) officers. DC complained that their supporters were not considered for any recruitment. Instead of recruiting deserving candidates, the governing parties use the posts to reward loyal supporters and retain patronage. According to the DC sources, the DC had hoped that the ABC would reciprocate its "kind gesture" after the DC-controlled Home Affairs ministry reserved some posts for ABC members when it conducted its own recruitment exercise late in 2020 (Kabi, 2021). Recruitment to government posts has always been a cause of disagreement with reports of partisanship and nepotism dominating the exercise.

The political conflict flowing from the fragility of the coalition government soon spread to the security sector, culminating in volatile relations between the security organs that deteriorated to such an extent that open, armed conflict was a real possibility. Although there were several interconnected factors that led to tensions, the partisan nature of senior personnel within the security organs was central to the conflict (Motsamai, 2015:6-7). At the time, there were reports (Ntaote, 2014; Pherudi, 2016:202-204), indicating that the LDF under Kamoli was pro-LCD while the LMPS under Tšooana was pro-ABC. The tensions

were to the extent that the then DPM Metsing had scheduled a meeting with Tšooana, who was the Commissioner of LMPS. Tšooana did not honour the meeting and indicated that the former DPM should have arranged the meeting through the office of the Minister of Police, who was, at that time, Thabane (Pherudi, 2016:203-204; Rakhare, 2019:18).

Politicians used the army to achieve their political objectives. Politicians used the army to settle political scores in their contestation for the control of state power. In this process, politicians in Lesotho have used and abused the army for their self-serving political gains, much like the army used and abused politicians for their own corporate and/or personal interests (Matlosa, 2019b:13). If this trend is not contained, the army runs the risk of being perceived as an armed wing of a party or a coalition of parties. Chief Khoabane Theko (quoted in Boloetse, 2017:1) observed that: “politicians think they cannot do anything if they do not have backup from the army”. Sharing similar sentiments is Motsamai (2015:12-13), that:

The military’s involvement in Lesotho politics is still an aberration and symptomatic of a malfunctioning political system. It also underlined the inevitability of the politicisation of security institutions because the security forces have been drawn into high-level political disputes.

Thabane attempted to abuse the security apparatus for self-political gains by ordering the LDF and National Security Service (NSS) to investigate his governing ABC rivals, whom he accused of plotting to topple his government. He also deployed the LDF onto the streets of Maseru, claiming some people and institutions were undermining the rule of law and abusing the courts. The people and institutions he was referring to were the Police Commissioner Holomo Molibeli, Thesele Maseribane and Ketsetso Rantšo, leaders of BNP and the RCL, respectively. Molibeli had exposed the alleged role of both Thabane and 'Maesaiah in the death of Lipolelo while Maseribane and Rantšo – who were part of the coalition government and had joined the opposition parties in opposing Thabane’s prorogation of parliament (Ngatane, 2020a). This abuse of office to fight personal and political battles was a contributory factor in Thabane’s eventual downfall. The LDF leadership refused to be drawn into the political battles, instead acting as peace mediators in what appeared to be a power struggle within the LMPS and reiterated their commitment and adherence to the Constitution.

Politicisation of the public sector contributed immensely to dividing the Basotho and collapsing the coalition governments in the country, particularly, the first coalition. Lesotho’s politics have divided Basotho into two groups – congress supporters and nationalists. This situation fuels the fires of hatred. Moreover, it is evident that if either of these parties gains power, they would ensure that the only citizens who benefit from government would be their own and those closest to the people in leadership position.

2.4 Misuse of the motion of no-confidence

In Lesotho, the motion of no-confidence in the Prime Minister is a constitutional provision, but politicians have misused it on several occasions for self-gain. In 2014, the opposition parties tried to pass a vote of no-confidence in Thabane, which he thwarted through the prorogation of parliament (Letsie, 2015:92-93). In June 2016, the DC became a battlefield over the leadership of the party between *Lirurubele* (butterflies) linked to the deputy leader, Moleleki and *Lithope* (girlfriends) aligned to the leader, Mosisili. On the other hand, Mosisili staged a fierce fight to retain power within DC by replacing Moleleki, and the latter left with 23 MPs and formed a new party called AD. Mosisili remained with 42 coalition MPs and rallied them to resist any attempt to oust him. He stated that he would not hand over power to anybody if he lost the motion of no-confidence in parliament. On 1 March 2017, he indeed lost a vote of no-confidence. Consequently, he advised His Majesty King Letsie III to dissolve parliament (Legal Notice No. 22 of 2017). Consequently, the country held snap elections on 3 June 2017. Mosisili wanted the elections for three reasons:

- (i) he was still in control of the unreformed state apparatus and could use the military as an electoral strategy,
- (ii) to avoid or postpone the implementation of the SADC recommendations arising from the Phumaphi Report which investigated the circumstances around the assassination of Brigadier Mahao in 2015, and
- (iii) to complete the deployment of all his allies in all strategic areas of government so that he could rule from the grave if he lost power (Sejanamane, 2017:206-208). He became disappointed when SADC confined the army to the barracks. Therefore, his strategy of using the army to win the elections was frustrated. The implementation of the Phumaphi recommendations could not be avoided forever, as they became a priority of the third coalition government (Sejanamane, 2017:206-208).

The protracted war of attrition between the outgoing and incoming NECs of the ABC resulted in ABC legislator Motebang Koma filing the motion of no-confidence against Thabane, seconded by the DC's deputy leader Motlalentsoa Letsosa. Siphiri Motanyane, Speaker of the National Assembly, submitted that the motion did not meet procedural and constitutional requirements. He accepted advice to seek a legal opinion before ruling on its admissibility. On 6 August 2019, the former Attorney General (AG), Haae Phoofolo, confirmed that a no-confidence motion against Thabane was valid (Lesotho Attorney General, 2019:1-2). The passing of the motion of no-confidence and the outcome of the legal opinion made Thabane's position as Prime Minister more vulnerable and threatened his stay in power. However, at the end of 2019, Motanyane rejected the motion as inadmissible. This lengthened Thabane's days in power for a short while.

On 19 March 2020, Thabane prorogued parliament through the *Government Gazette* Legal Notice 21, 2020, ostensibly, to manage the Covid-19 pandemic. In reality, he wanted to prevent parliament from meeting and passing the motion of no-confidence in him. At

the time, he was almost certain to lose the vote as many MPs of his own ABC party had made it public that they wanted him out. The ABC and opposition parties challenged the prorogation in court. Consequently, on 17 April 2020, the Constitutional Court ruled that the proroguing of parliament was irrational and invalid (Ngatane, 2020b). The court outcome did not augur well for Thabane, as he was more vulnerable politically. His legacy would always be associated with the prorogation of parliament, as he had done it more often than any PM.

In November 2016, the then deputy leader of DC, Moleleki broke ranks with the party and formed Alliance of Democrats (AD). Moleleki, Thabane, Maseribane and Rantso participated in the vote of no-confidence in the second coalition led by Mosisili, which resulted in the 2017 elections after the dissolution of parliament. The grand coalition was also threatened when Mahao formed BAP with nine MPs crossing the floor with him. SADC became concerned about this development within ABC and despatched an assessment mission to confirm stability in the country. In June 2019, the ABC itself filed a motion of no-confidence in its leader Thabane and this destabilised the third coalition government from discharging its mandate. The no-confidence motion was a culmination of a protracted war of attrition between the outgoing and incoming NECs of the ABC.

For fear of a vote of no-confidence, Thabane prorogued parliament from 19 March to 19 June 2020. He wanted to prevent parliament from meeting and passing a vote of no-confidence in him, which would have ended the third coalition government (Legal Notice 21, 2020). Lesotho's leaders were fully aware that they could lose power through a vote of no-confidence.

In August 2021, Tefo Mapesela, the leader of Basotho Patriotic Party (BPP) filed a motion of no-confidence and demanded the use of a secret ballot. Even though Mapesela's motion is more about politicking than substantive issues, Majoro's enemies within his party may seize the opportunity to try to frustrate him as there are more 'backstabbers' than unified supporters in the ABC (Mpaki, 2021:4). This was evident when Phori, Chairperson of ABC announced his support for the motion, but later reneged after the party's NEC called him to order (Kabi, 2021:4). Though a motion of no-confidence is a conditional provision, the frequency at which it is passed in the Lesotho is worrying. Among, other things, it creates uncertainty and threatens potential investors that the country so badly needs.

2.5 Undue interference in judicial matters

In 2014, Thabane's first coalition government attempted to retire both AG Tsokolo Makhetha and Director for Public Prosecutions (DPP) Leaba Thetsane due to age – both had reached 55 years (Pherudi, 2016:200-203). Ironically, in 2018 he appointed Phoofofo

as AG, despite being 71 years old at the time. It became evident that it was not about age but having party-preferred candidates in such positions. Makhethe and Thetsane were perceived as agents of the previous government, an allegation they rejected.

In April 2014, Thabane forced Justice Michael Ramorebodi to resign after losing a case before Court of Appeal in which he wanted to stop the impeachment initiated against him by Thabane. In January 2015, weeks before the February 2015 general election, Thabane appointed Justice Kananelo Mosito as the President of the Court of Appeal. After winning the 2015 snap elections, Mosisili moved to impeach Mosito; the move Mosito pre-empted resignation in December 2016 after the Tribunal had recommended his removal. In May 2017, Mosisili appointed a retired South African judge Robert Nugent as President of the Court of Appeal. Following the 2017 snap election, Thabane became the Prime Minister. He in turn revoke Nugent's appointment and reinstated Mosito. Thabane further facilitated the resignation of Justice Mahapela Lehohla and was replaced with Justice Nthomeng Majara at the helm of the High Court. Nugent (Zihlangu and Tlali: 2013; Tefo: 2015).

He also replaced Majara with Acting Justice Masefora Mahase following an attempt to impeach her on allegations of being too close to the second coalition government. The two reached out-of-court settlement (Pherudi, 2016:200-204). Thabane wanted to appoint Mahase to head the High Court but his own party differed with him and Justice Sakoane Sakoane was appointed instead.

This constant tinkering with senior leadership of the judiciary destabilised the courts and deprived them of continuity and the capacity to fulfil their democratic mandates. Thabane's attempt to impeach Majara in 2017 was one of the many instances of executive interference with the judiciary, which encourages the perception that judges must give allegiance to the Prime Minister to keep their jobs. Such perceptions contribute significantly to the lack of public confidence in the justice system (Monyake, 2020b:8). Thabane tried several times, without success, to dismiss Mosito after he had overturned decisions of the High Court regarding the ABC power struggle. Mahase, who was seen as Thabane's ally, delivered the High Court judgments that favoured Thabane's faction. More often than not, the smooth functioning of the High Court and Court of Appeal were disturbed as the political wrangles and interference ensued. Almost all the PMs in Lesotho interfered with the judiciary for selfish interests.

Appointments in the judiciary have a political flavour which threatened the coalition governments and the independence of judiciary. From 2012, some politicians wanted to use the DPP's office to settle political scores. Thabane tried to dismiss Thetsane in 2014 and 2017 respectively. Thetsane was suspected of discharging his responsibilities with a political agenda, a charge he denied (Muzofa, 2017). Two reasons contributed to an attempt at his first dismissal. First, in 2012, there was a fabricated charge of M53 million against

Metsing which went to court without his knowledge. The DPP subsequently withdrew the case to the dissatisfaction of ABC leadership. Secondly, he refused to dance to the tune of the politicians (*Lesotho Times*, 2017). Consequently, Metsing vowed to fight for Thetsane to the bitter end and orated that: “they are likely to threaten the DPP and if they are going to threaten him, we are ready to die along with him” (Tefo, 2014). Differences within coalition governments affected the functioning of the state organs including the office of DPP.

After the 2017 elections, ABC was not happy with the charges against Mosito for tax evasion. Lebohang Hlaele, the then Minister of Law, Constitutional Affairs and Human Rights approached the DPP to withdraw the case against Mosito, and he refused (*Lesotho Times*, 2017). The third coalition government facilitated his retirement and Motinyane was appointed after acting for a while in that position.

3 Unique reasons for the collapse of the coalition governments

3.1 The collapse of the first coalition

The first coalition experienced serious internal squabbles as it became personality-driven with a standoff between Thabane and Metsing. Squabbles were expected, as they differed in ideological orientations, comprising the nationalists and the congress. Consequently, the coalition collapsed after only two years in power because of poor leadership, tensions, and misunderstandings between coalition partners, especially between ABC and LCD (Mahlakeng, 2016). Poor leadership became evident when Thabane did not consult other partners on issues of mutual interest. He considered himself a senior partner, and that created a personality cult around him. He thought he could do things without consulting or informing other coalition partners. He often showed little respect to other coalition partners, especially Metsing. Consequently, tensions heightened. The political misunderstanding was evident when Thabane dismissed Kamoli, and Metsing publicly announced his disapproval and non-recognition of the dismissal (Ntaote, 2014).

What also contributed to the fragility of the coalition governments was a lack of cohesion, discipline, unity and effectiveness. The parties did not have a uniform developmental plan for the country, except focusing on the gains of individual parties and their membership. As a result, comprehensive service delivery was compromised. Lesotho’s political history is marked by recurrent conflict with contending political parties that have been and are deeply adversarial towards and mutually distrustful of one another (Makoa, 2008). They also clashed over the division of spoils in allocating key ministerial and government portfolios. It was more about the acquisition of power and less about governing the country more effectively and efficiently.

Likoti (2021) opines that the fears of the first coalition partners were not grounded on ideology but motivated by an office-seeking mentality. The first coalition was also driven by anti-Mosisili sentiments (Mothibe, 2017:71). Metsing accused Thabane of running the governing coalition like a “one-man” show and of making crucial decisions without consulting other partners. The two leaders were bent on undermining each other at any given time. For example, Thabane attempted to reduce the number of the Senate and the ministerial positions of the LCD. He also removed the Lesotho Highlands Water Project from the LCD and brought it under the ABC control (Pherudi, 2016:202-204). In summary, the first coalition government collapsed due to: (i) differences about the powers of the PM; (ii) the modalities of parties’ working relations; and (iii) lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms (Deleglise, 2018:31; 'Nyane, 2019:97). Both ABC and LCD undermined and despised each other publicly. As a result, they drifted apart instead of cohering for the progress of the country.

3.2 Collapse of the second coalition government

Two key factors contributed to the collapse of the second coalition government: first, the misuse of the vote of no-confidence, as reflected earlier in the chapter. Secondly, there was an escalating reign of terror by the military. The mid-2015 saw the emergence of a new strategy dubbed “Team 20” comprising LDF members led by the late Major Bulane Sechele and Col. Tefo Hashatsi aimed at eliminating the enemies or perceived antagonists of the second coalition government (Motsamai, 2019). The “Team 20” launched an operation to abduct and arrest soldiers who were suspected of supporting Mahao, under a pretext of mutiny. This resulted in the mafia-style abduction and arrest of 23 soldiers, tortured, and locked up at Maseru Maximum Security Prison while others fled the country for their safety. Kamoli also refused to avail them before the SADC Commission of Inquiry to testify against their alleged role in the mutiny. The SADC Commission of Inquiry concluded that all soldiers who had been detained and charged for mutiny must be given an amnesty since there was no substance to the charges of mutiny (SADC Commission of Inquiry, 2015:61). They were only acquitted on 18 December 2017, after some of the key witnesses confirmed that they were coerced to implicate the 23 officers. With all plots having failed to get rid of Mahao out of the LDF, on 25 June 2015, members of the LDF assassinated him on his way from his home village, Mokema, near Maseru (Pherudi, 2018:123). He was perceived as the enemy of both the government and the LDF, and after assassinating the LDF submitted that he resisted arrest, a version disputed by Mahao’s family on the basis of the account given by a nephew who was with him at the time. According to the nephew, Mahao had surrendered and thrown his hands up as soon as the three LDF vehicles blocked his way but they fired anyway (Ambrose, 2015:32). It could also be argued that the involvement of high-ranking officers of the LDF as the foot soldiers in the operation indicated its political importance because eliminating him reduced a threat to Kamoli’s position.

The LDF created a serious reign of terror in the country, including sporadic bombings of private residences, including that of Tšooana. Some who experienced the wrath of the LDF included Lloyd Mutungamiri, the editor of *Lesotho Times* newspaper, who was shot in the face but survived; Ramahloko, who was brutally killed at the Maseru Police Headquarters at the dawn of the 30 August 2014 coup for refusing to provide dockets of Kamoli and Metsing; Lisebo Tang – killed on 9 May 2014; Khomotso Makibinyane, Lekhoele Noko and Molise Pakela, who were thrown into the Mohale Dam (Pherudi, 2019:100-101). Their bodies were tied with stones to ensure they did not surface above the 145m high and 700m long dam. No suspects were arrested during the tenure of the second coalition because they were allegedly shielded by Kamoli. They were only arrested after the 2017 snap elections.

It took more than three years to prosecute most of the suspects in this regard. In fact, at the time of writing, none of the cases had been concluded due to various delaying tactics by the suspects and some of their legal representatives (Kabi, 2020g:4).

3.3 *The collapse of the third coalition government*

The collapse of the third coalition government was self-inflicted. There are four key factors that were contributory to the collapse. First, there was a power struggle between Thabane and his Deputy leader, Mahao, following the ABC's elective 2019 elective conference. The conference produced a new NEC with Mahao as deputy leader. The old NEC, including Thabane, refused to recognise the new NEC. Subsequently, factions, namely *Likatana* and the "State House" factions led by Thabane and Mahao, respectively, crippled the ABC. The "State House" faction was also known as *Malumara* (underwears), a name coined due to an allegation that Thabane had ceded his constitutional power to his wife, 'Maesaiah, who was accused of interfering in the party and government affairs (Kabi, 2019c). Some members of the State House faction, such as Motlohi Maliehe complained that the ABC NEC elections were rigged while Koketso Sello, Mohapinyane Mohapi and Habofanoe Lehana lodged a High Court petition. On 8 May 2019, the High Court verdict favoured the State House faction but *Likatana* won the matter on appeal. Other reports indicated that even the director-general of the NSS, Pheello Ralenkoane, advised Thabane to resolve the crisis in his party and that it would be in his best interests and that of the stability of the nation for him to accept and accommodate the new NEC (Kabi, 2020d). Instead of addressing the internal party conflict, Thabane expelled four members of the new NEC from the party. They challenged their expulsion through the courts, and were reinstated. In trying to resolve the ABC power struggle, Thabane offered to deploy Mahao as ambassador to Belgium, an offer he rejected. The deployment was seen as a divide-and-rule strategy. This was an easy attempt at resolving the conflict within the party and it did not hold as Mahao rejected the offer.

The second factor was Lesotho's former First Lady allegedly meddling in the country's politics and allegations of murder: 'Maesaiah was accused of having captured the government. In May 2018, the then chairperson of the ruling ABC, Maliehe, launched a blistering and unprecedented attack on 'Maesaiah, accusing her of unduly interfering in the party and government through constant meddling in the work of ministers and officials. Some members of the party also complained that Thabane had allowed his wife to run the government through what they termed a bedroom *coup* (Mohloboli, 2018:2). Theko (Kabi, 2019a) expressed concerns that Thabane was in breach of the Constitution by allowing an un-elected individual, his wife, to exercise powers only given to the PM. Theko accused 'Maesaiah of interfering in the ABC and cabinet matters and for instigating the fallout between Thabane and his son-in-law, Lebohang Hlaele (former Cabinet Minister and member of the new NEC). He also claimed that Thabane was no longer consulting his party or coalition partners. Instead, decisions were taken unilaterally at the State House. This situation is reminiscent of Mrs Grace Mugabe, who involved herself in Zimbabwe's politics leading to the resignation of former President Robert Mugabe (Sejanamane, 2017; *Lesotho Times*, 2018). Thabane also resigned due to pressure from his party, partly because of 'Maesaiah's unconstitutional role in governance. Since then, the role of first ladies has become a subject of research in other areas.

On 14 June 2017, Thabane and 'Maesaiah were implicated in the killing of Lipolelo Thabane. At the time of the murder, Lipolelo was still legally married to Thabane (Southall, 2020). The first attempt to kill Lipolelo failed on 12 June 2017. They were also accused of having promised to pay 3 million Maloti in cash to Lipolelo's killers as well as providing jobs in government for executing the murder. To date, it is alleged that M400 000.00 has been paid (Kabi, 2020h). Thabane was accused of shielding his wife from prosecution.

The third factor is that as political pressure mounted on Thabane to resign, he announced that he would resign on 31 July 2020. However, he only resigned on 19 May 2020. To stop the abuse of prorogation by PM, which Thabane was likely to follow, the Lesotho parliament adopted the Ninth Constitutional Amendment that stated:

The Prime Minister shall not advise dissolution under this section, unless the dissolution is supported by a resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the National Assembly" (*Lesotho Government Gazette*, 2020:371-372).

This amendment was implemented immediately after adoption by the National Assembly ('Nyane, 2020:2). It curtails the PM's power to advise the king to dissolve parliament and call for elections. Through this amendment, the country was spared having to hold another snap election. In fact, at the time, there were fears that Thabane could advise Letsie III to dissolve parliament.

The fourth factor was the mass resignation of ABC MPs. On 8 May 2020, 33 ABC MPs announced their resignation from the third coalition government with a view to joining the grand coalition comprising ABC and DC. Other small parties supported both parties.

Likoti (2021) argues that the grand coalition was not based on any ideology but on their desire to oust Thabane without holding another snap election. The two ABC factions reached a transition arrangement, and top of their priorities were: (i) ensuring a dignified exit for Thabane; (ii) ensuring that ABC would remain leader of government. Majoro was part of that truce between the two factions (Mutasa, 2020). Subsequently, Thabane's third coalition collapsed on 11 May 2020 and on 19 May 2020, he announced his resignation.

Majoro, an economist and former executive at the International Monetary Fund and Lesotho's Finance Minister, became PM. Majoro had been Thabane's long-preferred candidate associated with the State House faction.

The fifth factor was the misuse of the security agencies, especially the LMPS. Their brutality resulted in an outcry in the country. Some cases of police brutality were reported with little action (Mohase, 2019). This further resulted in calling for LMPS Commissioner Molibedi to be dismissed, but the call and the attempts by Thabane to dismiss him did not materialise as he implicated Thabane and his wife 'Maesaiah in the murder of Lipolelo Thabane.

4 Political and socio-economic impact of the coalition governments in Lesotho

According to Likoti (2021), all the coalition governments in Lesotho did not complete their five-year tenure because they were hastily formed, with no proper preparations during the pre-negotiation period. Parties usually had two weeks to negotiate, which is far from sufficient. Ironically, the state at which the coalitions collapsed before they completed their tenure also suggested that no lessons were learned from the previous ones. After a hundred days in office, Majoro accepted that it was difficult to be in a coalition government as people with different ideologies and objectives established it. Coalitions are often characterised by differences and the threat of collapse. Therefore, it was not surprising when conflict within the coalition escalated, resulting in some members collaborating to collapse the government with a view to better political rewards in the newly formed coalition. This was evident when leaders of minority parties were rewarded with ministerial positions during the second coalition government.

The corruption that permeated through various coalition governments, in particular, the first three, denied the citizens service delivery. Most politicians advanced their personal gains and those of their friends. Bohloa (2020:2-3) succinctly explained the situation thus:

Like scavengers, everything is done with sole purpose of self-gradation. They eat everything from their prey until bones are exposed and nothing is left. That is the nature and mind-set of our politicians.

As a result, politicians themselves contribute to the country’s poverty levels and the misery of the already vulnerable groups in the country.

Corruption has created its resistance movement and sowed the seed of destruction. Coalition politicking has led to an increase in government expenditure, largely because of rampant corruption. The size of cabinet and political deployments has almost doubled over the past nine years of coalition governance in Lesotho (Monyake, 2020a). This is because the national cake is extremely small and grossly insufficient for the political elites (Moloto, 2021).

The 2020 grand coalition is holding under a cloud of being collapsed by some disgruntled members of the ABC. This has been the trend since the 2017 coalition due to inter-party conflict. Some disgruntled members of the ABC expressed dissatisfaction with the appointment of the BNP and RCL leaders, Maseribane and Rantšo respectively, to Majoro’s cabinet ahead of the ABC MPs. As a result, two MPs, Tsatsanyane and Mooki, dumped the party to join the opposition AD (Kabi, 2020). Monyake opined the defections of the two proved that the ABC had still not solved its internal problems despite ousting Thabane from the government. The duo was aggrieved that cabinet posts that should have been for ABC members were given to BNP and RCL leaders. On 27 August 2020, Majoro admitted that his government had survived countless attempts to overthrow it and that the first attempt began two days after he was inaugurated. He also said that his government was used to being toppled, as it was an everyday issue (Lesotho Office of the Prime Minister, 2020).

The coalitions did very little to improve unemployment levels, including that of the youth (ages 15 to 24) in the country. Since 2012, the youth unemployment rate was as reflected in Table 11.1 below:

Table 11.1 Youth unemployment between 2012-2019

NO	YEAR	PERCENTAGE%
01	2012	35.33
02	2013	34.53
03	2014	34.08
04	2015	34.16
05	2016	33.96
06	2017	33.19
07	2018	33.22
08	2019	33.01

Source: Pletcher, 2020

Table 11.1 above shows that the first three coalition governments have done little to provide much-needed opportunities for the youth. Theko (2020:4) also lamented the country's high unemployment rate and that hiring of Basotho was done through politics and nepotism. As a result, politicians took the country for granted as they continued this evil practice at the expense of the high rate of unemployed young people. According to Ramdeen (2017:55), states are responsible for creating an enabling environment that promotes youth employment. Therefore, through job opportunity programmes the country could avoid protests similar to the Arab Spring that swept through the north of Africa around 2010. Whether the current coalition would last until the expiration of its life span in 2022, only time will tell as some members of parliament have a history of collapsing their own governments.

Lesotho politicians have too often abused the public trust and confidence in government by expanding the cabinet and their benefits of getting into government while under-delivering on public service and development programmes. The coalitions have spent more time negotiating the terms of their agreements and jockeying for ministries than governing (Aerni-Flessener, 2021). This happens at the expense of popular programmes such as old-age pension and universal primary education.

The grand coalition has experienced challenges from two fronts: continued inter-party conflict within the ABC and the intra-party differences between ABC and DC. On 3 February 2021, Majoro reshuffled the cabinet and, among others, appointed Lekhetho Mosito as Defence and National Security Minister. Mosito was dismissed barely two weeks after his appointment into the post due to ABC internal pressure groups (*Lesotho Times*, 2021).

The politicisation of the public sector is still rife, as evidenced by LMPS recruitment of March 2021. Instead of DC imploring ABC to adhere to the merit-based recruitment process, it lamented that its supporters were not considered. Therefore, the governing parties continue to use the posts to reward loyal supporters and retain patronage.

The coalition governments also had positive spin-offs for the country. It ended one party dominance of the LCD that had been a feature of Lesotho's democracy for decades. The then ruling LCD was an unrestrained force (Makoa, 2008). It also increased political party representation in parliament.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

The chapter identified the key role players, generic and unique factors that contributed to the collapse of the coalition governments in Lesotho. In redressing some of the challenges bedevilling the coalitions, the following is recommended:

Regarding the fight against corruption, the government should provide more resources for anti-corruption entities, continue showing zero tolerance on corruption, encourage whistleblowing and provide protection thereto. The non-involvement of political office bearers in tender processes would go a long way in curbing unnecessary influence for preferred bidders or corruptor and corrupted relationship.

Lesotho should consider abolishing floor-crossing or amend the Constitution to provide for by-elections whenever people defect to allow people to choose the party that they want to represent them. The country could also learn from Botswana, where any member of parliament or councillor wishing to cross the floor from one party to the other first must resign their position and pave the way for fresh elections. (Lephogole, 2020).

The country should undertake multi-sectoral reforms as recommended by SADC Commission of Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Brigadier Maaparankoe Mahao (Final Report, 2015) and other SADC entities including SADC Observer Mission to Lesotho (SOMILES), which were deployed to Lesotho by SADC to resolve political stalemate between partners of the first coalition. Reforms should be aimed at building an institutional framework within which elites could solve political conflicts in a non-violent way.

Coalitions should work towards peace and stability in the country because it needs peace for development as Santho (2017:128) argues: "Lesotho needs peace, security, good governance and stability in order to realise inclusive growth and development..." Peace and stability are prerequisites for successful countries, and Lesotho, without doubt, would benefit from both. Aerni-Flessner (2012) opines that coalitions could win public trust through basic service delivery.

Finally, the first three coalition governments were crippled by disunity, scepticism, and intra-party conflict. These characteristics impacted negatively on service delivery, including dealing effectively with HIV and AIDS and recently addressing the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The failure of the coalitions is emblematic of the failure of the government to listen to and address the needs of its constituents including lack of convergent national policies aimed at national development and poverty alleviation.

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