

## **Dullah Omar Institute**

The Dullah Omar Institute started its work under the name 'Community Law Centre', an organisation borne out of the struggle against apartheid. The Community Law Centre opened its doors in 1990 Adv Dullah Omar, a human rights lawyer, was its first director. The Centre played a major role in the negotiations towards a democratic South Africa. First staff members included prominent activists such as Bulelani Ngcuka, Dr Zola Skweyiya, and Brigitte Mabandla. Working with Albie Sachs and Prof Kader Asmal they participated in the constitutional negotiations. Ever since our inception, we have been a major contributor to policy formulation for South Africa's constitutional order and increasingly, elsewhere on the continent.

In 2015, the Community Law Centre was renamed into the Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional Law, Governance and Human Rights to honour our founding director and the first Minister of Justice in a democratic South Africa. We host the prestigious Dullah Omar Memorial Lecture to pay tribute to the rich legacy of the late Adv Dullah Omar.

Every year, the Institute produces more than 60 articles, books and research reports and hosts more than 50 workshops, conferences and seminars. It houses professorial and research staff of national and international repute including three NRF-rated researchers. It collaborates with numerous national and international universities, NGOs and think tanks to pursue policy impact in governance, development and the realisation of human rights.

The Institute has been conducting research, teaching and advocacy in the area of local government for more than 25 years. Over the past five years, it has engaged extensively on the topic of coalitions, particularly as it affects local government.

## **University of the Western Cape**

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) was founded in 1960 and occupies a unique space in the South African higher education landscape. It is a dynamic institution with an engaged research agenda that is committed to excellence in learning, teaching, research and innovation in a globally competitive environment whilst remaining true to the values and ethos that have shaped its identity as a university rooted in serving the public good. UWC is home to more than 23 000 students who engage in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in seven faculties namely, Faculty of Arts and Humanities; Faculty of Community Health Sciences; Faculty of Dentistry; Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences; Faculty of Education Faculty of Law; and Faculty of Natural Sciences.

## **About MISTRA**

The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) is an independent think tank that takes a long-term view on the strategic challenges facing South Africa, the continent and the globe. Since its inception in 2010, MISTRA has assumed a leading position in long-term, strategic and transdisciplinary research through generating research and creating platforms for engagement. Our research, policy debates, convening power and scenario planning expertise have assisted in finding lasting and effective solutions to the challenges our country is facing.

## **Research on coalitions in South Africa**

MISTRA's research project, [\*Marriages of Inconvenience: The politics of coalitions in South Africa\*](#) was conceived to help analyse and inform the exercise of coalition politics in South Africa. The research-based volume constitutes both a resource document and roadmap to South Africa's possible electoral futures in the face of questions about the continuous dominance or decline of the African National Congress (ANC), and the uncertainty about the party's ability to constitute single-party majority governments. It collates and interprets lessons that South Africa should take to heart in managing interparty coalitions while drawing from domestic experiences as well as from case studies on the rest of the African continent and generic instances further afield.

## **Analysis of South Africa's 2021 local elections and coalitions**

The *Marriages of Inconvenience* research project provided the foundation for MISTRA's report on South Africa's November 2021 local government elections, [\*When Wedding Bells Ring: Coalitions with\(out\) concord\*](#). In the 2016–2021 local government term South Africa experienced high levels of coalition instability and disruptive local government. The report 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.

## **MISTRA Coalitions Barometer**

[When Wedding Bells Ring: Coalitions with\(out\) concord](#) is an inclusive mapping that sets the template for MISTRA's Coalitions Barometer that will monitor unfolding coalition practice in South Africa. The barometer aims to understand the evolving operation of democratic governance in South Africa by investigating how local governments that have moved into hung council statuses and coalition government acquit themselves in their governance functions. Central to these understandings are the identification and analysis of factors that enhance or impede developmental local government, including party politics and parties' quest for political power. MISTRA is currently in the final phases of this large-scale benchmarking study, which has been recording the local coalition trends from early 2022. The barometer is due to be launched during the last quarter of 2023.