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

GENDER DYNAMICS IN COALITION GOVERNMENTS' MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS IN LESOTHO

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Mamello Rakolobe

1 Introduction

Despite national, regional and global efforts to address gender inequality in politics, the number of women in public decision-making bodies remains low. For instance, the global average women representation in parliament is 25% as of 1st January 2021, and Sub-Saharan Africa stands at 24.9% (IPU, 2021). Women heads of state are 6.6%, and women heads of government are 6.2% as of 1st January 2020 (UN Women, 2020). On average, women constituted 22% of the global ministerial positions as of 15 October 2020 (United Nations, 2020). This indicates that after 25 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, the presence of women in public decision-making structures is still far below parity.

Lesotho is not excluded from this global problem. It faces the under-representation of women in all spheres of life. There is a low presence of women in parliament, in the cabinet, in the judiciary and in the security sector as high-ranking public officials. For instance, since its independence in 1966, Lesotho has never had a female Prime Minister under both a one-party rule, between 1966 and 2011 and coalition government rule, since 2012 to date. Additionally, it has never had a significant number of women in the National Assembly and the cabinet. The same is true for high-ranking officials in the public service and the security sector.

The under-representation of women in public policymaking structures is deleterious to good governance, democracy and general national development. The literature indicates that the presence of women at all government levels is a social, economic, and political

good (Asiedu, Branstette, Babulal & Malokele, 2018:2; Mumporeze & Nduhura, 2019:357) and is an essential aspect of democracy and all forms of development. As a result, the international community has established the legal and institutional frameworks that are meant to address the under-representation of women in the public sphere, such as, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the Protocol on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003, the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and Southern African Development Community Protocol (SADC) on Gender and Development, 2008.

This chapter seeks to explore the institutional arrangements that determine ministerial recruitment in Lesotho. The focus will be on the formal and informal rules, norms, practices and procedures that influence the appointment of women into ministerial positions. To identify the formal institutions, the study analysed the constitution of the country and those of the political parties, coalition agreements, parliamentary rules, past research papers and government reports. The study uses secondary data from past research reports and newspapers to identify the informal rules, practices, and procedures. The analysis focuses on the parties with at least three ministerial positions in any of the coalition governments.

The political parties have a role to play as gatekeepers for women to access the national parliament and to become ministers consequently. The coalition agreements also have a bearing on women's propensity to be appointed to the ministerial positions as they stipulate the formulae to be followed when partners share in the spoils that come with being the ruling parties. The parliamentary rules also influence the composition of the National Assembly and, consequently, women's ability to become ministers.

The chapter is structured as follows: the first section focuses on tenets of institutionalism on gender and power. The second section presents the literature on the benefits of gender diversity in public decision-making bodies, specifically the cabinet. The third section deals with the formal and informal institutions that influence the presence of women in ministerial positions. The penultimate section is an analysis of the Lesotho situation. The fourth section presents the conclusion and recommendations.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Institutionalism

Institutions are the rules, norms and practices that influence political life (Colley & Van Acker, 2020:3). Lowndes (2020:547) defines institutions as the rules of the game guiding both the individual and collective actors. In applying institutionalism to the study

of politics, Claveria (2014:1160) states that political institutions refer to the characteristics of the political system and can have two effects, namely; political system effects, which refer to characteristics and practices of institutions in each country; and party organisation effects, which include the norms and procedures of the parties in government.

Institutions can be formal, for instance, contracts, codes of conduct, laws, policies, procedures and informal, such as norms, practices and narratives (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013 in Galea, Abigail, Loosemore & Chappe, 2020:3). Institutions reflect and constitute the roles, relations and identities of actors in politics (Lowndes, 2020:544). Formal and informal institutions have gendered consequences and can result in the political underrepresentation of women (Colley & Van Acker, 2020:6).

Both formal and informal institutions are embedded in organisational life, established by actors and continuously evolving through a process of negotiation, conflict and contestation (Galea, Abigail, Loosemore & Chappe, 2020:3) and produce relatively predictable and stable political outcomes (Lowndes, 2020:548). In the same vein, Julia, Azari and Smith (2012:38) note that the written and unwritten rules prescribe patterned behaviour that is common in political life.

Informal norms and practices are difficult to study, mainly because they are unwritten and seldom discussed publicly or explicitly. These factors mean that informal norms become more visible when dishonoured or challenged than routinely respected (Franceschet & Thomas, 2015:661). Informal rules and norms are more difficult to identify because they are hidden from public scrutiny. However, with appropriate methods, they can be identified, for example, through practitioner or journalist accounts (Annesley, Franceschet, Beckwith & Engeli, 2014:11). In the same vein, Lowndes and Roberts (2013, 47 in Annesley, 2015:24) acknowledge the difficulty in identifying the informal institutions; nonetheless, they note that they can be described and explained to the researchers by actors and also in the form of insider accounts or observations by experts.

In adopting an institutionalist approach to a study of cabinet formation, researchers identify the rules that govern ministers' appointment to executive office (Annesley, Franceschet, Beckwith & Engeli, 2014:12). They focus on the rules that govern the selector/s of ministers, the eligibility criteria, and how these rules are gendered (Annesley, Franceschet, Beckwith & Engeli, 2014:11). The institutions may be gendered to disproportionately distribute cabinet positions to either men or women and, consequently, fuel gender inequality in ministerial positions. The following section presents the rationale for the inclusion of women in cabinets as they have historically experienced exclusion in public decision-making structures.

3 Why women in cabinets?

John Stuart Mill (in Reynolds, 1999:548) argued that for a government to be efficient, it should represent both the majority and minority. By the minority, Mill included women who were a disenfranchised “minority” at the time. Cabinets with just a small number of women are inadequate and undemocratic (Franceschet & Thomas, 2015:643). The cabinet is the most important structure in government decision-making (Annesley, 2015:2; Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2016:16) and is the highest level of political power (Rashkova & Zankina, 2019:221) as it oversees substantial amounts of the national budget and policy initiation and implementation (Silvia, 2014:4).

In agreement, Suraj, Scherpereel and Adams (2014:322) state that members of the cabinet control the states’ resources, manage the public service, and oversee government expenditure of funds. As a result, their positions offer them authority in government. In addition, unlike individual legislators, cabinet ministers initiate policies and make and approve many important political decisions in their ministries (Shan-Jan & Banaszak, 2016:8). Ministers oversee government departments, oversee the implementation of government policies and partake in discussions of policy and political strategy (Franceschet & Thomas, 2015:646).

Additionally, the gender composition of the cabinet is highly likely to have a bearing on both substantive and symbolic representation of the women community (Silvia, 2014:5). On symbolic representation, Shan-Jan and Banaszak (2016:7) argue that most cabinets are small, and this increases the visibility of ministers because they become heads of government ministries.

On substantive representation, Goddard (2019:631) argues that the appointment of women to cabinet posts is necessary for the views of the women community to be represented at the highest levels of decision-making in government. Similarly, Annesley and Gains (2012:724) point out that women should be represented in the cabinet to present a variety of perspectives and experiences for government decision-making.

Though the literature on the need for the presence of women in cabinets abounds, the number of women ministers is still low as indicated in the introductory section of this paper. This can be attributed to several political institutional factors. The following section presents the institutional factors that impact on the representation of women in cabinets.

4 Political and institutional factors that impact the number of women in cabinets

A study on advanced industrial democracies, Claveria (2014:1167), found that fewer women get ministerial posts in coalition governments than in single-party cabinets. This is because senior coalition partners trade cabinet seats to other partners for government stability. Consequently, intra-party competition for the available posts increases, thereby increasing the likelihood of men being appointed (Claveria, 2014:1161). Along the same line, O'Malley (2006:324) notes that in coalition contexts, it is imperative for Prime Ministers (PMs) to appoint a cabinet that will be supported by the legislature. As a result, PMs use the cabinet-formation process to build coalitions of parties and even coalitions within a party. Additionally, coalition governments limit the autonomy of PMs in ministerial appointments because their partners appoint their own candidates for the ministerial posts they have negotiated.

In a situation where the PMs command the majority, they would appoint a gender-balanced cabinet provided they have the will to do so. For instance, Prime Minister David Cameron failed to deliver on his 2008 pledge of one-third women in his 2010-15 coalition cabinet, partly because of the failure of his coalition partner to nominate any female ministers. He was able to deliver on his promise in his 2015 majority government (Annesley & Gains, 2010). Krook and O'Brien (2012:843) weigh in and point out that coalition governments reduce the number of cabinet positions available per party, thereby affecting the chances for women to get ministerial posts. They explain that in most cases, parties are led by men; as such, it may be more difficult for women in large coalition settings to be given a seat in the cabinet.

In most countries, the allocation of women to cabinet positions is still determined to a large extent by the stereotypical beliefs that women belong in the home and the public arena is the preserve of men (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2009:21; Krook & O'Brien, 2012:842; Annesley, Franceschet, Beckwith, & Engeli, 2014:17). As such, women are skewed to the traditionally feminine portfolios such as gender or women's affairs, culture, family affairs, sports and tourism, health and education; while their male counterparts are given positions in defence, foreign affairs, finance, foreign affairs, home affairs and agriculture, commerce and industry, justice and security, labour and social security, mining and energy, transportation and public works (Reynolds, 1999; Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2009:21; Suraj, Scherpereel & Adams, 2014:326; Goddard, 2019:637; Rashkova & Zankina, 2019:237). The ministries that do not fall within the two categories are placed in the "unclassifiable" or gender-neutral group. They are environment, justice, planning and development, sports, tourism and communications (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2009:22). This gendered approach to ministerial appointments disadvantages the women MPs because they are confined to certain ministries and are faced with a glass ceiling. This

limits the number of ministries available for them and, ultimately, their presence in the cabinet. Besides their gendered nature, cabinet portfolios also differ in the amount of media attention they receive, the extent to which they can be used as a stepping stone to higher office, and their authority within the cabinet (Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

Factionalism also has a bearing on the PMs' cabinet appointments. They at times select both their loyalists and opponents. They do this to garner support in the cabinet and quell opposition and offer rewards for support and encouragement to others (O'Malley, 2005:17). Heppell (2012:212) concurs by arguing that appointments need to ensure the appropriate factional balances that will make the party's management easier. The leader must also reward the factional grouping to which he/she may also be aligned to accommodate the party elites with a sizeable amount of influence.

Another factor that influences ministerial appointments is one's presence in the top hierarchy of the party leadership. Annesley (2015:12) notes that few women have secured leadership positions in political parties' structures, setting up ministerial opportunities. Cabinets are composed of political party leaders who are also responsible for the formation of the cabinet. They usually allocate cabinet posts to the highly visible members of the political parties (Shan-Jan & Banaszak, 2016:6-7).

In their study on the conditions that determine the acceptance or rejection of the changes that bring about gender equality by the party or parties in power, Franceschet and Thomas (2015:651) compared two gender parity cabinets: the first appointed in 2004 by Spain's prime minister, Jose' Luis Rodri'guez Zapatero, and the second appointed in 2006 by Chile's president, Michelle Bachelet, and found out that Bachelet could not appoint a parity cabinet because the party wanted to maintain the tradition whereby ministers are selected from the party leadership.

The above section has brought to light the combination of institutional factors that determine the appointment of women to ministerial positions. In the following section, the chapter presents the composition of the Lesotho cabinet since 2002 followed by the analysis of the formal and informal institutions that have contributed to the low presence of women ministers since the dawn of coalition politics in 2012.

5 Women in cabinet in Lesotho and the institutions that determine the number of women in ministerial positions

The presence of women in the Lesotho cabinet has been below parity in the past six elections cycles. Since 2002, the percentage of women surpassed the 30% threshold only once, that is, in 2007. The table below shows the representation of women in ministerial positions since 2002.

Table 15.1 Women representation in cabinet in Lesotho since 2002

Year	Number of parties in government	Number of cabinet members	Number of Women	Percentage (%)
2002	1	14	2	14
2007	1	19	7	37
2012	3	20	4	20
2015	7	35	7	20
2017	4	37	7	18
2020	6	36	7	19

Source: Compiled by the author

The picture portrayed by the statistics in the above table is that Lesotho is experiencing a disturbingly poor representation of women in one of the most important public decision-making bodies. This is in contradiction to the gender equality protocols to which Lesotho has acceded. It also indicates that the country is missing out on the benefits that accrue from the inclusion of a significant number of women as public decision-makers.

5.1 Formal institutions

5.1.1 The constitution of the country

Section 87 of the Constitution of Lesotho specifies that the Prime Minister (PM) has the prerogative for appointing ministers and advises the King on the choice. The King appoints ministers from among the legislators, that is, from the National Assembly and the Senate. The Constitution does not specify the need for gender parity in the cabinet. As such, the Prime Minister and the coalition partners are not obligated by the highest law in the country to ensure gender equality in ministerial appointments. As much as the Constitution bestows the ministerial appointment powers upon the Prime Minister, in reality, the Prime Minister does not unilaterally select the ministers. In coalition governments, the parties that have formed the government are at liberty to choose ministers according to their own criteria and then submit the list to the Prime Minister.

Additionally, in effect, the Prime Minister does not make appointments even from his own party. The national executive committee (NEC) of his party plays a significant role in the appointment process. For instance, after the appointment of the ministers in the 2020 coalition government led by Moeketsi Majoro, some disgruntled All Basotho Convention (ABC) MPs who were against the inclusion of MPs from Basotho National Party (BNP) and Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL) in cabinet stated that the Prime Minister informed them that the NEC made decisions on who was to be appointed. He told them that cabinet appointments were not his prerogative (*Lesotho Times*, 2020). Consequently,

even a pro-gender equality Prime Minister and the leaders of political parties in government have no powers on the gender composition of the cabinet. This arrangement disadvantages the women, as often, the NECs are male-dominated and will therefore serve men more than women. Obviously, even the parliamentary caucus of the party is not involved, as the discontented party members were MPs but were not involved in the formation of the cabinet.

5.1.2 Party constitutions

The constitutions of some of the parties that have had the opportunity to recruit more than three ministers (DC, AD and LCD) specify that women will constitute a minimum of 30% in all the parties' structures and in all political posts in governments under their leadership. LCD and DC have even gone further to put in place some measures that would be taken to ensure the presence of a minimum of 30% of women in all the structures of the party. They mention that women with the requisite abilities will be voted for and those with the most votes will be incorporated into the party structures until they constitute 30% (Democratic Congress Constitution, 2012:6; Alliance of Democrats Constitution, 2016:12; Lesotho Congress for Democracy Constitution, n.d: 5).

They are, however, silent on measures for ensuring that women constitute at least 30% in government political posts under their parties' rule. So, in the absence of formal mechanisms for ensuring the 30% presence of women in government posts, cabinet included, informal institutions take centre stage. Galea, et al. (2020:14) argue that where internal recruitment criteria are absent, the recruiters resort to the informal practice of "picking your team" and "taking your team with you" and these require interpersonal links and male sponsorship. The situation on the ground contradicts the contents of the political parties' constitutions as the 30% quota is hardly implemented. The examination of the formal institutions does not sufficiently shed light on the recruitment process for one to become a minister.

This indicates that the informal institutions might be dominant in determining one's eligibility and chances of being a cabinet member. This is in line with Franceschet and Thomas's (2015:647) argument that the absence of legal rules about ministerial recruitment does render cabinet formation as entirely an ad hoc process. Instead, the appointment of cabinets is frequently governed by informal norms and practices that follow regular patterns, although the patterns are not static. The ABC and BNP are silent on the gender composition of their party structures; as a result, it is befitting to say that the informal institutions solely determine their cabinet appointments. A look at their ministerial cabinet trends indicates that their performance in gender equality is unsatisfactory. For instance, in the 2012 coalition government, which comprised 20% women, ABC women constituted 18% while LCD women constituted 25% of the women ministers. In the 2015 coalition government, which consisted of 20% women, DC had 24% of its ministerial posts occupied by women while LCD had 33%. In 2017, the cabinet comprised 18% women, of which 10% was from ABC, 33% from AD and 25% from BNP (GoL, 2012, 2015, 2017).

AD fulfilled its pledge in appointing more than a minimum of 30% women to cabinet positions. The LCD and DC have at times failed to live up to their pledge of 30% representation of women in all political posts in government under their leadership. This could mean that coalition governments are limiting the gender equality cautious parties to live up to their promises or the informal selection criteria gets to be informally institutionalised within political parties by being broadly known, accepted, and executed by institutional actors, while the formal selection criteria may fail to be institutionalised and employed as posited by Bjarnegård and Kenny (2015:752).

Bjarnegård and Kenny (2015:750) state that party regulations do not tell us much about the nuances of recruitment processes on the ground. They, therefore, advise researchers to look further for the role played by the informal rules, norms, and practices in shaping behaviour and outcomes. Thus, the following paragraphs delve deeper into the role played by the informal norms and practices in the appointment of ministers. The paper adopts a periodisation approach to identify the patterns that emerge in coalition governments.

5.2 *Coalition governments and informal institutions*

5.2.1 The 2012 coalition government

The 2012 elections resulted in a hung parliament. As a result, no single party had enough seats to form a government on its own. This resulted in the first coalition government that was formed by three political parties, namely, All Basotho Convention (ABC), Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and Basotho National Party (BNP). The percentage of women in the cabinet stood at 20%. The constitutions of ABC and BNP are silent on the representation of women in the party structures and in government positions that are filled with political appointees. LCD was the only coalition party that had made the commitment to ensure 30% representation of women in all governance structures in its constitution. However, it failed to live up to its pledge. Women comprised 25% of the ministers representing LCD, a massive decline from 2007 whereby the cabinet included 37% of women. Women from the ABC, which had a larger share, only made up 18% of the party's ministerial representation. This is not surprising since ABC has not made any promises about improving the participation of women in the party and government structures.

So, what explains the renegeing of LCD on its pledge? The formal rules were not enforced, leaving space for the informal ones. This boils down to the unwritten rules regarding who qualifies for appointment as the constitutions are silent on the backgrounds and abilities required for one to be a minister. This could be explained based on the political environment that was prevailing just before the 2012 elections. The LCD had experienced internal fighting that led to the formation of the splinter party, the Democratic Congress (DC). It is, therefore, safe to say that the LCD leader was bound to reward those who had

stood with him during the conflict that led to the splitting of the party. This corroborates the observations by O'Malley (2005:17), who argues that leaders use cabinet posts to reward their supporters. Women do not thrive in an environment characterised by heightened conflict; only men do. As a result, more men than women had to be rewarded for their loyalty to the LCD and women were left out of the cabinet.

Another notable issue in the allocation of the ministerial post was that most women were placed in the traditionally feminine portfolios. Mrs Doti was placed in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Mrs Mamahele Radebe in the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture, Mrs Makabelo Mosothoane in the Ministry of Education and Training and Mrs Keketso Rantšo in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Unexpectedly, the Ministry of Gender, Sports and Recreation was given to a male, Mr. T. Maseribana. His party had few seats in parliament and was a junior partner. The core portfolios were given to the males. This indicates that the coalition partners in government allocated posts based on the traditional gender roles. Women are seen to be unfit to lead core ministries such as finance and defence. This stereotype limits the number of portfolios to which women may be appointed and therefore disadvantages women. This corroborates the assertion by Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2009:21), Krook and O'Brien, (2012:842) and Annesley, Franceschet, Beckwith and Engeli (2014:17) that women are confined to the traditionally feminine portfolios and are thus able to access a limited number of ministerial positions.

Moreover, membership in the executive structure hierarchy in the party of a political party plays a vital role in ministerial appointments. Party leadership position has already been alluded to, in that party leaders, who are predominantly male, are guaranteed positions in the cabinet in coalition governments. The same is true for deputy leaders and the rest of the executive committee. The leaders of the three parties that formed the coalition government and their deputies were given ministerial posts. The members of the NECs (mostly men) for LCD and ABC were given a larger share of the cabinet seats. Women were, therefore, side-lined. This observation substantiates the findings of Annesley (2015:2), who states that ministerial appointments are determined by membership in party leadership positions and that few women secure such advantages. Shan-Jan and Banaszak (2016:6-7) made a similar argument that political party leaders are guaranteed a place in cabinet and usually appoint the highly visible members of the parties to the ministerial positions.

5.2.2 The 2015 coalition government

The 2015 coalition government comprised of seven political parties, namely, the DC, the LCD, the Popular Front for Democracy (PFD), the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP), the Lesotho People's Congress (LPC), the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) and the National Independent Party (NIP). There was no known pre-elections factionalism amongst the political parties that formed the 2015 coalition government. However, the fact that the

bigger parties, DC and LCD, that led the coalition, sought the support of smaller parties to bolster the stability of the government meant that they had to reward their small partners with cabinet seats. The leaders of the big and small parties scored ministerial positions for themselves; all had male leaders. Six cabinet posts were allocated to the five small partners; each got one post except PFD, scoring two (one for the leader and the other for the deputy leader as deputy minister). From the beginning, women were already side-lined on the basis that political party leaders of the parties forming the government automatically deserve to be in the cabinet. The deputy leaders of the political parties all got into the cabinet, and they were all males. This brings to light that seniority in political party structures determines the propensity for one to be appointed into the cabinet. This also has gendered effects because women rarely occupy senior positions in political parties' national executive committees (NECs). Consequently, the NEC seniority criterion disadvantages the women; hence their numbers in the cabinet were low.

Another factor that was factored in during the cabinet posts allocation was the rewarding of the ABC member of parliament (MP), who had crossed the floor to join the DC, namely, Thabiso Litšiba. Thabiso Litšiba was a former ABC secretary general who defected to DC on 15 May 2015 and was placed as the minister of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing. This factor has not been alluded to in the literature. The analysis of the coalition governments that followed elucidates whether it is a factor that matters or a once-off phenomenon.

Regarding portfolio allocations, the trend of placing women in feminine ministries continued except for Dr M. Khaketla and Mrs. 'Mapalesa Mothokho, who were given Finance and Agriculture and Food Security ministries, respectively. Other women were placed in either feminine or neutral portfolios. Interestingly, the Ministry of Social Development was given to a junior coalition partner representing Lesotho People's Congress (LPC). It is proper to say that women and males from the junior coalition partners share the feminine and neutral portfolios. It is important to note that the number of cabinet posts was increased from 20 to 35 (Gol, 2015). In such a situation, one would have expected that the percentage of women in the cabinet would increase. Unfortunately, it remained at 20% as it was in 2012. The increase benefited the coalition partners from the junior parties, who were all men.

5.2.3 The 2017 coalition government

The 2017 elections also resulted in a coalition government between four parties: ABC, BNP, Alliance of Democrats (AD), and Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL). The 2017 coalition government appointed the lowest number of women ministers ever since Lesotho's beginning of coalition politics. The presence of women in the cabinet stood at 18%. This can be explained based on the stance of political parties that formed the government and the political environment leading to the elections. The political environment was marred

with intra-party conflict in the Democratic Congress (DC). The DC conflict led to the birth of the Alliance of Democrats (AD). After the 2017 elections, the AD rewarded the MPs that had defected with the leader with cabinet positions. For instance, at the height of the conflict, the then PM, Pakalitha Mosisili shuffled his cabinet, and in doing so, he fired some of the well-known Lirurubele faction members (the name given to the supporters of Moleleki faction) such as Dr M. Phamotse and Dr M. Molapo and transferred the leader of the faction to a junior ministerial post. He tried to destabilise the faction by luring Mrs M. Phohleli and Mr Mokhele Moletsane to his side by giving them ministerial posts. Mr. Moletsane refused and was rewarded with a ministerial post during the AD, ABC, BNP and RCL coalition government that was formed post-2017 elections. Mrs Phohleli took up the offer by Mr. Mosisili, which she later rejected. She also got rewarded with a ministerial post by her party. Additionally, most of the AD women who were given ministerial positions in the 2017 coalition government were members of the Lirurubele faction. They were Dr M. Phamotse, who became the Minister of Education and Training, Mrs. M. Phohleli who was rewarded with the deputy ministerial post in the Ministry of Health and Dr M Molapo who became the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Security.

The other aspect that seems to have been considered when appointing ministers was floor crossing. For instance, immediately after the elections, Mr Tlohelang Aumane and Mr. Mothepu Mahapa jumped ship by defecting from the opposition DC to the coalition government partner AD. They were rewarded with ministerial and deputy ministerial posts in the Ministry of Development Planning and Ministry of Education and Training, respectively. Another MP from DC, Mr S. Sekatle was given a ministerial post in the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture; he then left the DC to join ABC (*Lesotho Times*, 21 December 2018). In an interview with *Lesotho Times* (21 December 2018) Mr. Sekatle stated that he would not have considered crossing to ABC if Tom Thabane had not offered him a ministerial post. The rewarding of floor crossers, as was the case with Mr. T. Litšiba repeated itself. The tendency to reward floor-crossing has a gendered effect as the country's parliamentary rule does not allow Proportional Representation (PR) list MPs to cross the floor but only those with constituency seats. Most women access the National Assembly through the PR list and are therefore unable to sell their seats for cabinet posts.

Additionally, membership in the executive structure hierarchy of a political party played an important role, even in this case. Party leadership position has already been alluded to in the preceding sections. The deputy leadership follows the leadership position when the ministers are selected. For instance, most of the AD ministers held positions in the NEC, which was true for the ABC.

The issue of gendered portfolio allocation happened again even in this government. Women bagged the feminine ministries, and the small coalition partners were allocated the neutral ones. The allocation restricts women further as they seem to be only eligible for the feminine and neutral portfolios. This, therefore, reduces further the number of portfolios available for them.

5.2.4 The 2020 coalition government

The resignation of Prime Minister Tom Thabane in 2020 followed a bitter fight for power within the ABC that had started in February 2019 during the elective conference for the national executive committee (NEC) of the party. The ABC conflict resulted in two factions namely, *likatana* and "state house". In 2020, after many court battles, the *likatana* faction won the war. Almost all the MPs that were from the *likatana* faction got ministerial positions. Most were men, with the exception of Mrs Doti who was the only female MP who was publicly known to be a member of the *likatana* faction. So, it is safe to say that one's loyalty to the winning NEC served as a qualification for appointment.

Lesotho Times (30 September 2020) corroborates the observation when reporting that the ABC MPs and members of the NEC accused Prime Minister Majoro of neglecting their recommendations for him to reward those who took part in bringing down the previous government of ABC leader, Thomas Thabane by appointing them to high-ranking government posts. Instead, Prime Minister Majoro was said to be appointing his favourites to such positions. An anonymous source informed *Lesotho Times* newspaper that the party members had agreed that people from the constituencies of the MPs who had supported the NEC but failed to secure cabinet positions must be considered for PSs and ambassadorial positions to appease the constituents for their support during the fight. The utterances by the MPs indicate clearly that there is an unwritten rule that those who supported the winning faction must be rewarded with key posts in government. This expectation has a gendered outcome because, at times, the warring factions engage in violent activities, a situation that most women would avoid at all costs. As a result, most women would take up a back seat and, in the end, when the war has been won, they would be highly unlikely to get appointed to lucrative cabinet posts.

Additionally, some ABC MPs were angry that although they won constituency seats, they were left out in Prime Minister Majoro's cabinet, stating that it was unfair for the leaders of both BNP and RCL to have been given cabinet posts despite having won no constituency (*Lesotho Times*, 2020). This also has a gendered effect because more men than women win in the constituencies. Therefore, if the expectation is to have a constituency to qualify for a cabinet post, most women would be left out.

Like the coalition governments that came before, the leaders of the six (ABC, DC, BNP, MEC, PFD, RCL) political parties that have formed the government have scored ministerial appointments. It is important to note that the small coalition partners have been allocated the neutral portfolios. And this seems to have been the case in the coalition governments that came before. This phenomenon has also not been raised in the literature, but it seems to be a norm in Lesotho coalition governments.

The leader of ABC retired, and the ABC MPs and the NEC elected Moeketsi Majoro to replace him (*Lesotho Times*, 2020). This was because his deputy, Nqosa Mahao was ineligible for the Prime Minister position as the Constitution of Lesotho requires that one must be a member of the National Assembly to become the Prime Minister (*Lesotho Times*, 2020). He joined the Senate at a later stage and was given a cabinet post. Nonetheless, the leader of ABC was a member of the cabinet before he retired.

Moreover, membership in the executive structure hierarchy in the party of a political party played an essential role in ministerial appointments. For instance, most members of the ABC NEC who are MPs are ministers except Mr. Hlaele, who was said to have refused a cabinet post citing his commitment to reuniting the fractious ABC as his reason for the refusal and Mr Phori, who was siding with the anti- Mahao faction. The same is true for DC. Therefore, in all instances, party leadership and one's membership in the high echelons of the political party structure serve as a golden ticket to the cabinet seat.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

The political parties in Lesotho do not have known criteria for the appointment of candidates for cabinet posts. A few that acknowledge the need to ensure gender equality in the appointment of members to the party structures and government posts do not specify the requirements for one to qualify. Since there are no explicit formal rules on ministerial recruitment, one can aptly argue that the informal rules are predominantly followed in undertaking that exercise. The formal and informal rules and norms that have been identified in this chapter are gendered in a way that they distribute power within executives towards the male actors.

Several patterns have come to the surface in this analysis. The most glaring one is the post-factionalism trend wherein the supporters of the winning faction get rewarded with ministerial posts when they get into government. The few women who were brave enough to publicly be seen to be supporting leaders of certain factions secured themselves some cabinet posts. However, as indicated earlier in this chapter, this criterion disadvantages women as factionalism results in violence, something which most women would try to avoid.

Another factor that has emerged is the floor-crossing in the National Assembly. Most of the MPs that crossed the floor were rewarded with cabinet posts by the parties to which they had defected. Mr T. Litsiba, Mr T. Aumane and Mr S. Sekatle crossed the floor and were all given cabinet posts. Floor crossing can only be done by MPs who have constituencies; those who entered the National Assembly through the PR list are barred from crossing. Most women MPs are PR list beneficiaries, which means that they cannot trade their seats by crossing the floor in exchange for ministerial posts. Only a few women have constituency seats. As such, the bargaining powers of women for cabinet positions is highly limited.

Additionally, more women than men have occupied ministerial positions in ministries that deal with soft tissues such as gender, social welfare, and health in all coalition governments. Women have been confined to the soft ministries, limiting the number of ministries available for them, and consequently, their number in the cabinet is restricted. The ministerial portfolio allocation exercise is highly gendered.

Based on these observations, it is appropriate to conclude that the formal and informal institutions guiding the recruitment of ministers in Lesotho are highly gendered. As a result, they limit the chances for women to access the cabinet, which is the pinnacle of public decision-making. Women are being overlooked when appointments for core portfolios are made. As a result, the core portfolios have not benefited from the experiences and perspectives of women. Ironically, the male MPs who may have competencies and interest in the so-called feminine policy areas are also side-lined as they are confined to the traditionally masculine portfolios. As a result, the country is missing out on the diversity of skills and knowledge available from both the female and male MPs, which could bring positive development to the nation.

Moreover, the data suggest that the coalition governments in Lesotho have in a few cases appointed women to the traditionally masculine policy areas such as finance, foreign affairs and agriculture. Since the birth of coalition governments in 2012, a woman has been appointed to the ministry of finance, agriculture, and foreign affairs only once. That is, in 2015, whereby Dr Mamphono Khaketla and Mrs 'Mapalesa Mothokho were appointed to the ministries of Finance and Agriculture respectively and in 2020 where Mrs. Matšepo Ramakoe was appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations. As far as the Defence and Home Affairs ministries are concerned, only men have had the privilege to be ministers in such. There is a stark difference between the core portfolios and non-core ministries. Regarding the neutral ministries, MPs from coalition partners with few seats seem to be getting appointed to the neutral portfolios. As the literature points out that women are more likely to be appointed to the less salient and neutral portfolios, this practice reduces the chances of women being appointed to the cabinet in satisfactory numbers.

In order to arrest the pervasive gender inequality in the appointment of ministers, the chapter recommends the following institutional reconfigurations. Firstly, political parties may consider establishing selection procedures for cabinet posts to give formal rules more weight than informal ones. In so doing, they will have to assess the likely gendered effects of the formal procedures on the composition of the cabinet. Franschet and Thomas (2015:647) state that the informal rules are frequently disadvantageous to women because there are no formal authorities to whom demands for gender-friendly change can be addressed.

There is also a need to introduce a gender quota system for both parliamentary and ministerial posts. Claveria (2014:72) points out that party quotas effectively increase the number of women in the cabinet than other political factors. Presently, the political parties submit gender-balanced PR lists for only 40 of the 120 seats in the National Assembly. This is not enough. As such, provision should be made for a quota system regarding constituency seats. Measures should be put in place to motivate political parties to comply. Political parties should commit to that to make it easy for the Prime Minister to appoint a gender-balanced cabinet. Krook and O'Brien (2012:850) posit that enhancing the number of women in parliament increases the pool from which to select and consequently increases the number of women in the cabinet.

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