

WHEN WEDDING BELLS RING: COALITIONS WITH(OUT) CONCORD

Analysis of South Africa's 2021
local elections and coalitions

A MISTRA Report

Edited by
Susan Booysen





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CONTENTS

Abstract	7
Party name abbreviations	8
Glossary	11
Comparative provincial coalition maps, 2016 and 2021	15
SECTION A Strategic overview	
1 Strategic overview of South Africa's local government elections 2021 – <i>Joel Netshitenzhe</i>	19
2 The discordant coalitions aftermath of South Africa's 2021 local elections – <i>Susan Booysen</i>	25
3 Coalition negotiations and agreements in South Africa's local elections 2021 – <i>Amuzweni Ngoma</i>	41
4 Youth and coalitions in South Africa: A future hardly spoken about – <i>Wandile Ngcaweni</i>	46
5 Using the local government legislative framework to guide coalition formation in municipalities – <i>Jennica Beukes</i>	52
SECTION B Coalitions in metropolitan municipalities	
6 Nelson Mandela Bay coalition 2021: Forward to the past? – <i>Mcebisi Ndletyana</i>	59
7 Building municipal coalitions as the political tectonic plates move – eThekweni 2021 – <i>Imraan Buccus</i>	65
8 Tugs of war reincarnated: Coalition government in the City of Johannesburg, 2021 – <i>Bonolo Makgale</i>	70
9 Continuity and political stalemates: Coalition manoeuvring and citizen representation in Tshwane – <i>Graeme de Bruyn</i>	76
10 From showcase coalition to the extraction of 'collateral damage' – Coalitions in Ekurhuleni, 2016–2021 – <i>Amuzweni Ngoma</i>	82
11 Coalitions in the City of Cape Town – From post-coalition majority to a return to coalition? – <i>Jennica Beukes</i>	87
SECTION C Coalition clusters across the provinces	
12 A coalitions-focussed analysis of KwaZulu-Natal municipalities following the 2021 local elections – <i>Bheki Mngomezulu</i>	93
13 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend' – Western Cape coalitions 2021 – <i>Mcebisi Ndletyana</i>	97

14	Double-edged sword of Northern Cape coalitions 2021 – Rise in activism, reflecting racial polarisation – <i>Mcebisi Ndletyana</i>	103
15	Gradual attrition and coalition partner vacillation, 2011–2021 coalitions in the Free State – <i>Nkoe Montja</i>	107
16	Stalemates to the point of flipping a coin – Coalitions in Limpopo – <i>Nkoe Montja</i>	110
17	Saved by small parties – the ANC in 2021 coalitions in the North West – <i>Nkoe Montja</i>	113
18	Small changes, significant inroads – 2021 coalitions in local municipalities in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape – <i>Susan Booysen</i>	116

SECTION D Closing reflections

19	Lessons for the 2021–2026 term and beyond – <i>Susan Booysen with Yacoob Abba Omar</i>	120
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Appendices	A: Party support in South African national and local elections – various dimensions	124
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	B: Local election turnout in South Africa, metros and provinces, 2011–2021	129
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About the authors		132
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ABSTRACT

Elections do not play out in isolation. Voting in elections gives the mandate to form governments. In this context MISTRA’s report on the local government elections of 2021 goes beyond the historic event of 1 November 2021, and explores the conversion of the electoral mandates into local government. It comes at a time of political turmoil, when party dominance is fading. The main opposition parties, unable to offer definitive, majority-backed alternatives, seem as lacking as the African National Congress. Yet, besides still supporting South Africa’s three main parties in significant numbers, the voters signalled their disillusionment and alienation from local government and local elections. The party system reflected the spirit of the time through a substantial level of fragmentation – and 70 hung councils resulted.

When Wedding Bells Ring unpacks this unfolding world. South Africa from 2016 to 2021 experienced an increase of around 260 per cent in the number of hung councils, where coalition governments need to be constituted, unless the parties choose (or are forced to accept) the unstable route of minority governments. In the 2016–2021 local government term South Africa experienced high levels of coalition instability and disruptive local government. Party-politicisation ruled, and rewarded opposition parties with the hitherto dominant African National Congress falling below 50 per cent.

In MISTRA’s *Marriages of Inconvenience: The politics of coalitions in South Africa (2021)* we recorded the lessons available from the previous local government term (and highlighted best international practice) in the hope that South Africa’s political parties would follow suit. The early days of local government coalitions 2021 suggest that while some of the political parties are taking on board lessons such as striving for formalised coalition agreements, the parties continue to pursue power, patronage and positions far more than coherence of local government, social justice and service delivery.

When Wedding Bells Ring presents a set of 19 compact analyses, written by a range of experts and researchers, exploring the state of the art of coalition formation in the wake of Local Government Elections 2021. The analyses mine the election results to understand the reasons for and impact of the outcomes. It follows through with analyses of the emerging coalition culture shaping a large proportion of South Africa’s hung council governments. Besides offering definitive election analyses, the report does a ‘wall-to-wall’ analysis of the hung municipalities across South Africa. It includes case studies of all the coalition metros, as well as the clusters of local council coalitions in the nine provinces. It is an inclusive mapping that sets the template for MISTRA’s forthcoming project (starting in 2022) that will monitor unfolding coalition practice in South Africa. Simultaneously this report focuses on the bigger picture of the legal framework guiding (or failing to) the hung councils and their governments. This MISTRA study also charts youth perspectives on elections and coalition politics, in the knowledge that young people will in due course be the ones who will be tasked to negotiate the traps and opportunities that come with the loss of outright electoral majorities.

The essential message from this report is that South Africa needs a separation of political parties seeking their gains and fulfilling their mandates for constructive governance.

PARTY NAME ABBREVIATIONS

AASD	African Alliance of Social Democrats
ABC	Abantu Batho Congress
ACC	Active Citizens Coalition
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
ActionSA	Action SA
ADeC	African Democratic Change
AFNA	Agency For New Agenda
AHC	African Heart Congress
AIC	African Independent Congress
AIM	Abantu Integrity Movement
AL JAMA-AH	Al Jama-Ah
AMP	African Muslim Party
ANC	African National Congress
APC	African People's Convention
APEMO	African People's Movement
APF	African People First
ARA	African Restoration Alliance
ARP	Azania Resident Party
ATM	African Transformation Movement
AUF	Active United Front
BCM	Botho Community Movement
BO	Breedevallei Onafhanklik
CCC	Cape Coloured Congress
CE/CFRA/CeFRA	Cederberg Eerste / Cederberg First Residents Association
CIP	Cape Independence Party
CMC	Cape Muslim Congress
COPE	Congress of the People
CSA	Compatriots of South Africa
DA	Democratic Alliance

DIP	Democratic Independent Party
DLC	Democratic Liberal Congress
DLRP	Dienslewering Party
DOP	Defenders Of the People
DPSA	Dikwankwetla Party of South Africa
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
F4SD	Forum 4 Service Delivery
FF+	Freedom Front Plus
GCF	Gamagara Community Forum
GOOD	Good
IC	Independent Councillors
ICOSA	Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JEP	Justice and Employment Party
KCM	Kareeberg Civic Movement
KDF	Karoo Democratic Force
KGP	Karoo Gemeenskap Party
KIM	Knysna Independent Movement
KIP	Kannaland Independent Party
KZNI	KZN Independence
LCF	Lekwa Community Forum
MAoC	Merafong Agents of Change
MAP16	Map16 Civic Movement
MCA	Metsimaholo Community Association
MF	Minority Front
MHRF	Middleburg and Hendrina Resident Forum
MSA	Minorities of South Africa
NA	Northern Alliance
NCF	Nala Community Forum
NCM	Namakwa Civic Movement
NFP	National Freedom Party
NICO	National Independent Civic Organisation
NPSA	National Party South Africa
OGI	Oudtshoorn Gemeenskap Inisiatief

OKM	Operation Khanyisa Movement
PA	Patriotic Alliance
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
PAU	Power of African Unity
PDC	Plett Democratic Congress
PFP	People's Freedom Party
PRM	People's Revolutionary Movement
RCoT	Republican Conference of Tshwane
Saamstaan	Suid-Kaap Saamstaan
SACP	South African Communist Party
SARKO	South African Royal Kingdoms Organisation
SCM	Siyathemba Community Movement
SEFM	Socialist Economic Freedom Movement
TA	Truly Alliance
TFSD	Thabazimbi Forum for Service Delivery
TRA	Thabazimbi Residents' Association
TSSA	Team Sugar South Africa
UCDP	United Christian Democratic Party
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UIF	United Independent Front
UIM	United Independent Movement
UP	Ubuntu Party
WA	Witzenberg Aksie
WP	Witzenberg Party

GLOSSARY

absolute/outright majority: more than half the votes cast, or more than half the number of qualified voters. It also refers to the overall majority, not just of those who voted (see 'simple majority').

alliance: when two or more political parties come together, especially in pre-election times, aiming at maximising votes. They are likely to share interests and cohere ideologically.

by-elections: elections that take place after the main election. They are done to fill an office that has become vacant. In South Africa, by-elections take place in a ward in a municipality, and between general municipal elections which are held every five years.

coalition: a form of government in which political parties cooperate to form a government. The usual reason for such an arrangement is that no single party has achieved an absolute majority after an election.

confidence-and-supply agreement: a party (or independent members of a council) agrees to support the government in motions of confidence and appropriation or budget votes (supply); they would either vote in favour of a motion, or abstain. It also designates an opposition party agreeing that it will not vote against a minority government.

first past the post (FPTP): electoral system in which voters cast their vote for a candidate of their choice, who had most likely been put forward by a political party. The candidate who receives the most votes wins, irrespective of the vote share.

fragmented party system: where competitive-party politics comprises many political parties, none of which is able to command a majority of the vote; instead, electoral support is spread across a large number of often minor parties.

grand coalition: where the government coalition is composed of two or more of the largest parties in the system.

hung council: a council in which no political party has enough seats to secure an overall or outright majority.

kingmaker [tiebreaker, queenmaker]: is a person or grouping that has great influence on political 'succession' or majority creation, without themselves being viable candidates. By adding their votes to municipal balances of power they determine who governs.

local government: a geographically based administration of a particular country, also refers to a tier of government with limited and localised powers.

metropolitan municipalities: in South Africa metropolitan municipalities are category A municipalities that execute all the functions of local government for a city.

micro-parties: small political parties, sometimes focusing on a single issue.

minority government: a government (in this case at local level) formed in the municipal council when a political party or coalition of parties does not have an overall majority of seats.

mixed member proportional (MMP): the mixed electoral system used at local level in South Africa.

Voters get two votes: one to decide the representative for their single-seat ward, and one for a political party. A proportion (half in this instance) of the municipal council is elected by plurality-majority methods, from single-member wards, while the remainder is constituted by PR lists. The two votes are cast at the same time. Under the MMP system the list PR seats compensate for disproportionality produced by the ward seat results.

oversized coalitions: coalitions containing more parties than needed to make a majority.

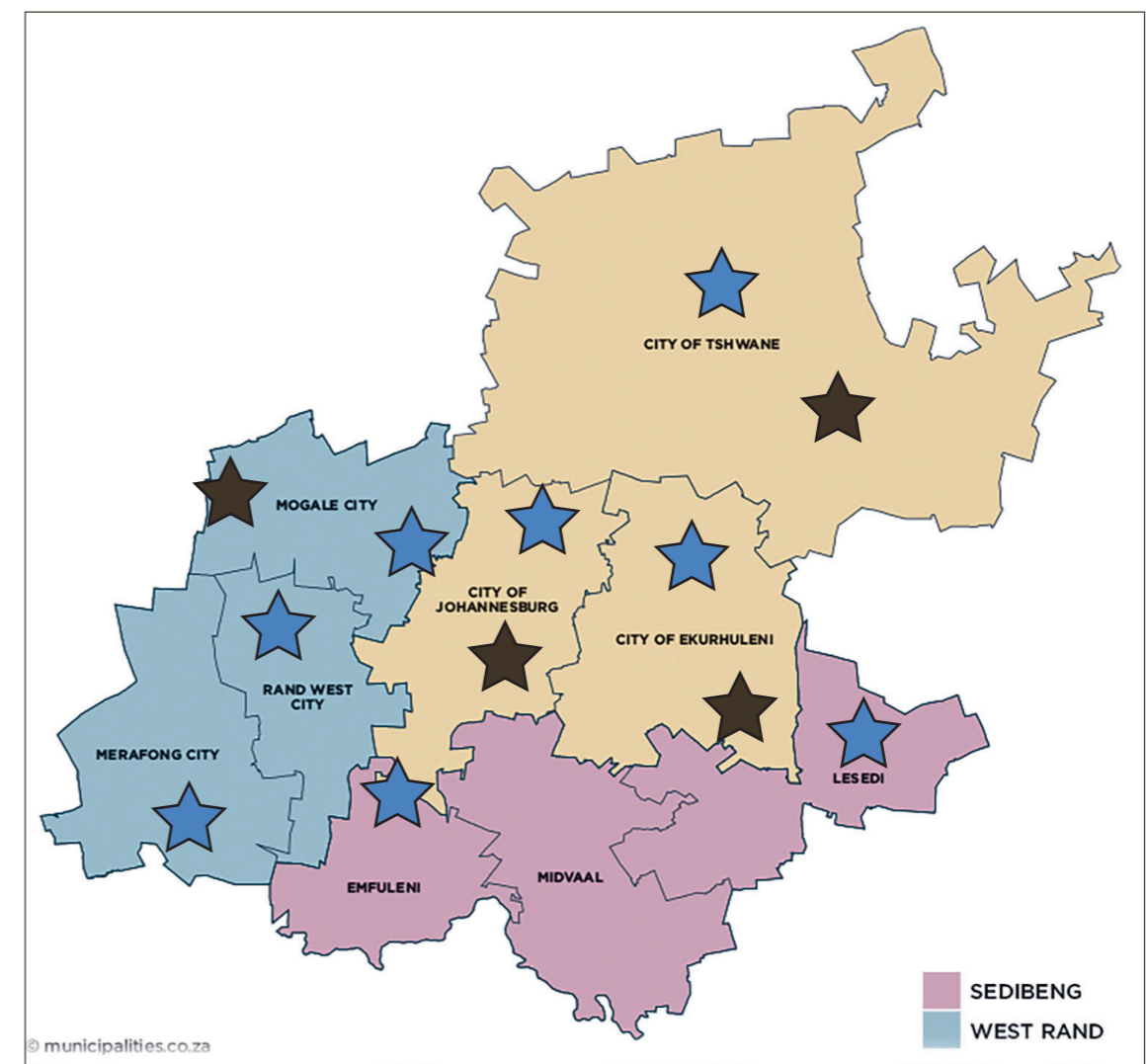
proportional representation: an electoral system in which seats are first allocated to parties based on vote share, and then assigned to party-affiliated candidates on the parties' electoral lists.

referendum: a direct and universal vote where an entire electorate votes on a proposal or issue. It may take place at national or local level.

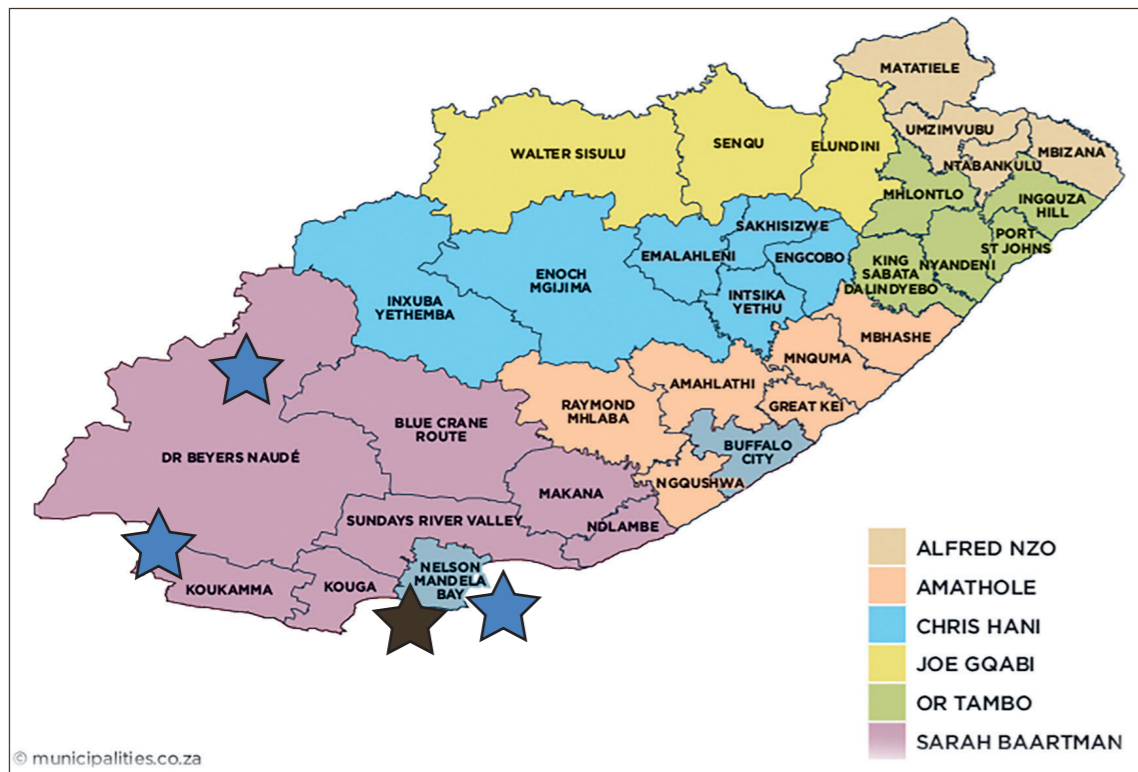
rent-seeking: manipulation of public policy or economic conditions as a strategy for increasing profits.

simple majority: a majority in which the highest number of votes cast for any one candidate, issue, or item exceeds the second-highest number, while not constituting an absolute majority.

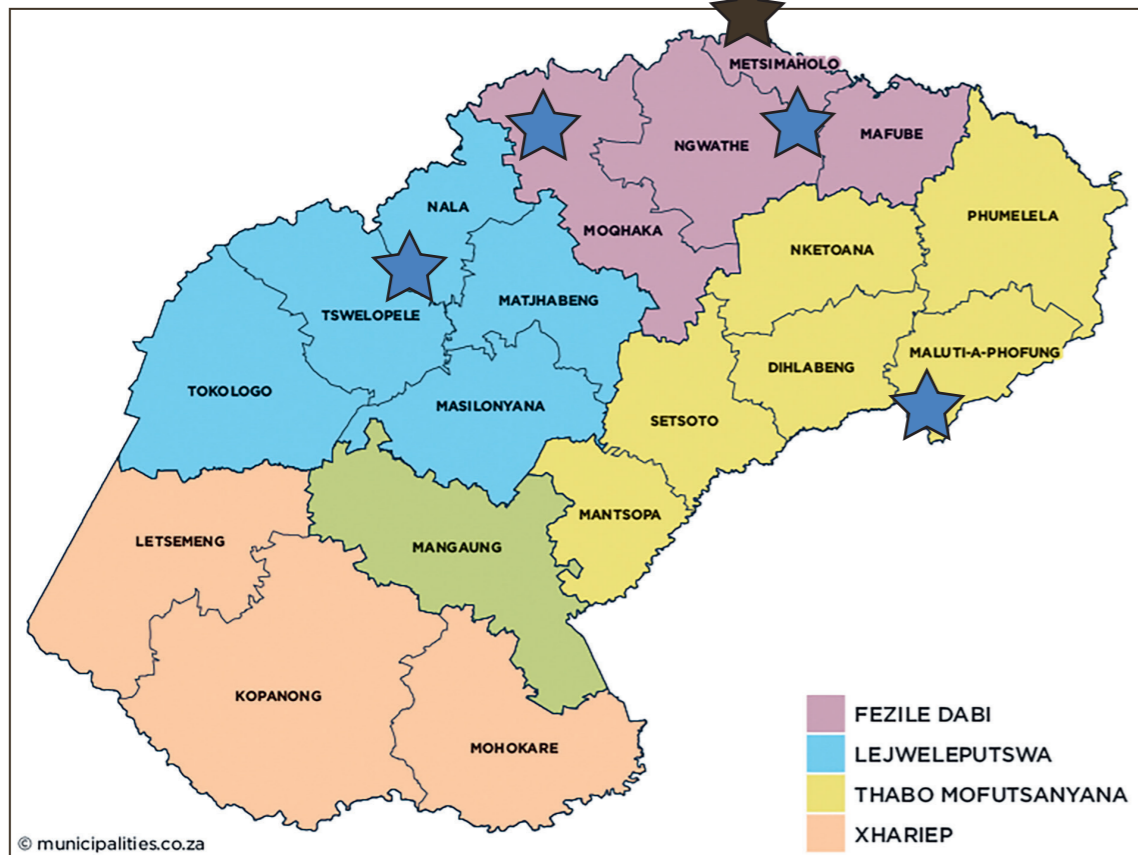
COALITION GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE PROVINCES – SOUTH AFRICA'S LOCAL ELECTIONS 2016 AND 2021



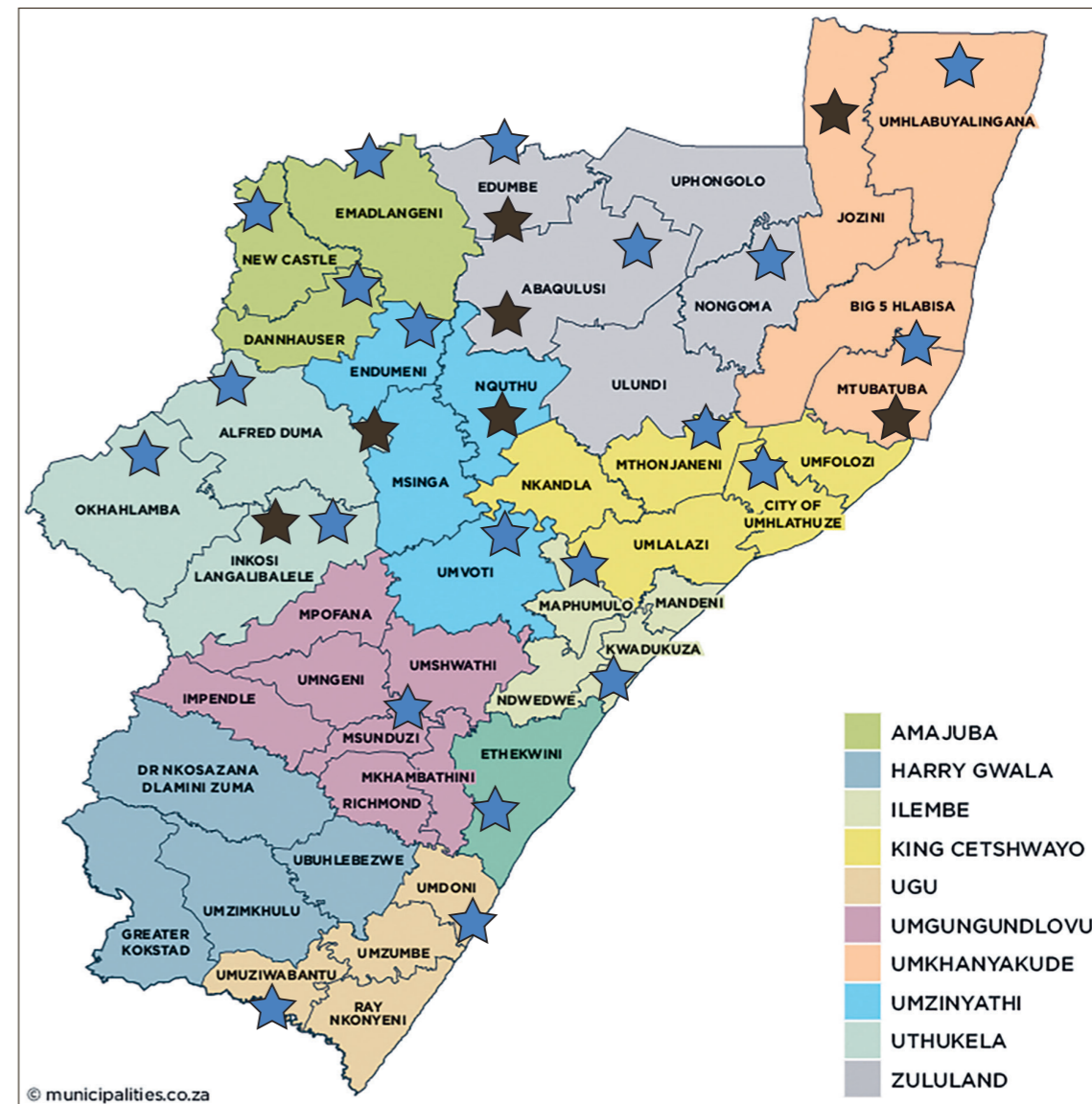
GAUTENG COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)



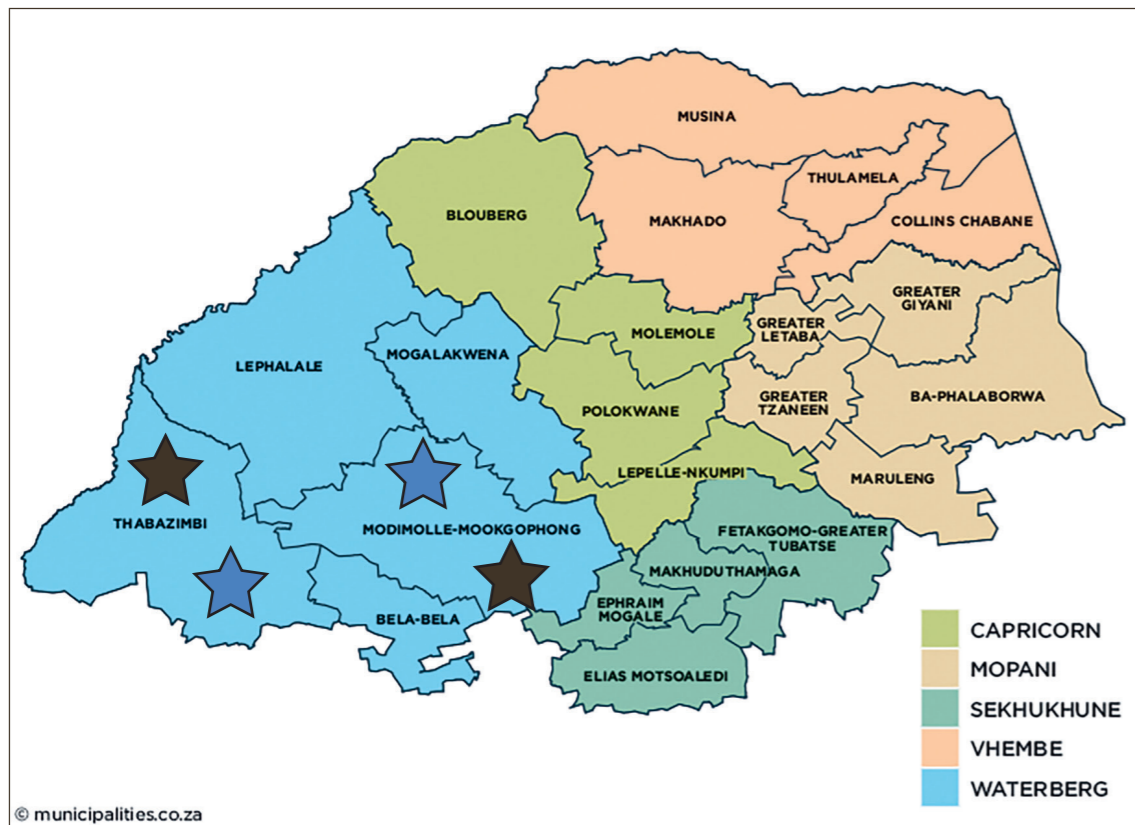
EASTERN CAPE COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)



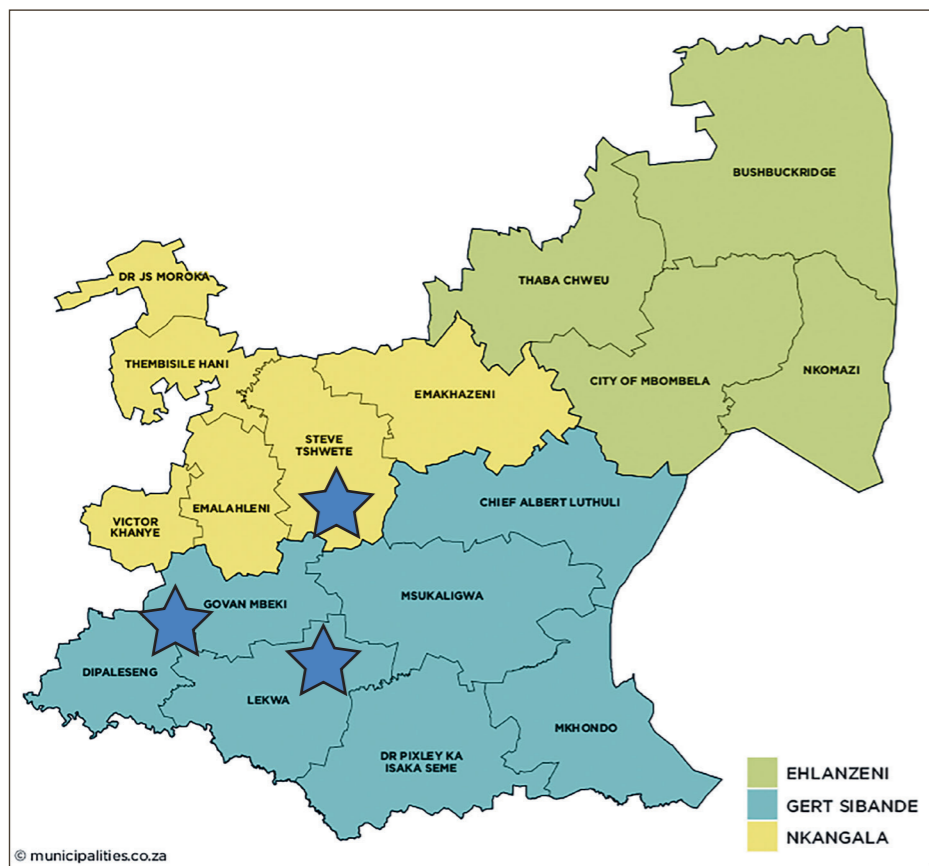
FREE STATE COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)



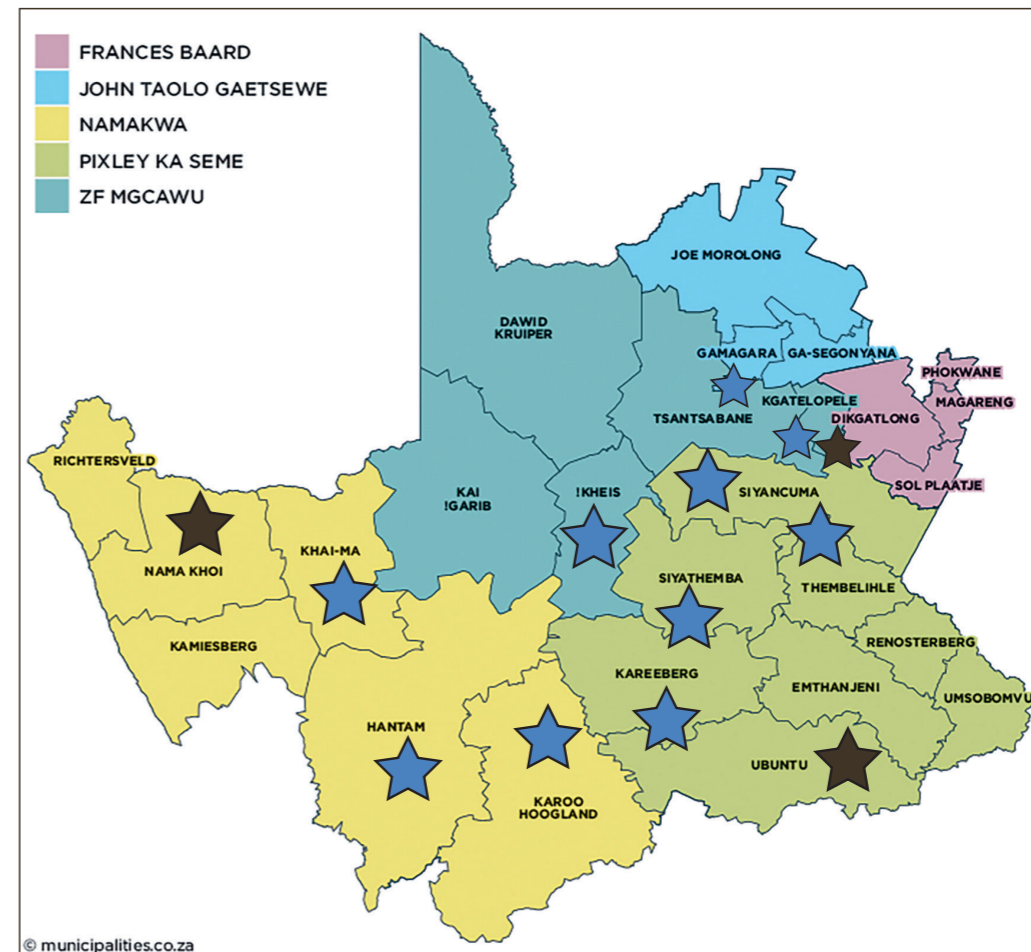
KWAZULU-NATAL COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)



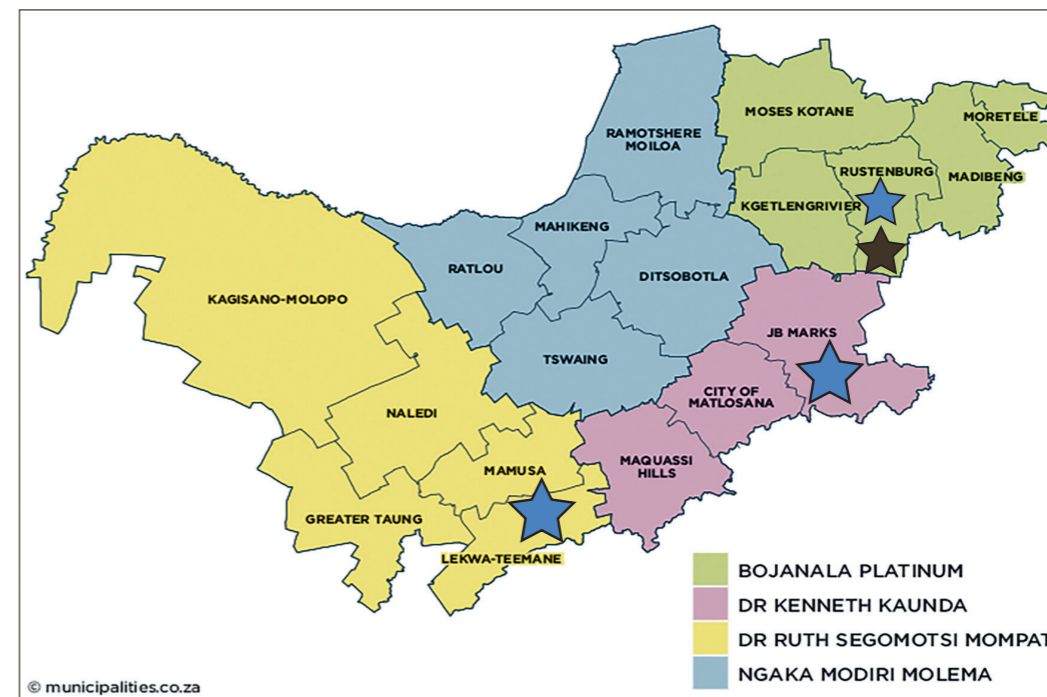
LIMPOPO COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)



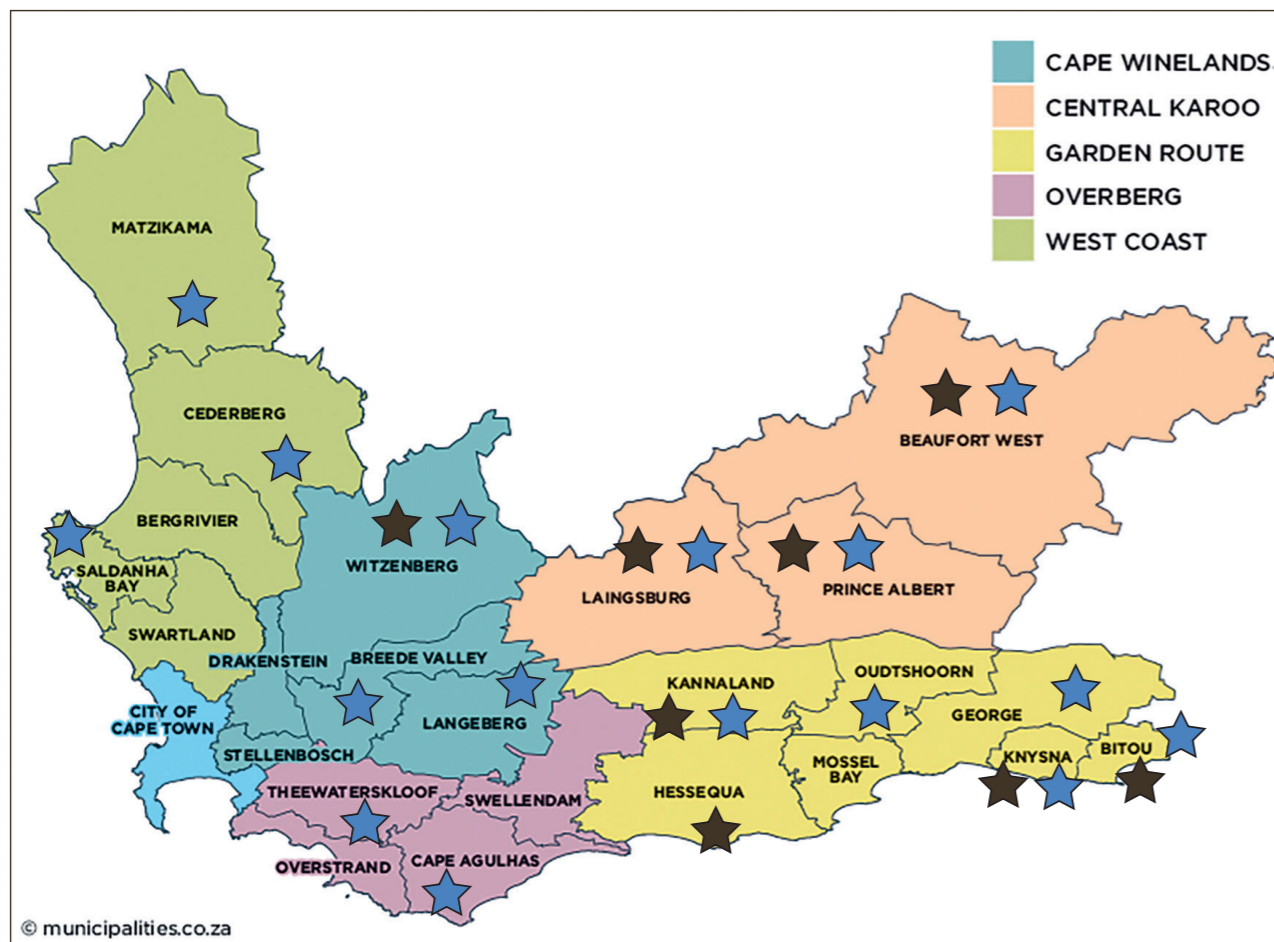
MPUMALANGA COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown - none)



NORTHERN CAPE COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown - none)



NORTH WEST COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)



WESTERN CAPE COALITIONS, 2021 (blue); 2016 (brown)

Source: Maps from <https://municipalities.co.za/>, accessed 23 November 2021; Coalition identification by MISTRA.

ANALYSIS 1

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2021

JOEL NETSHITENZHE

South Africa's local government election on 1 November 2021 was a unique 'snap poll': against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic's trajectory, the Electoral Commission (IEC) and most political parties had argued for and expected a delay. In the event, the Constitutional Court stuck to the letter and the spirit of the basic law of the land, and everyone was thrust into frenzied hustlings.

The outcome of the elections contains many salutary trends, at both aggregate and sub-national levels. This includes the dipping of the African National Congress (ANC) below the 50 per cent support mark at national level and its sub-40 per cent performance in all Gauteng metropolitan councils (metros) – though it emerged as the party with the largest share of the vote. Data also point to mixed performance by the other two largest parties, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). There are many other dynamics, explored in more detail in the rest of this report, that may portend some shifts in the political landscape going forward.

With many hung municipalities across the country, the chime of wedding bells filled the air and suitors tied the knot in tidy and not-so-tidy ceremonies. There was also the spectacle of forced marriages, as some parties imposed themselves on partners who claim not to have asked for nor fancied their support.

This overview examines the strategic trends in the outcome of the elections, with a focus on issues that may have significant implications.

The election environment in context

It is understandable that generic conclusions and projections are being made from what has transpired in the November 2021 local government elections. As shown in Figure 1.1, at least for the two largest parties (ANC and DA), municipal election outcomes between 2006 and 2014 had broadly presented as a bellwether for performance in the next general election.

However, a word of caution is necessary, considering the specific environment in which the 2021 elections were held. The following peculiarities pertinent to November 2021 are worthy of analytical consideration:

- The election took place against the backdrop of a COVID-19 pandemic which had just passed the peak of its Third Wave. Besides the disruption it has caused on business and government operations, the pandemic has had a devastating impact on people's quality of life and has

generated apprehensions about public engagements. Electricity loadshedding did not help matters.

- The campaign period was short, by South African standards; and many of the parties had expected the election to be postponed. There was a general sense of underpreparedness, even among those who were clamouring for the constitutional deadline to be met.
- Although the IEC carried out all the tasks expected of it, a few of the traditional undertakings had to be circumscribed. These include voter education campaigns and the number of registration weekends.
- The election was, for the first time since 1994, held on a Monday, creating a long-weekend effect, and this, at month end. It may have affected voter turnout.
- Many parties faced a challenge of resources because of the pandemic's impact on business performance and the new party-political funding legal regime.

These factors did have some impact on parties' ability to enthuse their voter bases. At 45.86 per cent, voter turnout was the lowest since the 2000 municipal elections – though it should be noted that in 2000 and 2006 the turnout figures were about two percentage points below 50 per cent.

It would be wrong, however, to overplay the unique features outlined above.

There are realities that are not specific to November 2021 that are critical to the outcome of any local government election. These relate to municipal service provision and what can be characterised as a sense of nonchalance about it. In most municipalities, including those with clean audits, there are intense problems, especially in poor communities, such as provision of water, sanitation and electricity.

Local government elections are also impacted by national trends. Opinion polls have highlighted intense frustration with levels of corruption not only in many municipalities but also the trailing and direct stench of venality all the way to national government. As all elections have shown, economic performance and a sense of whether things would improve have a direct bearing on voter participation and election outcomes. South Africa's poor performance in this regard predates the advent of COVID-19. Combined with this are the schizophrenic personality traits of, and elements of division within, some of the large parties.

The results in perspective

Given the intemperate statements by some elements in the DA, the EFF and some smaller parties variously against the IEC and the Constitutional Court, it is notable that the results were accepted by all the parties.

In interpreting the outcome of the 2021 local government elections and the implications going forward, both the specific and the general factors need to be taken into account.

What then do the results tell us and how do we balance seemingly contradictory considerations?

In Table 1.1, reference is made to the performance of the top 10 parties as well as Independents. This is elaborated in greater detail in Appendix 1 of this report, though a different measure is used in terms of figures for the 2021 elections.

Table 1.1: Party performance based on proportional representation

Parties	1995/6	2000	2006	2011	2016	2021
ANC	58.02	59.39	64.82	61.95	53.91	45.59
DP/NP/NNP/DA	21.5	22.12	16.24	23.94	26.90	21.66
EFF					8.19	10.31
IFP	8.73	9.14	7.53	3.57	4.25	5.64
ActionSA						2.33
FF+	2.66	0.09	0.94	0.45	0.80	2.34
Independents				0.87	0.89	1.73
PA					0.06	0.97
ACDP	1.4	1.14	1.28	0.62	0.42	0.71
ATM						0.62
Good						0.61

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/lge/>, accessed 30 November 2021.

Compared to the 2016 elections, parties such as the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) and the Patriotic Alliance (PA) improved their performance by multiples, though from a small base. To a lesser extent, the same applies to Independents. For a new party, ActionSA performed quite well, especially in the Gauteng province, and Johannesburg in particular. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and EFF experienced marginal increases.

The ANC and the DA experienced large drawbacks with decreases of 8.32 and 5.24 percentage points, respectively; and the ANC dropped below 50 per cent nationally for the first time.

The precipitous decline in proportional votes for the dominant parties in the various provinces is reflected, on the extreme end of the scale, in the fact that the ANC lost by more than 9 percentage points in four provinces (KwaZulu-Natal 16.04; Mpumalanga 11.44; Free State 10.92; and Gauteng 9.78; see also Appendix A). In the Western Cape, the DA declined by 9.08 percentage points (and the ANC by 5.84). This underlines the argument that the trends in the election outcome cannot be attributed to a single factor.

Although the national and provincial dynamics are useful in assessing generic trends, account should also be taken of local parties (and Independents) and spatial concentrations of support. For instance, while at national level the IFP received just above half of the EFF's proportional votes, its concentrated support in KwaZulu-Natal means that it is able to control many municipalities in that province either as outright winner or largest party in coalitions. On the other hand, the EFF has not emerged as the largest party in a single municipality. As discussed in other sections of this report, in a few areas, local parties or forums and Independents contributed to the decline of the ANC and the DA, placing them at the helm of processes to form coalitions.

Understanding the strategic trends

Figure 1.1 shows the electoral fortunes of the three largest parties (ANC, DA and EFF), using national and local proportional share of the vote over the past 17 years. It is significant that these parties continue to reflect a national footprint, with varying levels of concentration across the country. This is fundamental for the project of nation-formation.

As elaborated elsewhere in this report, the ANC's retreat in the urban areas is starkly shown by the

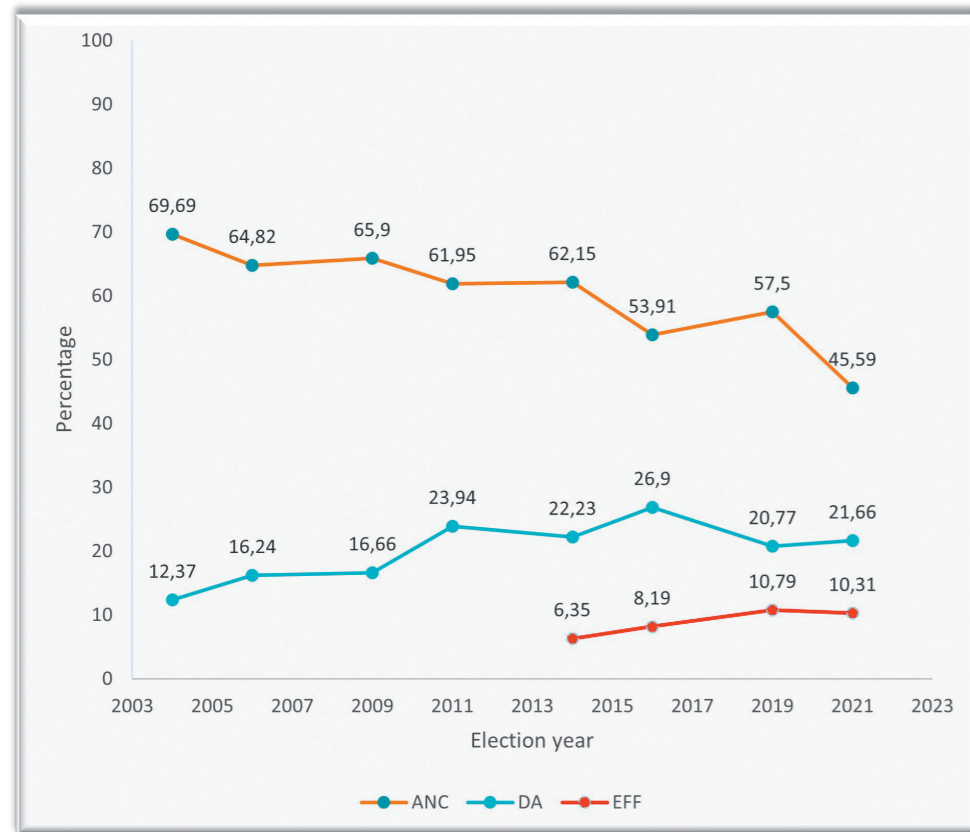
party dropping below 40 per cent in the aggregate Gauteng proportional vote. While relative turnout in its so-called ‘strongholds’ had something to do with the outcome, the entry of ActionSA was a major contributor to this trend. The ANC won an absolute majority in only two of the country’s eight metros (Buffalo City and Mangaung) compared to three in 2016.

While most analysis on the ANC’s deteriorating performance in the metros and large towns has focused on the ‘middle class’ demographic group, the reality is that, with internal migration, these areas are among those with the highest percentage of people living below the minimum living level (The Presidency, 2006). The strain on provision of housing, sanitation, water, electricity and other public services in these areas has been massive, and there is no indication that government, across the spheres, has a systematic approach to these challenges. In addition, poor performance where it governed, a weak role in opposition and organisational weaknesses contributed to this decline.

Table 1.1 shows that the DA did not perform better in 2021 compared to 2011 and 2016. It has continued to haemorrhage support to the Freedom Front Plus; its support in African areas has all but collapsed; and in coloured communities parties such as the Patriotic Alliance, Good and local formations have slashed its support.

Although the EFF shows relative growth compared to 2016, the overall trend in its performance, as shown in Figure 1.1, suggests some levelling off. In part, this may reflect declining novelty of its message and appeal, though it is making great strides in certain provinces, such as KwaZulu-Natal. Its national stagnation is starkly reflected in Gauteng where it registered minimal growth, and particularly in Johannesburg where it was overtaken as the third largest party by ActionSA (16.05 per cent with the EFF at 10.63 per cent).

Figure 1.1: Election trends for the three largest parties, 2004–2021, National and Local



Source: adapted from <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/lge/>, accessed 30 November 2021.

From the point of view of the ‘national question’ and identity, the fault lines of apartheid colonialism continue to dominate, with the ANC and the EFF enjoying support mostly from African communities. The DA seems to have retreated from pursuing the ‘African vote’, but the further advancement of the FF+ shows that this may not have reversed its losses in Afrikaner sections of the white community. With regard to the coloured community, the relative rise of the PA and Good does suggest a sense of marginalisation and a growing assertion of narrow consciousness. However, in the Northern Cape with a majority Afrikaans-speaking population, the ANC garnered just over 50 per cent of the vote; and it tends to do relatively well in rural areas of the Western Cape.

Do the parties’ ideological positions on socio-economic issues come into play in a municipal election? It may be a bit of a stretch to impute direct linkages, given the character of issues in local electoral contests. It can be argued, though, that the relative resurgence of the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal and the dramatic entry of ActionSA in Gauteng suggest a slight rightward shift of the ideological centre of gravity.

Marriages of inconvenience

As argued in the book, *Marriages of inconvenience: The politics of coalitions in South Africa* (MISTRA, 2021), coalitions have been relatively common in South Africa since democratic local government was established in 2000.

As reflected in Table 2.3 in this report (Ndletyana in MISTRA, 2021; IEC, 2021), the number of municipal government coalitions increased from 27 in 2016 to 70 in 2021, with the highest number before this being 33 in 2011. The coalitions have taken the form of co-governance with partners involved at agreed leadership levels or confidence-and-supply agreements with minority governments supported on an issue-by-issue basis by other parties.

In most of the hung councils, negotiations have led to co-governance arrangements, presumably based on common policy perspectives and agreements on representation in leadership structures. However, by the beginning of December, no such agreements had been made public; and, besides the election of mayors and speakers, executive structures had not been constituted in the five ‘hung’ metros.

Strange instances of imposition by the EFF and ActionSA to vote for DA mayors and speakers, when the DA had presumably not asked for such support, is almost reflective of *ukuthwala* or forced marriages. The motivation for these parties is to keep the ANC out – their mission, they assert, is not to ‘save’ the ANC but to ‘bury’ it. Further, there are hints, in the EFF’s pronouncements, of attempts to insert itself into ANC factional politics by identifying with those opposed to the ANC president. There has also been much confusion around the collapse of the ANC-IFP pre-nuptials for a nationwide confidence-and-supply arrangement publicly announced earlier by the IFP leadership.

Parties have the right, of course, to behave as they wish on coalition arrangements. The concern, however, is about stability in these municipalities and their ability to meet community expectations on service provision. Many coalitions have undermined governance through all manner of patronage, including political and management positions, and meddling in administrative functions such as procurement. Such instability also attaches to political cycles in that as a new election approaches there is a tendency to want to demonstrate a unique discriminator compared to partners – in many instances by collapsing the coalition arrangements.

This experience bolsters the arguments in the MISTRA book on how to stabilise coalition governance, including that:

- there should be workable coalition agreements lodged with a competent authority and these should be made public.
- where formal coalitions are unable to attain a majority, a proportional collective executive system (different from executive mayoralty) should be considered.

The maturity of political leadership and activism by a 'loyal' opposition, civil society and, where necessary, the other spheres of government, are also fundamental to stability.

A harbinger of things to come?

Most pundits hail the 2021 municipal elections as the beginning of a new era. Is 1 November 2021 indeed a harbinger of things to come in the 2024 general election and beyond? This takes us back to observations about finding a balance, in our interpretations, between peculiarities of the 2021 elections and the structural dimensions.

As argued earlier, there are many factors that were unique to the 2021 local elections such as the timing, the COVID-19 pandemic, parties' access to resources, the long weekend effect and so on. But macrosocial trends such as the state of the economy, service provision, corruption and other such factors had a massive impact on the outcome. In any case, it can be argued that moments of crisis such as the pandemic tend to accelerate generic trends that are already abroad in society.

Therefore, whether these local elections are a bellwether of things to come should be examined at three levels: firstly, the unique features of the 2021 election campaign; secondly, broad macrosocial trends such as economic growth and service provision; and thirdly, how the parties address subjective issues that are specific to them.

On the latter, with regard to the three largest parties, the following is pertinent: how the ANC navigates issues of corruption and related internal divisions that its efforts at organisational renewal generate; how the DA defines its existential personality on liberalism in as unequal a society as ours; and how the EFF positions itself with regard to the political art of the possible, in relation to factional dynamics in the ANC and with regard to the penchant for hyperbole and drama – all these subjective factors will be crucial going forward. For the fourth and fifth largest parties (IFP and ActionSA, respectively), how they profile themselves both in government and in opposition, and how they address any internal organisational challenges, will be critical.

Overall, South Africa needs seriously to reflect on how to ensure stable coalition governance. The theory and praxis, in this regard, is seriously deficient. To the extent that coalitions may become necessary in the other spheres of government in future, such reflections will stand the democratic project in good stead.

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ANALYSIS 2

THE DISCORDANT COALITIONS AFTERMATH OF SOUTH AFRICA'S 2021 LOCAL ELECTIONS

SUSAN BOOYSEN

Marriages of Inconvenience, the Mapungubwe Institute's 2021 volume on coalition politics in South Africa, noted that the country might be approaching an epoch of widespread coalition government. The local government election results of November 2021 pushed that future onto the political centre stage. The growth in the number of coalition governments had been anticipated as part of South Africa's hitherto gradual transition from party dominance by the African National Congress (ANC) to some form of more equitable multipartyism – and yet, the scope and scale of the coalition governments that resulted were hardly expected. Roughly a third of South Africa's directly elected municipal structures, 70 out of 213, required coalition governments.

The election result that produced widespread coalition governments defined a new moment in South African politics. The two main parties lost support; the third biggest in election support, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), gained minimally but did not make enough progress to indicate catching up with the main parties (see also Analysis 1). The biggest factor was the ANC's nationally projected support level that declined to below 50 per cent. Opposition parties observed the haemorrhage and vulnerability, most of them uniting in asserting that the voters had rejected the ANC at the polls, and they should not be letting it back in by including it in coalition governments. After some failed coalition negotiation attempts, or rejection of opening bargaining positions (some that included the ANC), opposition parties joined up in a multiplicity of agreement types. Where the hung councils and party politics permitted, the parties converged to oust the ANC from power.

The ANC, having rejected approaches by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and EFF in a first phase of coalition negotiations, had few options for coalition partnerships. Complexity was added to the coalition-building mix as some of the losses of both the ANC and the DA had fragmented into uptake by small and community-based parties. These new and old micro-actors used their kingmaking power, often in incoherent blocs, to bargain successfully for major council positions.

The rest of this analysis reviews how South Africa's political parties handled the expanded hung council reality that LGE2021 delivered. It takes stock of party behaviours in this world, the approaches and new rules that they have shaped, and specifically the types of coalitions and governance constructs that have been forming. It sets out the framework for the analyses that follow. The analyses in sections B and C, spanning the provinces and their local and metropolitan municipalities, fill in the details of coalition formation following LGE2021.

Party performance with relevance to coalitions

With the restrictive conditions of the prevailing pandemic, and the widespread expectations of postponement to early 2022, South Africa's political parties were unevenly prepared for both elections and the local coalition governments that would follow. Based on by-election results from 2020–2021, the ANC had realised that decline to below 50 per cent could be imminent. Reliable public opinion polls confirmed that the ANC may have been heading for a below 50 per cent status, nationally projected. Declining to this extent generally, and at the sites across all nine provinces (with high provincial proportions in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape; see Tables 2.1 and 2.2) nevertheless moved the tectonic plates of South African politics.

The ANC haemorrhaged support, dipping to its lowest level yet in local government elections in democratic South Africa. The nationally projected 2021 proportional result showed that the ANC had slipped to below 50 per cent for the first time since the institution of the democratic order in 1994. The decline from 2016 to 2021 was approximately equal to the scope of decline from 2011 to 2016 – in both instances about eight percentage points. The Democratic Alliance (DA) did not gain the support that the ANC had shed. It also suffered support losses, albeit overall percentage losses of a lesser scope than the ANC. The EFF (despite winning more municipal seats overall) more or less flat-lined in support. Its pre-election hype of 'government in waiting' failed to materialise. The 'big' growth parties were instead the two smaller parties, the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) and the newcomer ActionSA. Along with the EFF these three players came to be crucial kingmakers in the 2021 coalition configurations.

The relativity in election results is evidenced in the political parties' gains and losses in municipal seats (Table 2.2). In descending order, the EFF, FF+, IFP, ActionSA and Patriotic Alliance (PA) had the biggest gains in the number of municipal seats won. The ANC by far, along with the DA, suffered the biggest losses in the number of seats. Regional concentrations also mattered – the IFP with its KwaZulu-Natal support concentration could garner council control that evaded a party like the EFF.

ANC losses of outright majorities at many significant political sites meant that ANC domination was weakening to a point where its power over government institutions was slipping. The ANC's losses contributed hugely to the rise in the number of hung councils – from the 27 of 2016 to 70 overall of 2021 (five of the eight metros, and 65 of the 205 local municipalities).

The post-election interparty cooperative manoeuvres to gain power showed that the extent of opposition windfalls was largely unexpected. The main opposition parties appeared underprepared for the moment. Coalition-making initiatives evolved, inspired by a new zeitgeist of under-strategised opposition-party alliances taking municipal power from the ANC. This combined with the thrust of smaller parties using the DA (relatively strong, but lacking outright majorities in all but a handful of municipalities) as voting bloc contributor to help take power from the ANC. In addition, at many municipal sites in KwaZulu-Natal the IFP was on a rebound and could dictate party fortunes in alignments to kingmaking parties. In the process, and spanning provinces like the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal, the EFF – that had aspired, but failed, to win councils – gained a series of influential, even dominating, council positions.

LGE2021 was also the time of the micro kingmakers. Conventional small parties (some new, some growing, others hanging on, even former Bantustan parties) plus new community parties would make a big impact on coalition formation. They gained enclaves of votes across the local and metropolitan municipalities – too little to gain outright control even at their best performance sites, yet gaining kingmaking powers in many municipalities. In the aftermath of coalition negotiations they have many municipal executive and mayoralty or speaker and whip positions. Balances of power in many of the hung councils (see Table 2.4) were often in the hands of complex sets of one- or two-seat parties:

from now on municipal governance would require intricate management.

Far more than tilting balances in the numbers game to constitute municipal governments, these new actors also signalled change in political culture. Their mandates often concerned service delivery and municipal governance issues, unfiltered by the big parties' policy-making processes and bureaucracies, and indirect forms of accountability. Even more, and potentially adversely, they frequently mobilised support on community identities of race and the race-class interface. Their mandates were often exclusive and distant from the ideal of inclusion and universality, yet anchored in life experiences and conditions of living.

Low turnout as active voice in LGE2021

The low voter participation rate in LGE2021 (see Appendix B) was a strong voice in own right. We do not yet have sufficient research to fathom the exact breakdown of this non-vote. Only 12.1 million out of the total 26.2 million registered voters (fewer than in the elections of 2019 and 2016) turned out to cast their votes. Youth registration (see Analysis 4) was also low, and proportionately lower than in 2016. The participation rate overall, of 45 per cent, was the lowest across all 12 national-provincial and local government elections since South Africa's democratic transition of 1994.

The 12 percentage point lower turnout than in 2016 could be ascribed to a combination of factors. It reflected apathy, disillusionment or anger with politicians and with local government corruption and mismanagement, or even rejection of the often malfunctioning local government system which is characterised by dysfunctionality and frequent lapses in councillor and local bureaucrat probity. The legitimacy and credibility of local government were being questioned and the base on which the new coalition governments would have to operate was a weakened one.

The ANC is generally known to benefit from higher turnout. In the aftermath, the ANC elections head Fikile Mbalula designated the low turnout as a preferred outcome: 'Voters gave us a warning. It could have been worse; they could have taken their vote elsewhere' (see Merten, 2021). A dense set of ANC-specific factors surrounded the ANC vote. These included the factionalism in the ANC and the continued role of former president Jacob Zuma; the perceived weakness of current leadership; the July 2021 riots and infrastructure destruction that happened, at least in part, as a result of ANC internal politics; and major Eskom power outages right (some suspected sabotage) up to the eve of the elections – a problem that arose under ANC government.

From ANC dominance to interregnum of coalitions

The performance of the political parties in elections, in this instance the local government elections of 2021, determines post-election interparty agreements to cooperate in governance. The options include minority government, accompanied by negotiations between the parties to ensure the passing of budgets, as well as the election of municipal office-bearers such as the speaker of council and mayor of the municipality. An alternative, for which the political actors cannot plan, is that the council majority will be in continuous flux, irrespective of whether coalition agreements have been reached, and that motions of no confidence (or more informal measures like the destabilisation of municipal council proceedings) can be on the council agenda regularly during the five-year term of local government. An interregnum of such making can be unstable and unpredictable – and distract from the governance and service-delivery issues that ought to prevail.

As the details in Table 2.1 show, the bulk of South Africa's 257 municipal councils (inclusive of the 44 district councils) remained under the control of a single party. In 167 of these councils the ANC remained the biggest party and in 122 of the 167 it still retained outright control. The figures were,

however, undermined by the national-level decline of the ANC, the loss of the Gauteng metros (even if to unstable co-governance or minority government alliances), and that it suffered the loss of outright control at multiple important municipal sites.

Table 2.1: Party control over councils and total seat counts in context of party support

Political party	Number of councils in which party is the biggest	Number of councils in which party has outright control	Total number of seats won by party (out of total of 8 794)	Percentage support 2021 local elections*	Percentage support 2016 local elections
ANC	167	122	4,548	45.6	53.9
DA	24	12	1,496	21.7	26.9
IFP	16	9	545	5.6	4.5
NFP	1	0	52	0.5	0.02
ICOSA	1	0	8	0.1	0.1
FF+	0	0	221	2.3	0.8
EFF	0	0	982	10.3	8.2
ActionSA	0	0	90	2.3	-
PA	0	0	75	1.0	-

Note: * Based on the proportional representation segment of the election results. Alternative available calculations are based on the combination of party proportions that take into account both ward and PR votes. The figures in Appendix A are based on the combination of ward and PR.

Source: <https://www.news24.com/news24/elections/map/lge?year=2021&level=country>, accessed 21 November 2021.

Table 2.2: Biggest gains and losses in seat counts in LGE2021

PARTIES WITH BIGGEST GAINS (+)		PARTIES WITH BIGGEST LOSSES (-)	
EFF	+221	ANC	-614
FF+	+154	DA	-288
IFP	+112	Cope	-31
ActionSA	+90		
PA	+75		

Note: 10,500 seats were at stake, while there were 4,468 wards. The figures in this table do not constitute totals. Beyond the gains recorded in this table, a further 276 seats were won by parties and independents not listed in column 1.

Source: www.elections.org.za multiple windows, accessed 5, 25 November 2021; author's calculations.

The ANC's decline generated much of the new space for coalitions. It declined by 8.3 percentage points from 2016 to 2021, comparable to its 2011 to 2016 decline of 8.4 percentage points (see Appendix A). In 2016 the decline was seen as a watershed, yet one that could still be reversed. In the national election of 2019 the ANC had a modest recovery of roughly three percentage points, compared with 2016. At the end of the Zuma presidential era and subsequent Ramaphoria (see Booysen, 2021a), hope sprang in ANC ranks that this might indicate a new trajectory of recovery. The ANC's internal and organisational problems, however, coalesced with failures of local government to confirm the ANC's jagged downward path.

In terms of democracy theory such weakening of a dominant party might signal the maturation of multiparty democracy (see Linz and Stepan, 1996; Stokes, 1999). The mere weakening of a strong party to below 50 per cent of its own accord does not, however, complete the picture. In 2021 in South Africa, the probably unstable, often opportunistic politics of constellations of small and micro-parties cohering with disruptive bigger opposition parties to form variations on the theme of coalition governments appear to contradict notions of maturation. It is also possible that the ANC has been in power for so long, with so much associated delegitimation of opposition parties (with much help from the parties themselves) that a more or less normal alternation of governing parties was not possible.

The 2021 diffusion of the coalition councils

Up to LGE2021, South Africa had been maintaining a relatively consistent number of hung councils and coalition governments, especially prevalent in the KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces. The 2021 spread remained concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, but now extended in higher numbers across all nine of the provinces (see the set of provincial maps comparing 2016 and 2021 in the opening parts of this report).

The 2016 municipal elections resulted in 27 hung municipal councils in eight of the nine provinces of South Africa (Table 2.3). In 2021 coalition formation happened across the country in 65 of the 205 small to medium sized local municipalities and five of the eight metropolitan municipalities. The total number of hung councils was 70 (Electoral Commission, 2021). Most of the 27 hung councils of the 2016 term retained their status. In the Western Cape specifically, the DA in 2021 lost outright control in six municipalities: Beaufort West, Oudtshoorn, Cape Agulhas, Saldanha Bay, Breede Valley and Langeberg. In the rest of the provinces, the spread could be attributed mostly to ANC decline.

Table 2.3: Increase in number of coalition councils per province, 2000–2021

Provinces	Total of local coalition councils per local government election				
	2000	2006	2011	2016	2021
Eastern Cape	1	1	-	1	3
Free State	-	-	-	1	4
Gauteng	2	-	-	4	8
Limpopo	-	-	-	2	2
KwaZulu-Natal	10	8	19	7	21
Mpumalanga	-	-	-	-	3
Northern Cape	2	-	5	3	10
North West	-	-	-	1	3
Western Cape	14	21	9	8	16
Totals	29	30	33	27	70

Sources: www.elections.org.za, accessed 5, 27 November 2021; Ndletyana, 2021; SABC research department, 2021.

Coalition strategy, 2016–2021

The big 2016 coalition event was that the ANC lost its outright council majorities in four metropolitan municipalities: Tshwane, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Bay. Opposition parties formed coalitions in three of these four metros, and the ANC in Ekurhuleni. The EFF was a kingmaker, guardian of majority statuses. In confidence-and-supply arrangements it voted with the DA to

elect DA mayors in three out of the four metros and also in smaller local municipalities. The ANC in the 2016–2021 term allied with smaller parties in Ekurhuleni, and later won back the City of Johannesburg. It attempted the same in Tshwane but was thwarted. Continuous turmoil in Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay brought realignment and manoeuvres for the ANC to regain lost power from DA-led coalitions. Coalition manoeuvres and rotations of power were repeated in councils at several local municipal sites – for example, in the Central Karoo and Garden Route areas where small or community parties rotated allegiance between the ANC and DA.

Throughout the 2016–2021 period the EFF manoeuvred to access power in municipalities where it enjoyed modest vote proportions – it brought in blocs of council votes that could swing the balance of power. Its power capture took the form, for example, of controlling important municipal portfolios in Herman Mashaba’s DA coalition in the City of Johannesburg. In July 2019, following the DA’s rejection of its offer for co-governance in Johannesburg and Tshwane, the EFF announced that it would no longer support the DA or ANC in minority councils. The EFF sought the Tshwane mayoralty and member of mayoral committee positions in Johannesburg. These examples illustrate the EFF’s approach to gaining power, an approach which would be fine-tuned in the 2021–2026 term. Several kingmaking parties from the Karoo and Garden Route areas were using a comparable power strategy.

Coalition realisation and emerging strategy, 2021–2026

In the wake of LGE2021, hung councils appeared in all provinces and, in several provinces, in unprecedented numbers. The new coalition government sites were almost without exception councils previously held by the ANC or DA. The DA gave up some support in favour of the FF+, ActionSA (which also captured previous ANC support), and multiple community parties. The ANC lost support to its left (to the extent that the EFF is indeed socialist) and to a host of ideologically mixed, small and community parties. Determination to gain or retain power drove the ANC to strike coalition deals with parties like the Patriotic Alliance (PA), Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA), Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) and African Transformation Movement (ATM), all of which came with political baggage.

South Africa’s eight metros were of particular importance in the unfolding coalition landscape, given their economic and political centrality to the affairs of the country. They are also attractive to parties because of the patronage and financial windfalls that can be leveraged. In all three Gauteng metros the ANC in 2021 suffered support percentages that dipped into the 30 percentages wise, dropping from the 40 percentages of 2016 (see Appendix A). In Mangaung, the ANC retained outright power in 2021 by winning 50.6 per cent of the vote. Buffalo City, at 59.6 per cent for the ANC, was the only metro still comfortably in ANC hands.

The details of LGE2021 outcomes and coalition aftermaths in the metros are assessed in analyses 6–11 of section B. The provincial clusters of hung councils and variations on coalitions beyond the metros are reviewed in analyses 12–18.

Kingmaking in these metros also became diversified, with both the EFF and ActionSA holding significant chunks of votes. Jointly, and even individually, they formed a bloc that had the potential to perfect disruptive coalition governance (threatening motions of no confidence, forcing constituency-specific delivery). Alternatively, their strategy would be to make local government tick over, with maximum deliverables to show to their constituencies, while they transfer the 2021 local opposition strategy to subvert the ANC into the national elections of 2024.

The ANC narrowly retained control of the eThekweni metro by coalition, and won back Nelson Mandela Bay, also by a miniscule and complex coalition majority. In both these cases the ANC cut

deals with minor and/or new opposition parties that held minimal numbers of seats. Control handed to micro-parties over municipal portfolios was a substantial part of the coalition bait in eThekweni’s executive committee system and in Nelson Mandela Bay’s mayoral executive system.

Table 2.4 offers the overview by council and province of how the 70 hung council mandates transitioned into council elections of mainly mayors and speakers. These elections help indicate the type of coalition governance that will result, for example whether there will be minority governments, council-sharing arrangements, or anti-dominant-party fronts.

Table 2.4: South Africa’s 70 metropolitan and local hung councils of LGE2021: Voter support and governments formed (top office-bearers)

Municipality/council (excluding district councils)	Top three parties in LGE2021	Government formed Post-LGE2021 – Parties (M=Mayor, DM=Deputy Mayor, Sp=Speaker)
EASTERN CAPE – 3: 1 metro and 2 local municipalities hung (compared with 1 out of 33 in 2016)		
Dr Beyers Naudé	ANC – 46.82%, DA – 39.55%, EFF – 4.18%	M: DA, DM: N/A, Sp: CSA
Koukamma	ANC – 46.35%, DA – 27.47%, PA – 10.89%	M: ANC, DM: N/A; Sp: ANC
Nelson Mandela Bay*	DA – 39.92%, ANC – 39.43%, EFF – 6.4%	M: ANC, DM: N/A, Sp: NA
FREE STATE – 4 local municipalities hung (compared with 1 out of 19 in 2016)		
Nala	ANC – 48.72%, EFF – 23.21%, DA – 9.45%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Maluti-A-Phofung	ANC – 39.2%, MAP16 – 28.55%, EFF – 9.84%	M: MAP16; DM: N/A. Sp: MAP16
Metsimaholo*	ANC – 34.47%, DA – 26.19%, EFF – 25.28%	M: EFF, DM: N/A, Sp: ANC
Moqhaka	ANC – 49.55%, DA – 21.2%, EFF – 11.53%	M: ANC, DM: N/A, Sp: ANC
GAUTENG – 8: 3 metro and 5 local municipalities hung (compared with 4 out of 9 in 2016)		
Rand West City	ANC – 45.33%, DA – 23%, EFF – 15.05%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Lesedi	ANC – 50.43%, DA – 20.32%, EFF – 13.53%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Mogale City*	ANC – 40.17%, DA – 32.26%, EFF – 13.89%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
Emfuleni	ANC – 39.71%, DA – 26.91%, EFF – 15.59%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Merafong City	ANC – 48.97%, DA – 16.15%, EFF – 15.02%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Ekurhuleni*	ANC – 38.19%, DA – 28.72%, EFF – 13.57%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
City of Johannesburg*	ANC – 33.60%, DA – 26.14%, Action SA – 16.05%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
Tshwane*	ANC – 34.63%, DA – 32.03%, EFF – 10.69%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
KWAZULU-NATAL – 21: 1 metro and 20 local municipalities hung (compared with 7 out of 44 in 2016)		
eDumbe*	NFP – 33.54%, ANC – 23.53%, IFP – 23.26%	M: NFP, DM: ANC, Sp: NFP
eMadlangeni	IFP – 35%, ANC – 29.04%, DA – 10.45%	M: IFP, DM: NFP, Sp: IFP
Dannhauser	ANC – 34.97%, IFP – 31.29%, EFF – 10.35%	M: IFP, DM: EFF, Sp: IFP

Municipality/council (excluding district councils)	Top three parties in LGE2021	Government formed Post-LGE2021 – Parties (M=Mayor, DM=Deputy Mayor, Sp=Speaker)
eNdameni*	ANC – 36.18%, IFP – 35.25%, DA – 14.63%	M: IFP, DM: IFP, Sp: IFP
Maphumulo	ANC – 46.85%, IFP – 42.14%, EFF – 3.27%	M: IFP, DM: EFF, Sp: IFP
uMhlabuyalingana	ANC – 45.64%, IFP – 36.21%, EFF – 4.45%	M: IFP, DM: IFP, Sp: IFP
Mtubatuba*	IFP – 42.44%, ANC – 35.97%, EFF – 9.06%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Nongoma	IFP – 46.1%, NFP – 29.48%, ANC – 16.92%	M: IFP, DM: EFF, Sp: IFP
AbaQulusi*	IFP – 45.35%, ANC – 31.1%, NFP – 7.57%	M: IFP, DM: IFP, Sp: IFP
Mthonjaneni	IFP – 47.92%, ANC – 37.89%, IND – 4.52%	M: IFP, DM: IFP, Sp: IFP
uMhlathuze	ANC – 39.5%, IFP – 34.6%, DA – 11.78%	M: IFP, DM: EFF, Sp: IFP
Newcastle	ANC – 31.3%, IFP – 25.47%, EFF – 12.06%	M: IFP, DM: TSSA, Sp: IFP
uMuziwabantu	ANC – 47.27%, IFP – 24.03%, EFF – 8.33%	M: ANC, DM: Al Jama-Ah, Sp: DA
uMdoni	ANC – 44.15%, DA – 17.9%, IFP – 14.02%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Msunduzi	ANC – 48.32%, DA – 19.33%, EFF – 11.75%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
eThekwini	ANC – 42.02%, DA – 25.62%, EFF – 10.48%	M: ANC, DM: ABC, Sp: ANC
KwaDukuza	ANC – 49.56%, DA – 15.48% Action SA – 7.85%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
iNkosi Langalibalele	IFP – 44.13%, ANC – 35.25%, NFP – 5.7%	M: IFP, DM: IFP, Sp: IFP
Okhahlamba	IFP – 30.49%, ANC – 29.15%, APEMO – 19.59%	M: APEMO, DM: ANC, Sp: NFP
Alfred Duma	IFP – 44.96%, ANC – 37.84%, EFF – 6.01%	M: IFP, DM: IFP, Sp: IFP
uMvoti	ANC – 36.13%, IFP – 33.3%, ABC – 24.57%	M: IFP, DM: ABC, Sp: IFP
<i>2016 KwaZulu-Natal hung councils that achieved majority government status in 2021: Jozini, Nquthu and Estcourt.</i>		
LIMPOPO – 2 local municipalities hung (compared with 2 out of 22 in 2016)		
Thabazimbi*	ANC – 45.3%, DA – 22.21%, EFF – 20.24%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: TFSD
Modimolle-Mookgophong*	ANC – 49.83%, DA – 23.17%, EFF – 14.66%	Mayor: DA, DM: DA, Sp: ANC
MPUMALANGA – 3 local municipalities hung (compared with 0 out of 17 in 2016)		
Lekwa	ANC – 42.03%, LCF – 19.43%, DA – 13.36%	M: LCF, DM: TBC, Sp: LCF
Steve Tshwete	ANC – 36.85%, DA – 28.37%, EFF – 14.39%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: Ind
Govan Mbeki	ANC – 41.08%, DA – 26.57%, EFF – 19.88%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
NORTHERN CAPE – 10 local municipalities hung (compared with 3 out of 26 in 2016)		
Nama Khoi*	ANC – 42.01%, DA – 30.07%, NCM – 20.84%	M: NCM, DM: N/A, Sp: DA
Hantam	ANC – 44.53%, DA – 28.57%, PA – 7.48%	M: ANC, DM: N/A, Sp: ANC
Karoo Hoogland	ANC – 40.48%, DA – 30.16%, PA – 22.08%	Mr: PA, DM: N/A, Sp: PA

Municipality/council (excluding district councils)	Top three parties in LGE2021	Government formed Post-LGE2021 – Parties (M=Mayor, DM=Deputy Mayor, Sp=Speaker)
Kareeberg	ANC – 44.17%, EFF – 18.71%, KCM – 17.26%	M: KCM, DM: N/A, Sp: KCM
IKheis	ANC – 46.44%, DA – 21.15%, IND – 12.62%	M: DA, DM: N/A, Sp: DA
Siyathemba	ANC – 44.4%, SGB – 39.67%, DA – 12.73%	M: SCM, DM: N/A, Sp: ANC
Thembelihle	ANC – 39.81%, EFF – 24.54%, DA – 12.21%	M: ANC, DM: N/A, Sp: SCM
Siyancuma	ANC – 52.12%, DA – 25.1%, IND – 11.19%	M: Independent; DM: N/A, Sp: DA
Kgatelopele*	ANC – 43.69%, PA – 18.47%, DA – 16.97%	M: ANC, DM: N/A, Sp: ANC
Gamagara	ANC – 43.06%, DA – 34.4%, GCF – 13.26%	M: ANC, DM: N/A, Sp: GCF
<i>2016 Northern Cape hung councils that achieved majority government status in 2021: Ubuntu.</i>		
NORTH WEST – 3 local municipalities hung (compared with 1 out of 18 in 2016)		
Lekwa Teemane	ANC – 48.17%, EFF – 23.67%, DA – 9.26%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
JB Marks	ANC – 48%, DA – 25.36%, VF Plus – 13.54%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
Rustenburg*	ANC – 46.74%, EFF – 17.91%, DA – 13.92%	M: ANC, DM: ANC, Sp: ANC
WESTERN CAPE – 16 local municipalities (compared with 8 out of 25 local and metro in 2016)		
Matzikama	DA – 37.3%, ANC – 29.15%, PA – 12.52%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
Cederberg	ANC – 35.45%, CE – 27.5%, DA – 20.72%	M: CFRA, DM: FF+, Sp: DA
Saldanha Bay	DA – 46.34%, ANC – 21.66%, Good – 13.81%	M: DA, DM: N/A, Sp: DA
Witzenberg*	DA – 36.64%, ANC – 30.46%, Good – 6.25%	M: DA, DM: GOOD, Sp: ANC
Theewaterskloof	DA – 41.67%, ANC – 28.59%, Good – 10.16%	M: PA, DM: GOOD, Sp: ANC
Langeberg	DA – 43.63%, ANC – 25.12%, VF Plus – 10.1%	M: DA, DM: FF+, Sp: DA
Cape Agulhas	DA – 44.04%, ANC – 26.76%, DLRP – 12.65%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: FF+
Laingsburg*	ANC – 26.25%, KDF – 24.42%, DA – 23.71%	M: PA, DM: KDF, Sp: ANC
Beaufort West*	ANC – 28.31%, DA – 27.11%, PA – 21.93%	M: PA, DM: ANC, Sp: KDF
Kannaland*	ICOSA – 45.2%, ANC – 21.52%, DA – 20.52%	M: ICOSA, DM: ICOSA, Sp: ANC
Bitou*	DA – 40.36%, ANC – 29.09%, AUF – 9.03%	M: DA, DM: AUF, Sp: PDC
Knysna*	DA – 35.44%, ANC – 33.2%, KIM – 7.9%	M: DA, DM: KIM, Sp: DA
Oudtshoorn	DA – 30.06%, ANC – 27.72%, FF+ – 12.07%	M: ANC, DM: ICOSA, Sp: OGI
Prince Albert*	DA – 37.44%, KGP – 22.02%, PA – 14.35%	M: KGP, DM: PA, Sp: ANC
George	DA – 46.54%, ANC – 17.84%, Good – 10.46%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
Breede Valley	DA – 45.01%, ANC – 23.35%, BO – 9.83%	M: DA, DM: DA, Sp: DA
<i>2016 Western Cape hung councils that achieved majority government status in 2021: Hessequa.</i>		
Note: * indicates that these councils were also coalition councils in 2016.		

Sources: MISTRA research, 2021; SABC research department, 4 November 2021; www.elections.org.za

Coalition praxis in the wake of LGE2021

An early conceptualisation of the types of coalitions that were being formed in the aftermath of LGE2021 suggested that four main types were prevailing, all displaying variable levels of stability (see typology in the next section of this analysis). Not all of the hung councils were converted into coalition governments, or minority governments, with confidence-and-supply agreements between the parties. Party partnerships emerged in which two parties agreed to allocate (or share) the councils among themselves in approximately equal measures. This amounted to a form of collective confidence-and-supply arrangement, because in individual councils the partner-party would be giving guaranteed endorsement of decisions. In minor variations on this theme, some parties chose not to endorse candidates put forward by a coalition grouping in electing mayors and speakers, but did not oppose the elections and undertook to support governance decisions. These actions were largely tied together in a general opposition pact to prevent the ANC from returning to power at the particular localities.

These typology-related observations point to new rules of political and coalition associations that were being formed, largely piecemeal, as coalition negotiations commenced and solidified.

New rules and unforeseen bonds – early indications

This MISTRA report is issued relatively early in the process of coalition operation following LGE2021 (MISTRA's project of regular monitoring commences in 2022). At early December 2021, indicators point towards a tumultuous period of coalition praxis, which will emulate season 2016–2021, but also overshadow it on the front of instability and disruptive governance.

Two aspects of the immediate political context will be crucial in the stability of the local governments generally, but in particular of the hung councils. First, performance and service by incoming councils to their communities will have to be achieved by building on a hugely deficient and mismanaged local government system. Where new coalition governments take over, they will be expected to correct the failures of predecessors – and lines of accountability will blur. Second, political parties in their coalition formations will be working towards the national elections of 2024. Interparty battles at the local level will be affected by the opposition parties having smelled political blood. They will be doing all in their power to continue the feats of 2021 in pushing the ANC below the level of outright majority. Malema emphasised that the EFF strategy of cutting the ANC from power, such as it did in the Gauteng metros and several local municipalities, was with a view to 2024. His argument centred on starving the ANC of funds it would have accessed through control of the municipalities, especially the well-resourced metros.

The 2021 iterations were being affected continuously by interparty and intraparty dynamics. First, there were successful, and failed, initiatives to establish coalitions before the municipal councils were being constituted, at the latest two weeks after the promulgation of the election results (see Analysis 5). Some of these agreements (see Analysis 3) were carried through into constituting the councils and electing their main office-bearers. Others floundered, either on the eve of council meetings or as these meetings took off and partners discovered that previous undertakings of joint action had lapsed. Second, even in a few places where the ANC had won a majority, such as Mpumalanga's Mkhondo (the ANC won 21 out of 38 seats), newly elected ANC councillors revolted against the National Executive Committee's prescription of candidates and voted in an Independent as mayor, the ATM as deputy mayor and the EFF as chief whip – the epitome of extreme levels of pending instability. Third, following informal voting blocs, which included 'uninvited' partners (ActionSA and the EFF) that joined the DA voting blocs and thereby constituted majorities that ousted the ANC from the Gauteng metros, new rounds of coalition negotiation were initiated in the phase after constitution of

the council. The DA had to find a way of forming viable, perhaps even stable, governments. Until that was achieved, it would hold the status of de facto minority governments – the EFF and ActionSA, to different degrees, would follow through with policy and governance demands that may, and probably in many instances may not, resonate with the DA's plans and visions.

Early turning points and watersheds in coalition rules

Details of the governance agreements post-LGE2021 unfold continuously – and, given the virtually guaranteed instability of coalition governments, the specifics will remain in flux. The current assessment covers the period up to early December 2021.

At least parts of the negotiations to arrive at coalition or confidence-and-supply agreements have been unfolding in public and across phases. As Analysis 3 of this report explains, the extent of formalisation of the negotiations has remained opaque. Experience from the 2016–2021 term in local coalitions in South Africa has shown that agreements are not always considered to be binding. A few minor formal, and many shifting de facto, agreements have emerged.

The following summary points provide an approximately chronological overview of important developments in the late 2021 season of local government coalition negotiations – and their associated pacts:

- As the election results start solidifying, the ANC issues a statement that the biggest party in a municipal council election result should be given the opportunity to lead in coalition negotiations.
- The EFF issues a list of coalition demands, the contents of which suggest that they are the preconditions for the party to cooperate with the ANC.
- Media reports and photographs show the ANC's Jessie Duarte and DA's Helen Zille in deep conversation, presumably talking about forming a grand coalition. The DA's federal executive subsequently considered the option but it did not find traction.
- There is a series of 'never cooperate with' statements from the main political parties. The DA states that it will never (again, as in the previous term) go into coalition with the EFF; the ANC will not do coalitions with the EFF; and the EFF next claims that it has succeeded in its 2021 objective – to help push the ANC below the 50 per cent threshold. The IFP announces that it will never work with the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal (other provinces would be continued as before, until that was changed a few days later). In the early rounds the EFF and ActionSA also do not see eye to eye.
- Talks between the DA and ActionSA flounder, with the insistence by Herman Mashaba in the early rounds of negotiation that he would have to be accommodated as mayor of Johannesburg.
- First evidence emerges of the council-sharing approach when the EFF tries to mediate an agreement in which it would take Tshwane, ActionSA Johannesburg and the ANC Ekurhuleni. This does not fly with the ANC. This also appears to be the last of EFF approaches to the ANC. At this point it also becomes clear that there will be deadlocks in forming metropolitan councils.
- The ANC and PA form a coalition agreement mostly covering the local municipalities of the Western Cape. The PA announces it in the language of 'we take' – a disproportionate allocation of municipal and council positions in exchange for keeping or elevating the ANC in power at some of these sites. A similar agreement is confirmed with ICOSA.
- High-level, behind the scenes negotiations unfold in the metros, for example in Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekweni, to gain the upper hand in coalitions that depend on lining up several one- and two-seat parties.
- The ANC and IFP would have formed a co-governance/council-sharing pact that would have included agreeing that where the IFP had the most seats, despite no outright majority, it would

form the municipal government and, reciprocally, the ANC would form the municipal government where it had the most seats. The IFP announces these details, but a few days later the ANC states that it has no agreement with the IFP – and this reopens much of KwaZulu-Natal for new party alignments.

- On the eve of the Johannesburg council meeting of 22 November 2021, Mashaba puts together the plan, and the EFF agrees, that the two parties will help vote the DA into power in the Gauteng metros. The rationale is to keep the ANC out of power and not to let it back in through the ‘back door’. The DA claims it is not part of any such agreement, but nominates its own candidates and accepts the election, as aided by the EFF-ActionSA axis.
- This model gains momentum as parties in many hung councils scramble and get creative in establishing a majority. Council-sharing takes place and municipal portfolio gifting to coalition partners flourishes. The arrangement also opens doors for the EFF that has been searching for sites to ‘prove its ability to govern’, irrespective of lacking the voter mandates.
- Beyond the domain of essential coalitions to form council majorities, the party mayhem of new alliances extends into areas where the ANC has gained a majority, as in Mpumalanga’s Mkhondo – where councillors rebel against ANC NEC candidate prescriptions and vote Independent, ATM and EFF councillors into the top positions.
- In the Gauteng metros the DA forges ahead with negotiations, trying to grow out of being a minority government, and hoping to strike a policy-programme deal with the EFF and ActionSA. There are several returns to the negotiation table.

Table 2.5: Typology of emerging coalition and confidence-and-supply models in South Africa

COALITION MODELS	Features
Top-up	Simple model, easy to manage, top-up of support of a party that hovers just below an outright majority, loyal partners give the majority.
Power alternation	One small tiebreaker vacillates between main parties, common in local municipalities, catapult main parties in-out of power.
Cobbled coalition	One major party needs multiple small entities to reach 50%+, these coalitions can be difficult to hold together (except through patronage).
Complex kingmaker	A modestly big party (smaller than the two main parties) is essential for either big one to get 50%+.
Complex multiparty kingmaker	A big party needs both a major tiebreaker and small entities to get to 50%+.
CONFIDENCE-AND-SUPPLY MODELS	Features
Standard confidence-and-supply – and minor variant	In a stable relationship, probably not formalised, a party supports another/ others/a coalition, to pass motions and budgets; it also takes the form of parties ‘agreeing not to oppose’.
Confidence-and-supply council-sharing	Political parties share councils, allocating or splitting them up among the participants and ensure the other of support in that one assuming full governance; there may be cross-over oversight of finance.
COOPERATIVE FRONT	Features
Complex cooperate-against-enemy front that combines with either coalitions or confidence-and-supply agreements	In complex multiparty arrangements parties unite against a common opponent (probably the ANC), vote into executive a multiparty line-up of discordant parties, keeping in view the bigger prize of revenge on the enemy. The front is also manifested as a voting alliance.

Source: Booyesen, 2021c; Author’s ongoing research.

Constituting local government coalitions in South Africa, circa 2021 – a typology

The early phases of coalition negotiation and establishment following LGE2021, and the evolving negotiations, followed in the context of sparse information on agreements, and few public statements on the details. The arrangements have been coalescing into a number of typical coalition formations and in several variations on the theme of confidence-and-supply agreements. To some extent they resemble the types of coalitions that were present from 2016–2021. In other respects there is evidence of diversified confidence-and-supply variants (see Table 2.5).

It is possible, as coalition praxis unfolds in South Africa’s municipal terrain, that new types of coalitions and confidence-and-supply agreements will be added.

Applications of the coalition types

This section provides select illustrations of the coalitions and confidence-and-supply agreements that have emerged or were confirmed in late 2021 (see also Analysis 3, with its comparative party political focus).

In the top-up model the ANC is the main example of the party that only needed minimal help to gain an outright majority. Ekurhuleni 2016–2021 illustrates the model (Analysis 10). Top-up was provided by the AIC, while the IFP and PAC provided further back-up. This model functioned with stability, in essence because the DA as biggest single other opposition party had no prospect of constructing a majority. From the demeanour of both the ANC and DA in 2021 it was clear that they had taken on board lessons from 2016–2021: to have key partners in place to help secure municipal power piecemeal, council by council. The DA’s agreement with the FF+ was another case in point, taken from 2016–2021 into the new term. The FF+ did the topping-up for the DA and together the two parties secured the governing majority in several municipalities in the Western Cape (Analysis 13). The ANC also applied this model in its pact with the PA (Analysis 13) which had been growing nationally, especially in coloured communities. Its guaranteed support tilted municipal power in favour of the ANC in a few local municipalities. It would have helped the ANC to retain metros like Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg had the EFF and ActionSA not devised their united front revenge strategy.

The DA in Cape Town in 2006 (Analysis 11), led in council by the then-rising Helen Zille, put together an alliance that pivoted around the DA, the biggest of the parties involved. It depended on the cooperation of a pack of small opposition parties. This could be described as a cobbled-together coalition (the DA had to scrape together a diverse set of parties). It was a high-maintenance coalition, but it persisted and also led to modest party realignment. The DA tried to advance this model in its 2016 multiparty agreement with the FF+, ACDP, Cope and the UDM, and it persisted, largely, apart from the UDM breaking ranks with the DA to align with the ANC in Nelson Mandela Bay.

Complex coalition construction ruled in Tshwane (Analysis 9) and Johannesburg (Analysis 8) in the 2016–2021 term. It was in the form of the DA aligning with modest-sized (EFF) and small and minor parties to oust a predominant party – a combination of a confidence-and-supply (conditional and partial) agreement with the EFF, and a formal (presumably binding) agreement with a set of smaller, generally DA-aligned, parties. This coalition type had also included national-level policy demands which, in the 2021 term, would also be applied across different models. It functioned until 2019. This model, a combination of different types of parties, bound by different agreements into the coalition, became prevalent post-LGE2021, probably in a more complex form than before. In the first term (2016–2021), the EFF played coalitions in a relatively self-centred manner, mindful of its own interests and benefits. In the second term, having claimed shared success for pushing the ANC below 50 per cent, the EFF was determined to position itself as the next-epoch coalition partner to the ANC

at national level, with hopes of extracting the policy concessions the ANC would not cede in LGE2021 negotiations.

The power alternation coalition model was practised mostly in local municipalities where low councillor counts help to induce this practice. It has nevertheless also been used in metros: a single small party alternates between two bigger partners (often the ANC and DA), bargaining for positions and other opaque benefits. In the 2016 term, the PA played this role in Nelson Mandela Bay (Analysis 6). Central Karoo, Garden Route and Eastern Cape coalition councils also hosted the practice. Early practice in 2021 indicated that this mode would continue. The fact that the ANC and some community parties in the wake of LGE2021 continued their pre-election coalitions was no guarantee that there would be stability in the subsequent months and years.

A variation of this model emerged in 2021 in the wake of the collapse of the 2021 ANC-IFP deal, when the IFP joined forces with the EFF in KZN local municipalities (Analysis 12). The EFF got the positions of deputy mayor in the Dannhauser, Nongoma and uMhlathuze municipalities. At this time council-sharing also morphed into concerted portfolio and position-sharing within councils: this is standard coalition practice where the positions of mayor, deputy mayor, speaker and chief whip are rewards for entering into coalitions and portfolios on the mayoral executive committee are also sought-after coalition commodities. In 2021 there was much evidence of these potential platforms for patronage being handed out, blatantly. In the Nelson Mandela Bay case it was remarkable in that approximately ten micro-parties were each rewarded with a portfolio (Analysis 6).

Another variation, also aborted, surfaced in early November when talks happened between the ANC and DA on whether a grand coalition at local level might have been the next step for South Africa. The negotiations did not advance, because the ANC would have found it impossible to justify with its own constituency and the DA would be forfeiting prospects of making political capital out of the ANC's support haemorrhage. The EFF rationalised its siding with the DA in the council elections of 22–23 November 2021 as a step to prevent the DA from handing over control of the metros to the ANC (the DA denied the existence of such a plan).

Unsolicited coalitions – voting alliances

In several municipalities of hung status, including the Gauteng metros, the DA said it was ready to go into opposition rather than being held hostage by the EFF, or by Mashaba who would depend on EFF endorsement. However, ActionSA took the initiative (according to Mashaba in terms of a plan that God revealed to him and he then shared with the EFF's Floyd Shivambu) and decided to support the DA candidates in major metro elections for mayors and speakers, rather than hand these councils to the ANC (Mashaba, 2021a; 2021b). The EFF's Malema (2021) had touted his party's role in bringing the ANC to a below-50 per cent position as the EFF's significant achievement in LGE2021. Both the EFF and ActionSA stressed that they are willing to negotiate with the DA to convert the bloc support into coalition status, but stressed the unity of the EFF-ActionSA axis. Some of the immediate demands were the insourcing of municipal workers, whose current outsourcing contracts were 'enriching ANC tenderpreneurs', according to Malema. These EFF-ActionSA voting alliances with the DA (and the DA's party associates) were no coalitions; there was no pre-existing agreement on cooperation and no agreed, joint policy programme. The opposition voted as a bloc and constituted a de facto voting alliance. In effect, volatile minority governments were being installed, while negotiations to possibly achieve a closer association lingered. The DA leader John Steenhuisen (2021) acknowledged the unsolicited task of the DA, namely to constitute coalition majority governments. He argued that the DA was 'going to work hard to make these governments less vulnerable by doing all that we can to build majority coalitions that don't rely on voting support on a case-by-case basis from parties outside of the coalition'.

Community organisation coalitions

Two local municipalities, Maluti-a-Phofung in the Free State and Lekwa-Teemane in the North West, illustrate the phenomenon of community organisations taking the lead in constituting councils, albeit with party political support. In both these cases the EFF provided lead support, and the DA and FF+ supported without forming part of the coalition. In Maluti-a-Phofung, MAP16 (its origins among expelled ANC councillors) dominated (see Booyesen, 2021b: 32). Besides the EFF, MAP16 aligned with the Dikwankwetla Party, African Transformation Movement, the South African Royal Kingdoms Organisation (Sarko) and the African Independent Congress (AIC). In Lekwa, Mpumalanga, the Lekwa Community Forum (LCF) took the mayorship and speaker positions with the help of the EFF and other opposition. The ANC has 13 out of the 30 council seats, and the LCF expressed surprise that it had been permitted to slip into power – albeit in a town in which service delivery had long collapsed. Maluti-a-Phofung was equally a failed municipality, now placed in community party hands – and continuously under administration. The Free State MEC for local government issued notice of his intention, coincidentally at the time of this community coalition takeover shaping up, to announce that the municipality was being consulted with a view to adopting the more affordable committee executive system (instead of the mayoral executive system) (Dukwana, 2021). This would, effectively, place the ANC in a commanding, biggest party position again.

The application of these coalition models contributed to establishing local municipal governance, although potentially in a largely unstable coalition government context. When the moment arrived to build the post LGE2021 coalition governments it showed that political parties had learned lessons on how to get their way in negotiations, how to let coalition agreements collapse, and how to use their local power to advance other demands, including for policy, image and power, at national level.

Trajectories into complex coalition futures, 2021–2026

Multiple stalemates and stumbling blocks appeared in the coalition negotiations in the two weeks from results promulgation to the cut-off point for constituting municipal councils. At a fair number of municipal sites voting alliances came into effect, although these were no guarantee that coalitions would follow. Wrangling was set to continue in the forthcoming months and years, even if there appeared to be shared purpose in uniting against a party political 'enemy'. Local government was certain to remain unsettled as the bigger political show unfolded – that of the possible waning of the ANC, of opposition parties sensing opportunities for growth and operating to position themselves for long-desired, definitive advances on the ANC. The ANC remained more than twice as big as its closest opponent, the DA, and more than four times as big as the EFF, yet received less than 50 per cent of the vote nationally for the first time since 1994 (a weak performance that was compounded by an already low rate of voter registration and electoral turnout).

The opposition parties chose to interpret this as a mandate from voters to keep the ANC out of power. They read into the new balance of forces the possible end of close to three decades of ANC dominance. As is evident in the coalition typology (Table 2.5), come 2021 they were frequently unwilling to top up ANC power, or enter co-governance or shared power agreements with the ANC. A few micro-parties that were aiming for more immediate positions and opportunities for their followers made themselves available, plus a few individuals and micro-entities that had some pro-ANC affinity.

For some of the de facto minority governments at the local sphere, including the Gauteng metros, there was the spectre of ongoing coalition destabilisation and failure. In many a local municipal council there was no apparent reason why instability in the 2021–2026 term would not be endemic. Promises of ingrained instability undergirded coalition formation in many of South Africa's hung

municipalities. Effective long-term management, guided by well-considered, predictable governing coalitions, seemed like a mirage.

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ANALYSIS 3

COALITION NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S LOCAL ELECTIONS 2021

AMUZWENI NGOMA

Despite the fact that coalitions have been relatively widespread in South Africa, even before the escalation of November 2021, firm coalition agreements have only rarely guided coalition practice. Where such agreements have been in place, they were often discarded as soon as political expediency entered. This analysis of coalition practice in the immediate aftermath of LGE2021 indicates that political parties may still be shunning the adoption of formal agreements and are guided by numbers and rewards more than by principles and policies. LGE2016 saw many of the coalition agreements being driven less by ideological and policy coherence than by the power and office seeking goals of parties and their leaders (Booyesen, 2021).

Iterations of multiparty coalitions, although present throughout South Africa's democratic period, gained prominence in 2016, when most metropolitan governments and some large towns became sites of heightened coalition politics. The 27 local government coalition sites of 2016 are distinguishable for not only adding metropolitan coalitions, but also for their numerous and unstable coalition constellations that weakened governance (Booyesen, 2021). Taking place in hung councils in all provinces, except for Mpumalanga in 2016, these coalitions took the form of co-governance arrangements and confidence-and-supply agreements offered to minimal or oversized coalitions.

The centripetal feature of South Africa's multiparty coalitions, come the post-election season of 2021, is that they seem to cohere on ousting the once dominant African National Congress (ANC) from government.

In the LGE2021 aftermath, negotiations often failed to yield coalition agreements among opposition parties. The final dates for councils to be constituted through the election of key functionaries, 22 and 23 November 2021, saw opposition parties – in the absence of coalition agreements – forming unprecedented voting blocs to elect council leadership including speakers of council and mayoral positions. South African political parties are alternating between coalition formation and supplementary multiparty cooperation. The voting bloc became the supplementary cooperative stance through which council leadership, for example in Gauteng's metros, was elected. The voting bloc in these instances comprised the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), ActionSA, Freedom Front Plus (FF+), Democratic Alliance (DA), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), United Democratic Movement (UDM) and Congress of the People (Cope). Elections for council leadership favoured the DA nominees. However, the voting margins in each metro were not significantly wide, indicating that the Patriotic Alliance (PA), African Independent Congress (AIC) and small parties voted with the ANC.

In the Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekweni metros, the ANC formed coalitions with small parties. In Nelson Mandela Bay, it took the ANC, plus about five of the small parties, to constitute the minimum to run the council. The ANC's eThekweni bloc is also a conglomeration of small and micro parties, many of them new; these include the 2016 coalition partners, African Independent Congress (AIC) and African Transformation Movement (ATM).

The chief whip of the FF+, Corné Mulder, told eNCA on Wednesday 24 November that the voting bloc was an outcome of the multiparty and bilateral coalition negotiations, which had helped parties understand the 'stumbling blocks' and necessary action to form coalitions. Mulder explained that the first round of negotiations delivered the agreement that the first objective was 'to remove the ANC from power', and the second was to 'try' and negotiate coalition governments (eNCA, 2021). By Friday 26 November, the DA leader John Steenhuisen said they were 'reaching out to parties as we try to establish majority coalitions in hung councils. This will be critical if we want to create stable governments that are able to best serve residents.' In Gauteng's metros, a DA-led majority coalition without the EFF (or ANC) is possible only in Tshwane. The 2021 LGEs have also continued to deliver new, micro parties and community organisations that have won seats and emerged as kingmakers. These have once again bolstered the waning ANC as the lead coalition partner of minority governments in numerous municipalities and two metros.

The landscape of South African coalition politics is once again dominated by precarious minimal winning coalitions or minority governments. The rest of this analysis briefly reviews the coalition strategies of the main political parties.

ANC coalition negotiations and agreements

The ANC's top party leaders adopted a three-tier process in which national, provincial and local leaders would initiate and agree on coalitions (Maqhina, 2021). The ANC stated that ideological coherence was a key factor in the choice of coalition partners and coalition agreements. It sought coalition partners that were committed to the rule of law and socio-political stability, as well as the constitutional principles of transforming South Africa into a 'non-racial, non-sexist, united and democratic country'. By 29 November 2021, coalition agreements were reached in all the provinces except Mpumalanga and the Free State.

The ANC leads the Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape and eThekweni in KwaZulu-Natal metros by coalition with small parties, many of them new. The 120-seat Nelson Mandela Bay council has a 48-seat ANC-led government constituted with the Northern Alliance (NA) (three seats), Abantu Integrity Movement (AIM) (one seat), Defenders of the People (DOP) (two seats), and parties that participated in DA-led Nelson Mandela Bay coalitions in 2016: the UDM (one seat), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC, one seat) and PA (two seats). The speaker is from the NA, and mayor from the ANC. The members of the Mayoral Committee come from all the coalition parties except AIM. The infrastructure and engineering portfolio is with the NA; Treasury with the DOP; Safety and Security with Good; Electricity and Energy with the UDM; Public Health with the AIC; and Sport and Recreation with the PAC. The three portfolios of Roads and Transport, Corporate Services and Human Settlements are led by the ANC (Ellis, 2021). This configuration illustrates how council positions and portfolios are used as reward for building the minimal majority coalitions.

A similar coalition arrangement was crafted for the eThekweni council, where the ANC had its candidates elected as mayor and speaker. ANC representative Nhlakanipho Ntombela said the party 'engaged smaller parties who share the same values with us' to form the voting bloc (Mabaso, 2021). The DA's Nicole Graham tweeted that the IFP did not vote with the ANC (Mabaso, 2021). This happened after the breakdown of the tentative ANC-IFP agreement (national level) in the preceding

week, to form coalitions for hung municipal councils in KZN. Abantu Batho Congress (ABC), a micro-party with two seats, was critical to the ANC's voting bloc; ABC leader Philani Mavundla was elected deputy mayor in the ANC's voting bloc – earlier, he had been approached by the IFP to vote with the EFF, ACDP and DA in the council.

The ANC-IFP agreement, had it been carried, would have enabled the party with the most seats in the 21 hung councils in KZN to form a minority government, while the other would have taken the role of the opposition in the council (Saville, 2021). The agreement collapsed because the ANC failed to agree to the municipalities the IFP had selected to govern. The IFP insisted that uMshuza, eThekweni, uMhlathuze and Newcastle be divided between the two parties (Saville, 2021). Issues of interparty friction relating to the naming of a major road and an ANC KZN region, both experienced as demeaning by the IFP, also entered the fray.

In the Western Cape's hung councils, the ANC chief negotiator was Lerumo Kalako (Solomons, 2021). The ANC spokesperson in the Western Cape reiterated that the ANC's negotiations were based on principled commitment by partners to ensure service delivery, good governance, redress in favour of the poor, accountability of officials, anti-corruption and stability.

One of the first ANC coalition agreements of 2021 was constituted in the Western Cape municipality of Laingsburg. In the Laingsburg seven-seat council, an oversized coalition (a coalition containing more parties than needed to make a majority) was formed between the ANC, Patriotic Alliance (PA), Karoo Democratic Force (KDF) and Karoo Gemeenskap Party (KGP). The ANC holds two seats, and the PA and KDF each holds one. The PA obtained the mayoral seat. In the Prince Albert and Beaufort West municipalities the Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA) and PA are in coalition with the ANC. In Kannaland's seven-seat local municipality, following public pressure, the ANC undertook to reconsider its ICOSA governing coalition (given the standing conviction of an ICOSA leader) and then withdrew from the specific alliance, moving to the opposition benches. ICOSA's three seats limited the options.

DA coalition negotiations and agreements

On 22 November 2021, as the deadline for the formation of councils loomed, the DA experienced an unexpected voting bloc windfall from the EFF and ActionSA, thereby clinching the mayoralship and speakers of council in the City of Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg and City of Tshwane.

In Ekurhuleni, DA candidates were elected into the positions of mayor, speaker and chief whip (Mahlali, 2021). In Johannesburg, similarly, the DA's nominees succeeded through the council votes to become mayor, speaker and chief whip. In Tshwane, the DA's nominations for the mayoral, chief whip and speaker positions were uncontested. The DA in Tshwane had a majority voting bloc that did not depend on the EFF and ActionSA. At the time of writing, early December 2021, the constitution and party-distribution of positions within the three-metro's mayoral councils are yet to be announced.

The EFF and ActionSA bilateral alliance created political discord, as it forced minority coalitions on the DA that would be 'dependent on the EFF to stay in power' (DA, 2021) – the DA was voted into council power yet would be forced to negotiate major council decisions with tiebreaker parties, especially the EFF and ActionSA. DA leader Steenhuisen explained that no prior agreement had been made with the EFF. Before the three-metro win, the DA had rejected the EFF's 2021 offer of another confidence-and-supply arrangement. The EFF had offered to stay outside a DA-led minority coalition but support it on decisions that it agreed with (DA, 2021).

After the three-metro win, Steenhuisen said that no concessions would be offered to the EFF, and that he expected the metro governments to be short-lived. He said the DA was prepared to return

to its initial coalition stance, which was to either form majority coalitions with parties that agreed to its 'core values of accountability, transparency, accessibility and responsiveness, commitment to the rule of law and constitutionalism', or form strong opposition coalitions (Madiba, 2021; Democratic Alliance, 2021). By late November 2021, negotiations were unfolding. The DA was seeking additional coalition partners among other parties in a bid to constitute majority coalitions.

EFF coalition negotiations and agreements

As with the LGE2016, the EFF's first approach to 2021 coalition negotiations was to draft a set of principles upon which it would negotiate party coalitions, particularly with the ANC. It required:

- Appreciation of the EFF's seven non-negotiable pillars for economic freedom in our lifetime;
- Service delivery commitments with timelines, particularly on land, jobs, water, electricity, flushing toilets, and care for people with disabilities;
- Anti-racism – meaning that all coalitions that were the outcome of EFF participation must not reinforce supremacy and Afrikanerdom;
- An understanding that there would be exchange municipalities (agreement to allocate municipalities between the EFF and other parties) and in municipalities allocated to the EFF the party would be allowed to govern exclusively. Where this happened, there should be agreement on oversight functions given to the coalition partner(s);
- Non-interference in the appointment of municipal managers and all other senior managers;
- Publication of all the concrete agreements reached with coalition partners to avoid a perception that there were secret agreements;
- Constant and honest engagement and reports to the people on the progress made on coalitions (EFF, 2021).

The EFF also required that the ANC, as a possible coalition partner, should formulate a project plan for land expropriation without compensation, the creation of a state bank and the nationalisation of the South African Reserve Bank. No parties, including the ANC, acceded to the EFF's coalition framework.

Apart from the not-agreed-to confidence-and-supply agreement with the DA and its coalition partners in the FF+, ACDP and Cope in the three-metros, the EFF has few coalitions across the hung municipalities. Notable among them, in the Free State the EFF secured the 24 votes it needed to obtain the mayoral seat in the 46-seat Metsimaholo municipality. Like the DA, the EFF had 12 seats, with the FF+ holding three, and ATM, the Metsimaholo Community Association (MCA) and AIC each with one seat. With its 16 votes, the ANC voted for the EFF's candidate for mayor. Reasoning that the ANC's support would render its minority coalition dependent 'on the mood of the ANC councillors' and was therefore 'bound to fail', the EFF asked its mayor to resign. It was done.

Conclusion

By the end of November 2021, few coalition agreements had been publicised by South Africa's political parties. Similar arrangements to those of the 2016 coalitions were made, with small parties emerging as kingmakers while precarious confidence-and-supply arrangements emerged. The ANC would need close management of its coalition partners, many of which had broken away from the party and despite ideological affinity had also fallen out with the mother body. In 2016, the DA's more stable coalition partners were the ACDP, Cope and the FF+, which coalesced on matters of clean governance. The DA's intra-coalition instability derived from the UDM, EFF and IFP, parties with less ideological affinity with the DA. Yet, they converged on the opposition rallying call of the time: to remove the ANC from power. In the 2021–2026 coalitions, practicability and stability will depend on how this balance of forces plays out.

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ANALYSIS 4

YOUTH AND COALITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA – A FUTURE HARDLY SPOKEN ABOUT

WANDILE NGCAWENI

The 2021 local government elections once again forced South Africans to debate the cause of increasingly low youth voter participation. Some argue that youth are apathetic; others point out that this characterisation is simplistic at best and offensive at worst. This analysis, taking a municipal coalitions focus, tracks the local election registration and turnout trends among youth. It assesses youth participation in LGE2021; it also investigates the role youth have played in shaping party-political mandates and the extent to which they influence the shaping of the coalition partnership decisions across the country.

Immediately after LGE2021, young people had an opportunity to propel local-level attention to their needs to the top of the parties' coalition negotiation agendas. This analysis finds that youth, in line with the rest of the electorate, were inclined towards withdrawal and distrust of electoral politics, institutions and leaders. Not only did this have an impact on the 2021 LGE; it also had implications for political parties and the regeneration of their support bases.

In this analysis, trends in youth voter registration are taken as an indicator of youth uptake of the options of electoral participation. The analysis considers coalitions becoming a constant norm in South African politics, and the options available to and exercised by young people to voice and influence political and policy change. It looks briefly at views of youth of the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in post-election coalition debates.

In numbers: Youth participation in turnout context

The National Youth Policy for 2020–2030 (NYP 2030) defines young people as those aged between 14 and 35. The Electoral Commission (IEC) says that citizens are eligible to register at the age of 16 and can vote at 18. The Midyear Population Estimates of July 2021 find that there are 60.14 million people in South Africa (StatsSA, 2021a). There are 4,739,305 persons aged between 20 and 24, and 5,324,134 persons aged from 25 to 29. As a point of comparison, the IEC's (2021) registered voter statistics reveal that the number of 18 to 19 year-olds, the first-time voters, stood at 78,147 for males and 110,946 for females, while of the 20 to 29 year-olds, 2,013,808 males and 2,408,273 females registered to vote in the 2021 local government elections across the country.

In the 2016 municipal elections, of the 11.88 million eligible 18- to 19-year-olds, only 6.28 million (53 per cent) were registered to vote (MISTRA, 2019). Overall, the number of registered voters across all

provinces was 26,204,579 and the voter turnout was 12,063,759. This meant that voter turnout in the 2021 Local Government Elections, at 45.86 per cent (IEC, 2021a), was a decrease from the 57.94 per cent (IEC, 2016) in LGE2016.

Making sense of youth participation

Young people are credited for being a dynamic source of innovation through participating in, contributing to and catalysing important changes in political systems and economic opportunities (UNDP, 2013: 1). LGE2021 saw some young people running as political party and independent councillor candidates. This is important in that it acknowledges that political parties want to be seen to be relevant and inclusive to young people. S'thembiso Msomi (2021: 20) notes that youth in South Africa have always played pivotal roles in pushing the country in new directions, especially in times of crisis and despair. But as the UNDP report notes, 'young people are usually politically active in universities, but most ... are disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and are excluded from policy development'. According to Msomi, the loss of trust in the system is a vote of no confidence, a silent push which may lead to loud actions, away from the ballot.

The IEC (2021b) finds that 398 (4.20 per cent) of 20- to 29-year-olds and 2,571 (27.14 per cent) of 30- to 39-year-olds have been elected councillors in LGE2021. During both local and national elections there is always a challenge from young people, as a large demographic of the population and a significant influencer of election outcomes, for political parties to consider and include them as electoral candidates. These numbers reported by the IEC are relatively small considering that there were just over 9,400 councillor candidates in LGE2021.

It is difficult to provide a definitive conclusion whether the inclusion of young people between the ages of 18 and 19, 20 and 29, and 30 to 35 years on candidate lists translates into voter confidence in the political parties because there was a substantial drop in voter turnout in LGE2021. In the 2016 local elections, 15 million people voted, but only 12 million cast their vote in 2021 (IEC, 2021a, 2016).

The drop in both turnout and registration numbers is significant but, as Mazibuko and Mbete (2021) argue, there was more than one reason for people not turning up at the polls. Koko (2021) reports that '80 per cent of people of voting age that are dissatisfied and disillusioned with the country's political system were the reason for the drastic drop in voter turnout'. Disillusionment, slow service delivery, no job opportunities and public-sector corruption are also among the main reasons, argue Baloyi (2021) and Doods (2021).

The reasons can be interpreted as driven by a longstanding, persistent crisis of economic, social and political degeneration. Although young people are in no way monolithic, they share common challenges – thus their collective snub of the polls in LGE2021. There is also an argument that the IEC has not been effective at voter education, on both technical and political aspects and especially in relation to first-time voters, who were not informed of the purpose and power that comes with the vote, according to Doods (2021). On the other hand, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Elections Satisfaction Survey found that 60 per cent of the voters in LGE2021 believed that the IEC's voter education was very effective (HSRC, 2021).

Have youth been thinking about coalitions?

The shift in political party dominance away from the ANC in many municipalities is a result of growing dissatisfaction with service delivery, misgovernance and corruption (Mokgale, 2021). No doubt, young people and youth political formations have had to contend with the electoral outcome of dissatisfaction, which played a part in introducing coalitions to their localities. Youth political

formations bear the responsibility of convincing young people to participate in elections. As coalitions will affect their ability to get what they vote for, youth cannot avoid having a position on coalition debates within their political organisations.

Youth political formations have had to contend with the fact that post-election coalitions are becoming prevalent as contemporary politics develop (Kadima, 2014: 1). Young people and their political formations must understand that coalitions are a difficult political art form as they involve compromise with other coalition members on a variety of issues including on legislative policy and reforms (Moury and Timmermans, 2013: 17). They also have to familiarise themselves with the reality that coalitions are often conceived for opportunistic reasons rather than for collective interests (Oyugi, 2006 in Mokgale, 2021: 311), especially because coalitions are an association of at least two political parties working together based on elections outcomes (Kadima, 2014).

This raises the question of where South African political youth formations stand, and whether they have had a voice in recent governance developments. There has been little to no voice or presence of youth-wing representatives in the public debates or even in the coalition negotiation teams formed by the top three parties (ANC, DA and EFF). Failure of representation in this instance signals that political youth formations have not developed strategy or guidelines that inform their position on coalitions, and thus have had little influence on coalition decisions.

Political youth formation statements post-LGE – case study of the ANCYL, EFFSC and DA Youth

ANC Youth League

The African National Congress Youth League's (ANCYL) National Youth Task Team (NYTT) released a statement on 5 November 2021 wherein they addressed key issues of relevance to the youth organisation following the LGE outcomes.

The organisation acknowledged the participation of young people in the ANC's campaign. A member of the NYTT, interviewed by the author on 23 November 2021, said they were of the opinion that the only thing that saved the ANC in this local election was that young people were at the centre of the campaign. Had it not been for young ANC members and volunteers, the ANCYL believed the 2021 ANC local elections outcome would have been worse. The ANCYL Statement (2021) amplified this belief, arguing that '(t)hroughout the election campaign, ANCYL members and volunteers were at the forefront of advancing one of the twin tasks of the ANCYL, mobilising the youth behind the banner of the ANC'.

On ANC young councillors being elected, the statement confirmed the arguments that representation is a critical mandate for young people and political youth formations. The statement implored 'all young, elected councillors to place at the heart of service delivery the bread-and-butter issues of the society in general and active youth participation in the local economy and macro economy at large'. It noted the importance of the 'inclusion and deployment of young people into strategic positions of local governance across municipalities in the country'.

The statement is silent on high numbers of youth not registering or voting, but places blame generally on the slow renewal project of the ANC: 'There is no question that recording the lowest voter turnout in the history of our democracy warrants a thorough analysis of how we must implement the renewal of the ANC broadly.'

The statement does not mention the ANCYL's position on inevitable coalitions, following the result of 70 hung councils. This could be viewed as evidence of not being attuned to the fact that post-

election coalitions are becoming prevalent as contemporary politics develop in South Africa. The NYTT member interviewed by the author admitted to not having had an ANCYL representative in the Coalition Task Team that was set up by the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC), but insisted that the ANCYL was taking seriously the reality of coalitions and would most certainly create an ANC youth strategy on coalitions that they would feed into the parent body. Such a strategy would be underpinned by a commitment to serve communities and keep the interest of people.

DA Youth

An interview was conducted in Tshwane with a member of the Democratic Alliance Youth (DAY) Federal Executive (FedEx) and a ward councillor. The DAY FedEx member highlighted how the structure was 'heavily involved in the registration campaign on the ground, and on social media where we were encouraging young people to vote and make their mark ... We were also hosting rallies and leading door-to-door engagements and other online events to ensure that we stay visible'. This is consistent with ANCYL experience and confirms how critical the youth have been to political parties in the 2021 LGE. He revealed that the DAY had campaigned successfully for young people to join mayoral panels and be elected to councils: 'young mayors were elected across the country, with members of the DAY elected mayors in parts of the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal'. The DA seems to be making a norm of appointing members of its youth organisation to positions of leadership and is leading its ANC rival where this is concerned.

The DAY member said that although the youth campaign was successful internally it was less so in bringing in votes for the party, and this had affected the outcome of the election for the DA. He admitted that getting young people involved was a challenge because of their unwillingness to participate in elections. The low youth turnout in the 2021 LGE was 'a loss of opportunity'. He admitted that to do better in the next election the DAY needed to reinvent itself to attract more young people.

Asked about coalitions, he highlighted that DAY was able to give its views through its DAY national leader who sits on the party's highest decision-making body.

The DAY's approach and advice to the main DA FedEx is that we go into areas where there are common values and common principles ... the principles we hold when we engage our mother body on coalitions are that we must always take the opportunity to govern when it is available ... even though the mother body feels that we are a good party when we are in opposition, but our view is different; it is that you need to show a long-term track record of what you have done for people, not the battles you fought in opposition...'

The DAY appears to be ahead of the ANCYL in so far as thinking and strategising about coalitions is concerned. Not only can this serve to benefit the entire organisation but it also means that young people are demonstrating capacity for long-term thinking and imagination.

EFF Student Command

The interview, on 27 November 2021, with one of the national leaders of the Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command (EFFSC) on the role they played in getting youth to vote for the EFF revealed a consistent belief across the youth in the three parties. He highlighted that the EFF took the youth campaign seriously and even constituted a youth election committee. He pointed out: 'We have assisted the EFF to acquire the votes that they managed to get.'

Asked about the EFFSC's assessment of the causes of the low voter registration and turnout, the EFFSC member said they would be 'embarking on educating young people in communities to tell them their vote is their future'. He spoke about the plan of action, noting that at universities 'the EFFSC is doing very well. We are trusted. What needs to be done now is to translate the votes we get at universities into votes for the EFF at the next national election. We will run a campaign called 'community-based student activists' in which branches of the EFFSC must adopt neighbour communities where they are based and educate people on the importance of voting.' Unlike their ANCYL and DAY counterparts, the EFFSC has conceptualised a plan of action for mobilising and teaching young people about elections.

On the question of coalitions, the EFFSC is taking a different position from the other two youth formations; the member revealed that they are effectively going to rely on the mother body to determine coalition guidelines for the party. 'We are led by people whom we have elected and entrusted with responsibility of making these decisions; so far we do not have any problems with their leadership ... Remember, the EFF is not in a coalition with any party so it would be petty for the EFFSC to get too involved in coalition talks, but I suspect we will soon have a document on them [coalitions]'.

The EFFSC, like the ANCYL and DAY, does not have a seat on the party's main coalition negotiation team. With only a few platforms available to voice their views on coalitions, if they had any, the comment from the member was: 'We sit in the Central Command Team of the EFF which is a body that takes decisions. We also sit on the War Council of the EFF where strategic decisions are taken, where issues of national importance like coalitions are discussed.' This suggests that young people are not trusted by their political parties in relation to coalition deliberations, or are not seen as experienced enough to debate or help reach decisions. On whether the EFFSC agrees with the EFF giving key municipalities to the DA, he said, 'people are misunderstanding voting with the DA to remove the ANC as a coalition'.

Conclusion

This analysis explored key aspects of young South Africans not being interested in, registering for and participating in elections. It also presented the case that the youth's non-participation is a longstanding, persistent crisis caused by economic, social and political degeneration. It highlights how youth political formations contend with the fact that post-election coalitions are in South Africa to stay, and they must make sense of them. The brief case studies of the ANCYL NYTT, DAY and the EFFSC reveal how young people are critical of political parties and how important it is that they be taken seriously and given positions of responsibility. So far, it appears that the DA is doing better than the ANC when it comes to appointing the young in positions of power. As part of the problem, the ANCYL NYTT is not an elected structure and has limited lobbying power. An important finding is that DAY seems to be ahead of the ANCYL in thinking and strategising about coalitions. If political youth formations are to prove relevant, they will have to take serious positions on the question of coalitions.

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ANALYSIS 5

USING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE COALITION FORMATION IN MUNICIPALITIES

JENNICA BEUKES

Hung councils have been a common feature in municipalities since the ushering in of the decentralised system of local government in 2000 – which produced 29 of them. The 2021 Local Government Elections (LGE2021) set a record; 70 hung councils were recorded across South Africa (IEC, 2021). Although they are common in municipalities, coalition governments have not become institutionalised in the sense that there are no formal rules or guidelines. The Constitution of the Republic, 1996 and ordinary legislation do not contain provisions to define the principles, rules, procedures or sanctions that will apply to political parties and interests that agree to govern together in a coalition (Beukes and De Visser, 2021: 4; see also De Vos, 2021). This leaves parties to negotiate, structure and manage coalitions in a context of uncertainty.

Although the legislative framework for local government does not expressly regulate coalitions, there are certain legislative provisions to inform the approaches of political parties, and other interests, to coalition formation.

The purpose of this analysis is first to examine the influence of the 14-day timeframe prescribed in the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 on the coalition formation process. Are 14 days sufficient for parties to conclude coalition talks? What happens if they are unable to conclude them within the prescribed timeframe? In addition, the analysis considers how the particular structure of the executive in a municipality should guide parties' approach to coalition building.

Coalition formation in the aftermath of the 2021 local elections

The coalition formation process is that part of the coalition life cycle that is used to negotiate the coalition before it is established (Beukes and De Visser, 2021: 7). Section 29(2) of the Structures Act provides that after a council has been declared elected the parties have 14 days to negotiate and establish a coalition. On the 14th day, the council must have its first council meeting. The first order of business is, *inter alia*, to elect the speaker, mayor, mayoral committee or executive committee, and a council whip (SALGA, 2013: 16).

In addition, Section 45 of the Structures Act provides that members of the executive committee must be elected within 14 days from the date of the council's election. In the case of a mayoral executive system (followed by most of South Africa's municipalities), the mayor may structure the mayoral committee *after* the first council meeting.

The impact of the 14-day timeframe on coalition negotiations

In local municipalities, such as Bitou, Cederberg, Laingsburg and Oudtshoorn, coalition talks were concluded in fewer than 14 days (see also Analysis 13). In Bitou, a coalition was formed between the Democratic Alliance (DA) and two one-seat parties (the Active United Front (AU F) and the Plett Democratic Congress (PDF)); in Cederberg, the DA and Freedom Front Plus (FF+) formed a coalition with Cederberg Eerste (the Cederberg First Residents Association (CFRA) which had three seats where the DA had two); in Laingsburg the ANC went into a coalition with the Patriotic Alliance (PA) and Karoo Democratic Force (KDF); and in Oudtshoorn the ANC took the lead in a coalition with the Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA), the Oudtshoorn Gemeenskap Inisiatief (OGI) and the PA (IEC, 2021).

Several factors help account for these successes in terms of the 14-day time frame. It may be that coalition talks in local municipalities are easier than those in metropolitan municipalities with bigger councils and larger budgets. The smaller municipality and its resources suggest that fewer trade-offs are necessary to sustain the coalition. Entering talks with local political parties also makes coalition bargaining easier as it limits discussions to local matters. Reaching common ground on service-delivery objectives is relatively easy when coalition parties are responsible for delivering services to the same community. Coalition formation is easier too when coalition talks involve political parties that are ideologically or programmatically close to one another (such as the DA and FF+) or ANC and PA (where the PA discounts ideology in favour of positions and employment).

The LGEs produced hung councils in five metropolitan municipalities (metros): Ekurhuleni, City of Tshwane, eThekweni, City of Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay. Analyses 2 and 8 of this report question whether a coalition agreement was in fact reached between the parties in the Gauteng metros; despite not reaching formal agreements in the metros, ActionSA and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) proceeded to vote in favour of the DA and installed a DA minority government in the City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane and Ekurhuleni – their support for the DA was motivated by their common goal of keeping the ANC out of office. This shows that the context of coalition talks in the metros was very different from that in local municipalities. The electoral outcome in the metros limited the parties' options for potential coalition partners. ActionSA and the DA, for instance, did not share the same programmatic stances on policies relating to insourcing and to foreign policy and were not viable coalition partners. In this context, although it may also be that the 14-day period did not provide the negotiating parties with enough time to reach an agreement, it could also be that the parties reached a deadlock owing to the DA's unwillingness to compromise on its principles to field its own mayoral candidates (see Gerber and Hunter, 2021).

What happens if the parties cannot conclude coalition talks within the 14-day time frame?

If parties cannot reach an agreement in 14 days a provincial administrator may be appointed to the council or the council may be dissolved – which will give rise to fresh elections.

Appointing a caretaker in the council

If the political parties have the genuine intention of entering a coalition but simply require additional time to negotiate, the Structures Act makes provision for a caretaker to be appointed. Section 35(1) of the Act provides that if a council does not have enough members to form a quorum, the MEC for local government in the province must appoint one or more administrators to ensure the continued functioning of the municipality until the council has sufficient members to form a quorum.

On a broad purposive construction of the text, it appears broad enough to encompass those instances

in which the coalition parties are unable to have their first sitting because of prolonged coalition negotiations. The Structures Act then makes provision for a caretaker, whose role in the council would be restricted to essential business aimed at ensuring the ongoing functioning of the municipality.

Dissolving the council and having fresh elections

Fresh elections should be the last resort and must be considered only in exceptional circumstances. It is moot whether the inability to reach an agreement constitutes an exceptional circumstance warranting the dissolution of a council. The wishes of the electorate must be respected, and parties must as far as possible aim to work with the political parties in whom the voters have placed their confidence. Fresh elections cannot be called simply because prevailing circumstances make it difficult for political parties to govern in municipalities.

New elections may only be called if preceded by the dissolution of the council. The council may be dissolved in two ways. First, section 34(1) of the Structures Act permits a municipal council to dissolve itself with a supporting vote of at least two-thirds of the councillors (the term 'supporting vote' suggests that the two-thirds majority refers to all the members of the council, not merely a majority of the members present in a council meeting). However, political parties will have to carefully consider whether they are willing to risk losing the electoral gains they had made in the preceding election. The second way is for the council to be dissolved by the provincial government or, if the province fails to act, the national government, in terms of section 139 of the Constitution. Dissolving a council can only be done if it is *appropriate* and if the inability to establish a coalition or minority government constitutes an *exceptional circumstance*. In a section 139 intervention, dissolving a council may only be considered after other alternatives and less severe remedies have been ineffective – which suggests that it may take several months before elections can be called to dissolve a council, probably long after a coalition or a minority government has been established.

What can be done to meet the 14-day deadline?

Ideally, political parties should adhere to the law and conclude their negotiations within the 14-day time frame, before the council has its first sitting. This is to ensure that parties have a proper agreement by the time they officially become partners-in-government. There are, however, ways to get around the conundrum of prolonged coalition negotiations.

If political parties anticipate that their negotiations will take longer than 14 days they may have to prioritise certain items for discussion in the coalition talks – and much of this has been evidenced in deliberations in South Africa in November 2021. The priority items relate to decisions that must be taken in the first council sitting; before the first council sitting, coalition partners must as a minimum have reached consensus about who will be the mayor and (if applicable) deputy mayor, the speaker, and the whip of council; how the executive will be structured and who will serve on committees of council as well as who will be elected to the district municipality.

Bargaining continues throughout the life cycle of the coalition. After the first council sitting, parties can proceed to negotiate on other aspects yet to be determined, such as the content of a coalition programme. The partners do not have to reach consensus on every policy priority discussed in the coalition; they are allowed to impose an 'agree to disagree' provision in the coalition agreement that will regulate the policy areas on which political parties were unable to find one another (for example, insourcing in municipalities and matters not of direct relevance at the local level). This can bring stability in the coalition by ensuring that political parties focus on matters on which they agree, while reserving contentious policy priorities for implementation should any of the political parties win an outright majority in future.

Approaching coalition building by considering the municipal executive system

The context within which coalitions function should influence the structure that a coalition will assume. This context is in turn shaped by, inter alia, the institutional arrangements of the municipality, most notably the particular executive system in operation.

Coalitions vary in size, and the size of a coalition determines its type. Coalitions based on a minimal winning majority – where two or more parties and/or Independent councillors come together to constitute a majority government – are the most common in local government. The number of seats in the council, taken together, must contain 50 per cent plus one of the total membership of the council (see Beukes and De Visser, 2021: 7). Coalitions with a larger majority than what is required to establish a coalition are regarded as grand or oversized.

Determining the executive type in a municipality

The MEC for local government determines the type of executive system that will be established in a municipality in terms of a section 12 notice (section 12 of the Structures Act). Municipalities can have either an executive committee or mayoral executive system in place. There are fundamental differences between the two executive systems.

Characteristics of the mayoral executive system

In this system, executive power is vested in the mayor (section 7(b) of the Structures Act). Provided that the municipality is of a type empowered to establish an executive mayoral system, and the municipal council has more than nine councillors, mayors in this system are obliged to appoint a mayoral committee from among the councillors. Members of this committee provide the necessary assistance by exercising specific executive responsibilities or powers delegated to them by the mayor (section 60(1) of the Structures Act) and are directly accountable to the mayor, and not to the municipal council. By investing all executive authority in the mayor, the executive mayoral system increases the status of the office of the mayor. For coalition governments, this means that the coalition partner obtaining the office of mayor will wield the most power in the executive, for although other coalition partners may be appointed as members of the mayoral executive the mayor occupies a pre-eminent position in the executive arm of the municipality.

A benefit of the executive mayoral system is that the coalition government can assume complete control over the executive as the mayor decides who will be appointed to the mayoral committee, which could comprise only members of the coalition government and exclude opposition parties in the council. All the executive offices may be distributed among the coalition partners.

Characteristics of the executive committee system

In this system, the executive committee is a committee of the municipal council under s160(8) of the Constitution which guarantees the right of council members to participate in the executive committee in a manner that enables the parties and interests reflected within the council to be fairly represented. Executive authority is delegated to the whole executive committee. Save for the ceremonial role of the mayor, the mayor and other members of the executive committee have the same standing and are required to perform executive functions and take executive decisions collectively. The members of the executive committee, including the mayor, are collectively answerable to the council.

Section 43(2) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Act 3 of 2021 (Structures Amendment Act) provides a formula for the selection of executive committee members that

will ensure that the executive committee represents the parties and interests in the council in a substantially proportional fashion. It is axiomatic that this section has implications for coalition governments. Not all the coalition parties – especially smaller parties, regardless of their kingmaker status – always secure a seat on the executive committee. To compensate for this, section 43(2)(f) of the Structures Amendment Act permits a political party or interest from nominating a councillor from a different political party or interest to one or more of its allocated seats. This was the case in the eThekweni metropolitan municipality after the ANC put forward Philani Mavundla from the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) as a member of the executive committee – the ANC donated one of its seats to the ABC member in exchange for the party’s support in electing their mayoral candidate, and for general support in the council (see Goba, 2021).

Section 46 of the Structures Amendment Act also provides that members of the executive committee are determined for a fixed term until the next council is declared elected; this is subject to section 47 of the Structures Act which provides that an executive committee member vacates office during a council term if that member resigns, or is removed from the executive committee in terms of section 53, or ceases to be a councillor. If this happens, the political party or interest to which the seat was allocated must appoint another councillor to fill the vacancy.

Which form of coalition government is appropriate for each executive model?

The mayoral executive system is a majoritarian winner-takes-all model, or one in which the mayor has far-reaching powers over the party political composition of the executive. This model tends to promote adversarial politics between the governing and opposition parties in the council. It may be ideal for political parties in minimal majority coalition governments but the exclusion of opposition parties may foster conflictual council relations. The mayoral executive model is in essence a weaker model, as all it may take to collapse the coalition government is a motion of no confidence in the mayor – and in a minimal majority case it is easy to achieve this as the opposition need only influence a few councillors to vote in favour of a motion put forward by the opposition.

Conversely, the executive committee model is a consensus model aimed at distributing power equally and fostering a culture of cooperative governance. The model has the potential to increase stability in coalitions by removing the incentives for bringing motions of no confidence against senior political office bearers as the rest of executive committee will remain unaffected, and vacancies in the executive will simply be filled by the same party. Appointing all parties and interests, as represented in the council, to the executive committee also promotes high levels of inclusion in the formulation of policy which can, in turn, make it easier for adoption in the council.

To realise the potential of the executive committee system, it is important to have the appropriate coalition government formation arrangement in place. A grand coalition government that comprises all the political parties and interests represented in the council must be established: in an executive committee system there is no discretion on the mayor to decide. To avoid obstructive opposition parties in the executive it is necessary to include them in the coalition talks.

The case of *Mabaso and Another v Khumalo and Others* (7336/19P) [2019] ZAKZPHC 71 (30 October 2019) illustrates how important it is to align the executive system with the type of coalition government in order to bring stability in a coalition-led municipality. In this case, the executive committee of the AbaQulusi council comprised members of the ANC, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), DA and EFF. The IFP, DA and the EFF formed a coalition to oppose the ANC in the municipality. Despite governing together in the executive committee, the ANC still brought numerous motions of no confidence in the speaker and deputy mayor who were part of the coalition government.

If the municipality has an executive committee system, conflict between the governing and opposition parties will not necessarily be evaded. It may therefore pay off if coalition parties enter a grand coalition in municipalities with executive committee systems.

Conclusion

This analysis considered the legal-constitutional framework of coalition formation in the period following South Africa’s local government elections of 2021. The main clarifications that emerged are:

The impact of the 14-day timeframe on the coalition formation process

The time frame did not place strain on coalition talks in local municipalities where larger parties entered coalition governments with local political parties and interests. Coalition talks between parties that were ideologically close were also concluded within the 14-day time frame. Conversely, in metropolitan hung councils, the time frame may have placed pressure on the political parties to reach an agreement more quickly.

Deadlocks and municipal administration

On the other hand, negotiating parties in the major metros at the time of writing (early December 2021) were still unable to find one another on policy and programme matters, even if the council meeting and elections to major positions had taken place and, in effect, minority governments had been instituted. Not reaching an agreement can also be a valid outcome of the negotiation process. In the event that parties are unable to reach an agreement, a minority government is likely. Alternatively, if the parties require more days to negotiate, a caretaker may be deployed in a municipality until the parties can have the first sitting.

The possibility of fresh elections

Fresh elections are only possible if a council dissolves itself or if the province or national government dissolves a council. This can only be done if it can be proved that it is appropriate and that the inability to govern in a coalition constitutes an exceptional circumstance that warrants the dissolution of the council.

Matching coalitions and types of municipal executives

Finally, the executive type of municipality should guide the approach to coalition building. Whereas the mayoral executive type may favour a minimal majority coalition, this form of coalition will not be sustainable in an executive committee system in which all council parties and interests are represented in the executive in a substantially proportional fashion. For a coalition to be sustainable in a municipality with an executive committee, parties and interests should establish a grand coalition government in which the notion of opposition parties is minimised. This will help to avoid the unintended consequences of an executive governing with an opposition party that is simultaneously a coalition government partner.

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ANALYSIS 6

NELSON MANDELA BAY COALITION 2021: FORWARD TO THE PAST?

MCEBISI NDLETYANA

Now we know that the outcome of the 2016 local election in Nelson Mandela Bay was not a fluke. Once again, and in succession, electorates at the Nelson Mandela Bay metropolitan municipality in 2021 did not grant any of the contesting organisations majority support. Nelson Mandela Bay is one of the 70 hung municipalities in the country – the largest number since the installation of the current local government system in 2000 – and it seems unlikely that voters will return a majority party at any time soon. The two largest parties – the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the African National Congress (ANC) – both dropped below the 40 per cent support level. This places Nelson Mandela Bay, yet again, under a coalition government.

The pending coalition raises the question of whether this term is likely to be any different from the previous one, but before answering it is useful to take stock of how Nelson Mandela Bay got to be faced with yet another coalition and what significance, if any, can be drawn from the 2021 results.

Electoral participation, results and key winners

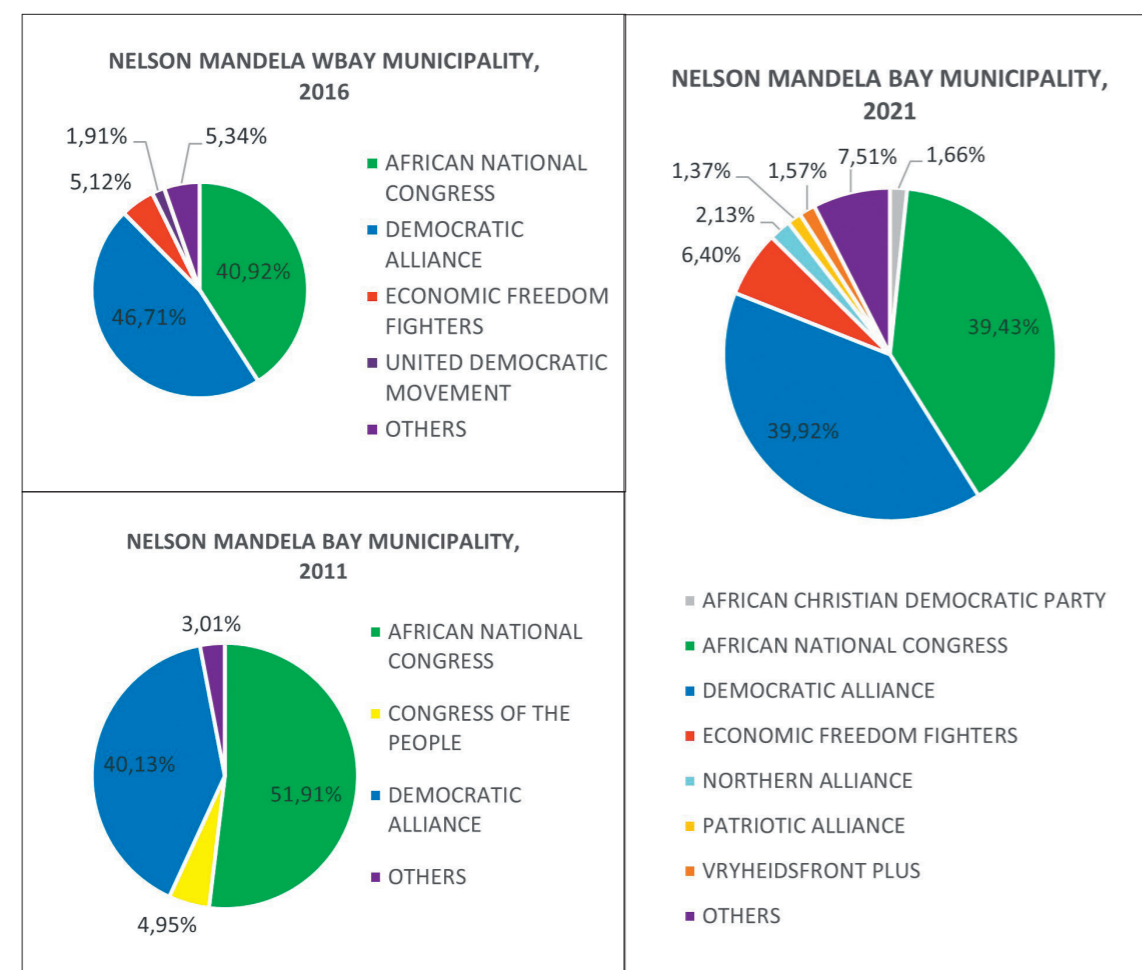
Voter participation was relatively low. The decline showed both at the level of registration and at voting on Election Day. In the previous election, 609,217 voters were registered, but there were only 583,270 in 2021. The voters roll had shed 25,947 voters. Turnout was, similarly, lower: at 45.88 per cent it was even below the 48 per cent national level. In 2016 it had been 63.86 per cent, above the national level of 58 per cent. The decrease was felt across the board, in all the wards. Turnout in predominantly white wards, for instance, was 53.65 per cent (down from 72.35 per cent in 2016). In predominantly African wards, at 42.37 per cent it was down from 59.61 per cent. At 45.79 per cent in predominantly coloured wards it had dropped from 65.03 per cent. This was a drastic turn for the Democratic Alliance (DA), which had experienced a surge in turnout in all elections since 2011. The high turnout had helped bring the party significant growth.

The relatively even spread of the decline meant that the two biggest parties were similarly affected (see Figure 6.1; Table 6.1). Both dropped from their 2016 tally. Despite pipping the ANC by more than 3,000 votes, the DA suffered most. Its share of the votes cast in the metro fell by roughly seven percentage points, from 46.71 per cent in 2016 down to 39.92. The ANC's 2021 tally of 39.43 per cent represents a marginal drop from its 40.92 per cent in 2016. Both parties maintained their dominance in their traditional strongholds roughly defined along racial lines. All 36 predominantly African wards went to the ANC and the 13 predominantly white ones to the DA. Similarly, the 11 predominantly

coloured wards continue to break massively in favour of the DA.

The third largest party in the metro, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was not spared the trends that affected the top two. Although the share of votes the party got overall (6.40 per cent) suggests a marginal increase from the previous 5.12 per cent, the EFF actually experienced a net loss. Its number of votes (both ward and PR ballot) dropped from 38,951 in the previous election to 33,662 in 2021. Like the ANC, the EFF continues to get its support almost exclusively from the predominantly African neighbourhoods – with a notable exception in the predominantly white ward 5, which the DA won commandingly, scoring 72 per cent while the EFF got an impressive 11.70 per cent, roughly similar to its average support in predominantly African wards. Largely made up of the middle-class neighbourhood of Central, Ward 5 has a notable presence of the black middle class and of students. These are the voters who possibly voted for the EFF.

Figure 6.1: 2011–2021 Local election results: Nelson Mandela Bay



Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 9 November 2021.

Table 6.1: LGE 2021: Nelson Mandela Bay seat allocation per party

Party name		Valid votes	Percentage support (%)	Party seats
African National Congress	ANC	207,443	39.43	48
Democratic Alliance	DA	210,007	39.92	48
Economic Freedom Fighters	EFF	33,662	6.40	8
Northern Alliance	NA	11,225	2.13	3
Freedom Front Plus	FF+	8,278	1.57	2
African Christian Democratic Party	ACDP	8,744	1.66	2
Defenders of the People	DOP	7,499	1.43	2
Patriotic Alliance	PA	7,197	1.37	2
Abantu Integrity Movement	AIM	5,672	1.08	1
United Democratic Movement	UDM	5,497	1.04	1
African Independent Congress	AIC	2,788	0.53	1
Good	Good	2,771	0.53	1
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania	PAC	2,607	0.50	1
Others	-	9,953	2.41	0
Total		523,343	100	120

Source: www.elections.org.za/electionresults/Downloads/ME-Results, accessed 27 November 2021.

Of the established parties the notable exceptions to the trend of decline or relative stagnation were the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and the Freedom Front Plus (FF+). The 2,712 votes (both Ward and PR) the ACDP got in 2016 grew almost threefold to 8,744. The FF+ in 2021 stands at an impressive 8,278, up from a paltry 1,917 in 2016. Conversely, the Congress of the People (Cope), one of the relatively old parties, was almost decimated, dropping from 5,587 to 1,238 votes. The United Democratic Movement (UDM) suffered a similar fate, declining from 14,569 to 5,497, but managed to retain some life.

Younger parties and new entrants are the major winners in this election. Among the new entrants, three made an instant mark, albeit to varying degrees. These are the Northern Alliance (NA), Defenders of the People (DOP), Abantu Integrity Movement (AIM) and GOOD. The Patriotic Alliance (PA), which made its debut in the 2016 election, more than tripled its support to 7,197, while the upstart NA pipped it by more than 4,000 votes.

A few inferences can be drawn from these results. The party structure is fragmenting further into multiple parties. If not staying at home, voters are continuing to shift away from their previous choices to new parties that appear to address their concerns. One of the concerns, among coloured voters especially, is what they experience as marginalisation. Largely seen as predominantly white and predominantly African, the DA and the ANC, respectively, are vulnerable to the criticism that they are indifferent to the plight of coloured neighbourhoods. This sentiment is exploited by parties such as the NA and the PA, which are focused exclusively on coloured communities. The NA has been particularly active in bringing attention to challenges that beset schools in the northern areas, while the PA has been unashamed in its rhetoric about championing the cause of the coloured folk. The impressive showing by the DOP, however, shows that all is not lost. Led by a young black socialite, Tukela Zamani, the DOP managed to gain support across the racial divide in both coloured and African neighbourhoods. This is also testimony to its racially diverse leadership.

Alongside the growing sense of marginalisation is the hardening of attitudes against a shared identity.

This is another trend in Nelson Mandela Bay. An increasing number of white voters is pulling away from parties that strive for trans-racial politics and moving towards racially exclusive conservatism. Civic ties are sagging, and voters prefer to trust their kinfolk over fellow citizens who make promises on the basis of commitment to the country's foundational values. Civic identity is making way for primordial identities.

The other extreme, populism, appears to be restrained in its appeal. In a metro with an unemployment rate (of close to 40 per cent) that mostly affects the youth, the EFF should be growing. But, its target constituency hardly participates in the polls, and the older voters, though affected by the issues that the EFF champions, are repelled by the party's belligerent rhetoric. South Africans, especially in places like the Nelson Mandela Bay, are socially conservative. This partly explains the growth of the ACDP. Religion remains a strong part of the country's social life.

Multiple winners: prospects for coalition formation and stability

Inevitably, the fragmented party structure has yielded a similarly diverse slate of winners.

Four more parties than in the previous metro election won seats, raising the number of parties in the incoming council to 13. Beyond the two largest parties (with 48 seats each), the rest of the 11 parties won between eight and one seats – of these, five parties secured one seat each. The increase in the number of small parties that won seats poses a challenge, not only for coalition formation, but also for the stability of the incoming coalition.

Experience and lessons

Nelson Mandela Bay had three mayors in close succession and, at one point, could not elect a mayor for a period of a year. The speaker even staged her own kidnapping from the council to prevent the election of a new mayor. Three factors occasioned instability: the nature and size of parties; the basis of the coalition agreement; and party coherence.

Parties based on patronage are vulnerable to the whims of their leaders. The UDM in Nelson Mandela Bay, under Mongameli Bobani, operated in such a manner. Bobani violated the founding agreement of the DA-led coalition that came into office in August 2016. A UDM strong-man at the metro, Bobani was not accustomed to abiding by rules – he acted as he pleased. His national leaders, especially Bantu Holomisa, indulged him as they credited the party's support in the metro largely to Bobani's charisma and machinations.

Bobani was also emboldened by the weakness of the coalition agreement in Nelson Mandela Bay. It lacked a legal standing, did not spell out any sanctions in instances of contravention and suffered from an absence of an independent arbiter over disputes. Bobani was not only allowed to misbehave, but coalition partners bickered among themselves about the extent of his misconduct. Rather than punish the culprit, they sought to spread the blame.

That said coalition agreements remain critical for the stability of coalitions. Where they are non-existent, things are worse. The 'faction of principle' (as opposed to the 'faction of spoils') within the ANC found it impossible to influence Bobani, once they had elected him mayor in August 2018, as they had no agreement to guide the coalition. Bobani exploited the ANC's factionalism. As long as the ANC (the largest coalition partner, holding 50 seats) was divided, Bobani's position as mayor was secured.

Besides factionalism and a strong-man syndrome, the turbulence of both the DA- and UDM-led coalitions in Nelson Mandela Bay was a function of party size. A one-seat party is tormented by

uncertainty over its prospects of returning to council in the next election. This predisposed most of the small parties – especially the PA, AIC, United Front (UF) and UDM – towards prioritising the accumulation of spoils over anything else, even to the detriment of government stability. Big parties with bright prospects of further growth, or of returning to majority status, tend to place a premium on governance. They are ambitious and forward-looking with an eye on pleasing voters (Ndletyana, 2021).

Both the context and outcome of LGE2021 yielded comparatively fewer challenges than before. There was cooperation between ANC factions, as evidenced by its list of candidates. The list was a balanced mix of candidates from both factions led by the current coordinator of the Regional Task Team, Luyolo Nqakula, on the one hand and Andile Lungisa on the other. With Bobani having died in 2020, the UDM at Nelson Mandela Bay in 2021 was led by a relatively young leader, Luxolo Namette, who appeared to be more pliant about party dictates than his predecessor.

Challenges remain, nonetheless. Small parties, with their penchant for pursuing spoils over all else, have multiplied. With the two biggest parties having ruled out forming a coalition with each other, the path to power and stability rested on small parties (excluding the EFF). Neither the DA nor the ANC was guaranteed of getting the 13 seats (out of 16) each needed to constitute the 61 majority in the council. Whichever got the EFF with its eight seats on its side had a better chance of getting its way. For the purpose of the inaugural meeting to elect the mayor and council officials, however, the EFF support was not a requirement. All that was required for the election were 61 councillors, constituting a quorum, to show up for the inaugural meeting. Whoever got the highest number of votes, for any elective position, would be elected.

Coalition formation: returning to a precarious existence

The new Nelson Mandela Bay coalition government appears poised to be a rerun of the previous unstable ones. The 13 parties divided into four groupings: DA, ACDP and the FF+; the ANC and the PA; seven small parties; and the EFF all on its own. The seven small parties were the Abantu Integrity Movement (AIM), African Independent Congress (AIC), Defenders of the People (DOP), Good, Northern Alliance (NA), Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM).

After it was snubbed by the ANC in its coalition talks at the national level, the EFF promised to return the favour. This meant that the EFF could either abstain or vote with the DA-alliance, which would add up to 60 votes – just one vote short of a majority. But, there was a still chance that the DA-alliance could end up with far more than 60 votes. The seven parties, with their combined 10 seats, were open to an alliance with the DA, and held discussions. Those discussions alarmed the ANC, which then resorted to some machinations. Xolela Nqatha, the ANC provincial MEC responsible for local government and traditional affairs, instructed the acting city manager, Anele Qaba, not to preside over the inaugural council meeting on 17 November 2021. Nqatha reasoned that Qaba no longer qualified to act in that role because, after it had initially expired earlier in October, his tenure was renewed irregularly – by the mayor, Nqaba Bhanga, without the approval of council as required by regulation. That was not procedural, validating Nqatha's intervention.

But Nqatha's objection was not spurred by a concern for proper procedure. He had known about the meeting a week earlier, but waited till the night before to issue the objection. The reason for the eleventh-hour intervention was that in addition to averting a possible DA victory the ANC had not concluded selecting its mayoral candidate. The postponement was not only to allow the ANC time to complete its selection process, but also to buy itself time to conclude a coalition agreement with the seven small parties.

Even with more time, negotiating a coalition agreement was still a tall order for the ANC. The small parties were furious at its machinations, decrying the obvious abuse of power by the MEC. They seemed even more determined to vote together, keeping the ANC out of government. The DA's insistence on taking both the mayoral and speaker positions, however, created an opening for the ANC. The NA, which got three seats, wanted the speaker position. The NA was further infuriated that the DA favoured Khusta Jack, whose AIM got one seat, for deputy mayor. The ANC offered the NA's Gary van Niekerk the speaker position and the rest of the small party positions in the mayoral committee. They were promised seven of the ten portfolios in the mayoral committee. The small parties agreed to the deal (see *HeraldLive*, 22 November 2021).

Converging for the inaugural council meeting again on 22 November 2021, it was still uncertain which side would win. The EFF had not declared which way it would vote. When it came down to actual voting, starting with the speaker position, the EFF chose the side of the DA alliance. That strengthened the DA considerably, but it was ultimately handicapped by one of its councillors, Retief Goosen, who was supposed to have resigned his position at the provincial legislature for councillor at the metro. He did not show up. As a result, the number for the DA alliance totalled 59, one short of the ANC's 60. Van Niekerk was voted speaker and the subsequent voting for mayor, deputy mayor and chief whip went to the ANC's Eugene Johnson, Buyelwa Mafaya and Wandisile Jikeka, respectively.

Although the ANC controls the mayoralty, power is effectively evenly balanced at 60 on each side. In instances of a tie over ordinary motions the speaker will cast the tie-breaker, most likely in favour of the ANC alliance. But all it takes for the government to collapse is one councillor to switch sides or simply abstain from voting on a motion of no confidence. It happened in the last term. And, in a coalition of eight parties, some of which have not worked together before, disagreements are probably unavoidable.

This coalition looks much like previous coalitions in the metro. For that reason, it may be nearly impossible to escape similar fates.

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ANALYSIS 7

BUILDING MUNICIPAL COALITIONS AS THE POLITICAL TECTONIC PLATES MOVE – ETHEKWINI 2021

IMRAAN BUCCUS

After much wrangling for party political control in the eThekweni hung council, a deal involving an Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)-African National Congress (ANC) coalition emerged. Just as South Africans were coming to terms with the pact, which would have marked a new phase in ANC-IFP cooperation, the agreement fell apart. The ANC and IFP accused each other of political treachery after the inaugural council sitting of eThekweni descended into chaos. On a different but interrelated battlefield and on the eve of the eThekweni meeting, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and ActionSA had aligned with the Democratic Alliance (DA) on a self-invited basis to make the Gauteng metros tumble in favour of DA coalition leadership. eThekweni was set to follow, but the council meeting was disrupted and suspended. Upon being reconvened two days later, an ANC-led coalition won the key council positions by a marginal majority. The ANC had held onto the metro.

Historically, in eThekweni, the ANC and IFP had a coalition of sorts in 1995. The work of Eveleth (1996) points to the post-apartheid interim council formed on a 50/50 basis between these two parties. This agreement did not last, as the IFP opted to work with the New National Party (NNP) and the then Democratic Party (DP). In the post-apartheid era, despite the provincial coalition of the early years between the ANC and the IFP (see Mnguni, 2021), there were fractures in their relationship driven by issues such as the location of the provincial capital and the fragility of the relationship between traditional leaders and the ANC leadership.

Following the failure of a 2021 deal with the IFP, an alternative, unanticipated deal with smaller parties emerged. The pivot in this coalition deal was the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) which had won two seats in eThekweni in LGE2021, out of the council total of 222. The ABC had split off the National Freedom Party (NFP), which in turn had been born out of the IFP. The controversial leader of the party, Zuma backer Philani Mavundla, also a former ANC mayor of Umvoti, bargained to become the deputy mayor of eThekweni and a part of strategic committees that oversee the city.

In eThekweni, the IFP has 16 seats, and the ANC 96. Had the ANC-IFP alignment materialised it would have given the two parties 112 seats out of a total of 222, an outright majority to govern. Earlier indications of a possible ANC coalition with the EFF had also not materialised. This was in the context of EFF demands that the ANC was unable to meet: the EFF's demands to the ANC in a national bargaining position included removal of the '*Die Stem*' verse from the national anthem *Nkosi*

Sikelel' iAfrika, the establishment of a state bank in a period of one year, land expropriation without compensation, and nationalisation of the South African Reserve Bank by 2023.

The ANC coalition with the small parties of eThekweni

With 96 seats, the ANC needed to boost numbers to 112 to gain an outright majority in the council of 222 seats. With few options available, the ANC brought in big names like Zweli Mkhize to convince smaller parties to vote with the ANC. This took place in a context where it is understood that horse trading in the hung councils might bring some temporary relief, but none of these are marriages made in heaven. The minion parties tried to wield their inflated sense of power, but there are no indications, bar the tactful game of the ABC's Mavundla, that they were able to exercise it to the full. The smaller and inexperienced parties were keen to get in, and cash in brown envelopes is said to have lubricated the process (eThekweni official, private communication, 25 November 2021). Ultimately, the ANC's mayoral candidate Mxolisi Kaunda took 113 votes, and the DA's Nicole Graham 105. There were 2 spoiled ballot papers.

The ANC's victory is owed, in part, to Mavundla, who agreed to stand for the ANC camp as new deputy mayor of eThekweni. Despite the EFF and IFP raising concerns about the process being flawed, he was voted in. Much speculation revolves around his decision to support the ANC, given that he had voted with other opposition parties a few days earlier. A property business giant and well-known name in KZN, he is the former ANC chairperson in the Inkosi Bhambatha region which includes Nkandla, the hometown of former president Jacob Zuma. He was a member of the Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust, and at one stage had offered to pay Zuma's Nkandla debts. There is speculation that Mavundla had not come cheaply for his role in delivering a city with a budget of billions of rands (former senior city official, personal communication, 20 November 2021). Not surprisingly, there were reports that Zuma had convinced Mavundla to support the ANC or that he had found a place in a Zumaist project of influencing future political relations in the city and province (see Ngalwa, 2021).

Mavundla adopted a race-identity argument, linking it to party politics. The prospect that KwaZulu-Natal's biggest municipality would fall into the hands of a party dominated by whites (DA) 'was just unimaginable, and that is why we ended up voting with the ANC and keeping the province's economic hub in the hands of Africans, even though we did not get everything that we wanted' (*Mail & Guardian*, 26 November 2021).

eThekweni's slide into coalition government – the numbers and some explanations

Table 7.1: 2011–2021 seat allocation: eThekweni municipality

2021 seat count per political party							
Seat count	ANC	DA	EFF	IFP	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
	96	59	24	16	27*	222	ANC, ABC, others
2016 seat count per political party							
Seat count	ANC	DA	EFF	IFP	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
	126	61	8	10	10**	215	None, ANC
2011 seat count per political party							
Seat count	ANC	DA	MF	NFP	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
	126	43	11	10	14***	204	None, ANC

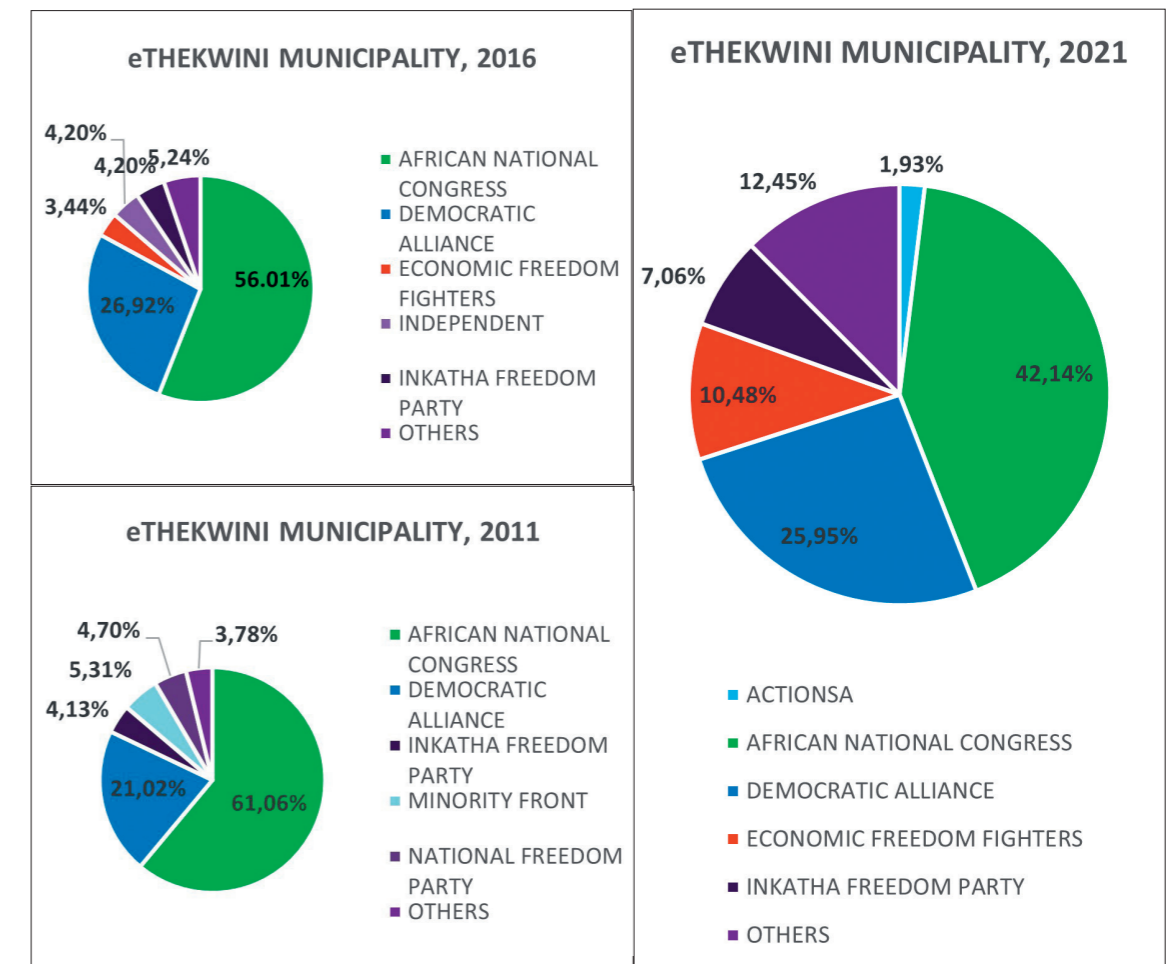
Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 10 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

Notes: *ABC 2, ACTIONSA 4, ACC 2, ACDP 2, ADC 1, AIC 2, APF 1, ATM 1, Al Jama-Ah 1, DLC 1, JEP 1, KZNI 1, MSA 1, MF 1, NFP 1, PRM 1, TA 1, UDM 1, FF+ 1.

** ACDP 1, AIC 3, APC 1, Al Jama-Ah 1, DLC 1, MSA 1, MF 1, TA 1.

*** ACDP 2, APC 1, Cope 1, IFP 9, TA 1

Figure 7.1: 2011–2021 Local election results in eThekweni municipality



Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 10 November 2021.

Although a decline in support for the ANC is true in the national and provincial context, it is also true in the case of the eThekweni municipality. Southall (2019) helps us understand that liberation movements do not stay in power forever and tend to get pushed to the periphery three to four decades into liberation. He makes the point that liberation movements will survive organisationally in one form or another, 'but their essence as liberation movements', as harbingers of hope and freedom, die even as they cling on to power against a future where their continuation as ruling parties is increasingly uncertain (Southall, 2019: 327).

Of the last three local elections, the ANC in eThekweni received 61 per cent support in 2011, 56 per cent in 2016, and is down to 42 per cent in 2021 (see Figure 7.1). This is a clear and steady decline. There are multiple factors of explanation. The eThekweni municipality has been marred by corruption, with mind-boggling amounts of money looted from eThekweni's public purse. Service delivery is often dismal, and the city's finances are not in great shape. Moreover, the conflicts within the party, which are about access to positions and opportunities for rent-seeking, have led to political assassinations and other forms of thuggery, in eThekweni and beyond. This has compromised the party's standing.

For more than ten years Abahlali baseMjondolo, a powerful actor in the city's politics, and which has access to the isiZulu media, has spoken of the ANC in terms of 'gangsterism'.

The riots of July 2021 and the way in which the police stood down during the crisis, and that ANC politicians were generally silent, or even implicitly supportive, also did massive damage to the ANC's standing. It is clear that the riots were not all orchestrated, but they did begin after pro-Zuma forces began to act with obvious impunity. They were also used as cover for a campaign of sabotage against infrastructure.

It would seem that the former liberation movement's reliance on a liberation dividend – or the idea of benefiting electorally from the notion that it brought liberation – is not being sustained any more. Romanticised notions of liberation are wearing thin and people are now more serious than ever about, in particular, jobs and service delivery (Southall, 2019). In this context the ANC suffered losses that made coalitions inevitable.

Jacob Zuma's rise to power and the ANC's KZN electoral feats under his leadership (especially from 2009 to 2014) led to the near decimation of the IFP. Although there is some reluctance in ANC circles to ascribe this to ethnic sentiment, there is plainly a strong current of ethnic sentiment in the politics of the province. It helps explain why, with control of the ANC having passed from Zuma's hands, and then his brief imprisonment, there has been a steep rise in support for the IFP from 2016 to 2021. The ANC's track record of poor service delivery and corruption in northern KZN is also likely to have contributed. We await solid empirical research of the reasons for the swing towards the IFP.

As is evident in Figure 7.1, smaller parties operate on the fringes of KZN politics, but the outcome of the 2021 elections provided them with an opportunity to flex their political muscle. A total of 14 of these small parties had one just one seat each in these 2021 council elections; a further five won two seats each. Amid allegations of receiving financial rewards for their vote, they have also had to explain their decision to vote with the ANC to their supporters, who judged by party mandates voted for them to ensure that the city was taken away from the ANC. Voting took place under the mantle of a secret ballot. The ANC's small party vote component may have included, besides the ABC, votes from the ranks of the Active Citizens Coalition (ACC), African Independent Congress (AIC), Democratic Liberal Congress (DLC), African Transformation Movement (ATM), Justice and Employment Party (JEP), Minority Front (MF), United Independent Movement (UIM), National Freedom Party (NFP), People's Revolutionary Movement (PRM), KZN Independence (KZNI), Truly Alliance (TA), African People First (APF), People's Freedom Party (PFP) and Al Jamah-ah.

The question is how the new ANC-small party alliance plays out. Will the two find common ground over a mutual interest in rent seeking? Will the smaller parties have what it takes to challenge the ANC on matters of probity in governance? Alternatively, will it be the ANC that exerts influence on the smaller parties, influencing how they exercise their votes in council? Or, will the coalition be unstable and collapse into mutual hostilities?

Lower turnout and the KZN problem

The most dramatic trend in eThekweni in LGE2021 was probably that huge numbers of people who stayed at home, in large part as a result of political disillusionment. The numbers tell the story. LGE2021 nationally saw the lowest turnout in the democratic era, just 46 per cent. About 15 million people, mainly the youth, did not bother to register (Buccus, 2021). KZN had about 5.4 million registered voters out of a potential 7.5 million eligible voters. It means that only around 2.6 million people voted in KZN. Of that, the ANC got about 1.1 million votes (from 7.5 million eligible voters).

The turnout figures of the last three local government elections *specifically in eThekweni* relate the rest of the story, in rounded numbers:

- LGE2011: Turnout percentage 59.30; registered voters 1.7 million, number that voted 990,000.
- LGE2016: Turnout percentage 59.67; registered voters 1.9 million; number that voted 1.2 million.
- LGE2021: Turnout percentage 41.91; registered voters 1.9 million; number that voted 804,000.

Only time will tell whether it was 'just' a stayaway, a revolt against KZN and eThekweni politics or a growing rejection of multiparty politics in South Africa.

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ANALYSIS 8

TUGS OF WAR REINCARNATED – COALITION GOVERNMENT IN THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, 2021

BONOLO MAKGALE

This analysis focuses on coalition negotiations and outcomes in the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) in the wake of the 1 November 2021 local government elections, from which no party emerged with an outright majority. Indeed, the presence of a minority coalition, the fragility of the coalition government and kingmaking partners ‘gate crashing’ and playing by their own rules resembled, in many respects, the CoJ’s recent coalition past. The coalition negotiations have led to the formation of, in essence, a minority government in the metro.

The analysis examines the trends and the results of the negotiations. It assesses the lessons drawn from the 2016–2021 term of coalition government and argues that, good intentions notwithstanding, much instability seems to be in the offing.

Two coalition arrangements governed the CoJ after the 2016 local government elections: a DA-led coalition (with elements of confidence-and-supply arrangements) was formed. It collapsed in 2019, and an ANC-led coalition subsequently governed the metro. The municipal council comprises 270 seats, and in order to form a majority government, a party (or group of parties) requires a 50 plus 1 majority, which amounts to 136 seats. While they did not secure the outright majority of 50 plus 1, the DA attained the mayorship of the city with support from opposition and minority parties.

From 2016 to 2021 – building council majorities through coalitions

In the 2016 local government elections, the ANC emerged as the party with the most seats in the municipal council but it failed to obtain an outright majority. A similar situation occurred in 2021 in the CoJ, when no single party secured the outright majority, thus creating the need to form a coalition government. In 2016 the absence of an outright winner led to the main opposition, the DA, entering into a coalition with several minority parties. It also obtained support from the EFF on voting matters (Pather, 2016) in a confidence-and-supply arrangement.

The rationale behind this unlikely dual-style coalition, particularly the role of the EFF in supporting the DA, was the maximisation of power for opposition parties and ensuring that the power of the ANC would be diminished. It also took shape when former president Jacob Zuma led the ANC, and the EFF helped to mobilise for his removal. Following ideological and administrative issues in governing

the city, linked to the escalation at national level of land policy matters at the time of 2018, the local-central government relationship and internal party woes, the DA-led coalition collapsed. In the process the DA mayor Herman Mashaba resigned from the party.

Following the collapse in 2019, council elections were held, and the ANC obtained the most votes, regaining control of the city under an ANC-led coalition. As of 1 November 2021, when South Africans went to the polls, the city was governed by the ANC-led coalition government.

Coalition negotiation premises

The 2016 formation of coalition government in the CoJ appeared to have been relatively easy. Immediately after the elections, parties met and started cohering on the formation of coalition government. The rationale behind the coalition formation was to unseat the incumbent, the ANC. It was clear that power seeking dominated policy seeking in the decisions and alliances made. However, power seeking and policy seeking are not mutually exclusive (Law, 2018), and parties do indeed require the power to govern in order to further their policy agendas.

The 2021 negotiations (in an early stage at the time of writing, early December 2021) assumed a different direction, given the different contexts, including the political climate, in which these elections took place. The city has been run under a coalition government since 2016, which meant that there was no single local regime to hold responsible for lapses in governance and delivery. The rationale behind the 2021 formations included the prioritisation of service delivery, nuances in policy objectives and, equally, the maximisation of power that will grant parties access to advance their intended policies and control positions and delivery in this major metropolitan municipality. The EFF, a partner in an ‘uninvited’ capacity to the coalition, made it clear that it was acting in revenge on the ANC.

Negotiations were generally centred around ideological alignment, policy agendas, service-delivery provision and governance ideals, leading to the seemingly protracted processes. A senior ANC politician interviewed for this report noted that ‘the ANC would like to form government with parties based on the same principles of, good governance and service delivery’, reiterating an official press statement by ANC deputy secretary-general stating ‘[t]he ANC believes that with our maturing democracy, there is a need to look beyond party confines to service our people. We believe that in exercising their will, the people of South Africa have imposed on all parties to work together and take the country forward...’ However, statements from opposition parties who had been in discussion with the ANC, and those who had refused to work with the party, indicate otherwise. This may signal increased awareness and caution of opposition parties in dealing with the ANC. One of the opposition party leaders in CoJ, ActionSA’s Herman Mashaba, stated that ‘ActionSA committed during the campaign that we would never work with the ANC, and any arrangement that is dependent on ANC support would be a violation of that commitment to the South African people...’ (Mashaba, 2021a).

That coalitions in CoJ have generally been unstable is due to the coalition parties’ differing ideological positions and governance priorities. The CoJ suffered political tensions between the relationship of opposition-led local government and administrators in so far as municipal budgets and other administrative processes were concerned (Makgale, 2021: 307; 322-323). This led to disruptions in service delivery in the previous coalition in Johannesburg, for example in the provision of housing (Makgale, 2020: 15). Given these protracted coalition government disputes, it would be essential for parties in the CoJ to enter into written agreements with a commitment to prioritising service delivery and maintaining the stability of governance in the metro. At the time of writing, the DA had proclaimed such an agreement as its exact objective. As a measure to increase accountability and transparency, it might also be worthwhile for parties to have full public disclosure of the agreements they make in terms of governing the metro, service-delivery commitments and rewards for coalition membership.

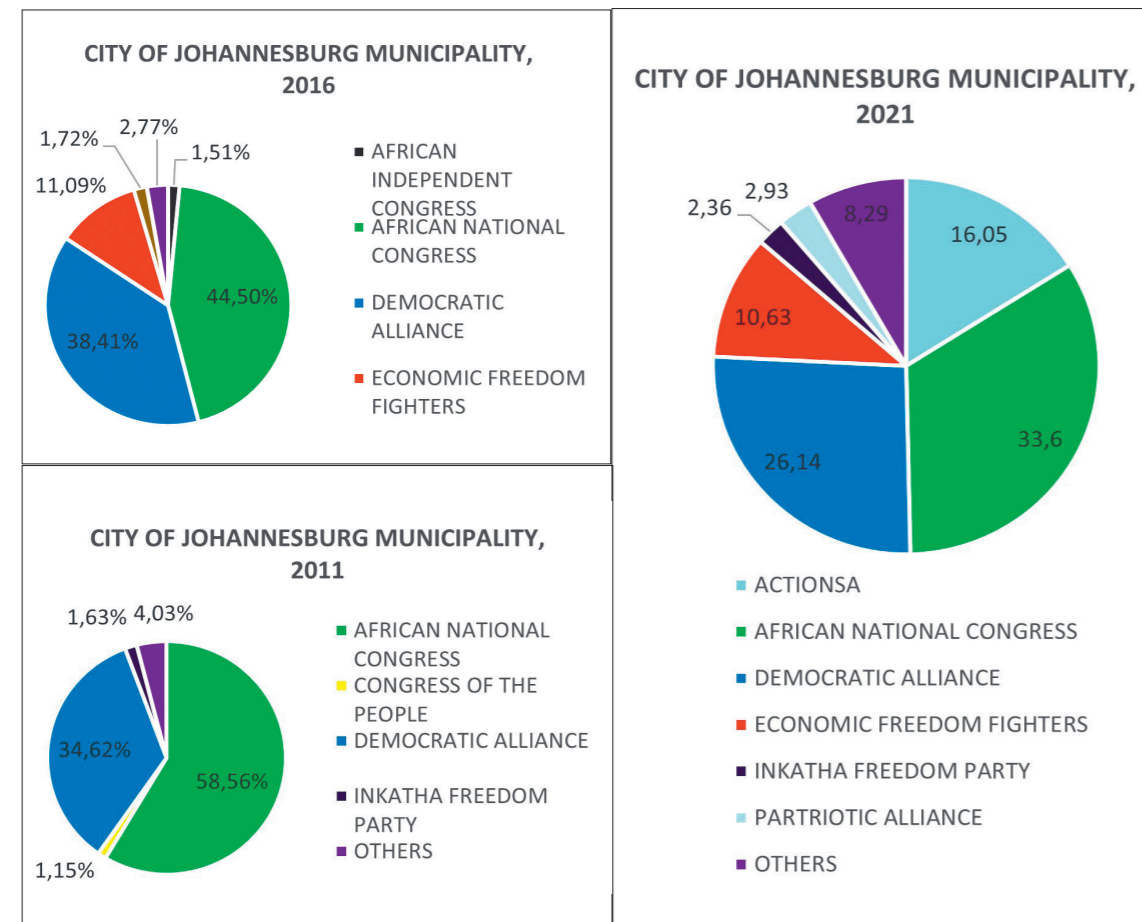
The lack of preparedness in the CoJ in 2016, in the sense of a hesitant interparty agreement, which was also porous in not taking sufficient account of political contexts that might change, was among the main factors in the failure of that coalition. The base of the coalition was in two sets of agreements, one with the set of roughly standard coalition partners nationally, and the other with a conditionally involved EFF, eventually constituted insurmountable problems. Besides there not being a comprehensive agreement, and no obligatory legal framework present to guide the process, power sharing and governance were continuously in flux.

This appeared to be in contrast to the evolving 2021 negotiations, in which a particular agreement for cooperation was being negotiated by the DA; yet still with uncertain uptake by the EFF and ActionSA. The nature of the negotiations seemed to be protracted, with a level of strategic caution from parties, perhaps signalling that they had learned lessons from the past interactions. This is potentially what led to the failure to establish a coalition agreement in the city.

The coalitions base – comparative electoral performances in CoJ

Support for mainstream parties decreased slightly in LGE2021 in the CoJ. The proliferation of and increased support for smaller parties and the rise of a new party ActionSA affected the balance of power in the CoJ. Both the ANC and the DA shed support, taking them even further from outright majorities than in 2016. These results (Figure 8.1; Table 8.1) had a direct impact on the necessity of, and options for, coalition formation.

Figure 8.1: 2011–2021 Local election results: City of Johannesburg



Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 5 November 2021.

Table 8.1: 2011 – 2021 seat allocation: City of Johannesburg

2021 seat count per political party							
Seat count	ACTIONS	ANC	DA	EFF	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
	44	91	71	29	35*	270	DA-led minority
2016 seat count per political party							
Seat count	ANC	DA	EFF	IFP	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
	121	104	30	5	10**	270	DA-led minority
2011 seat count per political party							
Seat count	ANC	Cope	DA	IFP	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
	153	3	90	4	10***	260	ANC majority

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 6 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

Other party results:

Notes: *ACDP 3, AHC 1, AIC 2, APC 1, ATM 1, Al Jama-Ah 3, Cope 1, Good 1, IFP 7, PAC 1, PA 8, UDM 1, UIM 1, FF+ 4

** ACDP 1, AIC 4, Al Jama-Ah 1, Cope 1, PA 1, UDM 1, FF+ 1

*** ACDP 1, APC 1, Al Jama-Ah 1, AZAPO 1, NFP 2, OKM 1, PAC 1, UDM 1, FF+ 1

The 2021 deals being made

Political parties had until 23 November 2021 to form the coalition government in Johannesburg's hung municipality. There was a common thread initially in that parties resisted forming a coalition with the ANC. For instance, the DA stated that it would not form a coalition government with the ruling party. According to DA leader John Steenhuisen (2021a): 'We [the DA] are not under any circumstances willing to go into coalition with the EFF or with the ANC in its current form, because their governing principles are diametrically opposed to ours. Therefore, any coalition with them would be unstable and dysfunctional.' This left few mainstream candidates to partner with, and it pushed the ANC into a corner.

Parties were vocal about opting to work with specific party clusters. The main parties that have suffered the fate of undesirability as coalition partners were the EFF and the ANC. Initially, this forced talks between the two parties for a potential coalition. However, the talks came to a halt and the EFF subsequently stated that it would not form a coalition with the ANC because of failure to agree on key policy issues. The EFF leader gave the following reason for the suspension of negotiations with the ANC: 'It's the ANC's arrogance that led to us walking away. They refused to talk about genuine issues and instead wanted to just talk about positions and who would share power. There was no willingness to discuss principles and the demands that we had made non-negotiable before entering any coalition' (Malema, 2021).

Steenhuisen (2021b) alluded to negotiation lessons that had been learnt: 'We don't just rush into coalitions for coalition's sake, we've learnt a lot of lessons as the DA in the course of the last five years and those learnings are being applied to the processes that we are undertaking during this period of coalition negotiations.'

The coalition agreement that developed between the ANC and the PA, with the PA being promised two members of mayoral council positions in the CoJ, indicated the generally underpublicised agreements between parties. The DA leader argued that the ANC-PA agreement affected the prospects of an opposition government taking control of Johannesburg. He noted that 'it narrows the path to an opposition majority considerably. Part of the reason we were starting initial conversations ... was to try and see if we could form together that opposition coalition.'

The EFF and ANC were excluded from discussions among parties such as the DA, ActionSA, UDM, IFP, ACDP, Cope and the PA (the PA subsequently aligned with the ANC). The negotiations in these discussions deadlocked owing to the DA's stance on mayoral positions (insisting that the DA should be awarded the mayoral positions in CoJ on account of the party having the most seats in the proposed coalition – it later became more acceptable); the ActionSA leader stated that '... we made it clear to the DA, please don't come out with the mentality of being a big party. There is no big party here, none of us has got a majority.'

Talks between the DA and smaller parties next failed to result in a coalition agreement due to the disagreement regarding the DA's attaining the mayoral position in the city. Despite the absence of a formal coalition agreement between opposition parties in the CoJ and the DA, DA mayoral candidate Dr Mpho Phalatse was voted into office with 144 votes, through the support of most opposition parties including ActionSA and the EFF but excluding Cope (Khumalo, 2021). It was a move which seems to follow the rationale of maximising power for opposition parties and ensuring that the ANC does not take control of the metro again, with opposition leader Herman Mashaba removing himself from the mayoral race to ensure that the DA candidate, not the ANC candidate, is elected mayor (Mashaba, 2021b). Mashaba stated that the parties that voted with the DA 'have chosen to remove the problem that is the ANC. The DA needs to talk to us and by us I also mean the EFF. That is if they are serious about having a stable government'.

The negotiations were ongoing. As the year 2021 closed, there were more questions than answers as to how coalition governance in the CoJ would unfold, or whether transactional minority government was the name of the future.

Conclusion

Local Elections 2021 confirmed that the CoJ had become a continuous site of metropolitan coalition government. The trajectory that parties took in negotiations and subsequent support for the DA mayoral candidate signalled in some respects the maturity of multiparty politics in the metro and the emergence of an era where the ANC was not controlling the majority in the CoJ. The absence of a coalition agreement between the DA and opposition parties who voted in support of them for the mayoral position is a potential threat to the stability governance in the city. Stability and success of this new administration will depend on clear agreements with parties that offered support to the DA around issues such as service delivery responsibilities and clear dispute resolution mechanisms, and contingency arrangements in the case of disputes.

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ANALYSIS 9

CONTINUITY AND POLITICAL STALEMATES: COALITION MANOEUVRING AND CITIZEN REPRESENTATION IN TSHWANE

GRAEME DE BRUYN

In 2016, a multiparty coalition government assumed power in the City of Tshwane. The African National Congress (ANC) was unseated as majority party and the political parties enacted coalition agreements that alienated the ANC from municipal power. These 2016 processes of multiparty and multiple coalition formation and disbandment in the City of Tshwane went through cycles of disruption and gridlock which shaped the 2021 coalition bargaining (De Bruyn, 2021). With the 2021 municipal elections, both the ANC and Democratic Alliance (DA) scored below 35 per cent of the votes. Political parties held precarious leads, barely capable of strong-arming other parties into compromises required to effect governing coalitions. As in 2016, the voting outcomes necessitated multiparty coalition formation and governing in Tshwane. The political actions, including antics, that followed suggested that Tshwane parties and their leaders may be on an all too familiar coalition track.

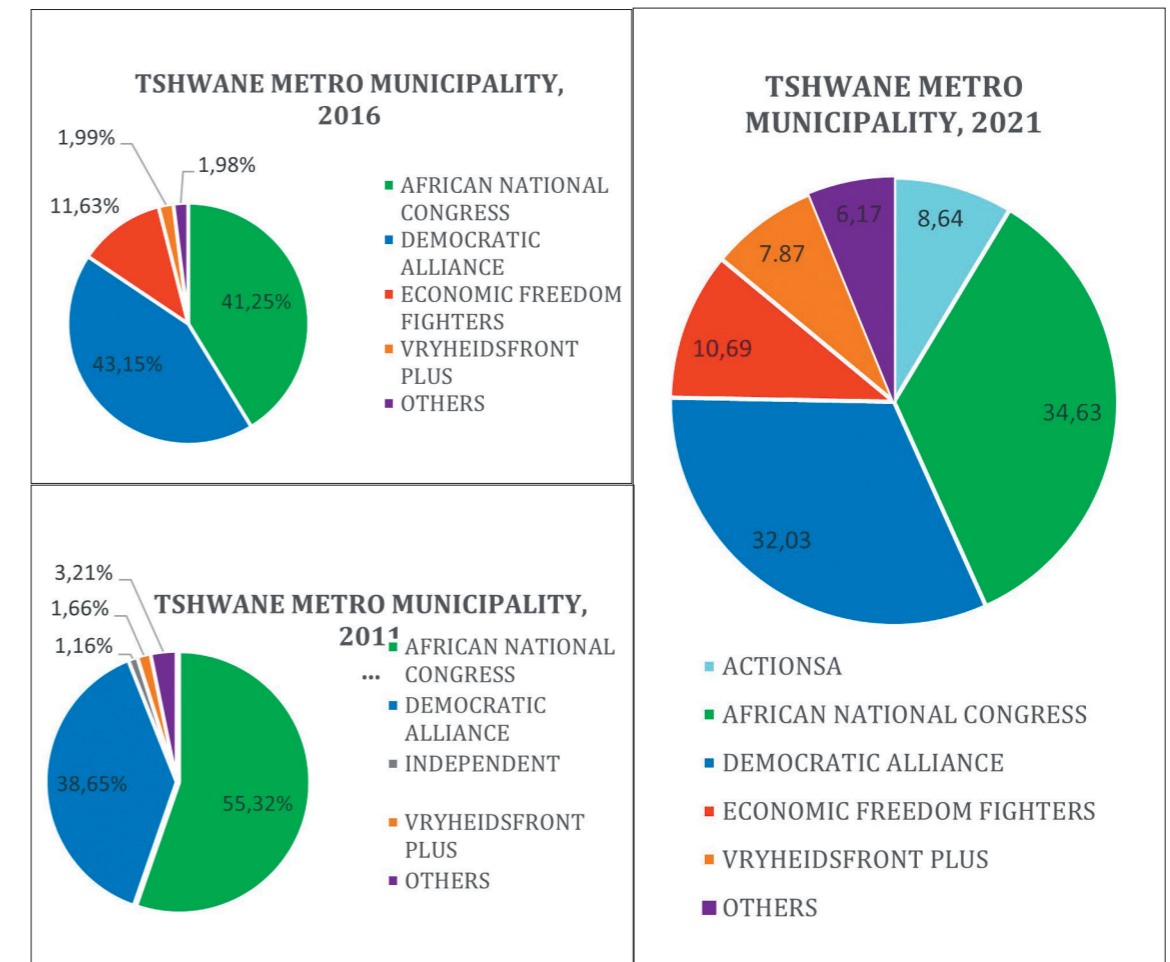
Leadership functions and capability have implications for coalition formation and stability. Specifically, leadership has a role in the 'establishment of an organisational structure and processes that guide coalition functioning in communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution' (Kegler et al., 2010). This analysis explores the coalition bargaining and formation triggered by the voting outcomes of the 2021 local government elections in Tshwane.

The ANC and the DA respectively secured the most council seats. In order to assemble a winning coalition majority through coalition agreements, parties bargained for strategic positioning across municipal jurisdictions (even across provincial boundaries), and payoffs such as mayoral committee positions and the mayoralty entered the picture. This analysis assesses the serial shifts in coalition bargaining, positioning, hostility and rivalry among ActionSA, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Freedom Front Plus (FF+), the ANC and the DA. A particular focus is on political parties' divergent approaches (also referred to as principles) to the coalition bargaining and the compromises that emanated from Tshwane. This coalition bargaining and formation was similar in character to what Huddy and Yair (2021) noted as intensified inter-party polarisation and 'hostility toward the opposition'. The analysis considers the prospects of council stability in the context of Tshwane's shifting coalitions.

Tshwane and the 2021 municipal elections

On 1 November 2021, Tshwane residents voted in the sixth round of South Africa's municipal elections. Residents voted in 107 wards to elect 214 councillors. There were 1,526,210 registered voters in a city which accommodates over 2.2 million people. The city's elections recorded a voter turnout of 45 per cent. Political parties made efforts to get back to what they perceived to be election platforms primed at electoral accountability. They clamoured to gain and retain what Acuña-Duarte and Salazar (2021) refer to as incumbency advantage – seats to the Tshwane municipal council. In the 2016 election cycle the ANC attracted 41.25 per cent (89 seats) of the participating voters, the DA 43.15 per cent (93 seats), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) 11.63 (25 seats) and the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) received 1.99 (4 seats). The FF+ more than doubled its vote share and the number of seats in 2021 compared with 2016 (from 4 seats to 17). New entrant ActionSA won 8.64 per cent of the vote (19 seats).

Table 9.1: Tshwane Metro municipality, 2011–2021 local election results



Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 11 November 2021.

Table 9.1: 2011–2021 seat allocation: Tshwane Metro municipality

2021 seat count per political party								
Seat count	ACTIONSА	ANC	DA	EFF	FF+	OTHERS	TOTAL	TRANSITIONAL PACT
	19	75	69	23	17	11*	214	DA-led minority-unfolding
2016 seat count per political party								
Seat count	ANC	DA	EFF	FF+	OTHERS		TOTAL	COALITION
	89	93	25	4	3**		214	DA-led ACDP-FF+ minority
2011 seat count per political party								
Seat count	ANC	Cope	DA	FF+	OTHERS		TOTAL	MAJORITY COUNCIL
	118	2	82	4	4***			ANC majority

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 6 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

Notes: * ACDP 2, AIC 1, ATM 1, Cope 1, DTP 1, Good 1, IFP 1, PAC 1, PA 1, RCT 1, FF+ 17

** ACDP 1, Cope 1, PAC 1

*** ACDP 1, APC 1, AZAPO 1, PAC 1

There were 688,237 participating voters (44.99 per cent) at the 2021 elections of 1,526,589 registered voters, compared with 2011 having 736,009 (55.32 per cent) and 2016 896,973 (59.20 per cent) (IEC, 2021).

Tshwane coalitions: legitimacy-building and political gridlock

Contestations and negotiation deadlocks over the inclusion and exclusion of certain leaders and political parties characterised the 2021 Tshwane processes. Tshwane’s hung council necessitated parties like the EFF, ActionSA, FF+, ANC, DA and other seat-carrying smaller parties (or any majority-generating selection of them) to reach a deal to form a voting pact and constitute a government. For the EFF, ActionSA, FF+ and the DA, the focus was to prevent the ANC from gaining a hold on government at this municipal level. As the ACDP, FF+, ACDP and ActionSA put it, it was to ‘keep the ANC out of government’ (Joint Media Release, 2021). The DA announced its stance to not enter coalition arrangements with the ANC or the EFF. There was an initiative for the allocation of municipal jurisdictions, initiated by the EFF and ActionSA, that would also have involved the ANC. This alliance was predicated on the EFF supporting the mayoral candidature of Herman Mashaba in Johannesburg and the EFF seeking a quid pro quo in Tshwane (the ANC would get Ekurhuleni). As the bargaining continued, ActionSA withdrew from this proposal. Mashaba (2021) premised an EFF-ActionSA alliance on its achieving the removal of the ANC from governing. The arrangement, argued Mashaba (2021), would prevent ActionSA from pursuing ‘its mandate to fight corruption’ and to ‘act decisively to remove the ANC from power’ (Mashaba, 2021). Consequently, the initiative broke down. This led to a realignment of coalition discussions between the DA, ActionSA, FF+, ACDP and the bilateral negotiations between the EFF and ActionSA. The DA and FF+ maintained their positions that this election was aimed at the ‘ushering in an ANC-free era’ (Steenhuisen, 2021) as the ‘ANC has proved that it cannot govern’ (FF+, 2021).

Coalition talks and transitional alliance outcomes

Multiparty negotiations and renegotiations to form coalitions in Tshwane led to considerable delays in finalising a minority or majority coalition. The manner and extent of these negotiations had consequences. At one stage, the DA, ActionSA, FF+, ACDP, UDM and Cope agreed to form a coalition

government in Tshwane, confirming that they would support the DA’s mayoral candidate. However, days prior to the convened council sitting neither of the ANC nor the DA had secured formalised coalition agreements with each other or with other political parties. Moreover, Mashaba even referred to the eventual collapse of coalition arrangements between ActionSA, the DA and smaller parties, as ‘the bulldozing of coalition discussions perpetrated by the DA’ (Mashaba, 2021b). A trend emerged wherein the DA, ANC and EFF all hardened their positions in terms of negotiation principles; attempts at finding common ground for a coalition failed. For instance, the DA was adamant that they were ‘not under any circumstances willing to go into a coalition with the EFF or with the ANC’ (Steenhuisen, 2021b).

Similar to what is occurring in the Tshwane coalition bargaining, Huddy and Yair (2021) point out in a paper on hostility and partisan polarisation in the United States that these occurrences are probably driven by ‘social and group-based differentiation between followers of the two major parties’ and ‘growing competitiveness between parties’. In interim deals struck in Tshwane there was backtracking and interplay over the implications for other jurisdictions (in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipalities, for instance, between the EFF and ActionSA, the ANC and the PA). The multiparty negotiations were particularly conflictual among these prospective coalition partners. Ultimately, arrangements were afoot for an ad hoc alliance or voting bloc built on a conditional and impermanent pact between the EFF, ActionSA and smaller parties to support the DA as leading party of this Tshwane council. The DA relied on an alliance with the FF+, ACDP, Cope and any number of smaller parties – and with ActionSA in and out of parts of the deal making – that would be able to form a 108-member majority to govern the city. Eventually, the EFF and ActionSA formed a voting pact to ensure a transition, with the DA as the lead in the council. As a result, the DA’s Randall Williams was voted in as the Tshwane mayor. The DA was on record as having preferred a scenario where they would head a minority government that was independent of the EFF as a coalition partner. In contrast, ActionSA convinced the EFF to vote for the DA mayor. This was despite ActionSA regarding the DA’s hard stance to decline the proposal from other parties for a ‘minority coalition government in Johannesburg and to support an ActionSA Johannesburg mayoralty’ (Mashaba, 2021b) as untenable. It would have required an alliance with the EFF and the DA’s stance rested on no coalition with the EFF or the ANC. The DA insisted on coalition bargaining based on the proportionality of seats. The leading party in the coalition should be the party with the most seats, an approach that concurs with Schermann and Ennsner-Jedenastik (2014) that there is merit in a strong relationship between a party’s seat share and the share of portfolios it receives (proportionality proposition). After Tshwane parties with seats on council expressed their dissatisfaction, the DA made a reconciliatory overture that may facilitate the formalisation of a coalition arrangement.

The 2021 municipal election outcomes led to the strategic manoeuvrability of micro-parties in reshaping party dominance in Tshwane. A case in point is the Patriotic Alliance (PA), a party with one seat in Tshwane, but eight seats in Johannesburg, four seats in Ekurhuleni and two seats in Rand West City, and which became a beneficiary of bargaining that would benefit the ANC in Tshwane. The coalition deal with the PA created disagreement among the ANC and the EFF, with the latter announcing the suspension of coalition talks with the ANC. Among the medium to small parties, complex and vacillating coalition approaches were evident. The EFF made advances towards ActionSA, which rejected the EFF’s proposal to form a winning coalition that would factor in the ANC as a partner to a multiparty coalition. At one stage, ActionSA had affirmed its position to ‘never work with the ANC’ (Mashaba, 2021b). At another time, ActionSA made public its commitment to reconcile the competing preferences required to deliver on multiparty coalition governance in Tshwane.

These permutations in the evolving coalitions’ life cycle in the period following LGE2021 in Tshwane have likely consequences. Given the respective political and organisational histories and proposed co-governing positions, residents would need to prepare themselves for a re-run of political polarisation

and impaired governance. Also, as Sarakinsky and Fakir (2015: 61) warn, absent platforms for expressing difference, the distribution of positions, or gaps between the bargained outcomes of coalition partners, are likely to lead to prolonged stalemates. This future is reminiscent of Tshwane's recent past.

Conclusion

The 2021 municipal elections reaffirmed the ascendancy of micro-parties in shaping major party dominance in Tshwane. More so, these micro-parties are likely to continue forging coalitions with leading seat-carrying parties, like the DA and ANC. However, opportunistic behaviour by party individuals and smaller political parties to synchronise their coalition agreements to the promises of higher immediate pay-offs could have a jarring impact. ActionSA will be a significant party in the outcomes of negotiated and renegotiated coalitions.

To sum up, coalition politics remain anchored in competitive party politics and political parties are focused on the next electoral cycle. Specifically, one may expect that the party leadership (collective) and individual leaders (for example, president) of a party like ActionSA will have a marked effect on coalition stability in Tshwane. In the interim, the jury is out on whether a DA-led minority coalition and voting pact will be formalised or how parties outside such a coalition will reconcile with the role of a constructive opposition.

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ANALYSIS 10

FROM SHOWCASE COALITION TO THE EXTRACTION OF ‘COLLATERAL DAMAGE’ – COALITIONS IN EKURHULENI, 2016–2021

AMUZWENI NGOMA

The ANC-led Ekurhuleni coalition of 2016 was once touted as ‘the most stable of all metropolitan municipalities in South Africa’ (Masina, 2021: 14). Former mayor Mzwandile Masina (2021) emphasised that coalition management, fairness and equality of coalition partners and openness and transparency in governance were central to coalition stability. Masina also asserted that common political interests, in addition to ideological closeness, stabilise coalitions. Yet, skills at managing a municipal coalition government for five years could not guarantee success to continue that coalition in the face of the voter verdicts of 2021 paired with the machinations of party political opponents.

Coalition formation in the City of Ekurhuleni, as in all other metropolitan cities, draws its impetus from the African National Congress (ANC) surrendering electoral hegemony (Booyesen, 2021). The Local Government Elections of 2021 (LGE2021), like those of 2016, delivered a hung council. The election results have necessitated Ekurhuleni’s second governing coalition since the start of democratic local government elections in 2000. This analysis unpacks the 2016 to 2021 tale of party political coalitions in Ekurhuleni, with a particular focus on the decline of the ANC and the new, strident role of opposition parties.

The decline of the ANC’s 2016 coalition bloc

Over the electoral cycles from 2011 to 2021 the ANC steadily lost and then further reduced its once outright election majority. By the time of LGE2021, the ANC had shed up to 23 percentage points of its electoral support in Ekurhuleni in the course of the recent local elections. In the 2011 elections, the ANC held a majority of 61.63 per cent, followed by 48.63 in 2016, and 38.19 per cent in 2021 (IEC, 2021). New and small opposition parties, such as ActionSA and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have gained electoral support from the waning ANC, and to a lesser extent from the Democratic Alliance (DA). The ANC’s loss was exacerbated by the 14.46 percentage point decline in Ekurhuleni’s voter turnout between 2016 (57.95 per cent) and 2021 (43.49 per cent) (IEC, 2016; 2021).

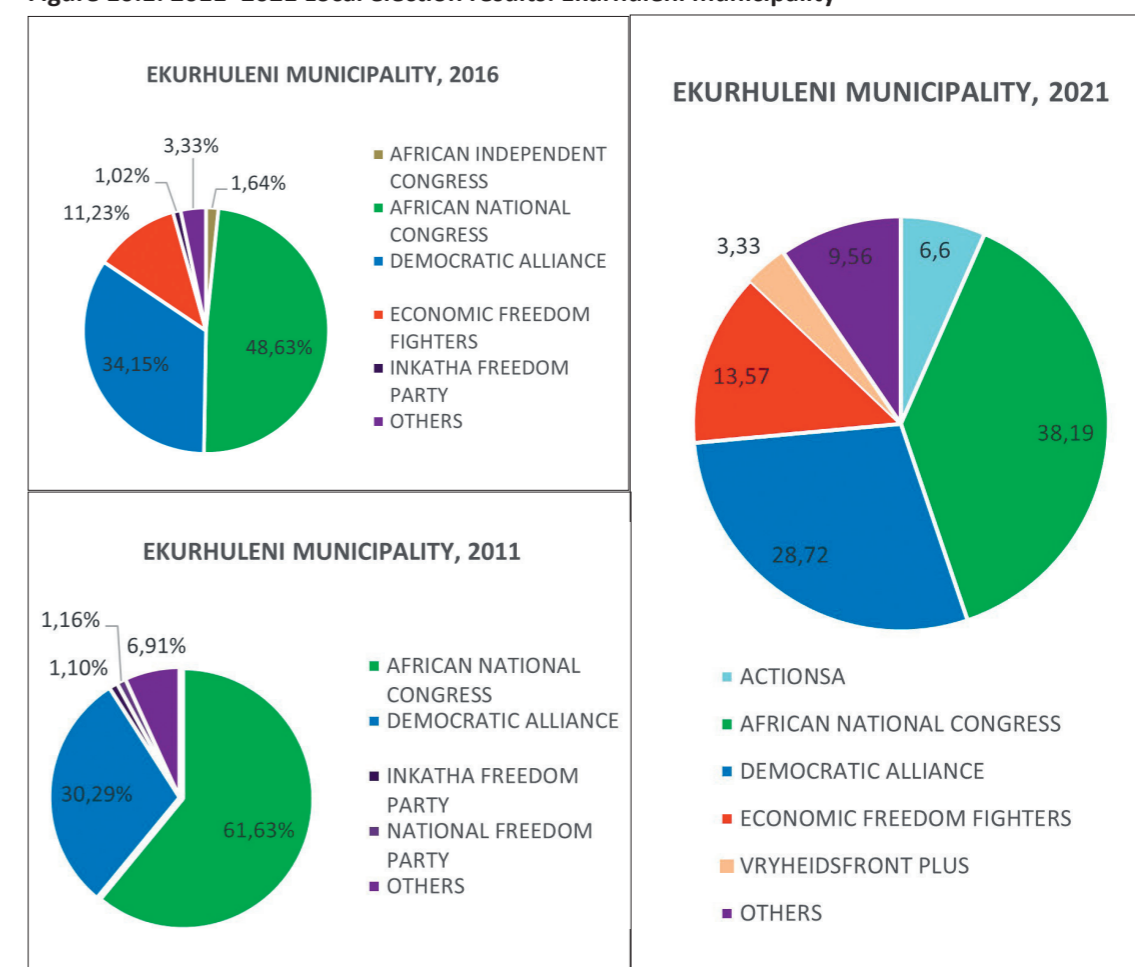
The DA as the second largest of the parties is also the ANC’s major contender in the formation of governing coalitions within hung metropolitan councils (Booyesen, 2021). The DA’s electoral support in Ekurhuleni increased by 3.86 percentage points between 2011 and 2016. However, like the African Independent Congress (AIC), a micro-party which lost one seat between 2016 and 2021, the DA also

failed to maintain its 2016 electoral gains in LGE2021. The party lost over five percentage points, resulting in 12 seats fewer in the Ekurhuleni council.

Similarly, as the newest political party in 2016, and the third largest party in the country, the EFF secured 11.23 per cent in Ekurhuleni, and, unlike the DA, the party maintained its upward electoral trajectory in the metro, winning 13.57 per cent in 2021 and surpassing the LGE2021 new party, ActionSA, which came in at 6.6 per cent.

In 2016 and 2021, the Congress of the People (Cope) and Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa (IRASA) experienced no change in their one-seat allocations. The African Transformation Movement (ATM) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) were not represented in 2016, but gained one seat each in 2021.

Figure 10.1: 2011–2021 Local election results: Ekurhuleni municipality



Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 5 November 2021.

From a durable minimal coalition to vulnerability and revenge by the opponents

A 13 percentage point decline between 2011 and 2016 for the ANC took Ekurhuleni’s 224-seat council from a solid outright majority to an ANC-led minimal coalition. The ANC, AIC, Patriotic Alliance (PA), Independent Ratepayers’ Association of South Africa (IRASA) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), constituted the 2016 coalition. Throughout the five-year council period, the mayorship was held by the ANC’s Masina. This 2016 Ekurhuleni minimal coalition was not only distinct in its durability and

only having one mayor throughout the council term, but also in that the main kingmaker was a micro-party, the AIC. The coalition was also bolstered by the PAC and a community organisation, IRASA. In LGE2016, coalitions formed by one big party alongside micro-parties or community organisations were more common in local municipalities than in metros (Booyesen, 2021; Ndletyana, 2021).

Table 10.1: The ANC's City of Ekurhuleni coalition in 2016

	ANC	AIC	PA	PAC	IRASA	Total	Proportion in council
Number of Seats	109	4	1	1	1	116	51.78%

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 6 November 2021.

Masina had expected that the ANC would maintain the 2016 coalition partners in the LGE2021. His emphasis of equality of coalition partners was seen as critical for coalition formation and stability by other partners. For example, the PA's Kenny Kunene told the eNCA (2021) that:

You would understand that the DA like to play a big brother mentality, DA-led coalitions. There is not one who leads a coalition. A coalition, and I think the ANC has gotten to understand that in our discussion ..., is based on one Rand principle. If you have 98 cents you still need two cents to make one rand. And the ANC came with that spirit.

The former mayor sees the EFF and DA as parties that are not only ideological incompatible, but 'class enemies' as their 'ideological postures are on opposite ends of the spectrum, and whose motive force is different' (Masina, 2021: 107). He observes 'that a coalition could have worked between the two was improbable and the tensions inevitable'. Similar to the ANC's weakened but still dominant position in Nelson Mandela Bay after 2016 (Ndletyana, 2021a), the ANC's 2021 voting bloc in Ekurhuleni remains powerful, particularly if any of the opposition parties in the DA's voting bloc spoil, abstain or are absent for voting on motions in council.

The DA's voting bloc in Ekurhuleni 2021

At its inaugural sitting on 22 November 2021, the City of Ekurhuleni's councillors were sworn in. Similar to the voting bloc windfall from opposition parties, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), EFF, ActionSA and Freedom Front Plus (FF+) garnered in the City of Johannesburg, the DA's Tania Campbell was voted in as mayor (Mahlati, 2021). Raymond Dlamini of the DA was voted in as speaker of council (Dlamini, 2021). Campbell secured 116 votes out of a total of 221 valid votes, while the ANC's contender Masina obtained 105. There was one spoilt ballot in the mayoral vote. Similarly, speaker Dlamini was voted in with 116 votes, while the ANC's nominee, Dora Mlambo, garnered 104 votes, like Masina. Two spoilt ballots were recorded. Khetha Shandu of the DA was elected as whip of council, beating the ANC's nominee Sizakele Masuku (City of Ekurhuleni, 2021). By 29 November 2021, members of the mayoral council had yet to be appointed and the coalition agreements discussed, signed and publicised.

When the Ekurhuleni negotiations started there was a mooted IFP co-governance agreement with the ANC for KwaZulu-Natal's hung municipalities. The IFP voted for the DA in Ekurhuleni at the same time as it became clear in eThekweni that the agreement was floundering. The IFP had expressed interest in obtaining the human settlements and transport portfolio in Ekurhuleni (Koko et al., 2021). ActionSA sought more than one position in the executive.

Conclusion

The EFF used its electoral gains in Ekurhuleni to play kingmaker against the ANC. Its leader, Julius Malema, tweeted an apology to Masina, saying that the erstwhile mayor had become 'collateral damage' as the ANC had failed to accede to the EFF's coalition demands. The DA's voting bloc required the support of the EFF in the Ekurhuleni council, for example to get council motions passed. Cooperation between coalition partners is necessary to stabilise the minority coalition, yet, past experience (like the Nelson Mandela Bay's 2016 experiences in minimal coalitions) portends instability. With the EFF, ActionSA and PA standing as possible factors of instability, a cooperative governance stance, in which the ANC supports motions, could stabilise the metro.

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ANALYSIS 11

COALITIONS IN THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN – FROM POST-COALITION MAJORITY TO A RETURN TO COALITION?

JENNICA BEUKES

By the time of Local Elections 2021, the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality had been the political home of the Democratic Alliance (DA) for 15 years – since the party had formed a seven-party coalition to govern in the city in 2006. The coalition had paved the way for the DA to credibly reposition itself as a 'party of government' and to nullify the perception that it was only effective as an opposition party (Van Onselen, 2016). The DA's performance in leading the 2006 coalition resulted in increased voter confidence in the party. This, in turn, enabled the DA to win an outright majority in 2011, consolidating its hold on the city. Since then, the DA had managed to retain its outright majority in the 2016 and 2021 local elections.

The 2006 coalition in the metro was one of the few coalitions in the country that was sustained for an entire five-year council term. During this time, although the parties undoubtedly encountered challenges, the coalition also managed to maintain internal stability.

This report takes stock of the electoral outcome in the City of Cape Town in 2021. Against this background, it assesses whether the election trends suggest that a coalition government may recur in the next local elections in the city. It also discusses the key lessons from the 2006 coalition. Why did it endure for five years? Are there any lessons for the new coalitions in the other metropolitan municipalities of Ekurhuleni, City of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay and the City of Johannesburg?

The 2021 election outcome in the City of Cape Town

Lowest voter turnout in the City of Cape Town since the 2006 local elections

The 2006 local election had held the record for the lowest voter turnout in the City of Cape Town, only 49.81 per cent of the registered voters turning out to vote. The 2021 local election set a new record for the lowest voter turnout – 47.14 per cent of 1,973,708 registered voters. This means that 1,039,959 registered voters did not vote. Compared to the previous local elections, the voter turnout declined by 17.07 percentage points. Table 11.1 shows the average percentage of voter turnout of the Cape Town LGEs from 2000 to 2021.

Table 11.1: Turnout in local government elections in the City of Cape Town, 2000-2021

Election year	2000	2006	2011	2016	2021
Voter turnout	56.63%	49.81%	64.66%	64.21%	47.14%

Source: IEC Voter Turnout Reports, www.elections.org.za, accessed 17 November 2021.

The data in Table 11.1 shows that there was an uptake in voter turnout from the time that the DA won an outright majority in the city in 2011. Between 2011 and 2016 there was active participation in the elections by more than half of the registered voters, which may be explained by the good service-delivery track record of the City of Cape Town, contributing to a political commitment among registered voters to return to the polls in order to keep the DA in power. The sudden decline in 2021 may be a result of the context within which these elections occurred. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with heavy rains on Election Day, may have prompted abstentions from voting.

The DA continues to hold an outright majority in the City of Cape Town

The City of Cape Town is one of the best-run municipalities in South Africa. In the last three audit reports (2017–18 until 2019–20) it obtained clean audits for three consecutive years, despite the auditor-general of South Africa citing the city as one of the top contributors to irregular expenditure at the local level. Across the 213 metropolitan and local municipalities, the city ranks 43rd on the Good Governance Performance Index. The status of the city has placed its governing party, the DA, on an upward trajectory. Table 11.2 shows the electoral support of the political parties that gained seats in the City of Cape Town across the five general election terms.

Table 11.2: Political parties’ electoral support and seat share in the City of Cape Town, Local Elections 2000–2021

2000			2006			2011			2016			2021		
Party	% Support	Total seats	Party	% Support	Total seats	Party	% Support	Total seats	Party	% Support	Total seats	Party	% Support	Total seats
DA	52.95	107	DA	41.85	90	DA	60.92	135	DA	66.61	154	DA	58.42	136
ANC	38.15	77	ANC	37.91	81	ANC	32.8	73	ANC	24.36	57	ANC	18.63	43
ACDP	3.81	8	ID	10.75	23	ACDP	1.22	3	EFF	3.17	7	EFF	4.13	10
UDM	1.44	3	ACDP	3.22	7	Cope	1.11	3	ACDP	1.21	3	Good	3.82	9
AMP	1.03	2	AMP	1.33	3	ALJAMA	0.37	1	ALJAMA	0.66	2	CCC	2.8	7
PAC	0.45	1	UDM	0.82	2	FF+	0.18	1	AIC	0.59	1	ACDP	2.34	6
IFP	0.28	1	Others	1.38	4	Others	1.76	5	FF+	0.41	1	FF+	1.57	4
MIP	0.27	1							PA	0.2	1	PA	1.49	4
Others	0.14	0							Others	1.32	5	ALJAMA	1.25	3
												Others	5.17	9

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/lge/>, accessed 17 November 2021.

Table 11.2 shows that the DA’s electoral support has grown significantly since 2006, increasing by 24.76 percentage points between the 2006 and 2016 local government elections. In the latest election, although the DA managed to retain its majority, in 2021 it suffered an electoral loss of 8.28 percentage points and now governs with a reduced majority of 58.42 per cent. The DA’s decline in votes emanates from shifts in the political landscape in the 2021 elections in the City of Cape Town and the reduced voter turnout.

Smaller parties make inroads in the City of Cape Town

Prior to the 2021 local elections, the DA had enjoyed a comfortable majority with a weak opposition. Save for Al Jama-Ah – which had demonstrated growth since 2011 – the seats of other opposition parties such as the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) had declined in number since 2000 and the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) had been unable to grow its seat share in the council between 2006 and 2016.

In the 2021 local elections, however, smaller political parties made significant inroads to affect the majority status of the DA. Political parties that won seats for the first time, or which gained additional seats in the council are the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Good, Patriotic Alliance (PA), Cape Coloured Congress (CCC), Al Jama-Ah, FF+ and the ACDP. Many coloured and Afrikaner voters defected from the DA and instead placed their confidence in smaller political parties.

Does the electoral outcome in the City indicate that a coalition government may be returned in the 2026 local elections?

To determine whether a coalition may arise in the City of Cape Town in the next local elections it is necessary to consider what factors increase the probability of no political party winning an outright majority. These factors relate to the electoral system, the absence or presence of threshold requirements, the dominance of the ruling party and whether the elections will be competitive.

Proportional representation electoral system

The electoral system that applies to local government in South Africa is a combination of proportional representation (PR) and first-past-the-post for ward elections. Section 159(2) of the Constitution, read with section 159(3), provides that the electoral system used for the election of members to a municipal council must result, in general, in PR. The formula aims to provide a correlation between a party’s vote share and the number of seats it secures in the council (Ware, 2015: 349). Zhai (2016: 4) finds that a council using a PR system is more likely to be fragmented than one with a majoritarian winner-takes-all electoral system. For this reason, PR electoral systems influence the composition of the council by introducing more political parties into it, increasing the likelihood that no political party will receive an outright majority.

The absence of threshold requirements

Neither the electoral system that applies to municipalities nor that of national or provincial governments prescribes any threshold requirements. Electoral thresholds are used to limit the number of smaller parties in a council (Evans, 2020: 8) and prevent councils from becoming highly fragmented. The electoral outcome of the 2021 local elections in the City of Cape Town helped to increase the number of parties represented in the council, from 13 to 17. Four additional political parties (Good, CCC, Cape Independence Party (CIP) and United Independent Movement (UIM)) also won seats for the first time. This increase influenced the majority status of the DA in the council. In the absence of threshold requirements, it can thus be predicted that the city’s council may become even more fragmented, given the growing popularity of the smaller parties and the concomitant chances that they may gain seat share.

The dominance of the DA in the City of Cape Town

According to Booysen (2021: 13) ‘coalitions flourish when dominant systems decay’. Although the

DA continues to govern with an outright majority, its decline in dominance was notable in the recent election. If this trend continues – and provided each of the political parties that gained seats in this election is able to win additional seats of the same value – a hung council may be returned. This is to say that if the DA suffers a further electoral decline of 8.82 percentage points in the next local elections, it would lose its majority status (finishing with a minority status of 49.51 per cent). The DA would then become a (key) player in any coalition that would have to be formed.

Competitive elections

In PR systems, the absence of threshold requirements and the diminishing confidence in the ruling party will all have a limited effect unless the elections are competitive, and the elections will be competitive if there are strong opposition parties that are gaining the trust of the electorate as viable alternatives. It is likely that the smaller parties which made an impact in this election will be here to stay and it can be expected that the next general elections in the city will be competitive.

Collectively, these factors suggest that it is probable for a hung council to arise again in the City of Cape Town. The PR electoral system means that hung councils, and therefore coalitions, will remain a possibility in some municipalities. The decline of the DA's relatively brief dominance in the local political landscape and the competitive nature of the local elections (at least in terms of the number of participating parties) suggest that, all other things being equal, a hung council may arise in the next local elections in the City. Among others, the differential party political impact of the lower turnout is still to be determined.

Key lessons from the 2006 coalition experience in the City of Cape Town

The 2006 coalition constitutes a case of best practice for coalition governance in the country. The DA, as senior party in the coalition, was able to govern effectively for the full five-year municipal term. There are key lessons in this Cape Town experience.

Strategic allocation of offices

During the coalition negotiations process, political parties need to consider how political offices will be distributed in the coalition. Office distribution can be used as an incentive for political parties to cooperate. In the 2006 coalition, senior political office-bearer positions were allocated to coalition partners. Jacob Derek Smit from the FF+ was elected as the speaker of the council. The mayoralty was secured by the DA. The deputy mayoral candidate was Andrew Arnolds from the ACDP (Kadima, 2006). Beukes and De Visser (2021: 33) posit that:

a combination of representation in the executive and other political offices can increase the incentive for that party to cooperate. This ensures that each party derives the maximum possible benefit from cooperating in the coalition, and reduces the chances of one or more parties or independent councillors defecting in the coalition.

The allocation of senior political office-bearer positions to coalition partners encouraged them to cooperate in the long term and to minimise instability in the coalition – for example, by reducing the risk of motions of no confidence being brought against the office bearers.

The personality of the mayor

Coalition bargaining needs to be sustained throughout the life cycle of the coalition. This is because political parties in the coalition may vary over time in their agreement with the coalition unit, and be prompted to renegotiate their position and the incentives for their cooperation. Bargaining lies at the heart of coalition politics (Lupia and Strom, 2008). To a large extent, the responsibility to maintain unity and cohesion in the coalition rests with the mayor, who is responsible for the promotion of good governance in the municipality by ensuring that policies, including the integrated development plan and by-laws, are implemented. In the context of the coalition, the mayor of a municipality must maintain positive relationships and manage any conflict arising among the coalition partners. The mayor's personality is crucial.

In the 2006 coalition, the DA mayor Helen Zille was perceived by other coalition partners as being a good negotiator, willing to make the coalition work in the best interest of all the coalition parties. When asked about the personality of the mayor in the 2006 coalition, the UDM leader, Bantu Holomisa (in a November 2021 interview with the author) said: 'The DA mayor of the 2006 coalition in the City of Cape Town worked well with the coalition parties. She would inform us about developments and provide us with all information that she thinks would be in our interest.' The duty of a coalition mayor is therefore to maintain transparency by ensuring that all the partners are informed about what is happening in the municipality – including the activities of the office bearers. This builds trust, which is important for coalition survival. Accordingly, coalitions should be underpinned by a consensus-building approach. Consensus needs to be fostered, and issues need to be resolved before decisions are taken on those matters.

Develop and adopt a coalition agreement that deals with dispute resolution

The coalition agreement is a contract-like political agreement that is negotiated between the parties. The document is comprehensive and includes the setting-out of dispute resolution mechanisms (Beukes and De Visser, 2021: 7). Coalition agreements document the concessions made among the parties to cooperate in the coalition government and help to manage conflict. The 2006 City of Cape Town coalition government had such an agreement in place. When asked (in an interview with the author, 30 September 2021) about the value of coalition agreements for conflict management in the coalition government, the DA's James Selfe (2021) remarked: 'to get around this problem of not being able to get sufficient consensus, we [the coalition partners] built in a clause in the coalition agreement that said if a particular political party wants to object to an issue, they must give the coalition government prior notice to amend the proposal and if they cannot reach consensus then the party is free to oppose'. Political parties may also include an 'agree to disagree' provision to regulate areas of contestation (see Beukes and De Visser, 2021: 17–18). This fosters coalition stability by ensuring that the partners are not forced to compromise in order to accommodate others in the coalition.

The 2006 coalition experience in the City of Cape Town demonstrated that the arrangement was underpinned by a consensus-building approach in which all the coalition partners were acknowledged in and integrated into the decision-making processes, in the appointments, in mayoral actions and in conflict resolution and mutual accommodation. Collectively, these aspects promoted coalition durability.

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ANALYSIS 12

A COALITIONS-FOCUSED ANALYSIS OF KWAZULU-NATAL MUNICIPALITIES FOLLOWING THE 2021 LOCAL ELECTIONS

BHEKI R. MNGOMEZULU

The 2021 Local Government Elections (LGE2021) have been historic. It produced an unprecedented number of 70 hung municipalities nationally – with KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) accounting for 21 of those municipalities. The focus of this analysis is on the local municipalities located in northern KZN, in the five District Municipalities (Amajuba, Ilembe, King Cetshwayo, uMkhanyakude and Zululand). The analysis considers several factors which contributed to the prevalence of so many hung councils in this area, and it zooms into coalitions. Although the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) were the main contenders in northern KZN, the initial stance of the IFP was that it did not want to work with the ANC. Later, the IFP made a U-turn, announcing that it would negotiate with the ANC under certain conditions. The proposed agreement was that in those municipalities where the IFP obtained more seats it would form a municipal government. Similarly, where the ANC obtained the highest number of seats it would do the same. This agreement, however, was not formalised. Subsequently, the ANC and the IFP contested against each other for control of the hung municipalities.

Within the broader context, the purpose of this analysis is threefold. First, the analysis makes sense of the election results for the benefit of understanding the overall political trends. Second, it extrapolates what the ensuing coalitions mean for service-delivery prospects. Third, it fathoms how the 2021 developments might affect the 2024 general election, specifically in northern KZN.

The performance of the IFP and the ANC in northern KZN in the LGE2021

As Table 12.1 shows, the IFP performed well in northern KZN. Not only did it retain 13 municipalities it had obtained in 2016 but it also reclaimed the municipalities it had ceded to the ANC and the National Freedom Party (NFP) in previous LGEs. The IFP achieved this goal either through an outright majority or through coalitions with other political parties. The Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) did well in KZN in general, but not in northern KZN where they had less visibility. The NFP performed well only in eDumbe and Nongoma. Therefore, this analysis focuses in the main on the performances of the ANC, and in northern KZN.

As demonstrated by Table 12.1, the IFP outperformed the ANC. Of the five districts enumerated, the IFP emerged victorious by outright victory in two and led in one more, while the ANC retained two, Ilembe and uMkhanyakude. Two of the District Municipalities which went to the IFP (Amajuba and King Cetshwayo) had previously been under the ANC's control. Zululand was headed by an IFP-led coalition when the NFP failed to participate in the LGE of 2016. In Amajuba, all three municipalities (Newcastle, eMadlangeni and Dannhauser) had been under the control of the ANC. The IFP took control in all of them through a coalition with smaller parties.

Table 12.1: Municipal control in northern KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities, 2016 and 2021

District municipality	Local municipality	Control in 2016	Control in 2021
Amajuba		ANC	IFP
	Newcastle	ANC	IFP-led
	Emadlangeni	ANC	IFP-led
	Dannhauser	ANC	IFP-led
Ilembe		ANC	ANC
	KwaDukuza	ANC	ANC-led
	Mandeni	ANC	ANC
	Maphumulo	ANC	ANC-led
	Ndwedwe	ANC	ANC
King Cetshwayo		ANC	IFP
	uMhlathuze	ANC	IFP-led
	Umfolozu	ANC	IFP
	Umlalazi	ANC	IFP
	Mthonjaneni	IFP	IFP-led
	Nkandla	IFP	IFP
uMkhanyakude		ANC	ANC
	Jozini	IFP-led	IFP
	Mtubatuba	IFP-led	IFP-led
	Mhlabuyalingana	ANC	IFP-led
	Big 5 Hlabisa	IFP	IFP
Zululand		NFP	IFP-led
	eDumbe	ANC	IFP
	uPhongolo	ANC	IFP
	AbaQulusi	IFP	IFP
	Nongoma	IFP	IFP-led
	Ulundi	IFP	IFP

Source: Author's compilation from various sources.

In uMkhanyakude, the IFP was in charge of Big 5 Hlabisa, and was assisted by the DA and the EFF in 2016 to control Jozini and Mtubatuba. In LGE2021, the IFP won Jozini and Big 5 Hlabisa with a clear majority and retained Mtubatuba through a coalition. There was fierce competition between the ANC and the IFP in uMhlabuyalingana, which was under the control of the ANC. The IFP took this municipality from the ANC, again through a coalition with smaller parties.

In King Cetshwayo, the IFP retained Nkandla, which it had obtained in 2016. It also retained Mthonjaneni through a coalition. The IFP's gain in this district was achieved when the party took uMhlathuze through the support of parties like the EFF and the DA. The IFP also registered a clear majority in both uMfolozu and Umlalazi. This saw the entire King Cetshwayo District changing hands from the ANC to the IFP.

Zululand was already controlled by an IFP-led coalition. In LGE2021, the IFP retained Ulundi through an outright majority. It also retained AbaQulusi and Nongoma through a coalition. The IFP's greatest victory was when it took uPhongolo from the ANC with an outright victory. The NFP also weighed in when it took control of eDumbe through a coalition. This left the ANC with no municipality to control in this district.

The ANC's losses in LGE2021 in northern KZN are glaring. They are not only evidenced in the fact that the ANC failed to take municipalities from the IFP; importantly, it was also unable to retain some municipalities which it had won in 2016. For example, in uMhlabuyalingana, having registered 64.20 per cent and 61.00 per cent in 2011 and 2016, respectively, the ANC only managed a slight majority of 46.31 per cent in 2021 – a significant drop. At uPhongolo in 2016, the ANC dismantled the IFP-led coalition which had been put together in 2011; in 2021, the ANC only managed 34.14 per cent against the IFP's 50.59 per cent. At Nkandla, the ANC led through a coalition in 2011 but lost to the IFP in 2016. In 2021, the IFP retained this municipality with a convincing 57.85 per cent majority while the ANC only managed 34.66 per cent. The same trend was replicated in Mthonjaneni. Having led this municipality through a coalition in 2011, the ANC surrendered it to the IFP in 2016. In 2021, there was no outright winner but the IFP had an upper hand, obtaining 48.36 per cent compared to the ANC's 37.92 per cent.

Nongoma has always been a contest between the IFP and the NFP. In 2011, the NFP obtained 44.23 per cent against the IFP's 40.68 per cent. However, the IFP led a coalition government. When the NFP failed to contest LGE2016, the IFP beat the ANC. In 2021, the IFP obtained 46.48 per cent while the NFP registered 29.35 per cent. Once again, the ANC was outclassed. The NFP is strong in eDumbe, which it won by 51.84 per cent in 2011. In 2016, the ANC registered 51.10 per cent and took control. Having made a come-back in 2021, the NFP obtained 33.51 per cent compared to the ANC's 23.62 per cent. The NFP led a coalition government.

KZN has four economic hubs: eThekweni, uMsunduzi, uMhlathuze and Newcastle. The first two fall outside of this analysis. At uMhlathuze, the ANC declined to 39.48 per cent from 63.99 per cent. Meanwhile, the IFP moved up to 34.92 per cent from the 18.83 per cent it had obtained in 2016. In Newcastle, the ANC went down from 61.75 per cent obtained in 2016 to 31.41 per cent in 2021. The ANC was outpaced quite comprehensively by the IFP in northern KZN in LGE2021.

Coalition negotiations among various political parties in northern KZN in 2021

Coalition negotiations among political parties in northern KZN cannot be discussed in isolation. Decisions on which party to negotiate with were taken by the national leaderships of various political parties. The negotiating teams were dominated by national leaders, leaving limited space for regional and local initiatives.

In this context, the IFP benefitted from support it received (mainly) from the EFF and the DA. Through its leader, John Steenhuisen, the DA stated that it would not work with the ANC. The EFF had some discussions with the ANC but when these discussions collapsed the EFF announced that it had closed doors to the ANC. Its leader, Julius Malema, stated that his party would vote for any party that stood against the ANC. Regarding hung municipalities in northern KZN, the IFP enjoyed support from the EFF and the DA but also formed minority coalitions.

The IFP and the ANC could have formed a grand alliance but this was thwarted by two factors. Firstly, the IFP stated that it was not going to cooperate with the ANC in KZN. Secondly, when the IFP changed its stance, the negotiations did not include the four provincial economic hubs. Here, the IFP wanted to take control of uMhlatuze and Newcastle – leaving the ANC with eThekweni and uMsunduzi. Thirdly, the IFP's demands included two complex issues with a deep history. The first was the re-naming of the Mangosuthu Highway after Griffiths Mxenge; the second was the naming of one of the ANC's regions in Vryheid after Mzala Nxumalo (1988) who had written the book *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda*, presenting Buthelezi and the IFP negatively. When the ANC did not concede to these demands, negotiations collapsed. This meant that the ANC in northern KZN was on its own, while the IFP enjoyed the support of the EFF and the DA, as well as other smaller parties.

Other than these unfortunate demands by the IFP, the ANC had to some extent brought itself into this situation. Some of its councillors had failed to deliver services. Others lived far from their constituencies. There was complacency occasioned by victories in previous elections. Then, there was the Zuma factor. Some ANC supporters believed that former president Zuma was left in the lurch by his ANC comrades. They believed that the string of cases levelled against Zuma were politically motivated, and they vowed to 'punish' the ANC.

There were also national issues which filtered down to this area. Among them were factional politics and intermittent power failures which are attributed to the ANC nationally. These and other issues resulted in many ANC members and supporters not voting, rather than voting for other political parties. There was also a lack of political education about the danger of not voting. With no outright majority in certain municipalities, the ANC was forced to look for partners. In the main, they were ostracised by those parties. Eventually, the ANC lost its power in many municipalities.

Lessons from the 2021 LGE

Flowing from the above, northern KZN experienced two types of coalitions. The first was grand coalitions formed by the IFP, DA and the EFF. There were also minority coalitions formed by the IFP and other smaller political parties, occasioned by the fact that outside the urban centres, for example in northern KZN, the DA and the EFF do not have any significant presence. Even the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) which assisted the ANC in eThekweni, has visibility only in limited areas. The increase in the number of political parties and independent candidates will continuously push the country towards coalitions. The process could have long-term negative consequences.

The 2021 LGE has opened many people's eyes. Clearly, the days of the ANC as the 'big party' are over. Despite their negative impact, coalitions have become a reality in South African politics. The ANC, as epitomised in the politics of northern KZN, and like a range of other liberation movements in Africa, has lost momentum. In the interpretation by Isike and Onapajo (2017: 2), describing the ANC's LGE2016 losses, including former stronghold constituencies such as four major metropolitan municipalities, these processes of decline 'add weight to the growing suggestions that it might lose national elections in the future'.

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ANALYSIS 13

'THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND' – WESTERN CAPE COALITIONS 2021

MCEBISI NDLETYANA

The Western Cape is synonymous with hung councils. Every election in this province since 2000 has yielded municipalities with no outright winners. The province had the largest number of hung councils in the three sets of local elections of 2000, 2006 and 2016. In 2011 it was overtaken by KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). It stands just behind KZN even in LGE2021, with the second highest number of hung councils, at 16, compared to the former's 21. The breakdown of hung councils in this election, however, indicates more than competitive politics in the Western Cape. It represents a dramatic change of fortunes, particularly of the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Since the 2006 local elections, the DA has been on the rise in the Western Cape. Hung councils were largely indicative of the DA encroaching into other parties' territories, especially that of the African National Congress (ANC). Hung councils were therefore a consequence of the party's expansion. That all changed in LGE2021. Hung councils now represent the DA's contraction; from 63.33 per cent at provincial level in 2016, the DA, has fallen sharply to 54.25 per cent. Of the current 16 hung councils, the party had won eight of them outright in LGE2016. At one level this dramatic fall is not surprising; problems first surfaced in the 2019 national election, the results of which halted the trend that had prevailed since the 2004 election. Provincial support dropped to 55.45 per cent from 59.58 per cent in 2014.

There have been many accounts of the DA's electoral decline in 2019 (Jolobe, 2019); instead of dissecting that aspect this analysis identifies the beneficiaries of DA losses and considers the implications. The Western Cape was affected by the general drop in turnout, nationwide, in 2021. Provincial turnout dropped from 63.46 per cent in 2016 to 48.80 per cent this time around, the hung councils experiencing an average drop of around eight percentage points. To make matters worse for the DA, it was not only the low turnout that hurt it: those who turned out to vote, and who would usually have voted DA were also attracted to contestants other than the DA (fortunately for the DA, those seeking alternatives did not go for its main rival, the ANC). The ANC also dropped significantly in the Western Cape, provincially from 26.22 per cent in 2016 to 20.38 per cent in 2021. The DA therefore remains in a commanding position in the province, albeit with a drastically reduced majority.

New winners have emerged in these hung councils. They are a mixture of political parties and community organisations, new and old. Among the parties are the Freedom Front Plus (FF+), Patriotic Alliance (PA), Good and, to a marginal extent, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The

oldest of the parties, the FF+, is experiencing a revival, whereas Good is a reincarnation of the Independent Democrats (ID) that was swallowed by the DA and a breakaway party from the DA, led by the former leader of the ID, Patricia de Lille. Both parties, FF+ and Good, together with the PA, are competing with the DA for the same voters, coloured and white. Their pickings have been at the expense of the DA.

Like the political parties, residents' associations also appear to have encroached into the strongholds of the two leading parties. Those that have won seats for the first time, and are consequently kingmakers, include the Knysna Independent Movement (KIM), Witzenberg Party (WP), Kannaland Independent Party (KIP), Suid-Kaap Saamstaan (Saamstaan) and Cederberg First Residents Association (CFRA). Among the old associations that continue to command support are the Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA), the Witzenberg Aksie (WA) and the Karoo Democratic Force (KDF).

Coalition formation and distribution of power

Of the 16 coalition governments, the DA secured the mayoralty in nine. In the other seven hung councils, the PA secured three mayoral positions, and the ANC, KGP, ICOSA and CFRA each got one. Getting the largest number of seats gave a party an advantage to secure the mayoralty (see Table 13.1), bolstered by nationwide pacts that the DA and the ANC concluded with small parties. In four municipalities, for instance, the pact that the DA signed with the FF+ secured it an instant majority, cancelling out the need for other partners.

The DA insisted on the mayoralty in all the municipalities where it got the largest number of seats. In George, the DA took all leadership positions – mayor, deputy mayor, speaker and chief whip – even though the FF+, with its four seats, lifted the party beyond the 28 seats required in a 55-seat council. Conversely, the ANC was less insistent on the mayoralty even where it got the largest number of seats among its coalition partners. In two municipalities where it was the largest coalition partner (Theewaterskloof and Beaufort West) the ANC deferred the mayoralty to the PA. Having the largest number of seats, therefore, did not guarantee the mayoralty, which depended on how desperate a party was to retain some measure of control in municipalities and which meant making more compromises than would ordinarily have been the case.

Of the all the residents' associations that contested in the Western Cape, ICOSA won the largest number of seats (three) in Kannaland. The ANC in this council followed with two, and the DA got one. The ICOSA mayor is Jeffrey Donson, a controversial figure whose election met with disapproval on account of his 2008 conviction for sexual relations with an underaged girl, but that statutory rape sentence never stained Donson's reputation among locals. He has been a dominant figure in Kannaland local politics throughout the 2000s. After the appeal court reduced his sentence and turned it into a non-custodial one, he was immediately re-elected ward councillor in 2010 (Ndletyana, 2021).

After promising to consider the outcry from the gender activists to resign his position, Donson's association came back, saying he would not resign. ICOSA explained that they believed in restorative justice and that the man had been rehabilitated and was contributing to society. The ANC, which knew of Donson's past, promised to review its coalition with ICOSA. Next, the ANC withdrew from its ICOSA coalition in Kannaland and resigned itself to occupying the opposition benches. In the words of ANC Western Cape spokesperson, Sifiso Mtsweni, the ANC's provincial coordinator '... visited Kannaland to effect this decision. The ANC Speaker of the municipality is being withdrawn and we will assume opposition in the municipality' (Solomons, 2021).

Though not gaining the largest number of seats as ICOSA in Kannaland, the CFRA managed to gain

the mayoralty of Cederberg. The ANC gained the largest number of seats (four), but its coalition with the PA only totaled five in a council of 11 seats. Nor could the DA and the FF+ with their combined three seats (two and one, respectively) make up the majority. With three seats, the CFRA became the kingmaker. Forced to choose between the ANC and PA, on the one hand, and the DA and the FF+, on the other, the CFRA opted for the latter. Formed by the former director-general of the Scorpions, Ruben Richards, CFRA aims to break political parties' stranglehold on Cederberg. CFRA is an expression of distrust in established parties whom they deride for making promises they hardly keep. CFRA, Richards explained, will prioritise locals and will be service-delivery oriented. He is adamant that, unlike parties, ideology will play no role in what they do (www.capetalk.co.za, 3 November 2021).

Table 13.1: Coalition government in the Western Cape 2021

2021 results and council positions					
Municipality	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Elected councils	Seats per party
Witzenberg	DA – 36.81	ANC- 30.63	ANC DA Good	Speaker: ANC	ANC: 7, DA: 8, EFF: 1, FF+: 1, PA: 1, Good: 1, WA: 1, WP: 1, ICOSA: 1 (Total 22)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy Mayor: Good	
Swellendam	DA – 52.18	ANC – 38.88	DA	Speaker: DA	ANC: 4, DA: 11, FF+: 1 (Total 16)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy Mayor: TBC	
Kannaland	ICOSA – 45.09	ANC – 21.36	ANC ICOSA	Speaker: ANC	ANC: 2, DA: 1, ICOSA: 3, Kannaland Independent Party: 1 (Total 7)
				Mayor: ICOSA	
				Deputy Mayor: ICOSA	
Hessequa	DA – 50.62	ANC – 34.83	DA	Speaker: DA	ANC: 6, DA: 9, PA: 1, FF+: 1 (Total 17)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: TBC	
Oudtshoorn	DA – 30.93	ANC – 28.35	ANC ICOSA OGI	Speaker: OGI	ANC: 8, DA: 7, FF+: 3, PA: 1, Good: 1, Oudtshoorn Gemeenskap Inisiatief: 1, Suid- Kaap Saamstaan: 1, Advieskantoor: 1 (Total 23)
				Mayor: ANC	
				Deputy mayor: ICOSA	
				Whip: ANC	
Bitou	DA – 41.34	ANC – 29.69	DA PDC AUF	Speaker: PDC	AUF: 1, ANC: 4, DA: 5, PA: 1, Plett Democratic Congress: 1, Ikhwezi Political Movement: 1 (Total 13)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: AUF	
				Whip: DA	

2021 results and council positions					
Municipality	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Elected councils	Seats per party
Laingsburg	ANC – 26.05	KDF – 24.50	ANC KDF PA	Speaker: ANC	ANC: 2, DA: 3, PA: 1, KDF: 1 (Total 7)
				Mayor: PA	
				Deputy mayor: KDF	
Prince Albert	DA – 37.95	KGP – 22.53	ANC KGP PA	Speaker: ANC	ANC: 1, DA: 3, KGP: 2, PA: 1 (Total 7)
				Mayor: KGP	
				Deputy mayor: PA	
Beaufort West	ANC – 28.18	DA – 27.25	KDF PA ANC	Speaker: KDF	ANC: 4, DA: 4, Good: 1, KDF: 1, PA:3 (Total 13)
				Mayor: PA	
				Deputy mayor: ANC	
Matzikama	DA – 37.16	ANC – 29.17	DA	Speaker: DA	ANC: 4, DA: 6, EFF: 1, FF+: 1, PA: 2, Good: 1 (Total 15)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: DA	
Cederberg	ANC – 35.49	CFRA – 26.89	DA CFRA FF+	Speaker: DA	ANC: 4, DA: 2, FF+: 1, PA: 1, Coloured First Residents Association: 3 (Total 11)
				Mayor: CFRA	
				Deputy mayor: FF+	
Saldanha Bay	DA – 46.91	ANC – 21.77	DA	Speaker: DA	ANC: 6, DA: 13, EFF: 1, FF+: 1, PA: 1, Good: 4, Cape Coloured Congress: 1 (Total 27)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: TBC	
Theewaterskloof	DA – 41.88	ANC – 28.61	ANC PA Good	Speaker: ANC	ANC: 8, DA: 11, EFF: 1, FF+: 1, PA: 2, Good: 3, Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party: 1 (Total 27)
				Mayor: PA	
				Deputy mayor: Good	
Langeberg	DA – 44.27	ANC – 25.46	DA FF+	Speaker: DA	ANC: 6, DA: 10, FF+: 3, PA: 1, Good: 1, LIP: 1, ADM:1 (Total 23)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: FF+	
Cape Agulhas	DA – 46.26	ANC – 26.30	DA FF+	Speaker: FF+	ANC: 3, DA: 5, FF+: 1, Dienslewerings Party: 2 (Total 11)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: DA	

2021 results and council positions					
Municipality	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Elected councils	Seats per party
Knysna	DA – 36.11	ANC – 33.54	DA KIM	Speaker: DA	ANC: 7, DA: 8, EFF: 1, PA: 2, Knysna Independent Movement: 2, Plaaslike Besorgde Inwoners: 1 (Total 21)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: KIM	
				Whip: DA	
George	DA – 46.46	ANC – 18.02	DA FF+	Speaker: DA	ACDP:1, ANC: 10, DA: 26, EFF: 2, Good: 6, FF+: 4, PA: 1, Plaaslike Besorgde Inwoners: 5 (Total 55)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: DA	
				Whip: DA	
Breede Valley	DA – 45.24	ANC – 23.77	DA FF+	Speaker: DA	ACDP: 1, ANC: 10, DA: 19, EFF: 2, FF+:2, PA: 1, Good: 4, BV Onafhanklik: 4 (Total 43)
				Mayor: DA	
				Deputy mayor: DA	
				Whip: FF+	

Note: A 2021 amendment of the Municipal Structures Act allows these municipalities to elect whips, but this amendment has not been implemented in all municipalities.

Source: Armstrong Mpela, South African Local Government Association, Western Cape Provincial Office.

Residents' associations are kingmakers in several other Western Cape hung councils as well. Though not gaining the mayoralty, like the CFRA, they have used their decisive votes to secure executive positions such as speaker or deputy mayor. A surprise inclusion in two of the coalitions, at Witzenberg and Theewaterskloof, has been the Good party. The party's national leaders made headlines with the announcement that they would not join any coalitions. Brett Herron, Good's secretary-general, explained that the best way for them was to serve their voters as 'a constructive opposition ... Coalitions don't work when they are expedient and are formed only to keep a particular party out of government' (www.polity.org.za, 8 November 2021). According to Herron, coalition formation was simply a scramble for power and they did not want to be part of that. Good's councillors in the two hung municipalities, however, hold the positions of deputy mayor.

Good's partners at Witzenberg are strangely defying preferences from the national leaders. Despite what the DA has been saying, the coalition there includes the ANC, whose councillor is the speaker where the DA's is the mayor. Voting did not follow the patterns, based on the national pacts among parties, which had characterised coalition formation elsewhere. After pipping the DA for the speaker post, the ANC then backed the DA for the mayoral post. The latter, in turn, backed Good for the deputy mayor position. The three biggest parties – DA, ANC and Good – whose combined seats constituted the majority of 17 seats out of 23 – decided to cooperate and share the executive positions among themselves without the help of the usual allies (FF+, PA and ICOSA).

An EFF councillor at Matzikama had followed the same unusual pattern of voting as happened at Witzenberg. He voted for the DA and the FF+, handing the mayoralty to the DA. This defied the

stance of the national leaders, who had railed against voting for the DA, after the latter had rejected any cooperation with them. The councillor's vote enraged the EFF president, Julius Malema, who promised retribution. After the EFF leaders subsequently turned around to vote alongside the DA and FF+ in the Gauteng metros, giving the DA mayoral positions, it was unclear what would become of the Matzikama councillor. He voted the same way as the national leaders subsequently instructed, but did so before they issued the instruction.

Both the big parties suffered greatly due to the increase in the number of small parties and residents' associations that contested the election. This shows eroding trust in the two parties. The DA has managed to escape any measurable loss of power. Though distrustful of both parties, the small parties and associations tolerate the DA more than they do its rival, the ANC. Local dynamics in the Western Cape often had more influence in the coalition formation than national leaders care to admit. Ultimately, it appears that personal chemistry among these local leaders will determine whether their coalitions hold.

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ANALYSIS 14

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF NORTHERN CAPE COALITIONS 2021 – RISE IN ACTIVISM, REFLECTING RACIAL POLARISATION

MCEBISI NDLETYANA

The least populous of South Africa's provinces, the Northern Cape, is now among locations with the largest number of hung councils. This is a dramatic turn of events; they had been relatively scarce in the province. At the inauguration of the current system of local government in 2000, the Northern Cape only had two hung councils, then none in the 2006 election. Hung councils resurfaced in 2011 at five, only to dip to three in 2016. Following LGE2021 they stand at 10, the third largest number after KwaZulu-Natal (21) and the Western Cape (16). It also brings the total number of hung councils the province has had to 20, and half of these were spawned by the 2021 election alone.

This dramatic change in the distribution of power is not surprising. More political parties and organisations (37) contested this election in the province than the previous one (19). Voters were also relatively keen to participate. The provincial turnout rate, at 53.31 per cent, was above the national level of 47 per cent. Although this turnout rate is a decline from the 58.57 per cent of the 2016 election, it still signalled a more enthusiastic electorate when compared to other parts of the country. This probably had to do with the wider choice of parties on offer to the voters. In addition to established parties, community organisations accounted for a notable number of the contestants.

Of these ten councils, eight are hung for the first time (Hantam, Karoo Hoogland, Kareeberg, !Kheis, Siyathemba, Thembelihle, Siyancuma and Gamagara). Two, Kgatelopele and Nama Khoi, are repeat hung councils. This leads to the main question this analysis addresses: What has prompted the increase in hung councils? The answer is twofold.

Firstly, the rise was prompted by the decline in support for the two main parties – the African National Congress (ANC) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) – and the near annihilation of the Congress of the People (Cope). The 2008 split in the ANC and the resultant formation of Cope changed what had largely been one-party dominance in the Northern Cape. Consequently, the 2009 national elections yielded a less dominant ANC and two other major parties – Cope and the DA. Cope got its highest number of votes from the province, making it the official opposition. The ANC supporters who did not join Cope, but sympathised with the reasons behind its split from the ANC, went to the DA. While infighting marred Cope's performance in the 2011 local elections, the ANC did not return to its unassailable dominance. It declined instead – something that consolidated into a pattern. The DA continued to grow, until this election in which it experienced a drop, as did the ANC (Ndletyana, 2010; Maserumule and Mathekga, 2011).

The second part of the answer to the question on the rise of hung councils in the province is the availability of alternatives. As a relatively engaged electorate, voters in the Northern Cape did not become apathetic once they were unhappy with their old parties – they went looking for other parties to support, and found options among the new parties. New and young parties, community organisations and independents are among the kingmakers in the hung councils. These include Independents; Namakwa Civic Movement (NCM); Kareeberg Civic Movement (KCM); Siyathemba Community Movement (SCM); Kgatelopele Community Forum KCF); Gamagara Community Forum (GCF); Forum for Service Delivery (F4SD); Patriotic Alliance (PA); and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

The spike in the number of coalitions indicates a surge in community activism. Civic formations not only made their presence felt in municipalities with hung councils, but throughout the province in roughly 70 per cent of the municipalities. They will amplify the voice of their residents, not only in municipal chambers, but also in the executive of these councils. In their selection of coalition partners, however, the residents' movements and independents have not been consistent. In Nama Khoi, for instance, the NCM went with the DA, securing itself the mayoralty and the latter got the speaker position. Similarly, Independents at Siyancuma voted with the DA to keep the ANC out of the executive, even though it got the largest number of seats. Here the mayoralty went to an independent and the DA got the speaker position. Independents did the same at !Kheis, even voting for Cope, with its lonesome seat, for the mayoralty. Conversely, the ANC was the beneficiary of the SCM votes in Siyathemba, which got the mayoral position, in return for voting the ANC into the speaker position. Interestingly, at Thembelihle, the EFF was possibly a beneficiary of DA and FF+ votes, giving it the mayoralty – a rarity for the party.

Besides the support from some residents' organisations and independents, both the ANC and the DA were also helped by their coalition pacts with the PA and FF+, respectively. In the instances of Hantam and Karoo Hoogland, for example, the ANC and the PA decided to share the municipalities, giving the entire executive control to each party. Overall, the varying ways in which Independents and residents' organisations voted suggest that, even though they claimed to have been spurred into formation by their opposition to the incumbent ANC, local dynamics have played a decisive role in their selection of coalition partners. Not all of them oppose cooperation with the ANC. These differences may still be their undoing in the council positions they have secured.

The involvement of community organisation activists in political leadership stands out in this province. Activism is widening beyond the typical political elite. Instead of surrendering leadership to politicians and continuing to decry the deterioration of services and life in general, residents have decided to take tangible initiatives to change their lot (Shepherd, 2021a). The NCM illustrates this surge in activism. NCM is a province-wide movement, which contested in several municipalities. In the case of the Nama Khoi Municipality, NCM was formed in February 2021 by Richie Cloete, a social worker with a private practice. Cloete was prompted by two local medical doctors, Gustav Bock and Calvino Watt, who had wanted to do something for the betterment of their own community, but lacked social networks. Besides being a social worker, and after a ten-year absence away in London, Cloete operated youth and childcare centres in Springbok. He also runs a radio station, Hamba Khaya. Cloete had the profile and social capital to initiate political activism.

Table 14.1: Coalition government in Northern Cape 2021

2021 party representation detail					
Municipality	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Elected* councils	Seats per party
Nama Khoi	ANC – 41.85	DA – 30.12	DA NCM	Speaker: DA Mayor: NCM	ANC: 7, DA: 5, NCM: 4, FF+: 1 (Total seats 17)
Hantam	ANC – 44.56	DA – 28.91	ANC	Speaker: ANC Mayor: ANC	ANC: 6, DA: 4, NCM: 1, PA: 1, FF+: 1 (Total seats 13)
Siyathemba	ANC – 44.43	SCM – 39.47	ANC SCM	Speaker: ANC Mayor: SCM	ANC: 5, DA: 2, SCM: 4 (Total seats 11)
Thembelihle	ANC – 40.33	EFF – 25.08	TBC	Speaker: SCM Mayor: EFF	ANC: 5, DA: 1, EFF: 3, SCM: 1, FF+: 1 (Total seats 11)
Siyancuma	ANC – 52.83	DA – 26.61	DA Independent	Speaker: DA Mayor: Independent	ANC: 6, DA: 3, EFF: 1, FF+: 1, Independents: 2 (Total seats 11)
+Kai !Garib	ANC – 44.82	HFTP – 21.63	TBC ***	Speaker: TBC See note Mayor: TBC See note	ANC: 10, DA: 3, EFF: 1, Hope For The Future: 4, FF+: 1 (Total seats 19)
!kheis	ANC – 47.16	DA – 22.28	TBC	Speaker: Cope Mayor: DA	ANC: 5, Cope: 1, DA: 2, EFF: 1, Independents: 2 (Total seats 11)
Kgatelopele	ANC – 45.28	DA – 19.20	ANC	Speaker: ANC Mayor: ANC	ANC: 5, DA: 2, EFF: 1, PA: 2, FF+: 1 (Total seats 11)
Gamagara	ANC – 44.47	DA – 35.77	GCF ANC	Speaker: GCF Mayor: ANC	ANC: 7, DA: 5, EFF: 1, GCF: 2 (Total seats 15)
Karoo Hoogland	ANC – 40.66	DA – 30.14	PA	Speaker: PA Mayor: PA	ANC: 5, DA: 3, PA: 2, FF+: 1 (Total seats 11)

Source: Bonolo Modise, Provincial Electoral Officer, Northern Cape. 25 November 2021

Notes: * These above municipalities are small and, therefore, only have speaker and mayor posts.

** + Kai Garib has not been able to convene an inaugural meeting owing to the sudden death of one of the ward councillors. The numbers are spread evenly between two blocs at nine each: the ANC, on the one side, and the rest on the other.

*** Indicates that the results were not yet available at the time of writing.

The initiative found resonance in the community. Social services were deteriorating and the physical state of the town, Springbok, is dismal. Given that status quo, the NCM aimed to 'knock the ANC out ... The political parties are like vultures who look for votes and leave when they have it. We wanted to start it to stand up and contest' (Shepherd, 2021b). Their campaign, however, was not only premised on inadequate services, but also championed identity issues. The purpose was to instill self-esteem, the belief that they could do things on their own. 'Our people,' Cloete explained, 'have been conditioned to wait for something to happen. We have to take the lead without any support networks unfortunately' (Shepherd, 2021b).

While identity is critical as the basis of political action, as Steve Biko (1978) asserted, how it is couched can also be worrisome. NCM defines itself as a movement for San, Khoi and Griquas. Their election poster read: 'Vote for your lineage'. This represents a retreat from an all-encompassing politics centred on civic identity to one formed on primordial identity. The NCM is mobilising kinfolk to the exclusion of Africans. To be sure, the PA is no different in this respect to the NCM. The PA grew significantly in this election. It is exploiting coloured nationalism that appears to be on the rise, partly caused by a sense of marginalisation, if not African chauvinism.

The downside of divisive politics aside, the relative success of the SCM is testimony to the Northern Cape appetite for community activism. All it requires to come to fruition is organisational and financial support, especially for campaign activities. The SCM secured this support from Mmusi Maimane's One South Africa Movement. The support also extended to training candidates on how to couch their electoral messages. Because they had financial support, these community activists could contest both the ward and PR ballot – they could not do this previously. This explains their improvement in this election. Maimane appears to have discovered a working model. Local activism is poised to rise, but the challenge is to guard against it widening racial divides.

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ANALYSIS 15

GRADUAL ATTRITION AND COALITION PARTNER VACILLATION, 2011–2021 COALITIONS IN THE FREE STATE

NKOE MONTJA

Coalition councils are generally unavoidable when elections do not deliver outright winners, whether at local, provincial or national levels. In the Free State province, it was LGE2016 that delivered the province's first hung council: the Metsimaholo local municipality. There was no outright winner, and the province's first-ever coalition government of the democratic era took root, growing to four in LGE2021 with the inclusion of Moqhaka and Nala in the northern parts of the province and Maluti-a-Phofung in the south-east.

The first Metsimaholo coalition testified to tentative and tumultuous beginnings. LGE2016 saw the African National Congress (ANC) lose the municipality to a coalition of the Democratic Alliance (DA), the local Metsimaholo Community Association (MCA) and other opposition parties. The council was dissolved in late 2017, after infighting among political parties in the coalition that led to the municipality failing to adopt its 2017–2018 budget. The voters were sent back to the polls for an election rerun. The thorn in the ANC's flesh in November 2017 was that its Tripartite Alliance partner, the South African Communist Party (SACP), contested against it. This division came at the height of campaigning to oust former president Jacob Zuma – under the weight of extensive corruption allegations – from the ANC presidency.

In the rerun, the ANC lost three seats to the SACP while the DA improved its performance modestly, followed by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The Freedom Front Plus (FF+) won one seat. The SACP, led in the council by Lindiwe Tshongwe, entered into an alliance with the ANC, and Tshongwe became mayor. The two kingmakers, the Forum 4 Service Delivery (F4SD) and the MCA, which had worked with the DA and EFF in LGE2016, switched sides to work with the ANC after the election rerun. Mayor Tshongwe, facing challenges during the coalition term (motions of no confidence; the council being placed under provincial administration) contested the 2021 elections as an ANC candidate.

These problems with municipal management contributed to the ANC's further decline in 2021, and to Metsimaholo's becoming a hung council again. There was uncertainty among voters. The three biggest political parties (ANC, DA and EFF) outperformed the smaller parties in LGE2021: the MCA only managed to get 1.4 per cent, compared to 4.92 per cent in 2016; the F4SD got 0.4 in 2021. The ANC, DA and EFF got 35.10, 26.32 and 25.57 per cent, respectively. The EFF was the only party that grew its support. From its 63.03 per cent outright majority in 2011, the ANC dropped to a midpoint of 45.03 per cent in 2016 and 35.10 per cent in 2021.

Table 15.1 illustrates these local elections power shifts and the continuation of Metsimaholo as a coalition council. In an unexpected ANC-EFF coalition deal, the ANC offered the mayoral position to the EFF while the ANC took speaker, chief whip and several mayoral committees. The EFF gained a mayoralty, and the ANC (despite only winning 16 out of 46 seats) could cling to influence in council matters. This arrangement, however, was reversed. EFF president Julius Malema announced the recalling of their mayor, Selloane Motjoane because she had achieved the position with the help of the ANC (see Feketha, 2021). The EFF's action to recall its ANC-endorsed mayor was an emphatic reinforcement of the EFF's refusal to work with the ANC. It also emphasised the fragility of the 2021 municipal coalitions.

This case of Free State ANC decline was reinforced by Maluti-a-Phofung, Maqhaka and Nala (previously held by ANC majorities) joining Metsimaholo in the ranks of provincial hung councils.

After the challenges it faced while working with the EFF in Johannesburg and Tshwane, the DA made it clear that it was not interested in working with the party. Neither was the DA interested in working with the ANC. These national determinations made an impact on the local coalition processes. The ANC in Maluti-a-Phofung lost 19 seats to the Map Sixteen Civic Movement (MAP16), a party formed by 16 expelled ANC councillors, whistle-blowers on alleged corruption in the Free State (Booyesen, 2021: 32). They took part in exposing the former mayor, Vusi Chabalala. The soured relationship made it difficult for the ANC, which had 28 seats, to form a coalition with the party after the LGE 2021. Coalition could not be avoided. MAP16, with 20 seats, chose to work with the EFF with seven seats, over the DA with five seats. The DA conceded and agreed to work with the coalition, without being part of it (see Hunter, 2021).

The power shift from the ANC to a coalition council was the result of a breakout party formed by disgruntled members seeking vengeance (and, at times, also looking to hold office and secure salaries after being expelled from the ANC). The EFF's role was reinforced through these developments: its formation indicated the start of a period in which the ANC was losing support systematically in several municipalities, starting from the 2016 local elections.

The ANC also failed to hold on to Nala local municipality. It secured only 12 seats in LGE2021, instead of the required 13 seats for an outright council majority. The DA, Nala Community Forum (NCF) and FF+ won two seats each while the EFF managed to win six. The municipality had been facing governance problems, including threats to its financial sustainability, allegedly as a result of corruption, according to the DA Nala councillor David Ross (2021). A similar situation arose in Maqhaka. The ANC won 22 seats, DA 10, EFF 5, MCF 3, FF+ also 3, and Power of African Unity (PAU) 1 – for a total of 44 councillors.

Corruption and poor service delivery in the Free State has seen the formation of local political parties in the province. In local elections these parties are a thorn in the ANC's flesh. MAP16, the Setsoko Service Delivery Forum (SSDF), NCF and MCF are among community-based political parties that continue to threaten the ANC's municipal power in the province. To some extent, the ANC's drop in the share of votes, from 61.53 per cent in 2016 to 50.61 per cent in 2021 is due to these local parties, which become kingmakers and often work with opposition parties. Despite the DA's not actively supporting the MAP16 alliance with the EFF in Maluti-a-Phofung, the party agreed to condone the coalition. This agreement saw MAP16's Gilbert Mokotso taking over the mayoral chain.

In both the Moqhaka and Nala municipalities the ANC won exactly half the seats and needed a coalition with smaller parties in order to hold on to the municipalities. This help came from the Power of African Unity (PAU) which had one seat in Moqhaka and the NCF with its two seats in the Nala municipality. The ANC's Motloheloa Mokatsane became the mayor of Moqhaka, and Nozililo Martha Ntema the Nala mayor.

Table 15.1: Local election results in four Free State hung councils, 2011–2021

Main parties and coalition partners 2011–2021									
Municipality	2011			2016			2021		
	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government
Metsimaholo	ANC (63.03)	DA (34.78)	ANC	ANC (45.03)	DA (28.92)	ANC SACP F4SD MCA	ANC (35.10)	DA (26.32)	EFF ANC (in flux)
Maluti-a-Phofung	ANC (75.43)	DPSA (14.31)	ANC	ANC (68.49)	EFF (12.62)	ANC	ANC (39.94)	MAP16 (28.55)	MAP16, EFF AIC ATM SARKO DPSA
Nala	ANC (74.43)	DA (13.43)	ANC	ANC (61.73)	EFF (20.40)	ANC	ANC (49.90)	EFF (24.49)	ANC NCF
Maqhaka	ANC (67.73)	DA (22.21)	ANC	ANC (60.39)	DA (24.39)	ANC	ANC (49.55)	DA (21.20)	ANC PAU

Source: www.elections.org.za/electionresults/Downloads/ME-Results, accessed 8 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

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ANALYSIS 16

STALEMATES TO THE POINT OF FLIPPING A COIN – COALITIONS IN LIMPOPO

NKOE MONTJA

Limpopo is another province of South Africa that first entered coalition governance in 2016 when the African National Congress (ANC) failed to hold onto Thabazimbi and Modimolle-Mookgophong municipalities. In 2011, the ANC had held the Thabazimbi municipality with over 65 per cent of the votes, while for Modimolle-Mookgophong, the party held power with 65.77 per cent in Mookgophong and 67.55 in Modimolle.

The shift in dominance in these municipalities came in the 2016 local elections as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) emerged to be an opponent whose support came mainly from the ANC. It was clear that the EFF, a breakout party from the ANC, would not work with the ANC (at least not at that stage). Instead, the EFF opted to work with the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Freedom Front Plus (FF+). The EFF's support in these municipalities came to some extent as a result of Limpopo being home to EFF president, Julius Malema and vice-president, Floyd Shivambu.

The DA, EFF and FF+ agreed to work together with the local kingmakers, the Thabazimbi Residents' Association (TRA), which had two seats in the council in 2016. The ANC managed to secure 10 seats and needed two seats to hold onto the Thabazimbi municipality. The EFF and FF+ managed to secure six and two seats, respectively. Proceeding with the coalition resulted in the kingmakers, the TRA, being given the mayoral chain. The municipal council, however, had its internal squabbles. At one stage the then TRA councillors were expelled, and their positions filled with new TRA candidates. The coalition managed to last until the end of the term.

In Modimolle-Mookgophong, the ANC on the basis of the 2016 results were two seats short of winning the municipality. It secured 13, three down from the 2011 elections. The DA had managed to secure seven, while the FF+ won two and EFF secured six seats. Given the DA-FF+ relationship, it was always expected for the parties to work together, and with the EFF's support in 2016 they managed to take over the municipality. The understanding between the councillors on running the municipality thus allowed the council to run its full course to the end of its 2021 term, even when there were challenges.

Tables 16.1 and 16.2 illustrate the power shift from ANC dominance to coalition councils in the Thabazimbi and Modimolle-Mookgophong local municipalities.

Table 16.1: 2011–2021 seat allocation in Thabazimbi

2021 seat count per political party							
	ANC	DA	EFF	TRA	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
Seat count	11	4	2	3	3*	23	DA with TSFD, TRA
2016 seat count per political party							
	ANC	DA	EFF	TRA	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
Seat count	10	5	5	2	1**	23	TRA-led
2011 seat count per political party							
	ANC	DA	FF+	TRA	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
Seat count	16	5	1	-	0	22	ANC

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 10 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

Notes: *TFSD 1, FF+ 2

** FF+ 1

Modimolle and Mookgophong municipalities were amalgamated to Modimolle-Mookgophong prior to the 2016 local elections. After failure by the ANC to secure an outright majority win over the municipality, the DA's Marlene van Staden became the 2016 mayor following the EFF's undertaking to work with the DA and FF+. In Thabazimbi in 2021, the ANC won 11 seats, one seat short of taking an outright council majority. The DA lost one seat, now managing to get four, but the EFF became the big loser this time around, losing three and securing only two seats. The FF+ also secured two seats. The 2016 kingmakers, the TRA, increased its seats from two to three and the Thabazimbi Forum for Service Delivery (TFSD) secured one seat.

Come 2021, the DA was vocal about not wanting to work with the EFF and the ANC. The EFF, in executing its own strategy of partnering the ANC, helped to vote in DA council positions, in votes the DA accepted. The DA emphasised that it would not make unprincipled concessions just to please its partners. In an arrangement that in essence continued the 2016 coalition pattern in Thabazimbi, the EFF, TRA and TFSD supported the DA-FF+ coalition. This resulted in the DA's Tokkie Swanepoel as mayor, Butana Thlabirwa of TFSD as speaker and Catherine Sikwana of the TRA as chief whip of the council (Russel, 2021).

Table 16.2: 2011–2021 seat allocation in Modimolle-Mookgophong (amalgamated since 2016 election)

2021 seat count per political party							
	ANC	DA	EFF	FF+	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
Seat count	14	7	4	3	0	28	None: DA by lot; ANC
2016 seat count per political party							
	ANC	DA	EFF	FF+	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
Seat count	13	7	6	2	0	28	DA-led
2011 seat count per political party							
	ANC	Cope	DA	FF+	OTHERS	TOTAL	COALITION
Modimolle*	13	0	4	1	0	18	ANC
Mookgophong*	6	1	2	1	0	10	ANC

Source: <https://results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results>, accessed 10 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

On the basis of the 2021 election results the Modimolle-Mookgophong municipality found itself in a coalition situation again. The 2021 elections in Modimolle-Mookgophong saw the ANC with 14 seats, also one seat short of taking back the municipality. As in 2016, the DA again won seven seats, while the FF+ had a slight growth, managing to win three seats. The EFF on the other hand suffered a two-seat loss, this time around only securing four seats in this council.

The first post-LGE2021 council meeting in Modimolle-Mookgophong municipality collapsed after the ANC councillors failed to attend and the meeting did not achieve a quorum which required at least 15 out of the 28; 14 councillors from the opposition parties were sworn in but could not elect the mayor, speaker and the chief whip since the meeting was not quorate. The meeting convened a few days later and ended in a stalemate as the DA, the EFF and the FF+ polled the same number of votes as the ANC. Resuming the meeting a few days later saw the ANC's Sinah Langa elected as the council speaker after getting 15 votes against DA's Dingaen Motshweni with his 13 votes (Makungo, 2021). After failing to elect a mayor for the fourth time, it was agreed that the Modimolle-Mookgophong council would resume three days later, this time around for the mayor to be elected using the 'flip a coin' process, as prescribed by legislation. The verdict by coin was that the DA's Marlene van Staden would again be the mayor.

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ANALYSIS 17

SAVED BY SMALL PARTIES – THE ANC IN 2021 COALITIONS IN THE NORTH WEST

NKOE MONTJA

Well-known for its platinum mines, African National Congress (ANC) political turmoil and mismanaged municipalities, North West, in the local elections of 2021, gained two more municipalities that required coalition government, for a total of three. Over the years, the province has been one of the bastions of ANC power – led by the ANC in all its municipalities. It entered its first municipal coalition after the 2016 local elections. In 2021 the ANC failed to get an outright majority in the Rustenburg, JB Marks and Lekwa-Teemane local municipalities. Rustenburg was the first municipality to become a coalition council in 2016.

With the backing of the Botho Community Movement (BCM) and African Independent Congress (AIC) in Rustenburg, the ANC in 2016 claimed control of all municipalities in the North West province. The ANC had then gained 48.24 per cent of the votes. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) won 26.98 per cent, the Democratic Alliance (DA) 15.99 per cent, Forum for Service Delivery (F4SD) 3.92 per cent, and the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) 1.29 per cent. Heading to the 2016 polls, the ANC was in the firing line owing to the 16 August 2012 Marikana shooting that left 34 miners dead. This event combined with a range of municipal management problems. The ANC then needed two seats to take over the municipality, and the AIC and BCM had one each. In the 2011, 2006, and 2000 local elections, the ANC had had an outright majority win of 72.89, 73.61, and 65.22, respectively. The post-LGE2016 coalition was not a smooth sailing one as the BCM often threatened to end the coalition arrangement with the ANC.

Lekwa-Teemane (in Bloemhof) offers an illustration of ANC decline in North West. In this municipality in 2011 the ANC still achieved an overwhelming majority, winning 10 seats out of the total of 14, Congress of the People (Cope) got one and the DA three seats. In the 2016 elections the ANC again claimed the municipality (now comprising a total of 16 seats) with 10 seats, while the DA, EFF, and F4SD managed to claim three, one and two seats, respectively. However, in the 2021 local elections the ANC lost three seats, winning only seven, one seat short of claiming the municipality and two short of a 50 per cent plus one majority. This time around, the DA lost two seats, securing only one as the EFF gained three to get an overall four. The FF+ and F4SD won one seat each.

After winning the JB Marks local municipality (in Potchefstroom) by one seat in 2016, the 2021 local elections left the ANC with 33 seats and in need of one seat to take over the municipality. The DA lost five seats, this time around securing 17, the EFF six, and the FF+ gained five to claim nine seats in the municipality. The Patriotic Alliance (PA) won two seats.

The municipality became an amalgamation of Ventersdorp/Tlokwe ahead of the 2016 local elections, and was later renamed JB Marks. The ANC had dominated this municipality. In 2011, the ANC held onto the municipality with ten seats as the DA only managed to get two. After being amalgamated, the ANC continued the outright majority status win over the municipality in 2016, with 34 seats followed by the DA with 22. The EFF got five while Independent Councillors (IC) and FF+ got two and four, respectively.

Table 17.1: North West municipal coalitions 2011–2021

Main parties and coalition partners, 2011–2021									
Municipality	2011			2016			2021		
	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government	Majority party (%)	Minority party (%)	Government
Rustenburg	ANC – 72.89	DA – 20.22	ANC	ANC – 48.24	EFF – 26.89	ANC BCM AIC	ANC – 46.07	EFF – 18.20	ANC AIC ARONA
Lekwa-Teemane	ANC – 71.99	DA – 23.42	ANC	ANC – 62.73	DA – 15.29	ANC	ANC – 49.68	EFF – 23.64	ANC F4SD
JB Marks	ANC – 81.22	DA – 13.91	ANC	ANC – 50.83	DA – 32.24	ANC	ANC – 48.09	DA – 25.43	ANC PA

Source: www.elections.org.za/electionresults/Downloads/ME-Results, accessed 10 November 2021.

Though experiencing a relative loss in the Rustenburg municipality in LGE2021, the EFF remained the official opposition. The party further extended its support in Lekwa-Teemane, claiming the official opposition spot after winning four seats, compared to the DA's one.

Although the lead party in the three hung municipalities in 2021, the ANC still needed to form coalitions to have control. The DA remained consistent with its statement of not going into any coalition in the North West, given that the ANC is the lead party, while on the other hand for some time the EFF had its doors open to work with any party, including the ANC. The open door for the ANC was then closed as the EFF said the ANC was not willing to give in to 'basic principles' during their coalition talks. This, however, did not stop the ANC from holding onto the hung municipalities. ARONA and the African Independent Congress (AIC) were the first parties to go into a coalition agreement with the ANC in Rustenburg, JB Marks and Lekwa-Teemane. The coalition was still not enough to make a majority. With the help of smaller parties the ANC managed to hold on to all the municipalities of the North West province after claiming mayoral positions in all three hung municipalities.

Papi Rangwaga of the Tsogang Civic Movement (TCM, winner of seven seats) and Pieter Malan of the DA, went against the ANC, but ANC mayoral candidate Sheila Mabale-Huma was elected the mayor of Rustenburg after getting 47 votes in the inaugural meeting at the hung municipality following LGE2021. This makes her the second woman to lead the municipality. Rangwaga and Malan got 26 and 16 votes, respectively. The speaker election process was filled with drama, as both the ANC and EFF asked for a caucus before the election process could continue (Molaole, 2021a); ballot papers were destroyed after councillors said it was easy to tell how the voting went as the papers were

numbered. The ANC took the speaker position as Koketso Mogomotsi was elected with 49 votes over Sharon Letlapa of the EFF and Luan Snyders of the DA who got 24 and 17 votes, respectively (see Molaole, 2021b).

It was the F4SD that got into a coalition with the ANC, allowing the party to hold onto Lekwa-Teemane municipality (winning one seat, the same performance as it had had in Rustenburg). The Lekwa-Teemane coalition saw Sebang Motlhabi, Mpho Pilane and Eva Makua of the ANC become the mayor, speaker and chief whip of the municipality. The agreement between the PA and the ANC led to the JB Marks municipality being held by the ANC under the leadership of Gaba Thithiba ka Qhele as mayor, Moithoesi Rosy Dassie as speaker and Lumkile Links as the council whip.

The ANC therefore had micro-parties, and an Independent, to thank for its ongoing control of corners of the North West. This control, however, was tenuous. The North West municipalities generally continued to be characterised by widespread governance and service-delivery problems.

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ANALYSIS 18

SMALL CHANGES, SIGNIFICANT INROADS – 2021 COALITIONS IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES IN GAUTENG, MPUMALANGA AND EASTERN CAPE

SUSAN BOOYSEN

Small changes in South Africa's vexed landscape of coalitions often constitute significant change. This brief analysis of the local municipalities beyond the metros of Gauteng and Nelson Mandela Bay, as well as the emerging coalitions in Mpumalanga, draws attention to how political tectonic plates have started moving where coalition statuses had been scarce.

Turmoil as Gauteng's local municipalities switch allegiances

Nowhere were African National Congress (ANC) losses more tangible than in the economic and political hub of Gauteng. While the three metropolitan municipalities hovered in the ambiguous intertidal zone of neither coalition nor minority government, several local municipalities formalised their changes in status. Beyond Gauteng's three metros, LGE2021 brought changes to five out of the six Gauteng local municipalities.

Mogale City, previously a coalition council, remained one, but changed status to being led by the Democratic Alliance (DA). The ANC lost outright control of two further important local councils, Rand West City (ANC 45.33 per cent) and Merafong City (ANC 48.97 per cent). This left the ANC in control only of Emfuleni and Lesedi local municipalities in the Vaal area. It won Lesedi with support of 50.43 per cent (after 62 per cent in 2016), falling short of a 50 per cent +1 majority. Midvaal, previously under outright DA majority, retained this ranking.

The ANC's national pact with the Patriotic Alliance (PA) helped it to establish a majority coalition in Rand West City and Emfuleni. In both municipalities ANC councillors became mayor and speaker. Through power-sharing agreements, the PA secured several seats on the mayoral executive committee. According to the PA, the ANC was the only party that 'respected' [meaning acceded to demands for positions] smaller oppositions in coalition negotiations (EWN, 2021).

In Lesedi the ANC won 13 of the 29 council seats (down from 19 in 2016) and established a minimal-majority coalition with the one-seater kingmaker, the Socialist Economic Freedom Movement (SEFM). The ANC gained all of the mayor, speaker and whip positions. It formed a more complex coalition in

Merafong City; it aligned with the PA again, but also brought the African Independent Congress (AIC) and the Merafong Agents of Change (MAOC) into its coalition. The ANC took mayor and speaker. Mogale City (in the 2016–2021 an ANC-led coalition) now turned into a DA-led coalition – mainly of the DA and Freedom Front Plus (FF+), yet in the style of the metro arrangements, with the support of the EFF and other small parties.

At all of the Gauteng local municipal sites where the ANC lost outright control in 2021 (except Mogale City) the ANC still won far more seats than its closest competitor, the DA. In 2016 the ANC had retained outright majorities. However, its status as the biggest of the parties in terms of percentage of support slipped below the 50 per cent mark in 2021 and it had to enter this series of coalitions. In Midvaal the DA consolidated its previous (2016) majority – it had 59.7 per cent then, and grew to 62.7 per cent in 2021.

New voices and quagmires in Mpumalanga's hung councils

For the first time in South Africa's democratic era, the ANC did not win outright control of all Mpumalanga's 17 local municipalities. The local political order changed in 2021 in the municipalities of Lekwa, Steve Tshwete and Govan Mbeki. Control in the Lekwa municipality (seated in Standerton-Morgenzon) went to the Lekwa Community Forum (LCF), while Govan Mbeki and Steve Tshwete went to the ANC, albeit in contentious coalition configurations. Across the three municipalities the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) performed above (and in Govan Mbeki and Steve Tshwete well above) its national performance level. In Lekwa its alignment with the LCF elevated it into shared power.

The LCF took the strategic lead in Lekwa, winning the positions of mayor and speaker, while the EFF won the position of council whip. This coalition succeeded with the support of the DA and FF+. These parties jointly superseded the ANC's 42.03 per cent election percentage and its associated council seats. An earlier possibility in Lekwa was that the EFF might have cooperated with the ANC. The EFF, however, set the condition that in return it would have to be given the Govan Mbeki municipality to govern. The ANC did not oblige and the EFF aligned with the LCF. It scored the 'second prize' of some positions and portfolios in the place of 'the council'.

In the Govan Mbeki local municipality (seated in Secunda) the parties battled to form a coalition, in a municipality that had probably fallen into hung council status because of preceding dysfunctionality, resulting in its being placed under administration. While other parties took part in the nomination and election process to constitute the council, the DA abstained. It walked out of the council proceedings, and thereby ensured that there would not be a quorum of 32. The ANC had won 26 seats, the DA 17, EFF 13, FF+ three, Azania Resident Party (ARP) two, African Transformation Movement (ATM) one, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) one, for a total of 63. The ANC's candidate was elected, nevertheless, as executive mayor (and another as speaker). Subsequently, other parties claimed that the election was unconstitutional. Immediately after this council election the mayoral committee was elected, which included councillors implicated in the Section 106 forensic report investigation into council matters.

The Steve Tshwete local municipality (seated in Middelburg) experienced similar problems in constituting its council. Here too the DA abstained from taking part in the election process. No coalition was formed. In the council of 58, the ANC had won just four seats more than the DA's 17. The EFF won nine, the Middelburg and Hendrina Residents Forum (MHRF) seven, and the FF+ three. One Independent was successful. The council elections that did happen selected an ANC mayor and whip, with the Independent taking the speaker position.

The ANC's dented Eastern Cape edifice

In many respects, the Eastern Cape remains the home of South Africa's still predominant but now under siege ANC. In provincial-level comparisons of the 2021 election result, the Eastern Cape is confirmed as one of the ANC's strongest provinces – and one in which the ANC still retains a comfortable outright majority (see Electoral Commission, 2021):

- Western Cape: ANC 20.4%, DA 54.31%, Good 4.31%
- Northern Cape: ANC 50.5%, DA 20%, EFF 10.5%
- Eastern Cape: ANC 63%, DA 15.25%, EFF 8%
- Free State: ANC 50.61%, DA 18.77%, EFF 12.41%
- North West: ANC 55.43%, EFF 16.5%, DA 11.4%
- Gauteng: ANC 36.1%, DA 28.70%, EFF 12%
- Limpopo: ANC 68.27%, EFF 14.27%, DA 5.5%
- Mpumalanga: ANC 59.3%, EFF 15.21%, DA 11.7%
- KZN: ANC 41.44%, IFP 24.24%, DA 13%

Nelson Mandela Bay was the province's only recent hung council, until 2021. Intra-Eastern Cape district results also show substantial variation. The Sarah Baartman region is the weakest Eastern Cape district for the ANC. The region's two new hung councils, Koukamma and Dr Beyers Naudé, contributed to this outcome. Both Koukamma and Dr Beyers Naudé are in the south-west of the Eastern Cape, bordering the coalition-infused Western Cape.

The Dr Beyers Naudé local municipality (seated in Graaff-Reinet) could have tilted in favour of either the DA or the ANC in a council that includes three one-seater parties – the FF+, EFF and Compatriots of South Africa (CSA). The CSA's vote depended on which of the ANC or DA was willing to hand over the position of speaker. The ANC had its own designated party favourite, but the DA obliged. This sealed the deal, and the coalition of the DA, FF+ and CSA came into being.

Courtesy of the national ANC-PA pact, the coalition in the neighbouring Koukamma local municipality (seated in Kareedouw) was seamless. The ANC had already won six of the 12 council seats (on a base of 46 per cent of the council vote) and needed minimal top-up. The PA with its one seat (or 10 per cent of the council vote) was at hand. The DA (three seats), FF+ (one seat) and the one Independent went into opposition.

Conclusion

The fluidity and vulnerability of local government, and the manoeuvrability within the ambit of local election results, emerge from this set of brief case studies of hung councils. The coalitions that were formed, especially in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga, confirmed the culture of small political actors appropriating centrality on the basis of minor election results – and demonstrated the considerable extent to which it has taken hold in South Africa. In several of the cases in this analysis (and in the rest of the report) the hung councils were already under administration of the provincial government; some councillors responsible for past problems were back at work. It remained to be seen whether new councillors, especially from the community parties, would rise to help make a difference. Or, would their voices be swamped by the bigger, more established parties?

The problems with local governments, and the new councils simply taking over where the old had let go, extended well beyond the hung councils. This happened, for example, in the Mpumalanga councils where ANC councillors were rebelling against the ANC NEC's endorsed candidates. The renegade Nkomazi Local Municipality mayor, Johan Mkhathshwa, was elected against the wishes of

central ANC nominations, and with the help of opposition councillors. The developments indicate a maelstrom of new activities – as evidenced in the cases in this analysis, but with relevance to other provinces too. These changes will have a far-reaching impact on party politics in South Africa.

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ANALYSIS 19

LESSONS FOR THE 2021–2026 TERM AND BEYOND

SUSAN BOOYSEN WITH YACOOB ABBA OMAR

At the time of Local Government Elections 2021 (LGE2021) there was hope that the lessons of coalitions in the 2016–2021 local government term would be taken to heart. Coalition politics in that period epitomised the instability of governing alliances, disruptive opposition politics and inefficient governance. Political parties and their competing interests thrived in the context of a weak local government base. Besides being hampered by patronage-ridden and often corrupt political practices, the coalition governments were vulnerable in the face of continuously shifting party political interests.

Barely a month after the LGE2021, the practices of 2016–2021 are back in force, seemingly with a vengeance, and amplification. This section takes stock of the lessons that may be taken forward from both the previous term, captured in MISTRA's edited volume *Marriages of Inconvenience: The politics of coalitions in South Africa* (2021), and the first months of post-LGE2021 praxis.

As the analyses in this report demonstrate, MISTRA's cautionary points about the need to establish stable and developmental, social justice oriented local government coalitions that are not impeded by interparty contests are not being heeded. The political context has also increased in complexity. Two overarching sets of reasons inform this: heightened party-politicisation of local government, and the weak base of local government that predisposes new incumbents to counter-mobilisation and failures.

Zeitgeist and prevailing political culture

Local government in South Africa is highly politicised. In addition, in the context of the 2021 decline in African National Congress (ANC) electoral support and increase in the number of hung councils, opposition parties are sensing the potential end of ANC party political dominance. Many have been forming opposition fronts in local councils to consolidate the electoral gains: local coalitions 2021 have been weaponised as a strategy to remove the ANC from majority power in the national elections of 2024. In some instances the ideological and policy bases are tenuous, but at local level this need not necessarily be an obstacle. Some of the assertions about the ANC also apply to the DA in the Western Cape, where the latter's decline was much of the reason for the 2021 growth in the number of coalition governments in the province. Many of the council-level manifestations of these unified fronts are hitherto untested and could deliver additional instability.

Particracy amid fragmentation of the party system

The reality of particracy (centrality of party politics) in South Africa cannot be wished away. Yet for coalition governments to work developmentally political parties will have to realise that municipal governance and political parties as they operate within the system must be used to serve local communities rather than politicians and their parties. It remains doubtful whether intense local competition can still be subdued in favour of some form of local, united 'emergency' government. The function of such unity would be to address local development and delivery definitively, through action by the elected government. Simultaneously, as South Africa moves beyond its dominant party system party politics is assuming more complexity. A multitude of small and micro parties, many representing specific issues and exclusive identities, have moved onto the political centre-stage. Coalitions and kingmaking have elevated them to positions of exceptional statuses that exceed their proportional weight. Their new presence in party politics and coalition governance help constitute a new political reality.

Weak base of local government as deterrent to coalition stability

Local government failures (through weak financial standings, adverse audits, serial alternation of incumbent party coalitions and dysfunctional service delivery, especially to disadvantaged communities) mean that most of the newly established coalition governments will find it difficult to perform better than the predecessor councils. Several of the hung councils are continuously under provincial administration. In some cases, those implicated in wrongdoing have been re-elected into influential council positions. National government has the constitutional responsibility to ensure the functionality of the local – yet with the weakening of the ANC interventions in the local could very well run the risk of being seen as biased interference to undermine the new local politics that emerged in LGE2021.

Lack of permanency of coalitions

There is no permanency in coalitions – they can be undermined, dissolved and reconstituted at any time. This is a key lesson that the 2016–2021 term of local government delivered, when stability was the exception and not the rule. There has been no hesitation to implement the 'rule' (late 2021 developments also set the scene for high levels of instability in 2022). Even in the early days of the post-LGE2021 order there are reports of mobilisation to unseat the newly installed local councils – mobilisation to bring a motion of no confidence against the one-seat coalition majority in Nelson Mandela Bay metropolitan municipality, led by the ANC, has been confirmed. Several of the coalition councils have new incumbent governments comprising bouquets of micro-parties that brought one or two seats into major coalitions. These configurations are by definition unstable. These parties have also been aligning with different lead parties across municipal sites.

Vulnerability of many municipal majority governments

Another lesson from the analysis is that even where the ANC was in control of a council in terms of election outcomes, at some municipalities the ANC's multiple internal divisions found their way into post-LGE council proceedings. In Mpumalanga, for example, in the Mkhondo, Nkomazi and Thaba Chweu local municipalities, the local ANC did not follow higher-level directives on whom to nominate and elect as mayors and speakers. In Mkhondo (a council where the ANC holds 21 out of 38 seats), ANC councillors voted with the opposition and elected an Independent mayor, African Transformation Movement (ATM) speaker and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) chief whip. In Nkomazi, ANC councillors voted in their own candidates, and not those put forward by the National Executive Committee (NEC). These examples flag potential danger points, which would have to be

managed to contain local government instability. Comparable previous-term action in Maluti-a-Phofung in the Free State saw the rise of new balances of power, both in by-elections and LGE2021, which eclipsed the ANC.

Containment of role for unreliable coalition partners

One of the factors complicating coalitions in the previous term was the role of kingmaking parties of medium size, such as the EFF, which proved itself from 2016–2021 to be an unreliable coalition partner. For instance, it made policy demands with national thrusts to end its confidence-and-supply agreement with the Democratic Alliance (DA). In the opening of the 2021 bargaining season it put national policy demands to the ANC, as a quid pro quo offer that would give the ANC easy outright majorities in a range of councils (the ANC did not give in on policy demands that appeared to mirror ANC internal factional debates). The DA rebuffed EFF approaches as well. ActionSA and the EFF were instrumental in popularising the idea of the united anti-ANC front of 2021 up to at least the national elections of 2024. In the process, the EFF helped to build a range of council majorities, and was rewarded in a few areas with positions of mayor, deputy mayor, speaker or whip – in tenuous coalitions with small parties. The durability will bring future lessons as to this form of coalition making.

Paucity of formal coalition agreements amid flourishing numbers

One of the great lessons of the 2016–2021 term (also from international best practice) was that formal and thoroughly negotiated coalition agreements are the base of successful coalition governments. Such agreements, however, remained elusive in South Africa. To the extent that minor coalition agreements (for example, the ANC and Patriotic Alliance (PA), or the DA and Freedom Front Plus (FF+)) emerged, the exact terms of the agreement remain to be publicised. In another type of illustration, the EFF and ActionSA helped put a DA minority government in place in the Gauteng metros – and the DA had the subsequent task of turning this de facto voting alliance into a workable, policy-coherent coalition (several rounds of negotiations followed). At many other sites and across the provinces, ‘agreements’ centred purely on the arithmetic of building an outright majority, based on crude principles of splitting up top council positions and mayoral portfolios. The small and micro-parties of South Africa were strident in their demands. In some metro council cases, the potential coalition partners even set their sights on ‘portfolios with agencies’, the potentially lucrative portfolios that could be milked for patronage, including employment for followers.

Change in the municipal executive system

At some levels there could be great benefit in change of the predominant municipal executive system in South Africa. The bulk of the municipalities use the mayoral executive system which affords the mayor considerable freedom in appointing the executive (and those positions constitute an attractive form of patronage or reward for joining a coalition). The alternative, also proposed in *Marriages of Inconvenience*, is the committee system. It entails that the executive will be proportionate to party representation in council. The 2021 Municipal Structures Amendment Act nevertheless enables exceptions to this rule (it has already been practised in eThekweni, although contested by opposition parties) which means that two of the great benefits of the committee system, proportionality and inclusiveness, may have been neutralised. In eThekweni the ANC allocated one of its mayoral committee seats to Philani Mavundla of the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC). The ABC’s two council seats had not qualified it for executive committee membership. Mavundla was instrumental in persuading the troupe of small parties in council to support the ANC, and helped bring the ANC its council majority. He earned himself the deputy mayorship.

Analysis 5 in this report also emphasises that unless local politics in South Africa becomes far less belligerent, the executive committee system (which includes the main council parties in the executive, generally on a proportional basis) will suffer. It is weakened currently in that parties that are in continuous contest, but are all incorporated into the same executive, do not leave their competition behind when they do their executive work. Yet again instability is triggered.

Further themes which need to be noted, especially in relation to the legitimacy of the local government system and its elections include:

- The possibility of continued erosion of the democratic system: LGE2021 saw the decline in percentage registration and turnout of voters. This seems to be an unstoppable trend, even if lower turnout often occurs in local government elections.
- Non-representation in local government of parties having the largest share of the votes: there is a chance that this may see greater delegitimisation of such structures.
- The bigger significance of civic organisations in local government: the increasing number of civic organisations and the influential individuals becoming involved not only in their immediate locales, but also spreading themselves to neighbouring municipalities was a notable phenomenon in 2021. These local dynamics also shaped the kind of coalitions that were struck in municipalities such as Witzenberg in the Western Cape.
- Leadership and gendered roles: leadership of local government across political parties and provinces remains largely a masculine affair, even if there are significant exceptions.
- Building and practising constructive opposition: there is a big question as to the future character of opposition, especially in the unstable local government context. It remains to be seen if parties that have chosen to occupy the opposition benches will be committed to playing that role constructively or continue contributing to their councils’ instability.

Overall, this report illustrates the non-learning of the lessons of 2016–2021. Coalition culture in local government in South Africa, in the sense of political parties working jointly for the best interest of communities, possibly in a trans-political mode, is poorly established. The maximisation of political power and optimisation of benefits to individual parties, leaders and followers are the ultimate rules of the game. Given the context of narrow partisan politics, and the current shifting of the political earth plates away from ANC dominance, it remains to be seen if central government has the credibility and power to initiate better systems of local government, or legislation that could contain and improve coalition practice.

APPENDIX A: PARTY SUPPORT IN SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS – VARIOUS DIMENSIONS

Parties with national representation	Party support across 12 national and local elections, 1994-2021											
	1994 National	1995/6 Local	1999 National	2000 Local	2004 National	2006 Local	2009 National	2011 Local	2014 National	2016 Local	2019 National	2021 Local
ANC	62.65	58.02	66.35	59.39	69.69	64.82	65.9	61.95	62.15	53.91	57.50	45.59
DA (1)	22.12	21.5	16.43	22.12	12.37	16.42	16.66	23.94	22.23	26.90	20.77	21.66
EFF									6.35	8.19	10.79	10.31
IFP	10.54	8.73	8.58	9.14	6.97	7.53	4.55	3.57	2.4	4.25	3.38	5.64
NFP								2.41	1.57	0.02	0.35	0.50
ActionsSA												2.33
UDM			3.42	2.55	2.28	1.16	0.85	0.63	1.0	0.56	0.45	0.47
FF+ (2)	2.17	2.66	0.8	0.09	0.89	0.94	0.83	0.45	0.9	0.77	2.38	2.34
Cope							7.42	2.14	0.67	0.44	0.27	0.20
ACDP	0.45	0.77	1.43	1.14	1.6	1.28	0.81	0.62	0.57	0.42	0.84	0.79
AIC									0.53	0.78	0.28	0.49
ID					1.7	2.14	0.92					
Agang SA									0.28	0.01	0.08	0.01
PAC	1.25	1.20	0.71	1.28	0.73	1.11	0.27	0.44	0.21	0.19	0.19	0.24
MF		0.44	0.3	0.32	0.35	0.43	0.25	0.42	0.12	0.04	0.07	0.04
Azapo			0.17	0.26	0.25	0.28	0.22	0.19	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.06
UCDP			0.78	1.14	0.75	0.60	0.37	0.19	0.12	0.06	0.18	0.08
Al Jama-Ah							0.15	0.05	0.14	0.12	0.18	0.24
ATM											0.44	0.57
GOOD											0.4	0.64
FASD										0.19	0.43	0.23
Independent								1.13		1.14		1.73
ICOSA								0.05	0.08	0.10	0.07	0.09
ISANCO												0.12
MAP16												0.19
PA										0.07	0.04	0.97
UIM												0.13
DOTP												0.12
CCC												0.24
APC							0.20	0.35	0.17	0.22	0.11	0.19
APM												0.12
ABC												0.33
Others	0.82	6.68	1.03	2.57	3.17	3.29	0.6	1.47	0.4	1.55	0.91	3.34

Sources: Booyesen, 2021; IEC, 2019, 2021; MISTRA, 2021 – based on <https://www.eisa.org/wep/sou1994results1.htm>, <https://www.eisa.org/wep/sou1994results2.htm>, <https://www.eisa.org/wep/sou1995results2.htm>, <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/ige/>, <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/npe/app/dashboard.html>

Notes: General: All percentages in this table, in the case of local elections, represent the PR plus ward results. (1) In some instances the IEC website combines the support for the DP and NP/NNP; the current table does not dissect it; hence, in the first few columns DA+NP/NNP=DA; (5) FF+CP, which later became the FF+.

Acronyms: ANC – African National Congress; DA – Democratic Alliance; EFF – Economic Freedom Fighters; IFP – Inkatha Freedom Party; NFP – National Freedom Party; UDM – United Democratic Movement; FF+ – Freedom Front Plus; Cope – Congress of the People; ACDP – African Christian Democratic Party; AIC – African Independent Congress; ID – Independent Democrats; PAC – Pan Africanist Congress; MF – Minority Front; Azapo – Azanian Peoples Organisation; UCDP – United Christian Democratic Party; ATM – African Transformation Movement; FASD – Forum 4 Service Delivery; ICOSA – Independent Civic Organisation Of South Africa; ISANCO – Independent South African National Civic Organisation; MAP16 – Maphisiteen Civic Movement; PA – Patriotic Alliance; UIM – United Independent Movement; DOTP – Defenders Of The People; CCC – Cape Coloured Congress; APC – African People's Convention; APM – African People's Movement; ABC – Abantu Batho Congress.

Comparative party support over three local elections in eight metros																		
Metro	2011						2016						2021					
	Votes per party (wards plus PR) – three biggest parties (%)						Votes per party (wards plus PR) – three biggest parties (%)						Votes per party (wards plus PR) – three biggest parties (%)					
	ANC	DA	EFF	Other	ANC	DA	EFF	Other	ANC	DA	EFF	Other	ANC	DA	EFF	Other		
Buffalo City	70.0	20.5		9.5	58.7	23.4	8.0	9.9	59.4	19.5	12.2	9.0	59.4	19.5	12.2	9.0		
Cape Town	32.8	60.9		6.3	24.4	66.6	3.2	5.8	18.6	58.3	4.1	19.0	18.6	58.3	4.1	19.0		
Ekurhuleni	61.6	30.3		8.1	48.6	34.2	11.2	6.0	38.2	28.7	13.6	19.5	38.2	28.7	13.6	19.5		
eThekweni	61.1	21.0		17.9	56.0	26.9	3.4	13.7	42.1	25.9	10.5	21.9	42.1	25.9	10.5	21.9		
Johannesburg	58.6	34.6		6.8	44.5	38.4	11.1	6.0	33.6	26.1	10.6	29.7	33.6	26.1	10.6	29.7		
Mangaung	66.3	27.1		6.6	56.5	26.0	8.7	8.8	50.6	25.7	11.3	12.4	50.6	25.7	11.3	12.4		
Nelson Mandela Bay	51.9	40.1		8.0	40.9	46.7	5.1	7.3	39.4	39.9	6.4	14.3	39.4	39.9	6.4	14.3		
Tshwane	55.3	38.7		6.0	41.3	43.2	11.6	3.9	34.6	32.0	10.7	22.7	34.6	32.0	10.7	22.7		

Note: There were 26.2 million voters, out of 40.2 million in the total voting-age population.

Source: www.results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results, accessed 5 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

Party	Local Government Elections 2021: Detailed party results projected nationally												Change				
	Ward			PR			Ward + PR			DC			Total			% 2016	% Point Change
	Votes	%		Votes	%		Votes	%		Votes	%		Votes	%			
African National Congress	5,291,101	45.06		5,402,792	46.12	10,693,893	45.59	3,838,015	53.84	14,531,908	47.52	55.65	8.13				
Democratic Alliance	2,527,862	21.53		2,543,764	21.72	5,071,626	21.62	995,803	13.97	6,067,429	19.84	24.57	5.27				
EFF	1,193,985	10.17		1,225,445	10.46	2,419,430	10.32	804,398	11.28	3,223,828	10.54	8.31	2.23				
IIFP	638,963	5.44		685,942	5.86	1,324,905	5.65	591,265	8.29	1,916,170	6.27	4.73	1.54				
Freedom Front Plus	276,136	2.35		273,213	2.33	549,349	2.34	161,056	2.26	710,405	2.32	0.80	1.50				
ActionSA	241,735	2.06		306,127	2.61	547,862	2.34	8,816	0.12	556,678	1.82	-	1.82				
Patriotic Alliance	111,811	0.95		114,736	0.98	226,547	0.97	38,401	0.54	264,948	0.87	0.06	0.81				
ACDP	92,232	0.79		93,161	0.80	185,393	0.79	32,234	0.45	217,627	0.71	0.39	0.32				
African Transformation Movement	63,531	0.54		70,874	0.61	134,405	0.57	55,509	0.78	189,914	0.62	-	0.62				
GOOD	75,937	0.65		74,144	0.63	150,081	0.64	35,186	0.49	185,267	0.61	-	0.61				
NFP	56,950	0.49		61,074	0.52	118,024	0.50	52,592	0.74	170,616	0.56	0.01	0.55				
UDM	50,902	0.43		60,303	0.51	111,205	0.47	46,508	0.65	157,713	0.52	0.62	0.10				
African Independent Congress	42,426	0.36		72,972	0.62	115,398	0.49	31,244	0.44	146,642	0.48	0.87	0.39				
Forum for Service Delivery	23,585	0.20		29,573	0.25	53,158	0.23	28,798	0.40	81,956	0.27	0.23	0.04				
PAC	24,021	0.20		32,302	0.28	56,323	0.24	12,613	0.18	68,936	0.23	0.19	0.04				
MAPsixteen Civic Movement	22,970	0.20		22,627	0.19	45,597	0.19	22,905	0.32	68,502	0.22	-	0.22				
Cope	21,012	0.18		26,497	0.23	47,509	0.20	15,047	0.21	62,556	0.20	0.48	0.28				
Al Jama-Ah	29,393	0.25		25,914	0.22	55,307	0.24	5,882	0.08	61,189	0.20	0.10	0.10				
African People's Convention	23,416	0.20		21,270	0.18	44,686	0.19	14,294	0.20	58,980	0.19	0.22	0.03				
Independent South African National Civic Organisation	12,164	0.10		17,060	0.15	29,224	0.12	17,556	0.25	46,780	0.15	-	0.15				
African People's Movement	14,028	0.12		13,317	0.11	27,345	0.12	12,661	0.18	40,006	0.13	-	0.13				
Defenders of the People	13,976	0.12		13,542	0.12	27,518	0.12	4,176	0.06	31,694	0.10	-	0.10				
United Independent Movement	14,315	0.12		13,542	0.12	30,405	0.13	1,038	0.01	31,443	0.10	-	0.10				
Independent Civic Organisation	10,600	0.09		10,673	0.09	21,273	0.09	9,775	0.14	31,048	0.10	0.11	0.01				
Tsongang Civic Movement	9,095	0.08		9,842	0.08	18,937	0.08	9,677	0.14	28,614	0.09	-	0.09				
Team Sugar South Africa	8,896	0.08		9,365	0.08	18,261	0.08	9,461	0.13	27,722	0.09	-	0.09				
United Christian Democratic Party	7,862	0.07		10,885	0.09	18,747	0.08	7,636	0.11	26,383	0.09	0.07	0.02				
Africa Restoration Alliance	12,777	0.11		9,999	0.09	22,776	0.10	3,264	0.05	26,040	0.09	-	0.09				
Justice and Employment Party	7,703	0.07		9,634	0.08	17,337	0.07	7,906	0.11	25,243	0.08	-	0.08				
Plaaslike Besorgde Inwoners	6,631	0.06		6,486	0.06	13,117	0.06	6,446	0.09	19,563	0.06	0.02	0.04				
Azanian People's Organisation	6,720	0.06		6,853	0.06	13,573	0.06	4,171	0.06	17,744	0.06	0.07	0.01				
Independent Alliance	6,571	0.06		6,545	0.06	13,116	0.06	5,891	0.08	19,007	0.06	-	0.06				
Cape Independence Party	7,616	0.06		7,448	0.06	15,064	0.06	2,817	0.04	17,881	0.06	-	0.06				
Setso Service Delivery Forum	5,597	0.06		5,542	0.06	11,139	0.05	5,605	0.08	16,744	0.05	-	0.05				
Namakwa Civic Movement	4,909	0.04		5,159	0.04	10,068	0.04	5,093	0.07	15,161	0.05	-	0.05				
Independent	405,847	3.46		N/A	N/A	405,847	1.73	N/A	N/A	405,847	1.33	0.89	0.44				
Total	11,741,055	100		11,714,127	100	23,455,182	100	7,128,139	100	30,583,321	100	38,524,059	7,940,738				

PR = Proportional Representation

DC = District Council

Source: www.elections.org.za, accessed 29 November 2021.

Comparative local election results by province for three local elections in South Africa												
Metro	Votes per party (all wards plus PR)											
	2011				2016				2021			
	ANC (%)	DA (%)	EFF (%)	Other (%)	ANC (%)	DA (%)	EFF (%)	Other (%)	ANC (%)	DA (%)	EFF (%)	Other (%)
Eastern Cape	73.45	14.26	-	12.29	67.10	17.44	5.12	10.34	65.13	13.51	7.87	13.49
Free State	71.74	19.34	-	8.93	62.41	19.81	9.95	7.83	51.04	18.19	12.71	19.06
Gauteng	60.21	33.04	-	6.75	46.38	36.70	11.38	5.54	36.41	28.76	12.11	22.72
KwaZulu-Natal	56.57	10.75	-	32.68	57.79	13.17	3.47	25.57	41.48	11.51	8.48	38.53
Limpopo	81.63	6.65	-	11.72	69.10	8.07	16.81	6.02	69.19	5.50	14.50	10.81
Mpumalanga	78.90	13.81	-	7.29	71.03	12.92	9.40	6.65	60.20	11.85	15.60	12.35
North West	74.99	16.14	-	8.87	59.04	15.05	15.60	10.31	55.89	11.43	16.70	15.98
Northern Cape	63.57	22.27	-	14.16	58.57	25.07	8.71	7.65	50.85	20.30	10.65	18.20
Western Cape	34.07	57.08	-	8.85	26.83	62.57	2.73	7.87	20.93	53.42	3.24	22.41

Source: www.results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results, accessed 5 November 2021; MISTRA, 2021.

APPENDIX B: LOCAL ELECTION TURNOUT IN SOUTH AFRICA, METROS AND PROVINCES, 2011–2021

Metro	Metro turnout in eight metros over three local government elections, 2011–2021											
	2011				2016				2021			
	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)
Buffalo City	384,910	218,108	56.51	419,044	235,369	55.93	406,486	185,525	45.24			
City of Cape Town	1,745,853	1,134,144	64.66	1,977,690	1,271,923	64.21	1,973,708	933,749	47.14			
City of Johannesburg	2,010,121	1,107,068	54.94	2,239,966	1,281,864	57.06	2,220,710	947,305	42.61			
Ekurhuleni	1,424,392	804,170	56.28	1,587,116	921,547	57.95	1,575,840	688,479	43.49			
Ethekwini	1,666,549	990,264	59.30	1,919,724	1,148,559	59.67	1,909,125	803,791	41.91			
Mangaung	372,692	204,967	54.81	425,211	245,908	57.72	410,785	179,703	43.52			
Nelson Mandela Bay	569,470	369,366	64.65	609,217	390,323	63.86	583,270	268,734	45.88			
Tshwane Metro	1,326,427	736,009	55.32	1,512,524	896,973	59.20	1,526,585	688,237	44.99			

Source: www.results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results, accessed 21 November 2021.

Province	Provincial turnout in nine provinces over three local government elections, 2011–2021											
	2011				2016				2021			
	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)	Voter registration	Voter turnout	(%)
Eastern Cape	3,111,535	1,813,802	58.16	3,337,532	1,888,500	56.43	3,253,307	1,522,726	46.55			
Free State	1,386,521	767,321	55.22	1,470,999	829,349	56.24	1,413,158	643,417	45.35			
Gauteng	5,592,676	3,127,671	55.77	6,234,822	3,618,214	57.91	6,195,753	2,724,361	43.86			
KwaZulu-Natal	4,648,733	2,865,855	61.53	5,411,237	3,333,298	61.48	5,447,815	2,638,549	48.20			
Limpopo	2,340,799	1,172,855	50.05	2,556,128	1,287,713	50.33	2,585,080	1,152,173	44.42			
Mpumalanga	1,718,309	960,748	55.80	1,919,216	1,082,665	56.19	1,903,239	814,745	42.65			
North West	1,576,898	845,093	53.47	1,715,460	921,519	53.63	1,671,551	710,300	42.40			
Northern Cape	572,140	363,361	63.36	621,310	380,718	61.18	622,746	333,708	53.31			
Western Cape	2,706,736	1,748,208	64.37	3,066,649	1,948,844	63.46	3,111,930	1,523,780	48.80			
Total	23,654,347	13,664,914	57.64	26,333,353	15,290,820	57.94	26,204,579	12,063,759	45.86			

Source: www.results.elections.org.za/home/downloads/me-results, accessed 21 November 2021.

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