

**Inaugural-Dissertation
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**ONE-PARTY-DOMINANCE IN CHANGING SOCIETIES
THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND INDIAN
NATIONAL CONGRESS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
A Study in Party Systems and Agency in Post-Colonial India and Post-
Apartheid South Africa.**

**vorgelegt von Clemens Spieß M.A.
Rottmannstraße 5
69121 Heidelberg**

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„India is unique among the post-Imperial (or post-colonial) countries, for it developed a viable center which has proved capable of dealing, at least in its initial phases, with the problems of a relatively highly politicized electorate (...).” (Eisenstadt 1973: 280)

“South African scholars have on occasion used systematic cross-national analysis to identify broad sets of factors – economic growth, stable political institutions and an appropriate political culture – that have elsewhere and in the past been associated with measures of democratic persistence. Yet each of these sets of factors in South Africa (...) presents a ‘paradox’ rather than any clear basis for judgement (...) The focus of local investigation has (...) been on the quality of political life under a period of extended ‘one-party-dominance’, and on the implications of such dominance for the longer-term future of the polity.” (Butler 2003: 97-98)

“Like a wounded tiger, it is a weakened and threatened center that is most likely to save itself by destroying others.” (Weiner 1989: 330)

This study deals with two regional and temporal contexts and a political phenomenon pertinent to these contexts that most often have ranked as ‘unique’ or ‘paradoxical’ in scholarly assessments. Academic accounts of post-colonial India are interspersed with references to a ‘deviant case’ of, or an ‘empirical anomaly’ to, party system and democratic theory, and the conventional vocabulary used to describe post-apartheid South African political development frequently resorts to such terms as ‘political miracle’ or ‘societal exceptionalism’. Both contexts however, figure prominently in party system and democratic theory because of their regional importance and the prominent role the party system played and plays for their political trajectory.

A similar confusion and vagueness prevails with regard to the specific configuration of a democratic and competitive party system characterised by the towering and prolonged dominance of one party.

The following is an attempt to shed light on these contexts and their party systems by departing from the conventional ‘paths’ of party system theory and from the ‘relativist’ assessments of post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa. This is done by means of a diachronic comparison of the two contexts’ party systems with a distinct focus on the role of party agency in the shaping and maintenance of one-party-dominance and on the role of the two party systems as independent variables.

Thus, it is hoped that shortly before South Africa's third democratic general elections take place, it will be fruitful to look at the origins and development of India's 'first' party system and the beginnings of her 'democratic career', launched more than half a century ago, in order to gain insights into the rather complex processes that determine a party system's formation, development and impact in the context of a changing society and to overcome the exceptionalism commonly ascribed to the two contexts and their party systems.

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Clemens Spieß

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Abbreviations

Note: Abbreviations used only once (e.g. in a table) are not listed but written out in full at the place of appearance

ACDP (African Christian Democratic Party)
AEB (Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging)
AICC (All-India Congress Committee)
ANC (African National Congress)
AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging)
AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation)
BCM (Black Consciousness Movement)
BEE (Black Economic Empowerment)
BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)
BJS (Bharatiya Janata Sangh, also JS, Jana Sangh)
BLD (Bharatiya Lok Dal)
CAD (Constituent Assembly Debates)
CEC (Central Election Committee)
COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions)
CP (Conservative Party)
CPI (Communist Party of India)
CPI (M) (Communist Party of India (Marxist))
CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies)
CSP (Congress Socialist Party)
DCC (District Congress Committee)
DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam)
DP/DA (Democratic Party/Democratic Alliance)
EISA (Electoral Institute of South Africa)
FA (Federal Alliance)
FF (Freedom Front)
FTPT (first-past-the-post)
GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme)
GoI (Government of India)
GNU (Government of National Unity)

HM (Hindu Mahasabha)
HSRC (Human Science Research Council)
IAS (Indian Administrative Service)
ICS (Indian Civil Service)
IDASA (Institute for Democracy in South Africa)
IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party)
INC (Indian National Congress)
INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress)
JP (Janata Party)
JS (Jana Sangh)
KMPP (Kisan Mazdor Praja Party)
MDM (Mass Democratic Movement)
MF (Minority Front)
NCOP (National Council of Provinces)
NEC (National Executive Committee)
NEDLAC (National Economic and Development and Labour Advisory Council)
NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation)
NP/NNP (National Party/New National Party)
NWC (National Working Committee)
PAC (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania)
PCC (Pradesh Congress Committee)
PR (Proportional Representation)
RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme)
RRP (Ram Rajya Parishad)
RSA (Republic of South Africa)
RSS (Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh)
SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation)
SACP (South African Communist Party)
SADF (South African Defence Forces)
SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations)
SANCO (South African National Civics Organisation)
SANGOCO (South African National NGO Coalition)
SC (Scheduled Castes)
SMSP (single-member-simple-plurality)

SOC (Socialists)

SP (Socialist Party)

SSP (Samyukta Socialist Party)

ST (Scheduled Tribes)

SWA (Swatantra Party)

UCDP (United Christian Democratic Party)

UDF (United Democratic Front)

UDM (United Democratic Movement)

Introduction

The Puzzle

“As the Congress represented every section of Indian society, it was the natural party of governance. Only the Congress could provide stable and effective government.”¹

This recent statement by Sadiq Ali, former general secretary (1958-62, 66-67, 68) of the (undivided) Indian National Congress (INC), captures the political actor’s perception of the INC as having a legitimate claim to the commanding heights of India’s polity. A claim based on the (perceived) national consensus regarding the benefits of one-party-dominance and which at the time also matched public and academic discourse on party systems in the developing world (for example Huntington 1968: 146-147).

Now that “the end of history” (Fukuyama 1992) has become such a popular proclamation, and everybody – in the name of ‘good governance’ – is talking about multi-party democracy as some sort of a ‘remedy’ for the consolidation of nascent democracies in developing countries, nobody seems to remember the disastrous results that multi-party democracy has had for most of these countries immediately after independence or in the transition to democracy. One-party-dominance has almost turned into a four-letter word, associated with creeping authoritarianism and the traumatic mental legacies of so many quasi-dictatorial single-party states. India nevertheless was able to combine over decades one-party-dominance with almost all features of a liberal democracy and remains a vibrant democracy, a record that sets her apart amongst post-colonial states.²

Across the Indian Ocean, seven years after the dismantling of apartheid was officially launched³ and two days before South Africa’s second democratic general election took place,

¹ Personal Communication; interview conducted at *Gandhi Memorial*, New Delhi, on December 18, 2000, see references.

² Although India’s status as a full-fledged democracy is questioned by some scholars, this study is in accord with most of the scholarly literature as regards India’s classification as a democracy. For a critical assessment of India’s democratic credibility, which hinges exactly on the (concentrated) state of the country’s party system for most of its post-independence democratic ‘career’, see Vanhanen (1997). For a similar argument with regard to the South African context, see Lane and Ersson (1997).

³ In 1992 the then ruling National Party (NP) under president De Klerk initiated a referendum to obtain a mandate from the white electorate in order to go on with the (gradual) abolishment of apartheid policies and to work towards a new democratic political order. The referendum, which – under threat of De Klerk’s resignation – had asked: ‘Do you support continuation of the reform process which the State President began on February 2, 1990 and which is aimed at a new Constitution through negotiation?’, secured approval of the reforms and negotiations that eventually led to the new constitution and the first democratic general elections in 1994 by two-thirds of the white electorate.

Firoz Cachalia, then African National Congress' (ANC) leader of the house in the Gauteng⁴ legislature, wrote in one of the country's leading newspapers:

*"Some academics and opposition politicians have, for a long time now, been making the argument that SA [South Africa, C. S.] is developing a system of one-party dominance that is dangerous for democracy and that consequently SA needs an effective opposition to protect democracy. (...) I will (...) argue that the ANC's dominance strengthens the prospects of democratic consolidation and is good for both economic growth and in the long term for greater social equality. (...) for most of its history, the ANC has been committed to an inclusive nationalism and its values have been strongly shaped by the enlightenment's universalism. It achieved its position of dominance in liberation politics and in post-apartheid SA through the methods of secular politics. Its dominance is thus the result of successful contestation, not the absence of it." (Business Day, May 31, 1999).*⁵

Cachalia, like Ali, refers to the all-inclusive nature of the ANC in a bid to legitimise a distinct party system configuration which was still not entirely perceived as fulfilling the criteria set forth by the normative ideal of a liberal democracy. Consequently, he hastens to refer to the competitive nature of the ANC's dominance, which is seen by him as a *sine qua non* for a successful democratisation.

Scholarly concern about South Africa's political development has increased tremendously in the last decade due to its distinction as the world's only post-apartheid society and as the last remaining 'powerhouse' on an otherwise "hopeless continent".⁶ Whether South Africa will follow the path of political decay like so many of its sub-Saharan democratising predecessors, or, whether it will take the lead in what has been called a continent on the brink of an "elusive dawn"⁷ has become a heated debate in the academic world with the nature of the country's party system increasingly the central 'bone of contention'.⁸

Both countries share a similar historical outcome with regards to their party systems albeit within very different temporal and spatial contexts. India's system of one-party-dominance

⁴ Gauteng is one of the nine provinces of contemporary South Africa.

⁵ The article has been included to the article section of the ANC's official homepage available at: www.anc.org.za/election/articles/dominance.html.

⁶ Cover of the Economist, 13 May, 2000.

⁷ Cover of the Economist, 24 February, 2001.

⁸ In fact, the relevance of the specific configuration of one-party-dominance goes beyond the South African experience. As Randall and Svåsand (2002b: 35) observed, "(...) the emergent predominant type of party system [in Africa, C.S.] is the non-authoritarian dominant type."

was terminated electorally in 1977 when for the first time in the country's history the INC⁹ was thrown out of office and power by the *Janata* Party, a multi-party electoral platform comprising the four major opposition parties of the time.¹⁰ South Africa on the other hand has had only two general (democratic) elections (1994 and 1999). However, the ANC won an overwhelming share of the popular vote on both occasions (62.65% and 66.35% respectively), and the establishment of long-term party dominance is rather likely.¹¹ What are the explanatory factors that enabled the emergence of a system of one-party-dominance in India after independence and in the South Africa of today? Why was it that a single party in a competitive democratic environment succeeded in winning one election after another amidst processes of massive social change, and, why is it that a single party is still able to do so at the end of the 20th century? What did one-party-dominance do to the political and socio-economic development in the world's largest democracy, and, what will be the effects of its working in the world's most unexpected democracy? How do the political actors' perceptions mentioned above match with the academic wisdom of our times?

Taking India as the *locus classicus* of one-party-dominance in changing societies (democratic post-colonial, developing or semi-developed societies)¹², the following is an attempt to make use of a diachronic comparison between the Indian party system after independence and the emerging one in South Africa. This, it is hoped, will free the political phenomenon of 'one-party-dominance' from some of the theoretical and conceptual misconceptions surrounding it, re-examine common thinking about a party systems' emergence by working on the basis of two regional realities and by putting forward party agency as a crucial but so far neglected explanatory tool, and, finally, with empirical backing, will enrich the current scholarly hypothesising about the correlation between the nature of the party system and processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and socio-economic development.

⁹ After the split of the INC in 1969, the two factions contested elections as separate parties named INC (R) – 'R' for 'Requisitionist' - and INC (O) – 'O' for 'Organisation'. The former, headed by Indira Gandhi, was the successful 'heir' of the undivided INC's dominant position. Another split of the INC in 1977 led to the emergence of the INC (I) – 'I' for 'Indira' - , the party led by Indira Gandhi, and the INC (as formally recognised by the Election Commission), which was successively renamed INC (U - Urs) and Indian Congress (Socialist) (ICS). In 1981 the INC (I) was formally relabelled INC. If not indicated otherwise, INC is used in the following as a common denominator for the undivided party up to 1969, the Indira-led INC up to 1977, the INC (I) and the INC after 1981.

¹⁰ The 'real' end of one-party-dominance in India is a highly debated issue in the scholarly discourse on the Indian party system. The years of 1967, 1969, 1975, 1977 and 1989 all figure as respective dates of termination in the scholarly literature. This study's focus is on the heyday of one-party-dominance in the first two decades after independence (1947-1967). For a discussion of this issue see 1.3.

¹¹ An assessment of the country's party system nevertheless needs to take into account the dynamic nature of a pattern of party competition still in the making.

¹² See 1.2. for a discussion of what distinct features the term changing 'societies' entails.

More recent research on party systems in changing societies, especially in those countries ‘affected’ by the “third wave” (Huntington 1991) of democratisation, calls into question some of the theoretical fundamentals on political parties and party systems that political scientists, entrenched in their western-based empirical references, have grown so fond of. This is hardly surprising, as it would have been presumptuous to expect parties and party systems in changing societies to adjust their shape and role to the analytical concepts and categories developed during the evolution of their western counterparts. Among the more important challenges to common party system theory are *a)* the inadequacies of some of the theoretical propositions made by the ‘social cleavages’ approach pioneered by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), as well as the one-dimensional attempts by institutionalists to make law-like generalisations about the relationship between institutions, especially the electoral system, and party systems without considering the respective context or alternative explanatory factors such as the (independent) role of political actors and party agency (for both critiques see e.g. Mainwaring 1999, Merkel and Sandschneider 1997); and *b)* the debate about a necessary extension and/or differentiation of the role and function of political parties and party systems with regard to an empirical setting that demands capacities from the political system going far beyond the ‘classic’ functions ascribed to parties and the party system in western democracies (e.g. McAllister and White 1995, Morlino 1995, Pridham and Lewis 1996, Schmitter 1999). In a situation where relevant party loyalties and identities have to be produced afresh (or ‘from scratch’), conflict and contestation have to be co-ordinated along unfamiliar institutional lines, and mobilisation and participation have to be channelled for the first time, the room to manoeuvre for political actors is naturally bigger, the institutional rules of the (democratic) game are not that clear, and the challenges for the representational system differ from those in the established democracies of western provenance.

Taking a closer look at the specific configuration of party systems, namely those of one-party-dominance, as well as the distinct contexts - post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa - that this study deals with, could enhance the understanding of parties and party systems in changing societies on the grounds that it has to handle a political manifestation and environment that have so far belied most of the assumptions made by common party and party system theory (of either the institutionalist or the sociological variant); that do not (exactly) fit most of the prominent classifications of comparative research on party systems; and, that represent two exemplary cases of democracy in changing societies: long-term survivals and post-1990 (third wave) surfers.

Despite its continued existence and reference in scholarly minds and works, one-party-dominance has kept its character as a pending phenomenon of political science. A few attempts have been made to grasp its logic and to fit it into common knowledge of democratic and party theory. These have left behind as many assessments of one-party-dominance being a (democratic) matter of course, as postulates of it being a democratic anomaly, as many delineations of a model of democratic stability as classifications of it being a transitional phenomenon, as much praise for its contribution to democratic consolidation and socio-economic development as condemnations for its perversion of democratic practices. Explanatory approaches to the phenomenon were almost always either of an institutional, sociological/structural or historical nature and the typological status of one-party-dominance was always (and remains) rather vague.¹³ The aim of this study is to provide an empirically backed analysis of two cases of one-party-dominance from which careful generalisations will be drawn and to shed light on current trends in party system theory brought about by the third wave of democratisation. In the event, the thesis also seeks to re-evaluate the role of one-party-dominance in transition to, and consolidation of, democracy in post-colonial or changing societies.

The general puzzle of the study is consequently as follows:

Why and how has one-party-dominance evolved, functioned and affected democratic consolidation, national integration and development in India, and, what are the 'lessons' thereof for the current establishment of one-party-dominance in South Africa?

Against the backdrop of this general puzzle, the epistemological interest and the resultant core question of the study is threefold. First, there is the question of correlation and causal relation. What were/are the factors determining the emergence of one-party-dominance in the contexts of India and South Africa? So far, scholarly debate on the emergence of party systems has been dominated by structural and/or institutional explanations. Only recently, has the role of political elites and party competition in the shaping of party systems been to some extent acknowledged. The study intends to focus mainly on this intensified consideration of political and party elites as determining agents in the evolution of one-party-dominance and in the

¹³ Apart from mentions of one-party-dominant systems in several scholarly works and a few scientific articles there is – to my knowledge – only one comprehensive and comparative account of one-party-dominance in changing societies to date (Giliomee and Simkins 1999); the only other book solely dedicated to the phenomenon is dealing with one-party-dominance within the context of advanced industrial democracies (Pempel 1990). A 'mixed' approach to one-party-dominance taking into account changing societies and advanced industrial democracies was recently published by Rimanelli (1999).

process tries to explain why the latter has so far slipped through the fingers of any kind of structural or institutional determinism. Hence, the first core question:

What role did party agency play in the emergence of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa?

This question is dealt with in chapter 3.

Second, it is aimed at reorienting the scholarly account of one-party-dominance on the basis of a proper understanding of its functioning within the regional contexts. Once again, the research interest is directed towards the role played by actors and party agency as well as party competition in the structuring of the respective party systems. This is necessary as it is assumed that a party system, ensconced in the vagaries of an electoral democracy but nevertheless characterised by the continued dominance of one party, is particularly prone to manipulations of and by the political process.¹⁴ Therefore, a distinction is drawn between the role party agentive factors and party competition play in the ‘achievement’ of one-party-dominance and for the maintenance of dominant party rule. The second core question is therefore:

What role did/does party agency play in the maintenance of dominant party rule in India and South Africa and what are/were the main characteristics and mechanisms of dominant party control and party competition inherent in the two regional contexts’ party systems?

This question is dealt with in chapter 4.

Third, it is part of the ‘holistic’ approach of the study to consider one-party dominance as a dependent as well as an independent variable in order to reach a comprehensive understanding of its interactions with the state and society. Compared to the so far rigid restriction of

¹⁴ This assumption refers mainly to the increasingly difficult balance of dominance and competitiveness in the representational system that is one of the essential characteristics of one-party-dominance. As Arian and Barnes (1974: 599) in their seminal article on one-party-dominance in Italy and Israel formulate: “(...) in many multiparty systems, parties are the result of historical and social forces and are only partially the conscious creation of political leaders. And in single party systems, only organizational inadequacies set limits on the exercise of power. The dominant party system is one in which politics is king, in which dominance results from strategic political decisions made by the party elite. Politics is not a dependent variable. Political strategy is determining.”

scientific analyses on either causes of party systems' evolution or their effects on democratic consolidation and/or social change, the approach here takes seriously the crucial role of party systems as an interface between *input* and *output* functions of the political system. This is done by considering both genetic as well as functional aspects of a party system. On the basis of chapters 3 and 4 it is therefore aimed to explore the impact of one-party-dominance on the processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and socio-economic development. Hence, the third core question, which involves a change of analytical perspective from looking at the party system as dependent variable to looking at the party system as independent variable:

What effect (positive or negative) had/has one-party-dominance on processes of democratic transition/consolidation, national integration and socio-economic development in the two regional contexts?

This question is dealt with in chapter 5.

These three research dimensions and core questions of the study are embedded in a cross-national and diachronic comparative perspective thereby adding a fourth epistemological interest to the analysis, namely, a predictive curiosity about the future development of one-party-dominance (and its effects) in South Africa in the light of the Indian experience.

Following these considerations there are two key hypotheses that inform the examination of the core questions stated above and guide the analytical framework (see below) to be applied in the assessment of the two regional contexts' party systems.

Hypothesis 1: Party agency and strategy were among the most decisive factors in the formation and development of the two regional contexts' systems of one-party-dominance and are, in general, crucial for party system formation and development. They are especially relevant in the shaping of one-party-dominance in changing societies.

Hypothesis 2: Systems of one-party-dominance have a potentially benign effect on processes of democratisation, national integration and democratic development in the crucial period of changing societies' transition to democracy and democratic consolidation. It is assumed that this was the case in post-independent India but is increasingly less so the case in post-apartheid South Africa.

Hypothesis 1, which highlights the need to incorporate party agency as explanatory factor in the examination of any party system's formation and development and takes the two systems of one-party-dominance as optimal 'test cases' for such an examination, is followed up in chapters 3 and 4 against the backdrop of aspects of party agency specified in the analytical framework outlined below. Hypothesis 2 is taken up in chapter 5 and seeks to examine what characteristics and mechanisms of one-party-dominance in post-independent India were responsible for the party system performing such a suppositionally benign function and why the same benign function is (or may be) increasingly less exerted by post-apartheid South Africa's party system.

There have been infrequent references to various aspects of party agency in the literature on party dominance but they lack analytical clarity and almost always deal only with specific aspects of a party system's multidimensionality. That is why this study has singled out spheres of (party) agency that correspond to the interactive aspects of systemic relations of the party system partly by borrowing from classic accounts of party dominance but more so by independent systematic reasoning that draws an overall picture of party agency and its close relationship to one-party-dominance. Likewise, the dimensions of a party system's or, for that matter, of the two, one-party-dominant systems' impact on areas and aspects of political development, which are considered to be relevant for a changing society's democratic and developmental trajectory and integrative capacity, are delineated within the overall framework.

The rationale and working of the various aspects of party agency and the role of the two party systems as independent variables are discussed at length in the respective chapters and sections. Only a broad outline of which aspects and areas of examination are to be involved in the analysis is given here in order to provide a synoptic view of the analytical framework applied in the following chapters.

This framework is first of all based on the assumption that party agency operates at three distinct levels: the interaction between party system/dominant party and state structures, i.e. the institutional arrangement of the polity, the interaction between party system/dominant party and the electorate, i.e. society at large, and the party system's 'inner space', which involves the interaction between the dominant party and other/opposition parties as well as the processes and organisational aspects related to the intra-party working of the dominant party itself.

A second assumption refers to the necessary distinction made between the initiation and consolidation or, for that matter, 'achievement' of dominant party rule and the maintenance of

such rule. The working of party agentive factors in the initial phase of the polity and party competition necessarily differs from the processes involved in up-holding party dominance once institutional rules, (party) power and state resources have been consolidated. A more fluid and volatile institutional context, organisational uncertainty of the dominant party and opposition parties, the vagueness prevalent in ideas about the future shape of party-society and state-society relations and, in the case of the two regional contexts, the (temporal) closeness to the past struggle for (national) freedom in the early stages of a party system's development, all call for different strategies than those involved in the dominant party's attempt to ensure continued dominance by means of constant fine-tuning to social change and party competition once party dominance has been achieved.¹⁵

Finally, a third assumption refers to the examination of the two party systems as independent variables and includes the notion of a close connection between political actors' perception of party system characteristics and the latter's impact. Here, the unintended but potentially benign effects of the dominant party's actions and strategies in its bid to uphold its dominance need to be taken into account. Likewise it is necessary that, before assessing the impact of one-party-dominance (in India and South Africa) on processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development, the canon of functions commonly ascribed to party systems be critically examined and adapted to the specifics of the empirical context wherever applicable.¹⁶

With regard to the achievement of one-party-dominance party agency basically involves three dimensions or processes: the role of political actors as 'inventors' of a historical project or national consensus of social transformation and democratic commitment, for the dominant party to become 'identified with the epoch' (society-oriented party agency); the role of political actors as determining agents of the young polity's institutional arrangement comprising constitutional engineering and amendment and the interpretation of institutional rules – this is based on the rationale that the institutional arrangement works in favour of the dominant party (state-oriented party agency); and the role of political actors as interventionists and accommodationists in the dominant party's organisational affairs and relation to other political forces – geared towards a 'mainstreaming' of the party's organisation and the facilitation of the shift from movement to party thus making it (even more) 'electable' and broad-based (party system's inner space).

¹⁵ The distinction between the achievement and the maintenance of one-party-dominance also draws advantage from the diachronic nature of the comparison for the differences in party agency come out more clearly in the different stages of the 'life-cycle' of the two systems of one-party-dominance under examination; see the introduction to chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of this aspect.

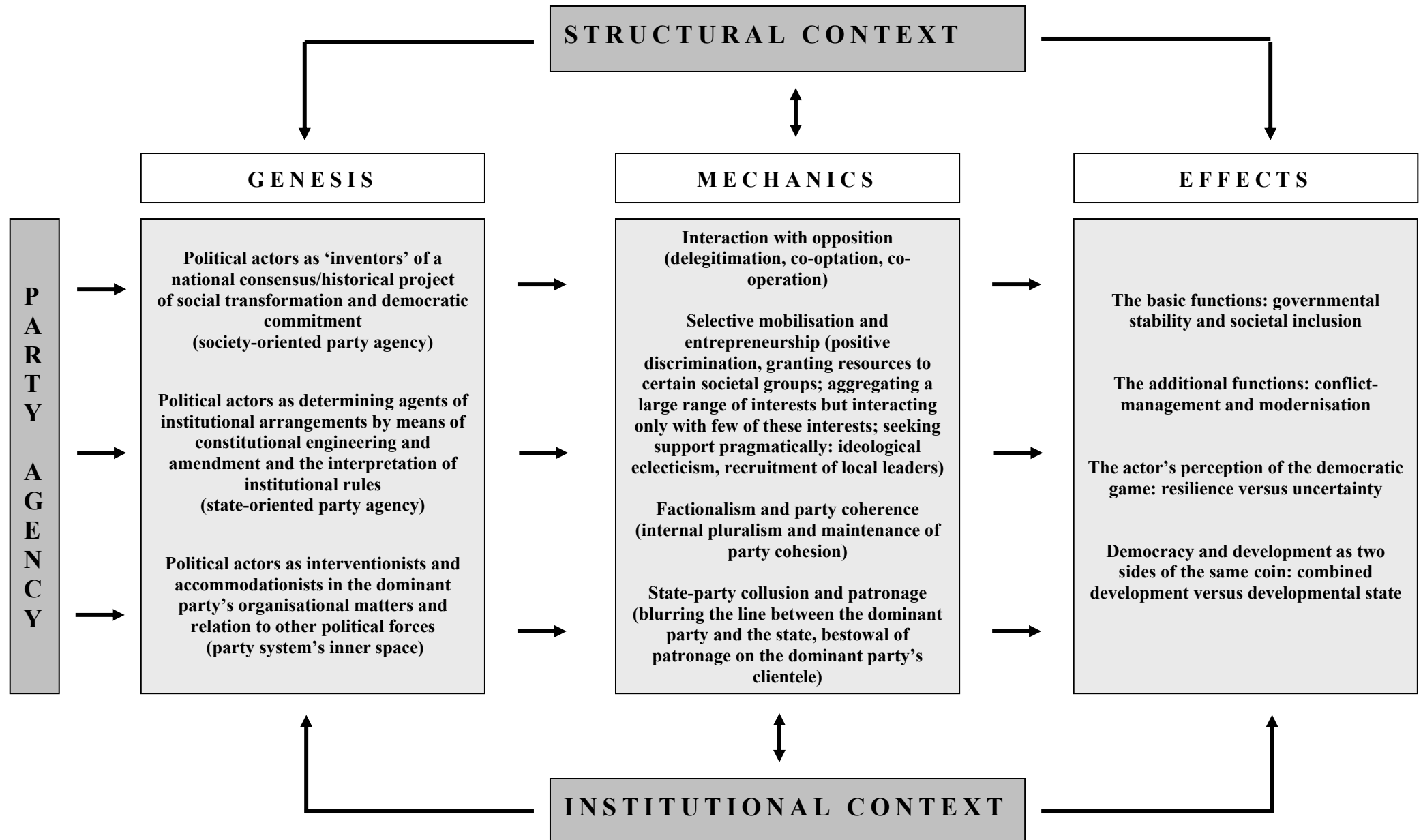
¹⁶ For a full discussion of this assumption and line of reasoning, see the introduction to chapter 5.

In maintaining one-party-dominance, the mechanisms of control that the dominant party employs and the dynamics of competition that a system of one-party-dominance entails are conceptualised in a number of ways. In terms of the specific interaction between dominant party and opposition parties this includes means of delegitimation, co-optation and co-operation, necessary to ensure not only the opposition's continuing exiguity but also its loyalty to the polity's ordering framework. Also important are the modes of selective mobilisation ('purchasing support by positive discrimination of or granting resources to certain societal groups and aggregating a large range of interests in society but giving voice only to certain spokesmen of these interests') and entrepreneurship on the electoral market ('actively seeking support in the most pragmatic fashion available') which enhance the dominant party's capacity to shape and/or accommodate voters' preferences in its favour. Furthermore, the dominant party has an interest in and need to provide and manage an extensive factional substructure in order to remain flexible and effective in terms of an indispensable (societal) inclusiveness, (organisational) coherence and (social) responsiveness. Finally, the dominant party's active pursuit of patronage politics is dealt with and its attempt, for obvious reasons, at blurring the line between it and the state.

With regard to the effects and functions of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts, various areas of examination have been singled out in accordance with the considerations made in the above mentioned, third assumption. The effect of the two systems of one-party-dominance is portrayed in terms of the two basic functions commonly ascribed to a party system, the provision of governmental stability and societal inclusion. Their effect is examined with regard to the additional functions identified as relevant in the context of changing societies: conflict-management and modernisation. Whether the party system has benefited or, been detrimental to the process of democratic consolidation is explored in terms of the politically relevant actors' perception of the party system (and the consequences thereof). Finally - taking into account the implications of the two countries' ruling elites' decision to follow a path of democratic development - the impact of the party systems' characteristics/configurations on the two countries' developmental trajectory is examined.

This analytical framework guides the bulk of the empirical analysis as it unfolds in chapters 3, 4 and 5 and is depicted in the diagrammatic representation below.

Figure 1: Analytical framework of a one-party-dominant system to be deployed



The research interest of the study thereby refers to a returning scholarly regard of parties as the main agents of representation paralleled by an emerging assessment of party systems as being the crucial determining factors of democratic consolidation. After decades of a scholarly-noticed decline in the importance given to political parties as intermediary institutions¹⁷ which, in the developing context, was sometimes coupled with a general distrust of the democratic capacity of parties and party systems as such, parties and party systems, as “a vehicle for studying democratization” (Mainwaring 1999: 11), once again figure prominently in comparative politics. Due to their central position in the competition for state power, their shaping of the political agenda (voicing certain interests and conflicts while muting others), and their role as crucial link between state and society, parties and party systems are key to the enhancement of participation and public political awareness, effective government and policy implementation, the accountability of the political process, the working of (democratic) governance, and, finally, the establishment of democratic legitimacy. This indispensable contribution of parties and party systems is even more important when one party dominates the political process and discourse in a context where the relationship between the state and society must be shaped anew and with high costs. An analysis that seeks to enhance the knowledge of how parties and party systems work in changing societies, whilst focusing closely on a distinct configuration of party systems and the specific theoretical aspects of their emergence, functioning and consequences, is also a study in democratisation and how democracies function (ibid. 11 ff.).

Design and Scope of the Study

As one can see from the introduction above, a descriptive or historic account of the two party systems under examination is not the primary concern of this study. Rather, it seeks to explore the details of the interrelations and mechanisms of interaction between political actors, societal structures, institutional arrangements, processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and socio-economic development and a distinct configuration of a party system within a distinct context. This is done on the basis of a new approach to, and perspective on, the study of one-party-dominance or, more generally, party systems in changing societies by directing the focus of analysis towards the role of party agency in the emergence and for the ‘mechanics’ of a party system, and by looking at the so far largely neglected aspect of (the two) party systems’ performance with regard to processes of democratic consolidation,

¹⁷ Most prominent among others, see Schmitter (1992).

national integration and development. The conceptual engagement with the phenomenon of one-party-dominance in changing societies on the basis of a diachronic comparison and with a specific focus on the role of party agency is a research attempt that has not been undertaken so far and thus an original contribution to the field of party system research and theory. A similar statement can be made with regard to the 'holistic' approach of this study, involving a change of analytical perspective on the party system from dependent to independent variable. The study is also an attempt at reinterpreting some of the processes involved in the political development of post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa. The rationale of the following depiction of the two party systems is the illustration of the above-mentioned interrelations/mechanisms and the explication and empirical backing of the two key hypotheses put forward above. An in-depth account of historical details of the periods under examination is largely avoided for the sake of clear theoretical reasoning.¹⁸ Furthermore, as the unit of analysis is the national party system of the two regional settings, no in-depth investigation of local or regional processes and specifics is conducted. The study is largely pursuing questions of middle-range theory such as why the INC and ANC were/are successful in gathering (and holding on to) a mass following or what kind of interaction prevails between the dominant party and opposition parties in a system of one-party-dominance. It does however aim to relate the findings to the *desiderata* of an adequate framework theory of party systems in changing societies, on which research is still in the making. The general thrust of the study is thereby conceptual rather than historically narrative.

Chapter 1 deals with the conceptual, theoretical and methodological problems, incentives and questions inherent in the kind of cross-national and diachronic comparison attempted in this study. The first section (1.1.) tries to establish one-party-dominance as a conceptual entity by looking at the, so far, sparse scholarly contributions to this political phenomenon and generates an own working definition. This leads to a consideration of the relevance and specifics of party systems and one-party-dominance in changing societies (1.2.) and to an explication of why post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa have been selected for comparison (1.3.). Section 1.4. outlines the theoretical implications involved in the comparison and study of one-party-dominance, whereas section 1.5. deals with the methodological problems that are inevitably tied to a cross-national and diachronic comparison. The last section (1.6.) provides a brief synthesis of common theories and approaches within party system theory and makes clear to what extent the approach and focus

¹⁸ As a participant at a seminar at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, once lucidly commented: 'Historians establish the facts, political scientists do play with what the historians have established'.

on party agency chosen in this study has to be considered as a departure from the conventional narrative of party system theory.

Chapter 2 gives a brief outline of the regional settings at the time democratic party competition was beginning to take shape, outlines the institutional boundaries within which the two party systems operate(d), looks at the main characteristics of the electorate in post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa and ‘takes stock’ of the two party systems in terms of a broad outline of the dominant party and the relevant opposition parties. The next three chapters present the bulk of the empirical analysis and deal with the emergence, working and functions/effects of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa respectively. Each chapter refers to the basic outline of the analytical framework depicted above and combines theoretical arguments with empirical, as well as historical, givens of the two party systems under examination. Whereas **chapter 3** examines how the two party systems were ‘shaped from above’, i.e. how party agency helped to achieve the dominant position of the INC and ANC respectively, **chapter 4** examines the mechanisms of control employed to maintain dominance and the mechanisms of party competition prevailing in the two regional contexts. Both chapters deal with the party agentive factors identified in the analytical framework as responsible for the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance in the form of short analytical narratives. The last one of these three chapters (**chapter 5**) sums up and discusses the effects and (redefined) functions of party systems in changing societies and gives an account of how both countries’ party systems have fared with regard to these effects and in terms of fulfilling these functions. **Chapter 6** takes up the differences and similarities of the two regional contexts as they have emerged out of the preceding three chapters, relates the ‘lessons’ of the Indian experience to the prospects of one-party-dominance in South Africa by means of a comparison and reassesses the key hypotheses stated above.

Chapter 1: One-Party-Dominance in Changing Societies: Conceptual, methodological and theoretical aspects of the study

“Political scientists have often used the number of parties in the system as an indicator of the patterns expected to be found. Political sociologists have often stressed societal variables such as social and ideological cleavages in order to explain party systems. Scholars with a more psychological bent have relied heavily on learning models for explaining party identification and perceived spatial distances in the party universe. We suggest that the dominant party system is a political rather than sociological or psychological model. Because of its structural characteristics and the importance of strategic decisions as well as the impact it has on the competition, the mass public, and the organs of power, the dominant party model provides an alternative way of understanding the emergence of competitive democracies in multiparty systems.”
(Arian and Barnes 1974: 613).

Based on an investigation into the party systems of post-war Italy and independent Israel, once treated as the ‘prototypes’ of dominant party systems in western democracies, Arian and Barnes’ portrayal above, of the distinctiveness of one-party-dominant systems, can be taken as a prime incentive or starting point for this study.

The fact that both the party systems under examination here, as well as systems of one-party-dominance more generally, have defied conventional wisdom on the emergence and working of party systems implies a need for alternative, additional or, in other words, more political explanatory factors. This is not to deny that other, more conventional explanatory factors such as the cleavage structure in a given societal context or the institutional arrangement in a given polity have a crucial impact on the unfolding of a (or any) party system, but rather to redirect and focus attention on the role of strictly political factors such as party agency in the emergence and working of party systems.

Political factors and party agency have often been mentioned as important determinants of party system development, but this contention has never been followed up systematically. This is basically due to the fact that a number of political factors and party agency are less quantifiable (or not quantifiable at all) and process-based, which makes them difficult to determine. However, systems of one-party-dominance in changing societies offer a fertile ground for an investigation into these very factors and aspects for reasons elaborated below. This study therefore, attempts to examine the role political factors, especially party agency,

play in party system development by comparing the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance in post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa. In that regard, the study possesses an explorative character and in a sense, enters 'virgin soil' with regard to another aspect involved in the study of one-party-dominance. As the quote above alleges, one-party-dominance has specific implications for emerging democracies and 'provides an alternative way of understanding' nascent democratic party systems. Democratic practice in one-party-dominant systems is still a controversial matter in academic debate demonstrated by the catchy book titles that hint at their scholarly subject as 'Uncommon Democracies' (Pempel 1990) or an 'Awkward Embrace' (of democracy) (Giliomee and Simkins 1999). The second rationale of this study is therefore to look at the two party systems and their characteristics as independent variables and to examine their effects with regard to the most crucial functions that party systems in changing societies have to perform in order to 'engineer' a successful process of (simultaneous) democratic consolidation, national integration and development.

Before going deeper into a discussion of these two main threads, it is necessary to outline the conceptual, methodological and theoretical aspects involved in the comparison. This chapter aims to define the concept of one-party-dominance for the purpose of this study, to discuss the relevance and specifics of party systems and one-party-dominance in the context of changing societies, to outline the rationale, problems and advantages of the envisaged comparison, to delineate the theoretical perspective chosen by the approach of this study, to pave the way for the argument put forward in chapter 5 that conceives of a system of one-party-dominance as the appropriate 'institutional container' for a process of democratic consolidation, development and national integration in changing societies to gain momentum, and to discuss the methodological problems involved in the comparison.

In the final section the chapter outlines the (preliminary) conclusion that common explanatory approaches to the emergence and working of party systems have not been able to catch the 'logic' of systems of one-party-dominance in changing societies, as they do not take into account 'party agency' as the crucial explanatory variable with regard to the complex nature of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa specifically, and more generally in changing societies.

1.1. ‘Grappling with the concept’: definitional clarifications of one-party-dominance

The term and concept of ‘one-party-dominance’, or ‘Congress system’¹⁹ was introduced to academic debate in 1961 by the Indian political scientist Rajni Kothari and later given fuller form by him in 1964 (Kothari 1961, 1964). Meant to describe the specific nature of the Indian party system, Kothari’s postulation of a compatibility of dominance and competition in a given party system touched upon an aspect, which had so far been largely neglected in the literature.

Although Duverger (1954: 279-280) was already alerting the scholarly community in 1951 to the many shades and nuances, in what is conventionally conceived of, as a one-party or single-party system, alternation in government was (and still is) commonly regarded as a necessary condition of a competitive party system.²⁰

Not until the understanding took root that mere numerical classifications do not suffice to grasp the nature and working of party systems and more qualitative criteria found their way into typologies and classifications, did the phenomenon of the long-term rule of one party in a competitive environment attract more scholarly attention. The degree of competitiveness of a given party system was no longer attached solely to the relative size (electorally) and number of parties prevailing in a system, but was increasingly differentiated according to more qualitative criteria.²¹

The function and position of a party in a certain system and the (party) power configuration became as decisive as its mere existence and the electoral strength of minor parties. As a result, the long-term dominance of one party was no longer necessarily associated with legally enforced restrictions or repression of political competition or with electoral fraud. Consequently, those party systems characterised by “(...) dominance coexisting with competition but without a trace of alternation” (Morris-Jones 1978: 217) could be subsumed under the category of ‘competitive party systems’.

¹⁹ The term ‘Congress System’, connotative of the main conceptual and analytical features of the ideal-typical phase of India’s system of one-party-dominance, was first introduced to the scholarly community by Rajni Kothari (1961, 1964, 1974). Independently, W. H. Morris-Jones came to similar conclusions about the conceptual and analytical nature of India’s system of one-party-dominance, and, often used the same terminology as Kothari. See Morris-Jones (1966, 1967). For an explication of the analytical nature of the Congress system see especially 4.1.

²⁰ See, for example, Neumann (1956: 397) or Huntington (1991: 263); see also fn. 24 below.

²¹ Thus, whereas Almond (1960a: 41-42) was still very simplistically differentiating between the categories of ‘authoritarian’ and ‘dominant non-authoritarian’ party systems with the latter being called “tutelary democracies” as long as they remain (‘somehow’) competitive and ‘modernising’ because of their elite dependence and lack of interest aggregation, LaPalombara and Weiner (1966a: 33) already made a more sophisticated distinction between competitive ‘hegemonic’ and ‘turn-over’ systems, which are additionally classified as ‘ideological’ or ‘pragmatic’ according to the pattern of inter-party interaction prevailing.

This is the first and foremost criterion of one-party-dominance: party systems thus labelled are democratic (in the procedural sense at least) and competitive, which means that political dissent can and does find expression in the party system (party dominance is not legally or otherwise enforced), that there are mechanisms available to protect the competitiveness of the party system (e.g. a latent threat from the opposition parties or a network of factions within the dominant party)²² and that democratic rules and minority parties are a matter of fact, which “(...) the dominant party cannot ignore in its political calculations” (Chan 1967: 4).

This development brought greater attention to systems of one-party-dominance and led to a refinement of typologies and classifications in order to incorporate this apparently rather anomalous subtype of a party system.²³ But scholarly accounts of party dominance have most often been vague on definitions and contradictory in terms of what cases should be counted as systems of one-party-dominance. This is hardly surprising given that the first and foremost challenge to the study of one-party-dominance arises out of the conceptual boundaries to draw between a party system with a dominant party (a frequent occurrence known to many established democracies) and a system of one-party dominance (Sartori 1976: 192-195).

From the angle of electoral dominance, and taking the view that one-party-dominant systems are essentially democracies²⁴, one-party-dominance is a ‘fluid’ category. Sooner or later (basically depending on the participation process, exogenous factors or on elite behaviour) it gives way to (clear cut) two- or multi-party competition or an authoritarian one-party state.

²² These more ‘informal’ mechanisms are considered to be more important for the protection of party system competitiveness than the provisions for ‘checks and balances’ in the institutional arrangement. The latter are of course necessary (and part and parcel of the two regional context’s polities; see 2.1.2. and 2.2.2.) but they depend heavily on elite perception of their appropriateness and are easily violated, especially in a relatively ‘fluid’ institutional context such as the one immediately after independence or transition to democracy.

²³ Among others, the more prominent (and original) scholarly attempts to grasp the logic of the phenomenon of one-party-dominance taxonomically are Duverger (1954, especially 307 f.), Huntington (1968: 420 f.), Blondel (1968, 1972: 99-102) and Sartori (1976, especially 192-201). Arian and Barnes (1974) and Levite and Tarrow (1983) both deal with the then dominant party systems of Italy and Israel and highlight specific aspects of their structure and working primarily by means of comparing the two country’s respective dominant parties. Whereas Arian and Barnes take a more general approach, Levite and Tarrow focus on the specific interaction (deligitimation) between the dominant parties and minority parties. The more recent attempts, although not focussing on the typological or classificatory aspects involved when dealing with one-party-dominance but taking a comparative perspective, include Pempel (1990), Giliomee and Simkins (1999) and Rimanelli (1999). The scholarly contributions solely devoted to one-party-dominance in India or South Africa (or any other country to which the label of one-party-dominance has been applied) are widely used in this study and are to be found and mentioned throughout the text.

²⁴ The clear dissociation from non-democratic regimes is necessary since (democratic) one-party-dominant systems form a distinct analytical category. One-party-dominance would not be a puzzling phenomenon of political science if repression or fraud were to be involved in the up-holding of a party’s dominance. In that case, it would even be difficult to speak of a ‘system’ since the dominant party would not be dependent on any kind of interaction with other political forces for it could rely on repression to push through its interests. Scholarly contributions that lump together democratic and non-democratic one-party-dominance are to be found in abundant profusion and do not contribute to any further understanding of the few ‘true’ (democratic) types of one-party-dominance. For a discussion of ‘alternation in office’ as a distinctive criterion for a political (party) system to be classified as democratic, see Huntington (1991: 263) and Przeworski and Limongi (1997).

Therefore, it would be extremely difficult to decide after how many consecutive majorities a party system could be labelled as one-party-dominant.²⁵

The challenge of making a distinction between a party system wherein one party is significantly stronger than the other(s) electorally and a veritable system of one-party-dominance has led Sartori (in what remains to date the most sophisticated typology of party systems) to conclude that “[d]ominant party is a category that confuses *party* (in isolation) with *party system*” (ibid. 195). His point is that the question whether the existence of a dominant party characterises a distinct category of a party system “(...) is bound to remain unanswered” (ibid.). This is of course not of much help for a study dealing with the phenomenon of one-party-dominance. However Sartori rightly argues that the ‘predominant-party system’ - the ‘rough’ equivalent to the one-party-dominant system referred to in this study²⁶ - “(...) is a *type*, not a class. This is to recall that the criterion here is not the number of parties but a particular distribution of power among them” (ibid. 199). Consequently, Thackrah (2000: 3), following Sartori, in a conceptual refinement of one-party-dominance has noted: “[i]ndeed, the ‘outdistancing’ phenomenon [a party system wherein one party outdistances all the others, C.S.] could potentially occur in all three systems [Sartori’s categories of two-party competition, polarised and moderate pluralism, C.S.] (...). This suggests that predominance must also be accounted for on a different dimension, namely the existence of *systems* through *time*” [italics added].

Thus, the second criterion for a party system to be labelled as one-party-dominant involves a chronological dimension and a notion of the interactive aspects that make up a party system. The latter is important, insofar as the view of a party system that is applied in this study breaks with the common idea in scholarly accounts of a party system, which is often confined to the universe of and interaction between the relevant parties in a given polity. Here, ‘party system’ refers not only to the horizontal dimension of the entirety and interaction of political parties as such, but also to the vertical dimension, the relationship of parties and the party system to the political system and the social system, to state structures and societal/social interests and forces. Dominance is consequently conceived of as comprising not only a notion

²⁵ Sartori (1976: 196) sets the criteria for his ‘predominant party system’ as three consecutive majorities of a party gaining absolute majority in parliament, but hastens to add that this sheer quantitative criterion looks rather arbitrary.

²⁶ Sartori makes a distinction between democratic, competitive ‘predominant party systems’ and non-competitive ‘hegemonic party systems’ where the dominance of a party is based - *inter alia* - on top-down restrictions of political competition (Sartori 1976: 192-201).

of domination of political competition (with other parties), but also a domination of the electorate, government and policy-making.²⁷

In that regard, the definition we get from Pempel (1990: 3-4) is still very useful. According to him there are four crucial dimensions when dealing with party dominance in a competitive environment. To be considered as dominant a party must be (1) dominant in number securing at least a plurality of votes and seats; but this only counts if the party is (2) electorally dominant for an uninterrupted and prolonged period; it must enjoy (3) a dominant bargaining position, always setting the tone when it comes to government formation, and, (4) it must be dominant governmentally to determine the public policy agenda.

One-party-dominance, implicit in Pempel's definition, still comprises more than just the continued dominance of the electoral and governmental process. Duverger (1954: 308) took this into account in his famous formulation that,

“[a] party is dominant when it is identified with an epoch; when its doctrines, ideas methods, its style, so to speak, coincide with those of the epoch (...) Domination is a question of influence rather than of strength: it is also linked with belief”

This statement points to the necessary incorporation of more qualitative aspects in the assessment of a party's dominance.

Indeed, without a consideration of the distinct quality of dominance not much is achieved with regards to determining the system. In particular the 'achievement' and effects of the party system requires a reflection on the qualitative aspects of a party's dominance (especially in terms of its domination of public opinion and the consequences for the state and society long-term party rule entails).

This leads to the third criterion, that the predominance over or preponderance of a certain *zeitgeist* favours the image of the dominant party as the 'natural party of governance' and affects the determination of the country's political trajectory.

Taken together, these three criteria then give rise to the following definition of one-party-dominance:

²⁷ In view of the manifold *avatars* political parties take in the Indian and South African context, a minimalist definition of a 'political party' is used for the sake of analytical clarity and restriction. Thus, following Coleman and Rosberg (1964: 2), parties are defined as “(...) those organisations, which have an organisational structure and a perceivable programme and which are striving for political office by taking part in elections (as a rule).”

‘One-party-dominance is a competitive (multi)party system wherein one party dominates government, the policy agenda, political competition and discourse and determines public opinion for a considerable amount of time and without any use of governmental repression, but, wherein opposition parties and societal forces do have a vital function as concerns the shaping of patterns of interaction within the party system.’²⁸

In addition, this means that in order to clarify the concept of one-party-dominance as a distinct political phenomenon, Sartori’s caveat about the confusion of party and party system notwithstanding, one has to look in detail at both the nature of the dominant party and the nature of a party system as characterised by the predominance of one party.²⁹

However, given the insights put forward so far, the problem remains that any further judgement of a party’s dominance in terms of the achievement and maintenance of a status of party dominance and in terms of its consequences has to be concretised as well as abstracted in such a way that makes comparisons and generalisations possible. This becomes even more challenging when one is dealing with the level of party system. Apart from the numerical domination of the electoral process and the predominance over a certain *zeitgeist*, the interactive aspects of systemic relations have to be accounted for. (Conceptual) boundaries have to be drawn around the dominant party’s relationship to other parties, societal interests, the electorate, state apparatus and changing socio-political conditions.

How to account for the role of opposition parties within a system of one-party-dominance? How to grasp the logic of a dominant party’s interaction with predominant social forces? To what extent is the collusion of power between the dominant party and the state an essential feature of a system of one-party-dominance? These questions have been partially addressed by regional experts but never in a systematic, comparative manner. One-party-dominance so far was mainly perceived as an individual and extremely context-sensitive phenomenon, to the extent that comparative analyses rarely went beyond a mere typological and quantitative account or presented their comparison in the form of a sequence of case-studies³⁰. This study has therefore singled out patterns of party agency relevant to achieve and maintain

²⁸ The time dimension is deliberately left open to avoid considering only the extreme cases of long-term party dominance (e.g. over several decades) thus leaving little room to possibly explain party systems with all other components of the definition prevalent but only a limited degree of chronological dominance. As stated above, it is anyway difficult to decide after how many consecutive electoral majorities a party system can be labelled as one-party-dominant. Of course, it does not make sense to talk of one-party-dominance if a party is re-elected only once or twice. Similarly, the occurrence of (massive) electoral fraud on behalf of the dominant party would compromise the democratic/competitive quality of the party system.

²⁹ In that regard, Sartori overlooks the fact that the dominant party is almost always made up of various distinct factions and components and displays features that are characteristic of a party system as such. Thus, the INC after independence was exactly that, a ‘system’ that is made up of one dominant party! See also 4.1.

³⁰ With the partial exception of Pempel (1990) and Giliomee and Simkins (1999).

dominance, features of one-party-dominance that are presumably indispensable to the working of a system of one-party dominance and areas of a party system's impact (see the analytical framework in the introduction and the introductory discussions in chapters 3, 4 and 5), and attempts to contrast the two regional contexts or, for that matter, the two systems of one-party-dominance in terms of these patterns, features and areas.³¹

1.2. Party systems and one-party-dominance in changing societies: relevance and specifics

Although the general definition of one-party-dominance put forward above is applicable analytically to any representative democracy, a conceptual division needs to be drawn between one-party-dominance as a political phenomenon in long-term, industrialised democracies (primarily of Western origin) and in the context of changing societies. In the former, high economic levels and living standards, ethnic homogeneity, clearly defined and less numerous societal interests and social cleavages, well-established democratic institutions, a politically more assertive citizenry and a vibrant civil society pose a particular set of challenges in the dominant party's attempt to uphold its grip on state and society. The strategies adopted by the dominant party in changing societies on the other hand, must necessarily differ given that the dominant party almost always presides over the polity's creation and stems from a year-long revolutionary struggle or liberation movement, resulting in a bigger share of popular legitimacy (to begin with at least). Having to interact with nascent state structures and an almost always more heterogeneous and politically, less mobilised (traditional) society, present the dominant party with different and more difficult challenges to its performance.

'Changing societies' is used here as a generic term denoting and comprising those countries wherein democratic transition or consolidation is still taking place and the pressures of social change (in terms of political and economic development as well as modernisation and, especially, in terms of economic restructuring and redistribution), are the most important determinants of societal interests and the political system. This is the case in most of the

³¹ And although this study rates the empirical analysis of parties and party systems as the backbone for any further examination of the emergence, working and consequences of a one-party-dominant system, it also seeks a complementary consideration of Pempel's argument that "[...] long-term dominance means more than a series of successful electoral campaigns. The study of one-party-dominance must be less concerned with parties and party systems and more attentive to *regimes* in which a single party has been dominant for a long period of time." (Pempel 1990: 30, italics added).

world's post-colonial states or developing/semi-developed countries. Often, these countries also share the socio-structural characteristics of socio-culturally 'divided societies'.³²

These differences are likely to bring about a differentiation in form including a stronger electoral hiatus between the dominant party and the contenders, reduced significance of interest groups and other societal organisations as intermediary alternatives to parties, a greater (interventionist) role assigned to the state and generally, a larger number of parties contesting elections and different modes of electoral competition. The preoccupation with party systems in changing societies should therefore specify and include not primarily common denominators of party system research and theory such as for example, 'fragmentation' or 'polarisation', but those distinct qualities of a party system or, for that matter, a system of one-party-dominance that represent its mobilisational, organisational and process-related aspects such as linkage strategies (clientelist vs. programmatic³³, patronage-based vs. transformative), intra-party organisation (factional accommodative vs. centralist), style of politics (consensual vs. confrontational³⁴, delegitimative vs. co-operative) or rhetorical strategy and policy options (ideological vs. pragmatic)³⁵. These aspects are far more telling indicators of a party system's mode of operation in a changing society than the simple reference to a given party system's fractionalisation or to the degree of ideological distance within the party system. Able to grasp the logic of the transactional dimension of politics (the most decisive in the early stages of a polity - contradictory rhetoric notwithstanding) and to go into the specifics of the interaction between parties (as distinctively 'modern' institutions) and a(n) (often still largely) 'traditional' society, they are especially important in a setting where political leaders enjoy a maximum of freedom. They gain special importance with regard to "(...) a competitive system in which electoral results are held constant (...) [because] [t]his situation highlights the bureaucratic and coalition aspects of politics and

³² The term, reminiscent of Huntington's (1968) path-breaking study on 'Political Order in Changing Societies' but confined to those societies that are essentially democratic, should be understood in a similar way as 'post-colonial', a term, which is often used to indicate a 'condition' rather than a historical fact or reality.

³³ See Kitschelt (2000); examining the nature of linkage strategies is especially relevant in changing societies where parties usually have to compete with or to co-opt alternative or opposing (traditional) social agencies of political intermediation such as individuals, traditional patron-client relationships or cliques.

³⁴ See Almond and Powell (1988: 94 f.).

³⁵ Although the distinction between ideological and pragmatic dominant parties was already part of Sartori's classification in 1976, it was mainly confined to a separation of totalitarian and/or clear-cut one party systems from the 'true' electoral democracies displaying one-party-dominance within his category of 'predominant party systems'. Here, the conceptual distinction is meant to account for the attitudinal preferences that guide political and party elites in their perception of the political process such as willingness to compromise or strong commitment to fixed goals (for an early formulation of this dichotomy see LaPalombara and Weiner 1966a: 36). Although in rhetoric and programme leaning more on the ideological side, both party systems that are dealt with in this study display more pragmatic features regarding the handling of the political process and the strategic devices employed in the process of mobilisation.

invites focus on the elites and their strategies in order to understand the system” (Arian and Barnes 1974: 614). These aspects are specifically dealt with in chapters 3 and 4.

In the early 1980’s von Beyme concluded a chapter of his book on party systems in western democracies with the statement that “(...) it doesn’t seem as if Barnes’ model [of the dominant party system, C.S.] of a ‘reliable type of democratic stability’ has any chance to survive in a competitive democracy of the western type” (v. Beyme 1984: 325, translation by C.S.).³⁶ This study neither confirms, nor contradicts this statement, which is based on the research findings and empirical givens of western democracies. It does however highlight the need to relate the examination and evaluation of parties and party systems to the respective general context in which they are embedded.

Two important premises have to be taken into account when dealing with parties and party systems in changing societies. These are, on the one hand, a reflection upon functional differences as well as the varying significance of party systems in such a context and, on the other hand, a consideration of the dynamic and procedural aspects of party system development in nascent, consolidating democracies.

Above all, the specific and complex nature of demands on the political system is what distinguishes the systemic role of party systems in established, industrial democracies from their role in changing societies. In the latter, nascent party systems are confronted with the ‘demand load’ that is put on the political system in the course of modernisation, state- and nation-building, namely processes through which legitimacy for the (democratic) political system is acquired, socio-economic development (especially industrialisation and redistribution) is initiated and national integration is advanced. In addition, these processes go on simultaneously.

Of course, South Africa’s status as a semi-industrialised country and late ‘democratiser’ stands out in that regard. The tasks involved in overcoming the social legacies and economic distortions of apartheid however, put it on par with a (lot of) post-colonial changing society(ies) such as India after independence.³⁷

Whereas in western industrial democracies the institutionalisation of parties and party systems usually took place during the course of industrialisation or in its (immediate) aftermath, emerging from an endogenous tradition of (political) ideas, and following the establishment

³⁶ v. Beyme refers to Arian and Barnes’ (1974) article mentioned before.

³⁷ The same rationale applies to the task of national integration despite the fact that the country’s territorial integrity and political sovereignty were well established before the emergence of a democratic and competitive party system.

of a nation-state, in changing societies the development of party systems is (has) right from the beginning (been) subject to the aforementioned triad of transitional processes.³⁸

The institutionalisation of party systems and competition in changing societies is therefore bound to take shape during (and as) a transitional period, characterised by specific challenges to the intermediary, performance-related and integrative capacity of the party system so typical of the early stages in political development. These include the need to provide incentives for political participation and the (initial) creation of partisanship, to organise political competition (often starting from scratch), to guarantee governmental stability as well as accountability, to provide policy innovation and to co-ordinate mass involvement with politics.

Consequently, the party system gains in significance but is at the same time much more 'fragile' and prone to manipulation by political actors. The importance that is ascribed to parties and party systems in this context of democratic consolidation, integration and development clearly exceeds what is commonly ascribed to their functional role.

It is in such a fluid context of often, extreme social dynamics and political vagaries, that the relevance and puzzling phenomenon of one-party-dominance has to be located. Of course, the combination of low levels of mobilisation, pervasive independence or liberation movements and sometimes, charismatic leadership figures may account for the initial emergence of a dominant party. This cannot however, explain how the party is able to translate its 'symbolic capital' into continued support at the ballot box, to engineer the painful but indispensable shift from movement to party and to remain dominant after taking up governmental responsibilities, especially against the backdrop of pressures brought to the fore by the transitional processes mentioned above.³⁹

Such a context also highlights the creative role of politics in the shaping of a national politico-ideological and economic agenda, in framing issues of political competition (and political competition as such), in determining and interpreting the nascent constitutional and institutional arrangements and in using state resources and the advantages of incumbency for political mobilisation. It is therefore particularly in the area of elite strategy and choice where the determinants of party system development are to be found and where answers to the

³⁸ With the exception, perhaps, of the Latin American countries, which share a longer tradition as nation-states.

³⁹ In this regard, the need for a dominant party in changing societies to be responsive to social dynamics and to resist oligarchic tendencies is much greater than in established, industrial (and often culturally homogenous) democracies.

phenomenon of one-party-dominance have to be sought though naturally, without losing sight of the political opportunity structure.⁴⁰

At the same time, one-party-dominance in changing societies raises the question of why the dominant party does not resort to non-democratic means to up-hold its dominance in times of waning popular support. In a situation where institutional rules and constitutional provisions are far less entrenched (compared to long-term established democracies), where economic backwardness and (almost always) extreme social inequality as well as a high potential for ethnic/social conflict could justify in the eyes of many a more 'authoritarian' path taken by the political leadership and where a process of democratic habituation is still to gain momentum, the likeliness of, and incentive for, (dominant) party elites to circumvent the regular democratic test at the ballot box is naturally higher. The dominant party's continued adherence to democratic norms is therefore more puzzling in changing societies than in established industrial democracies of (primarily) western provenance. Of course, since 'democracy' is still an ongoing process in these societies, an examination of one-party-dominance in such a context has to go into the question of whether such a configuration of party system is 'benign' with regards to the further entrenchment of democracy or whether it is more conducive to the establishment of a hegemonic party system and, eventually, authoritarian rule.

Finally, one-party-dominance in changing societies, in the sense of the term used in this study, is tied to the distinct experience of democratic development, posing a 'generic dilemma' to the party system in general and to the dominant party in particular. As formulated in view of the South African context, democratic development offers the dominant party (and burdens the party system with) the cruel choice between "(...) consultation with diverse political groups [which] leads to paralysis in decision-making [or] topdown decision-making [which] is sometimes impossible owing to political opposition and economic scepticism" (Kotzé 2000: 91). This dilemma must be kept in mind when dealing with one-party-dominance in changing societies. At the same time, the focus on one-party-dominance in changing societies offers an insight into the possible reconciliation of democracy and

⁴⁰ This line of thinking does not necessarily or, for that matter, only partially contradict/s the classic assumption of political and party sociology that postulates, relatively unanimously, that a party system is basically a response to a given socio-cultural and socio-economic environment and, consequently, its development is largely historically foreordained. As Sartori (1990a: 179) notes, relating this assumption to a market analogy of party system development: "[i]n the perspective of political sociology a party system is not only a response to the consumer's demand, but is equally a feedback of producer's options. There can be no customers without political entrepreneurs, just like there cannot be political entrepreneurs without customers". Producer's options are of course greater in times of massive social change and uncertainty about political identities. A similar rationale applies to the institutional environment and the institutionalist's view of party system development; see especially 3.2.

development, for “(...) several of the relatively few successful developmental democracies over recent decades have been one-party-dominant systems, notably Japan and Botswana and, more contentiously, India (since less successful developmentally) and Singapore (since less democratic)” (White 1998: 38).⁴¹ Thus, one of the specific aspects of an examination of one-party-dominance in changing societies is to ask whether such a party system, combining dominance and competition, is able to handle the precarious balance of contradictions inherent to democratic governance, which, in a developing or modernising context, gain a heightened significance. These contradictions have once been worked out by Diamond (1993) in terms of three paradoxes (of democracy): to allow conflict but also to preserve a general consensus, to ensure representativeness but to maintain governability, to make possible effective decision-making but with the consent of those affected by decision-making.⁴²

1.3. One-party-dominance in post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa: a strange comparison?

A third conceptual problem, which is also a methodological one, lies in the nature of the comparison itself. A diachronic comparison, especially one that spans several decades and involves a cross-national dimension, something even the most astute scholars of comparative politics normally shy away from, always bears the risk of ‘comparing the incomparable’. Context variables such as social change, economic development, new technologies, media exposure, the international environment or ideological commitment are of an almost totally different nature. To give an example, democratic transition and consolidation at the end of the century can rely on a much more supportive environment, domestic as well as international, compared to conditions prevailing more than fifty years ago. From that point of view India’s democratic career and resilience is all the more remarkable but apparently also less comparable to the anyhow hardly predictable South African situation (and future scenario). The fact that one-party-dominance has long gone in India adds further to the conceptual dilemma of an ‘uneven comparison’.

⁴¹ The assessment of India’s ‘success’ in this regard is discussed in section 5.4. Singapore’s categorisation as ‘less democratic’ is rather euphemistic and Japan, of course, would not be classified as a changing society according to the criteria outlined in this study.

⁴² In that regard, White (1998: 36-37) points out the additional significance that is attached to political parties in the context of changing societies: “They can (...) act as key determinants of the kinds of attributes (...) indicated as central elements of developmental democracy: the capacity to provide a stable and authoritative regulatory environment; to include large sections of the population and channel the views of diverse constituents; to implement programmes of social welfare and redistribution; to take the longer-term strategic perspective necessary to tackle deep-going developmental problems; and to organize accountability through both intra-party processes and inter-party competition. If democracy needs political parties, developmental democracy needs them even more.”

Nevertheless, there are some convincing common features and general aspects of the selected regional and temporal settings that make a comparison along clearly defined conceptual lines not only appropriate, but also compelling especially given the fact that a (democratic) one-party-dominant system is an extremely rare political phenomenon among changing societies. Among changing societies, only India and Botswana have so far succeeded in combining a long period of dominant party rule with liberal democracy. All other prominent examples of one-party domination in developing or semi-developed countries such as Mexico, Taiwan, Malaysia or Singapore (to name those listed in the only comparative account of the subject to date, Giliomee and Simkins'(1999) 'Awkward Embrace') either fell substantially short of the standards for a liberal or, even procedural democracy as was the case with Taiwan, Mexico and Singapore⁴³, or, like Malaysia, experienced the dominance of a complex and increasingly undemocratic ruling coalition (since 1969), only loosely allied under the label of an umbrella party.⁴⁴ Since the diverse patterns of interaction in a one-party-dominant system (or, for that matter, in any party system), Sartori's 'mechanics', the nature of state-society interaction and the anticipatory capacity and strategic devices of political and party elites naturally differ in a context of free and fair contestation, India's experience with one-party-dominance provides the most fruitful point of comparison for the development of one-party-dominance in democratic post-apartheid South Africa.⁴⁵ The diachronic perspective thus allows extending the range of comparative cases. The fruitfulness of the intended comparison becomes even

⁴³ Dominant parties in Mexico, Taiwan or Singapore for the most part of their post-independent history were pillars of quasi-authoritarian rule. Unlike in 'true' (democratic) one-party-dominant systems, opposition parties faced serious official constraints or harassment, and, the ruling parties exploited the powers of office to maintain political support to the extent that the legal separation of party and state was blurred in an extreme way and manner. Only recently, as a result of these countries' long-term buoyant economies, a process of far-reaching democratisation has set in and furthered their transformation from 'hegemonic' party system to one-party-dominant or multi-party system. Since India possessed a democratic set-up right from its inception as a one-party-dominant system (whose success and resilience is blamed for being responsible for its poor developmental record by most observers), it offers a much more convincing point of comparison regarding the consequences of a (democratic) one-party-dominant system on socio-economic development and democratic consolidation in the South African context.

⁴⁴ South Korea, where "(...) the post-authoritarian political elite (...) have sought to forge (...) a dominant-party system through the amalgamation of the former ruling party and part of the opposition parties, in an attempt to retain the previous developmental capacity of the state in the new democratic context" (White 1998: 38), is also no adequate candidate for the list of comparable cases of one-party-dominance in changing societies for this attempt was informed by levels of economic wealth and class homogenisation (as well as cultural homogeneity) far beyond what one usually encounters in changing societies, and the 'predominant' trend within the party system emerging in the 1990's soon gave way to a more balanced, symmetrical distribution of electoral support and political power.

⁴⁵ One could ask why not compare the South African party system to Botswana's political development? Since Botswana is always referred to as an exceptional case in the sub-Saharan context for it has successfully combined one-party-dominant rule with steady economic growth (and, to some extent, also fits the minimum standards of a liberal democracy), and, at the same time, shares a common regional setting, a comparison between the two neighbours seems rather obvious. But Botswana displays a very different level of social complexity than South Africa and India and also presents a distinct lack of democratic control over the state bureaucracy (Holm 1996).

clearer if one relates the puzzle of democratisation to the well-known debate about the socio-economic prerequisites of democracy (Lipset 1960). As Merle Lipton notices in a review of Giliomee and Simkins' 'Awkward Embrace': "SA [South Africa, C.S.] is an intriguing example [of a one-party dominant state, C. S.], both because of its inheritance of bitter racial conflict and because the per capita incomes of the black majority are below the level at which transitions to democracy generally occur. (However, while SA is unusual, it is not unique, and India, an even poorer democracy, would have provided an illuminating comparator.)" (Lipton 2000: 339). Again, behind this statement, the question arises whether a system of one-party-dominance is a possible institutional 'container' for the reconciliation of democracy and a low level of socio-economic development (and a concomitant high level of social inequality). Or, to consider the other side of the coin, whether a system of (democratic) one-party-dominance can only be upheld at the price of "peaceful stagnation", as according to Barrington Moore's famous dictum about India's post-independent development (Moore 1966: 418 f.). The deep division into many vertically as well as horizontally integrated subcultures, prevalent in both countries, is a further common denominator of the regional settings and of special relevance for the research subject.⁴⁶ With regard to the formation and working of a system of one-party-dominance it stresses the need to consider the degree of pluralism within the dominant party as well as the extent of societal inclusion of the party system as such, for they determine the catch-all character of the dominant party necessary to up-hold its dominance.⁴⁷ Considering the party system as independent variable, it adds a challenge to the dominant party's/party system's agenda: its integrative capacity.

It may be useful at this point also to look briefly at the two respective dominant parties' numerical dominance within the party system in terms of the party systems' fragmentation and aggregate electoral data, to have a (quantitative) proxy for the similarity in the historical

⁴⁶ Of course, the overarching, historically induced racial cleavage that still predominates South African society despite various more genuine and cross-cutting ethnic cleavages is a difference compared to post-independent India's more heterogeneous cleavage structure and relatively low salience of a potentially overarching religious cleavage after partition. Although, as the more recent development of the Indian party system shows, the potential for a structuring of the party system along one overarching cleavage (religion) is (and was) available in India as well and that it is largely party agency and competition that is responsible for the manifestation of such a cleavage; see 4.2.

⁴⁷ The term 'catch-all', introduced by Kirchheimer (1966) for the West European context to indicate a shift from the traditional mass party to a new kind/phenomenon of party, is used here basically to denote the dominant party's quality in terms of two of the characteristics identified by Kirchheimer as specific of the catch-all party (a 'drastic reduction of the party's ideological baggage' and 'securing access to a variety of interest groups', *ibid.* 190), although the other three characteristics (a 'further strengthening of top leadership groups', a 'downgrading of the role of the individual party member', a 'de-emphasis of the *classe gardée*, specific social-class or denominational clientele, in favour of recruiting voters among the population at large', *ibid.*) are partially reflected in the dominant party's organisational make-up/evolution as well.

outcome (the more qualitative aspects and similarities/differences of party dominance in the two regional contexts are dealt with extensively in the following chapters).

The degree of a party system's fragmentation is an initial numerical criterion that implies concentration (or dispersion) of party political power in a given party competitive context.⁴⁸ However, a simple counting of the parties contesting elections or, more appropriately, a counting of those parties represented in parliament, will tell us nothing about the relative power configuration in a given party system. Therefore, a weighting has to be incorporated into the calculation.⁴⁹ Using the 'effective number of parties' (Laakso and Taagepera 1979: 3-27), an index that weighs the relative size of parties (see notes on table 1 for the calculation of that index) and has superseded Sartori's rules of counting (see fn. 49) or Rae's 'fractionalization index' (Rae 1967) in most scholarly references, we get an illustration of the number of parties in a given system according to their relative or 'effective' electoral and/or parliamentary strength. As table 1 below shows, the INC's average vote share in the four general elections following independence was far from overwhelming. In fact, the INC never won more than 50% of the popular vote throughout its history of electoral dominance. Its governmental authority was always based on so called "manufactured majorities" (Rae 1967: 74 f.)⁵⁰ and the average effective number of electoral parties (calculated on the basis of the respective parties' vote share) within the Indian party system for the period covering the first four general elections after independence (4.3) is indicative of a clear-cut multi-party system (which it is, especially in terms of vote share) with no signs of one-party-dominance. However, when it comes to the proportion of parliamentary seats each party gained under their respective electoral systems as well as to the average difference between largest and second-largest party in terms of seats, the INC outdistances the ANC by a margin of nearly 5 and 14 percentage points respectively. The extreme variation as regards the respective party systems average difference in vote/seat share is a clear indication of the distortions or 'multiplier effect' produced by the Indian first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system.⁵¹ In

⁴⁸ "Likewise," as Sartori (1976: 120) has pointed out, "simply by knowing how many parties there are, we are alerted to the number of possible 'interaction streams' that are involved."

⁴⁹ Sartori (1976: 123) takes into account only 'relevant' parties in the measurement of a party system's fragmentation. A party is relevant if it endues either coalition potential (by means of its parliamentary strength or its programmatic orientation) or blackmail potential (by means of its capacity to impede parliamentary decision-making or even government formation).

⁵⁰ 'Manufactured majorities' refer to those absolute majorities in seat share that are not matched by an absolute majority in vote share (with the governing party winning less than 50% of the vote). They are very common under (clear-cut) systems of plurality voting.

⁵¹ The fact that the INC never won a plurality of the vote while securing overwhelming majorities in the *Lok Sabha* (national parliament) has led the Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO) to term the disproportionality in vote/seat share of the party as the 'Congress multiplier' (IIPO 1967: 18).

terms of vote share, the ANC is definitely more dominant electorally than the INC was, even during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India.

Table 1: Electoral data for India (national elections, 1952-1967) and South Africa (national elections, 1994-1999)

	INC/India	ANC/South Africa
Average vote/seat share of dominant party (%)	44.6/69.2	64.5/64.75
Average difference in vote/seat share of dominant party (%)	24.65	0.25
Average difference between largest and	33/63.4	49.5/49.75
Second largest party in terms of votes/seats (%)		
Average effective number of parties (votes/seats)*	4.3/1.8	2.2/2.2
Average volatility**	14.8***	17.65****
Average Turnout	52.6	77.5*****

Notes:

*the effective number of parties (Laakso/Taagepera 1979) being sensitive to the relative sizes of parties, is calculated as follows:

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2}$$

with p_i as the vote/seat share of the i -party; only parties represented in parliament were counted.

**Pedersen's (1983) index of volatility counts half the sum of net votes won/lost of relevant parties from one election (t) to the next. The (simplified) index can be expressed by the following equation:

$$V_t = \frac{1}{2} \times TNC_t$$

$$0 \leq V_t \leq 100$$

Volatility (V_t) is the cumulated gains (cumulated losses) for all winning (losing) parties in the party system, or half of the Total Net Change (TNC).

***only parties with 2% or more of the vote share were counted

****only parties at least once represented in parliament were counted

*****in the 1999 elections a registration of voters was conducted; the figure was calculated on the basis of % of eligible South Africans voting

Source: Enskat/Mitra/Singh 2001 for India, Engel (1999) for South Africa 1994, Reynolds (1999a) for South Africa 1999.

In terms of seats however, the average effective number of parliamentary parties (calculated on the basis of the respective parties' seat share) is extremely low (1.8) and hints at the low number of 'effective' or relevant parties in the Indian party system after independence. Thus, taking into account the number of opposition parties that goes into the effective number index, and, considering opposition fragmentation as well as the difference in vote and seat share, the combined figures of the effective number of parliamentary parties and of distance between largest and second largest party are a clear indication of the (numerical) domination of the electoral process by the INC (see also 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.).

The average effective number for South Africa's two national elections is 2.2 with regard to each party's vote share (2.3 in 1994 and 2.1 in 1999). Again, this figure hardly seems to be an indication of one-party-dominance, even though the use of the index has reduced the number of 7 and 13 parties actually represented in the country's first and second democratic parliament respectively, to a much lower figure.⁵²

Now, one could argue that, as in the Indian case, the 'real' concentration of power in South Africa's system of one-party-dominance would become visible once the effective number of parties according to each parliamentary party's share of seats is taken into account (assuming that at least some sort of concentration effect comes from the electoral system). However, due to the almost 'perfect' PR system prevailing⁵³ - involving no threshold at all - the effective number of parliamentary parties equals the effective number of electoral parties. Consequently, in the South African context the effective number of parties has to be complemented as well by the additional criterion of distance between largest and second largest party to illustrate the numerical dominance of the ANC in relation to opposition parties. Thus, we get a more appropriate picture of the ANC's dominance. In average, the ANC outdistanced the second largest party in the two elections of 1994 and 1999 by a margin of nearly 50% (it actually rose from 42.26% in 1994 to 56.79% in 1999).

Thus, the effective number taken together with the criterion of distance between largest and second largest party, gives a fairly illustrative account of the ANC's numerical dominance as the salient property of the South African party system. In terms of fragmentation, the South African party system displays features of a two-party system (though it is clearly not a two-party system) with regard to the dispersion of party political power between one dominant

⁵² Indeed, the 'effective number of parties' while certainly the most sophisticated and most illustrative index of party system fragmentation to date, is less useful when dealing with one-party-dominant systems, for it does not take into account opposition fragmentation. A clear-cut two-party system, for example, with two parties nearing the 50% majority, would get a lower score (~2) than a system of one-party-dominance with, say, one party getting a 60% majority and four other parties equally sharing the remaining 40% between them (2,5). Nothing would be more misleading to classify the latter as a two and a half party system.

⁵³ This becomes apparent from the extremely low (average) difference in vote/seat share of the dominant party.

party and the entire opposition. Taking into account the second criterion however, it becomes clear that it is in fact a multi-party system with one electorally, towering party or, for that matter, a dominant ruling coalition in form of the tripartite alliance between the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP).⁵⁴

In addition, against the backdrop of a high average turnout which, in the case of India, is remarkable in view of its predominantly rural and illiterate electorate at the time of independence (and beyond), the degree of volatility, indicative of the extent of a ‘floating vote’ between elections (see notes to table 1 for the calculation of the volatility index), is relatively low even in comparison with western democracies (see 5.1. for comparative figures; it is extremely low considering the fact that a) between a founding and second election, voters’ orientations are often not yet fully developed and, b) taking into account that a great deal of ‘new’ parties in successive elections had just changed their respective names). Thus, in both cases relatively stable patterns of party competition had emerged right after independence or transition to democracy. This is another indication of the firm and ‘secure’ position of electoral dominance of both the INC after independence and the ANC after apartheid.

Apart from the contextual similarities⁵⁵ mentioned above and a similar numerical domination of electoral and party politics by the INC and ANC respectively, the two regional settings display rather different contextual features. Especially with regards to the main research subjects of either the institutionalist’s approach to the study of party systems, the electoral system, or the (political) sociologist’s approach, social cleavages, the cross-national, diachronic comparison between India and South Africa intended by this study comes close to a *most different systems design* (Przeworski and Teune 1970) approach with plurality voting and a multiplicity of cross-cutting cleavages on the one side and proportional representation (PR) and apparently relative stable ethnic/racial and class cleavages on the other.⁵⁶

In fact, the diachronic comparison undertaken by this study, which – *fait accompli* – has to tackle the apparently lacking evidence needed to “(...) establish the functional equivalence of

⁵⁴ In fact, the ANC’s formal coalition with the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and its informal alliance with the small Minority Front (MF) further add to its parliamentary dominance, see 2.2.2, 2.2.5 and 4.1. Though the term ‘triple alliance’ would be more appropriate, ‘tripartite’ – connotative of corporatist arrangements in the European context - is used throughout the study in accordance with South African usage.

⁵⁵ One could add the federal set-up, the early inception of the INC and the ANC as liberation movements or the liberation of an indigenous people from political, social and economic subordination to the similarities mentioned.

⁵⁶ Another crucial difference between the two settings, especially with regards to those explanatory approaches of voting behaviour and the consequent structuring of party systems that highlight primarily attitudinal or behavioural factors is the level of participation and the degree of political awareness, or, for that matter, political development, i.e. mass involvement with politics.

different eras and political events” (Peters 1998: 73 f.)⁵⁷ but nevertheless reveals a similarity in the historical outcome (a competitive party system structured around the electoral and ideological dominance of one party that is seen as the primary embodiment of an all-inclusive nationalism), contradicts both the institutionalist’s and the sociologist’s basic assumptions. Neither the institutionalist view to the formation and working of party systems, which - simplified - predicts the emergence of a two-party system in the context of a first-past-the-post, single member simple plurality (SMSP) electoral system and the emergence of a clear-cut multi-party system in the context of PR, nor the sociological view, advocating a relatively clear-cut transmission of a given country’s cleavage structure into the party system, can offer an explanation for this empirical observation. Therefore, the need for an alternative explanation of party system development seems rather obvious.⁵⁸ For that reason, the approach chosen here tries to draw attention to the role of (collective) actors, such as political parties, in the process of a party system’s formation. Hence the need for a conceptualisation of aspects of (elite or party) *agency* (as outlined in the framework put forward in the introduction) indicative of the interrelations between political and party actors and the party system’s development without losing sight of the institutional and structural context.

Obviously, the socio-economic, international and political context, wherein the two party systems under examination operate(d), differs in various respects. South Africa is a semi-developed country with fairly advanced levels of industrial production and diversification as well as a sizeable (industrial) workforce and a politically sophisticated and assertive electorate, at least in the urban areas. India after independence was an overwhelmingly agricultural society at the very beginning of an industrialisation process with a high level of mass poverty, illiteracy (and a concomitant low level of occupational specialisation) and was highly traditional (rule-bound) in value patterns and beliefs. India’s rural bias persists till today and the country has remained poor. Both contexts, however, share a high degree of

⁵⁷ Of course, no attempt is made in this study to compare the political opportunity structure prevalent in the two regional contexts in terms of absolute figures and strictly aggregate data (which are hardly comparable due to the spatial and temporal distance but are widely used whenever necessary to underpin the theoretical argument). Instead, it is attempted to examine comparable patterns of party and political elite intervention in party system development and to assess the overall impact of a party system thus structured on the respective political, developmental and societal context. It thus follows a similar rationale as Arian and Barnes’ (1974: 608) argument with regard to the (catch-all) nature of the dominant parties in independent Israel and post-war Italy: “(...) our concern is not with the absolute values of the percentages in comparing Israel and Italy (...) but with the kinds of patterns that exist within countries among parties”

⁵⁸ Additionally, it is assumed that, on the basis of the diachronic comparison chosen in this study, a ‘most-different systems approach’ will suit the process of identifying the causes of one-party-dominance as the dependent variable or historical outcome much better than Pempel’s approach to the study of one-party-dominance which states that “[t]he similarities [between the examples of one-party-dominance in industrialised democracies chosen in his ‘Uncommon Democracies’, C. S.] suggest comparisons between regimes that experienced long-term single-party dominance and those that historically seemed similar but did not have one-party rule.” (Pempel 1990: 30).

social inequality (in that regard, South Africa is a poor country as well if one limits the view to the African majority) and the urgent need for economic restructuring, albeit for different reasons, and redistribution.

In a similar vein, one could argue that the end of apartheid in South Africa followed a different rationale than that of the decolonisation process in India. There was no (single) metropolitan power involved in the transition and, consequently, the country's political transformation is closer to the Latin American paradigm of transition from authoritarian rule (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986) than to India's post-colonial experience. However, as Ottaway (1991: 61-62) has argued, normatively the rejection of a decolonisation parallel was, quite understandably, largely confined to the white minority, whereas the African majority had no problem in thinking of "(...) *apartheid* as 'colonialism of a special type'" (ibid.). Analytically as well, the ANC's character as a liberation movement puts it at least as close to a post-colonial model as to the transition-to-democracy paradigm.⁵⁹

Lastly, the international context, especially the changed nature of the global(ised) (political) economy and the ideological climate, is hardly comparable with regard to the two cases under examination. Whereas India began her post-independent development in the heyday of the *dirigiste* paradigm, when national economic sovereignty was a matter of faith, and amidst the unfolding of the Cold War, post-apartheid South Africa has entered a world where neoliberalism, a concomitant dependence on (and subordination to) international capital and co-operation and a unipolar (or multipolar) structure of the international order reign supreme. Undoubtedly, context matters for the unfolding of a party system and also for regime outcomes and this study does not deny that the clear differences in context bear upon the two countries' party systems and potentially different trajectories.⁶⁰

These contextual differences do not however, stand in the way of a diachronic comparison that attempts to single out similarities in party agency, similar mechanisms of party control and competition and the general characteristics of a system of one-party-dominance that are responsible for the similarity in the historical outcome. On the contrary, it is exactly this difference in context that makes possible an assessment of the reasons for the two countries' achievement and maintenance of a system of one-party-dominance (despite contextual differences!) and of the independent role of party agency involved in the process. Contextual

⁵⁹ Although the mode of transition is clearly decisive for the subsequent political trajectory, the more general processes involved in post-colonial and post-authoritarian democratic consolidation, national integration and development bear enough similarity to justify a comparison between the two contexts in that respect.

⁶⁰ The focus on party agency and competition in this study and a concomitant neglect of other explanatory factors, especially exogenous factors, is also due to a necessary and deliberately analytical restraint on what is technically 'feasible' within the scope of a dissertation.

divergence at the same time enables the detecting of dissimilarity in party agency and competition that may hint at differences in the qualitative nature of the two systems of one-party-dominance and the party/political actors' capacity to react and adapt to divergent and changing circumstances. Contextual differences furthermore permit the examination of whether 'lessons' from the Indian experience in terms of the function and effects of the country's post-independent party system (and the role of party agency therein) are 'transferable' or applicable to the South African context, which would make cautious predictive statements possible, or whether it does not make sense to seek parallels at all.⁶¹

Additionally, a diachronic comparison and especially one that focuses on party agentive and process-based factors and on the qualitative aspects of a party system's working, also minimises the danger of a "[p]ost-hoc analysis of dominance [which] may inadvertently imply the operation of an ineluctable teleological process" (Pempel 1991: 333). The rationale for such a teleologically underpinned interpretation rests, as Pempel adds, in the fact that "[w]hen a party is in office for so long, its dominance may appear to have been historically foreordained" (ibid. 333-334).

Finally, the nature of the comparison and the research subject as such suggest, and to some extent also dictate, the 'holistic' approach to one-party-dominance undertaken here. The importance of considering the party system as a dependent as well as an independent variable is not only due to the renewed research interest in the contribution of parties and party systems to processes of democratic consolidation, and consequently of relevance to the partly predictive approach inherent in a diachronic comparison between India and South Africa, but, is also due to the research subject per se, since one-party-dominance as an analytical entity is characterised by reinforcing processes of the interrelationship between cause and consequence. Some authors see this interrelationship as creating a "virtuous cycle of dominance" (Pempel 1990a: 16) where office achieved through a dominant position is used to ensure further dominance, whereas others point towards the self-destructing tendencies of this interrelationship like, Morris-Jones, who describes the paradox of post-independent one-party-dominance in the Indian context as follows: "(...) to dominate, Congress [INC, C. S.] must accommodate; yet accommodation encourages incoherence which destroys the capacity

⁶¹ This was brought to my mind by Moncia Lagazio in the discussion of a preliminary outline of this study at the American Political Science Association's (APSA) 99th Annual Meeting held in Boston, August 28 – September 2, 2003. Nevertheless, as stated above, even though there are considerable contextual differences, both contexts share the general features of changing societies in terms of problems and challenges of democratic consolidation, national integration and development and a similarity in the historical outcome, i.e. a system of one-party-dominance. The methodological problems inherent to the comparison are dealt with in 1.5.

to dominate.” (Morris-Jones 1978: 224).⁶² In addition to these contradictory points of view in the scholarly literature, the attempt to conceptualise the phenomenon of one-party-dominance as dependent as well as independent variable is not only conducive to a revaluation of the so far relatively neglected output-function of a party system and the general impact of party system characteristics, but also allows a systematic exploration of the various dimensions of a party system’s ‘life cycle’ by affording “(...) an opportunity to view parties in both veins simultaneously, winning elections and governing, and in ways that reinforce each other.” (Pempel 1990a: 7).⁶³

Equally important for the legitimacy and need for a consideration of party system characteristics as independent variable (from a comparative perspective) is of course the simple fact of India’s democratic resilience and longevity despite structural constraints such as the low level of socio-economic development and the persistence of mass poverty. This ‘paradox’ demands an examination of the role and responsibility of the party system and party system characteristic, the most decisive determinants of the processes of democratic transition and consolidation (see especially 5.3. for an elaboration of this point), for the emergence of a leading contemporary exception to democratic theory (Dahl 1989: 4). It also makes it necessary to ask whether the similar historical outcome in terms of the two systems of one-party-dominance may also yield similar (democratic) results or whether crucial differences in the quality of the two regional party systems point in the direction of a different political trajectory for South Africa.

Patterns of party agency and control and mechanisms of party competition characteristic of systems of one-party-dominance are of course most visible during the heyday or ideal-typical phase of such a party system. The ‘life-cycle view’ on party systems is also one of the reasons why the analysis of India’s system of one-party-dominance in this study has been confined to

⁶² The self-destructing tendencies of party dominance were first formulated by Duverger (1954: 312) echoing Michels’ (1959: 377-393) considerations that long-term democratic party rule leads to an ossification of party structures and the emergence of an oligarchy. In a similar vein, Luszti, James and Moon (1997) have argued on the basis of subnational party dominance in Canada and Australia that long-term dominance has to be seen as a factor that ‘penalises’ dominant parties but for yet another reason. They claim that the policy decisions made and the policies implemented by the dominant (governing) party limit the scope of its manoeuvring thus depriving it of much-needed flexibility or adaptability to react to social or political changes and that often the combined strength of minorities affected by those policies may suffice to bring down the dominant party electorally.

⁶³ On a more fundamental level and as early as 1966, LaPalombara and Weiner stressed the need to consider parties and party systems as independent variable in their pioneering work on *Political Parties and Political Development*: “This concern with parties and party systems as independent variables reflects our understanding that they are not only the product of their environment but also instruments of organized human action for affecting that environment.” (LaPalombara and Weiner 1966b: 400).

the period from independence up to 1967 despite the fact that the INC dominated Indian electoral politics and the party landscape for a much longer period.⁶⁴

However, the general elections of 1967 have to be understood as a critical election or a critical juncture for Indian party system development going beyond the narrative that mere electoral results have to tell. The 1967 elections inflicted a major electoral setback upon the INC by nationally reducing its seat share in the *Lok Sabha* (national parliament) from 69.4 % in 1962 to 54.4 % and leading to the INC's loss of power in five of the then 17 States of the Indian Union as a result of the elections and in additional three States as a result of defections from the INC after elections. But it also marked other key changes. A perceptual move within the electorate toward a stronger issue- and performance-based orientation had occurred (Kothari 1975), a change in strategy had emerged among opposition parties, based on the realisation that it was possible to undermine the INC's electoral dominance, and a process of disintegration of the INC had begun eventually leading to the split of the party in 1969. In sum, the qualitative nature of the party system had altered and the seeds for the end of a clear-cut system of one-party-dominance had been sowed.⁶⁵

The 1967 'break' in the Indian party system therefore serves as a useful endpoint in the examination of the Indian context especially as the main focus of this study is to determine and single out party agentive factors responsible for the emergence and working of a one-party-dominant system.⁶⁶ In addition, in order to compare the respective 'first' party systems of the two regional contexts immediately after colonial rule/apartheid and the transition to democracy and to examine a system of one-party-dominance, whose 'life-cycle' is completed, and one that has just achieved dominant party rule and is now in the middle of the process of

⁶⁴ In fact, the INC came back invigorated after the electoral setback in 1967 securing nearly as much support as in the three elections before 1967. And, even after the emergency of 1975-77 and the INC's electoral defeat in 1977, its electoral dominance regained momentum with an all-time-high of 48.1 % of the vote in 1984. From 1989 onwards however, the party's electoral strength was continuously declining.

⁶⁵ The immediate post-1967 period also saw important institutional changes, the delinking of national parliamentary and State assembly elections in 1971, and, even more importantly for the purpose of this study, the suspension of organisational elections within the INC from 1972 onwards (up to 1992).

⁶⁶ Of course, the 1967 'break' and the 1969 split did not alter the post-independent Indian party system's inter-party mechanics and dynamics immediately and abruptly. As Morris-Jones (1989: 214) described the situation in 1970 (before the INC's electoral 'resurrection' under Indira Gandhi), "[n]ot all the characteristics that defined that system [of one-party-dominance, C.S.] have disappeared. The 'centre' party [the INC, C.S.] has not dropped out of the system, it has become two. The kind of interacting relation between centre and circumference parties which existed prior to 1967 has not ceased; rather each of the two centre parties [INC (I) and INC (O), C.S.] to some extent carries this on as before, and so do the non-Congress parties. The one dominant party system has been bifurcated. If the pre-1967 pattern was a 'Paul Jones' dance situation of two concentric circles, an outer circle moving around and periodically joining up with elements from the inner ring, then the post-1967 pattern began to look like a figure of eight with movement between as well as within each of the circles" (see especially 4.1.).

upholding such rule, the use of breakpoints is considered to be a legitimate analytical limitation.⁶⁷

With regard to the South African context, the watershed speech by then president De Klerk on 2 February 1990, in which he revoked the ban on the liberation movements, released their leaders from prison or gave them the opportunity to return from exile, and lifted restrictions on the media and other domestic organisations, is taken here as the trigger to the negotiations that led to the first general democratic elections of 1994, and, finally, to the end of apartheid. Since these negotiations form part of the institutional and procedural legacies and parameters that had a bearing upon the post-1994 party system development, it is appropriate to take 1990 as a point of departure for the analysis of the South African context. As Mattes (1994: 1) puts it with regard to the country's founding election: "To understand South Africa's first universal franchise election and its preceding campaign, we must begin not in 1994 or even 1993, but in February 1990 (...) we need to begin in 1990 because how South Africa got to 'here' from 'there' has deeply affected what the campaign and elections of 1994 looked like. In other words, how the elections were conducted and contested cannot be understood without reference to the negotiations that led to those elections."

One further, and more pragmatic, reason promising a fruitful comparison between the Indian party system after independence and the South African one after apartheid is the availability of relevant survey data. Among developing countries India is relatively unique in terms of surveys on political behaviour and attitudes conducted already in the mid-, and end-1960's, still the period of a 'full-fledged' system of one-party-dominance on the subcontinent, and the main focus of analytical coverage of India within the fold of this study.⁶⁸ As far as South Africa is concerned survey coverage and opinion polling since the end of apartheid have become a 'business' with all the advantages (primary data) as well as dangers (distortions resulting from dependence on contractors and fierce competition) this development has to offer for social science research.⁶⁹ Therefore, the comparative perspective chosen here can rely on largely comparable survey data across time and space as regards such relevant aspects as partisanship, political attitudes and identity to name but a few.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ This does not mean that references to the post-1967 period do not occur. Where they do they underpin the argument, especially with regard to the investigation into the functions and effects of the Indian system of one-party-dominance dealt with in chapter 5.

⁶⁸ For example, Eldersveld and Ahmed's (1978) study is an exemplary case for one of the first behaviourist accounts of a developing society based on extensive surveys on political behaviour and attitudes conducted in the late 1960's; see also CSDS (1967), Sheth (1975d) and Field (1980).

⁶⁹ Butler (1998) provides a critical review of the 'survey business' in South Africa from the end of apartheid onwards.

⁷⁰ Another, more pragmatic but also normative reason for the diachronic comparison and especially the preoccupation with the Indian party system is the wealth of genuine, theoretically informed literature on the

1.4. Theoretical implications: structure and agency, state and society

The discussion of the conceptual aspects involved in a study of one-party-dominance as such, one-party-dominance in changing societies and one-party-dominance in the respective regional settings of India and South Africa paves the way for the theoretical perspective chosen by this approach. The analytical framework depicted in the introduction draws on two basic theoretical strands: *a)* a distinct actor-orientation in the study of party systems that hints at the importance and autonomy of strictly political factors in the shaping, working and, to a lesser extent, effects of party systems; and, *b)* an integrative access to the study of party systems that supersedes the so far common dichotomization of state and society by taking into account not only the horizontal dimension of the party system (interaction between and within parties) but also its vertical dimension (as interface of the state and society) thus highlighting the fact that while party systems are continually moulded by political actors as well as the social and institutional surrounding in which the latter are embedded, they also help to mould a nation's institutions (state) and structures (society) and the interrelationship between the two. This may sound platitudinous but when it came to the analysis of processes of democratic consolidation or socio-economic development scholarly literature has so far often been biased towards either a (rigid) statist (most prominent among others: Skocpol 1985) or society-centred approach (as exemplified and pioneered by Moore, 1966, and those writing in his wake, for example, Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, 1992). Or, the literature has simply ignored the party system's importance as intervening variable in state-society relations in favour of an emphasis on corporatist structures or the direct interaction between state actors and civil society.⁷¹

The focus on the agency of political elites, mainly party elites, as principal determining factor in the shaping of the Indian and South African party systems combined with an exploration of how these party systems impact(ed) on the political process as independent variables is an attempt to *a)* examine the specific configurations of one-party-dominant systems in the respective regional settings of India and South Africa as well as to explain the puzzling phenomenon of one-party-dominance in political science; *b)* to somehow reconcile structure, institutions and agency in the study of party systems; and, *c)* to offer an integrated approach

Congress system (such as, for example, Kothari's seminal article on one-party-dominance in India) resulting from the desire of indigenous (but also western) scholars to scrutinise traditional theories about parties and party systems derived from a general western model that seldom looks beyond its well-worn propensities and assumptions. This literature has greatly benefited the theoretical enrichment and advancement of party system research on (even western) democracies.

⁷¹ For a critique of this neglect of political parties as intervening variable regarding the relations between the state and interest associations see, for example, Golden (1986).

to the study of party systems that combines aspects of the state and society both as dependent as well as independent variables.

As outlined by Pempel (1990a: 5-7), one-party-dominance is a puzzling phenomenon for electoral and organisational theory alike.⁷² In terms of voting behaviour, given situations of social dynamics, political openness and contestation, it is rather unlikely that a single party is able “(...) to retain a plurality or a majority of a relatively free vote by a dynamic and fluid citizenry decade after decade” (ibid. 6). In terms of organisational theory, the up-holding of electoral dominance as well as the continued domination of the public image contradict the theoretical assumptions of Michels (1959) and his successors that organisations over time will face an increasing reluctance of their leaders and members to adapt to changing external circumstances. Adaptation to social diversity and fluctuating socio-political conditions as well as to countervailing forces within the political/public sphere is however, one of the key explanatory factors for the lasting dominance of a single party amidst the uncertainties of an electoral democracy (Arian and Barnes 1974, Levite and Tarrow 1983, Pempel 1990, Giliomee and Simkins 1999). This study suggests that it is precisely this ability for adaptation, which stems from the party elites’ strategic skills, that allows for the ‘circumvention’ of a (scholarly perceived) ‘common’ democratisation and democratic consolidation, i.e. one that comprises alternation in office. To elaborate this point further I refer back to an idea of Schattschneider (1964), which states that a party system is not merely a reflection of social division, but that party leaders or political leaders (through parties) act as political entrepreneurs exploiting certain cleavages while muting others in order to define the political process in their interest, i.e. to gain power.⁷³ The corollary of this statement, from the perspective of institutionalism, though not covered by Schattschneider, is the assumption of a *relative* autonomy (of initiative) of political actors in decision-making who are nevertheless guided in their behaviour by the institutional arrangements they are ensconced in, thus partially coinciding with the basic premise of ‘new institutionalism’ as according to its

⁷² One could argue, as Pempel, among others, does, that one-party-dominance is not perplexing “(...) as the historical remnant of anticolonial movements that papered over social diversities as a means of achieving national independence” (1990: 5). This assessment certainly applies to the initial years of party system formation after independence, but can hardly explain continued dominance after two consecutive majorities. In the case of India, the INC’s vote share in the first two general elections was only 46,4% on average thus indicating a prevalence of social diversity not ‘papered over’ by the dominant party.

⁷³ As Ware (1996: 198): notes, Schattschneider – analysing the American party system between 1890 and 1930 – “is *not* describing (...) what happens in a single campaign, in which parties develop issues they think will go down well with voters and do not pick up on others: that is *part* of the overall process of cleavage development. Schattschneider is outlining a long-term process by which parties secure power.” This study will argue that party leaders do act as entrepreneurs in and between campaigns as well, and, that their entrepreneurial activity is not only limited to the exploitation of cleavages, but also comprises engagement in distinct linkage strategies, ‘style of politics’ in inter- and intra-party relationships, political mobilisation and the determination of policies and institutional arrangements.

original formulation by March and Olsen (1989).⁷⁴ Consequently, the approach chosen here tries to reconcile structure, institutions and agency by taking into account the structural and institutional context in which actors are embedded. The focus on how the latter work within the context of the former, thus “(...) provides the microfoundations for (i. e. tells the story of) how a given constellation of forces results in a certain outcome [a distinctively structured party system, C. S.] (...) and explains variation.” (Perkins 1996: 356).⁷⁵

Thus, Schattschneider’s idea of the relevance and independent role of (party) agency for the emergence and structuring of a party system is taken as a point of departure but is expanded to incorporate other dimensions of party agency as well.

Taking agency seriously without losing sight of its structural/institutional constraints (as well as resources) implies an integrative approach to the study of party systems that combines aspects of the ‘state’ and ‘society’ when it comes to the analysis of the role of political parties particularly in maintaining the interrelationship between the two, for example the connection between elections, electoral campaigns or policy measures and the socio-economic coalitions or institutional arrangements (electoral system, federal set-up) behind them. As indicated before, the up-holding of continued electoral dominance in a competitive environment is necessarily accompanied by distinct mobilisational, linkage and organisational strategies as well as the launching of some kind of a ‘national’ or ‘historical project’ (Pempel 1990b: 340 f.) for the party to become ‘identified with an epoch’. The process of ‘becoming numerically dominant’, electoral dominance *in strictu sensu*, involves mobilisation of social groups and individual voters, competition (with other parties) for support bases and reaction to or conjunction with other parties when office and power is obtained. ‘Consolidating dominance within the party system’ and ‘maintaining dominance’ require constant tuning of and adjustment to (changing) social and societal structures as well as state institutions and actors. This involves not only the *input* side of politics, but also its *output* dimension in terms of policy measures, resource distribution or institutional innovation. Public policy in this vein is not just a product of government. It can serve as well to “(...) reward friends, punish enemies,

⁷⁴ March and Olsen (1989: 26-38) ascribe a distinct ‘logic of appropriateness’ to institutions that is transmitted to their members mainly by experience and which those members in turn use to structure their own behaviour. Institutions themselves, following their approach, are relatively autonomous of societal and social forces and are far from being secondary or epiphenomenal to the shaping of political life. Although they put less emphasis on the autonomy of political actors to question their institutional surroundings than any rational-choice variant of new institutionalism, both share the basic assumption that institutions, through the modification of behaviour, affect political outcomes.

⁷⁵ See also Mainwaring (1999: 4): “Of course, political elites need to win support from below to remain electorally viable, and in their quest to do so they win loyalties among different social sectors, just as the cleavages approach would suggest. But the sociological pattern of support for parties should not obscure who created them: political elites, often those in command of the state.”

remain in power, and redirect a nation's political trajectory." (Pempel 1990b: 360). The dominant party or the system of one-party-dominance thus relies heavily on an interlacing of its electoral role and the way it forges and shapes societal interests, uses public resources and state institutions, and determines the public discourse. In other words, the dominant party is at the same time taking advantage of, and is being restricted by structural and institutional resources/constraints in the attempt to create its own favourable environment. Like in any other party system, but in a far more intentional way, the complex intertwinement of societal forces and state power in a system of one-party-dominance ascribes to the party system the role of a 'bridge-builder' affecting the linkage between state and society. Therefore, the party system deserves special attention as an independent variable regarding the impact that this linkage has on democratic consolidation, national integration and socio-economic reform.

This is all the more important in regional contexts where the conjunction of modern (liberal) state institutions and traditional societal forces or modes of political expression like clientelist networks or neo-patrimonial structures, produces additional tension for the representational system and the process of political mediation. Where (relatively "weak") state agencies are not above and beyond society, and state-society interactions are underpinned by the impact and vagaries of a "strong society" (Migdal 1988)⁷⁶, as is the case with India and, to a lesser extent, South Africa, the complex interaction between state and society, modelled through the party system, requires an integrative perspective that takes the penetration and permeability of these two basic parameters seriously.

At the same time, party system characteristics are of relevance as independent variables for another, again more actor-oriented, reason. Taking the stabilising effect that the Indian system of one-party-dominance has had and its furthering of democracy as a premise for further analysis and evaluation of the South African context, this study emphasises party system characteristics as political opportunities or constraints that bear greatly upon actors' decisions as to whether or not they can tolerate a democratic game. It therefore refers to a recent consideration of Angrist (2001, see also 2004), based on the logic of the "contingency school in explaining the initiation and institutionalisation of democracy" (Waterbury 1997). Pioneered by Rustow (1970) and formally elaborated by Przeworski (1988) this logic conceives of a viable democracy as a bargain struck by elite actors, one which no actor is keen to terminate. As long as no actor is calculating the risk of open-ended governance

⁷⁶ According to Migdal, a 'strong society' displays a high level of social control within its boundaries that can only be partially and incrementally permeated by the state depending on the latter's 'strength', i. e. its "(...) capacities to *penetrate* society, *regulate* social relationships, *extract* resources, and *appropriate* or use resources in determined ways." (1988: 4).

outcomes (as the essence of democratic governance) as to high, democracy as “the only game in town” (Przeworski 1990) has a chance to survive. Referring to an empirical examination of ‘failed’ and ‘successful’ attempts to establish a stable competitive regime in several countries of the Middle East, Angrist brings to the fore the pivotal role of parties and party system characteristics as determining factors of who will wield policy-making power. Depending on the outline of the party system the ‘assessment of what rival parties bring to the competitive market ideologically, organisationally and mobilisationally’ is a decisive factor in any given party elite’s calculation of whether democratic governance is tolerable. That is why the consideration of party systems as independent variable not only contributes to the generation of a synoptic view of party systems as totalities, but is also a necessary step towards the linking of political institutions and regime outcomes. Thus, Angrist’s idea of the relevance of party system characteristics for democratic regime outcomes is taken as a point of departure but is expanded to incorporate other effects of a distinct party system configuration (and other functions a party system has to perform in changing societies) as well.

The theoretical approach this study relies upon can thus be described as a movement from analytical narratives to begin with (outline of the regional contexts), to an in-depth analysis of the respective party systems’ emergence, working and effects based on an integrated state-society approach informed by the theoretical insights of actor-oriented approaches to party system research.⁷⁷ There is a discernible functionalist orientation inherent in this approach insofar as it takes for granted the assumption that the process of a party system’s emergence and working is a similar activity in any given political system, albeit unfolding in very different settings, and, that party systems as intermediary institutions tend to perform similar tasks, although perhaps in markedly different ways. In *theoretical* terms the aims of the *comparison* then, are to filter out *how* political and party elites, presumably the main determining agents of the respective party systems’ emergence and working, shaped the latter within a given structural and institutional context, and, to assess the *role* of a distinctively structured party system as the prime intermediary institution in state-society relations as well as its impact on democratic consolidation, national integration and socio-economic development.

⁷⁷ With reference to methodological individualism in either its neo-institutionalist or rational-choice variants.

1.5. 'Methodologies': problems and incentives

The two basic methodological problems of the approach chosen here concern the diachronic nature of the comparison and its 'holistic' character. Since important context variables that have an impact on the party system's emergence and working naturally differ over a time horizon of half a century (and a spatial distance of continental dimension), no effective control of the context is possible as would have been the case in a (synchronic) *most similar systems design*. Consequently, the exact way and manner of evolution and the (ideological) 'content' and orientation of the two party systems under examination at first view bear only a few similarities. In broad terms, these are the coming to power of the dominant party "in the wake of a nightmare"⁷⁸, colonial rule and apartheid, respectively, and, the issues of national integration, democratic consolidation and socio-economic development as the most pressing challenges the nascent democracies were/are facing. Whereas the 'roads' to a system of one-party-dominance as well as the issues it reflects may be different as is the structural and institutional context of the respective regional settings, the processes of political actors' adaptation to different contexts and strategies of party competition display a functional equivalence. It is the process-orientation of this study that makes a comparison along contextually different lines possible. For example, if we take the process of highlighting a certain cleavage by political actors through rhetoric, certain policy measures, or the engagement of party elites in clientelist linkage mechanisms as aspects in the analysis of how party systems are shaped 'from above', the nature of the cleavage and the kind of material incentives involved are of secondary relevance, at least for the time being. It is the 'mechanisms of control' of the dominant party in the respective systems that are of interest.⁷⁹ Whilst the dimensions of 'polity' and 'policy' are no doubt important in terms of the institutional framework and as political devices in the scope and strategic planning of political actors, though often developing their own dynamic, 'politics', being the essential political dimension comprising transactional processes between political actors and between parties and state and society, will be in the foreground of this analysis. By focusing on the

⁷⁸ This expression stems from R. W. Johnson who was referring to the party systems of South Africa, Mexico, Taiwan and Malaysia at a conference on One-Party Dominance in selected developing countries, Cape Town, 6-9 Nov. 1996, on which the 'Awkward Embrace' (Giliomee and Simkins 1999) is based. Although the end of colonial rule in India came with much more ease than in many other post-colonial states, the historical legacy of colonial oppression and resistance to it constituted the key founding myth of the independent country.

⁷⁹ In the same vein, Levite and Tarrow (1983) in their reassessment of Arian and Barnes' (1974) pioneering article on one-party-dominance in Italy and Israel describe the latter's comparison as a "[unique effort] in the annals of comparative politics, for they boldly compared what was generally considered a center-left dominant party, *Mapai*, with a center-right one, the *Democrazia Cristiana*, arguing persuasively that – even in the face of their differences – the two parties had developed similar mechanisms of control." (1983: 295).

prominence of party agency in patterns and processes of political competition, mobilisation and policy- and decision-making in the analysis of how these actors shape mechanisms of party competition, it is attempted to overcome the methodological problem of dissimilar structural and institutional contexts that is inherent in any kind of diachronic comparison.

An actor- or process-oriented approach demands distinct methods of (empirical) research and comparison. To gain insights into a party system's mode of operation and to grasp the logic of political actors' strategies, behaviour, perceptions and motivations as well as of their 'embeddedness' in a given structural and institutional context, a largely qualitative research strategy is combined with an empirically informed conceptual approach. Since the study is dealing with only two cases and a variety of variables the qualitative method recommends itself in any case for it allows a closer look at the relationship between independent and dependent variables and takes the (regional) context of the empirical phenomenon more seriously. The nature of the comparison itself dictates an asymmetric preoccupation with the empirical resources and qualitative data available. Since the system of one-party-dominance in India, or 'Congress System' as it is widely known (see 1.1.), is long gone and has been extensively studied, this analysis relies mainly on select secondary sources in this regard.⁸⁰

Written primary sources are used like party manifestoes, General Secretaries' Reports or other party and government documents and newspapers and are complemented by information, theoretical insights and ideas gained through interviews with two of the remaining party representatives from the period under examination, with a representative from the 'All India Congress Committee' headquarter in Delhi, with a political scientist from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), and with a newspaper editor (*The Hindu*) who is an INC specialist. As regards South Africa, primary sources such as party manifestoes and documents, party meeting reports and government publications are made use of and are also complemented by newspaper articles, secondary literature and interviews with experts on the country's party system (see references for a detailed list). An attempt was made to contact party representatives and politicians in South Africa as well, but the attitude of these people towards research was characterised by paranoia and open hostility given the heavy

⁸⁰ Indeed, the scholarly literature on the Congress System is overwhelming. Consequently, the study relies mainly on secondary literature and primary sources wherever necessary. However, despite the fact that the Congress system is well researched, the analytical perspective on the Congress system chosen by the approach of this study has been largely neglected. Almost all scholarly attempts to explain the apparently 'deviant' or 'anomalous' case of India's post-independent party system, with the partial exception of Kothari (1964) and Morris-Jones (1966), have tried to somehow 'couch' the Indian case in one of the existing theories and perspectives of either the sociological or institutional variant (and, less often, of the 'spatial model' variant in the tradition of Downs 1957). Two of the rare examples of research on the Congress system that include a focus on party agency and competition with regard to the Congress system's emergence, working and effects and an actor-oriented perspective are Chhibber (1999) and Swamy (2003).

(intra)party-infighting and party-opposition struggles at the time fieldwork was conducted. Interviews were mostly denied or did not yield the expected results. That is why, in light of the limited time available for fieldwork, it was decided to rely on interviews with political scientists/experts from the main universities and relevant institutions. All of my interview partners gave incentives for my own theoretical reasoning and in the case of most of them their ideas have been complemented by their own written sources, articles and books.

Wherever comparable survey data for India after independence and post-apartheid South Africa was available, extensive use was made of these to quantify results concerning, for example, public attitude towards and the social base of parties to be examined. Naturally, the same holds for the use of electoral data and aggregate data concerning assessment, comparability, similarities and differences in context and historical outcome.

Again, this study is rather a conceptual undertaking than a detailed historical or empirical account.

The comparison as regards the generative aspects of the respective party systems is, in essence, following the logic of the *most different systems design*.⁸¹ Hypothesis 1 denotes a (causal) relationship/correlation between political actors'/party elites' perceptions, strategies, decisions and behaviour (in sum: party agency and initiative of political elites) and the similarity in the historical outcome, i.e. the system of one-party-dominance. This study is well aware that the selection of cases, given their similarity in the dependent variable in this regard, could be characterised as extremely biased.⁸² So it is. The fact that, except for Botswana (see fn. 45) and – more contentiously - Namibia, there are only two countries among changing societies that clearly fall into the one-party-dominance category as outlined above, should not necessarily prevent from selecting other cases according to variance in the value of the dependent variable and similarity in the historical context. The fact remains though that where little is known about an empirical phenomenon, as is the case with one-party-dominance in changing societies, the ground for causal analysis has to be paved before a valid sample of a broader kind can be chosen for comparative analysis. This would be the research strategy as suggested by Pempel for the comparison of one-party-dominance in advanced industrial democracies (see fn. 58). However, one of the principal aims of the study regarding the emergence of the respective party systems is to show that common explanatory approaches of party system theory such as the sociological and/or institutional approach are

⁸¹ That a 'most different systems design' is suitable to diachronic and qualitative analysis was, for example, aptly demonstrated by Theda Skocpol's (1979) examination of the social revolutions in France, China and Russia.

⁸² Whilst I would object that my dependent variable (the nature of the party system which is turned to independent variable in the fifth chapter) does not display variance, the selection according to the dependent variable would nevertheless fail, for example, King et al.'s (1994: 128 ff.) rules of valid scientific inference.

not that insightful when it comes to the analysis of so many party systems in changing societies. Respectively, the aim is not to prove individual causation but to show that a (causal) relationship/correlation between political actors'/party elites perceptions, strategies, decisions and behaviour and the configuration of the party system exists. To that extent, the study has an explorative character in that it hints at a possible reorientation of party system theory with regard to the shaping of party systems from above.⁸³ In that respect and in view of the generalisations attempted in the course of the following examination, the study basically "(...) pushes scholars to discover new explanations that might not have emerged from a more homogenous set of cases" (Collier 1993: 112).

An additional methodological problem arises out of the dynamic general set-up of party competition in the South African context. Is the institutional as well as structural context that guides actors' preferences and decisions already settled? How to consider a party system that has passed only two consecutive electoral tests? Can one judge on the basis of such a 'fluid' or uncertain state of affairs? Indeed, we don't know yet how long the ANC's dominance will last, but it is rather unlikely, given the overwhelming electoral support for that party in the last two elections, that any other party or political force will replace the ANC in government in the foreseeable future. Especially with regard to the third part of the respective party systems' analysis (chapter 5), which takes the party system as independent variable, the conclusions concerning the South African context are however necessarily limited by the 'fluid' contextual conditions.

There is a twofold problem regarding the 'holistic' character of the study. The term 'holistic' also refers to the coverage of the 'life-cycle' of the respective party systems, i. e. their causes and consequences (and the way these two reinforce each other), comprising a change of perspective on the party system from dependent to independent variable. On the one hand, theoretical reasoning about the emergence and structure of party systems is of a completely different nature than the theoretical reasoning about the effects, or, for that matter, functions of party systems. Whereas the first perspective focuses on the empirically ascertainable specifics of the respective context, be it a sociological, institutional, behavioural or a

⁸³ As stated by Collier (1995), who was referring to J. S. Mill's 'method of agreement' as displaying the perspective of a *most different systems design* in a Review Symposium on King, Keohane and Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry* (1994) published by the *American Political Science Review*, "[I]n this sense, KKV's [King, Keohane and Verba's, C. S.] assertion that this type of design makes it "(...) impossible to evaluate any individual causal effect" (...) seems incomplete: it can serve to *eliminate* some hypothesized causes, which can be a useful first step in causal analysis." (1995:464). In the same vein, he concludes that "[i]f little is known about a given outcome, then the close analysis of one or two cases of its occurrence may be more productive than a broader study, focused on positive and negative cases, in which the researcher never becomes sufficiently familiar with the phenomenon under investigation to make good choices about conceptualization and measurement, which in turn can lead to conclusions of dubious validity." (1995: 465).

combination of different explanatory approaches (to name the ‘classic’ approaches to party system research on the determination of the emergence and structure of a party system) and may be similar over space and time, the latter basically deals with normatively derived system functions displaying the standards of liberal democracies and tries to identify functional equivalence in different empirical contexts.

On the other hand, both perspectives are closely interwoven. Given that parties as well as party systems act as intermediaries between the state and society, their functionality, for instance in terms of societal inclusion and government stability, affects a party system’s structure and change. To the extent that a party system’s capacity to fulfil the functions ascribed to it depends on its structural characteristics, explanatory approaches to the emergence and structuring of party systems do tell us something about their functionality as well. If we take, for example, Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens classic account on *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (1992) we will find a line of argument that is a good illustration of this intricate interweaving of theoretical perspectives on party systems’ research. Simplified, they argue that for the democratisation process in South America to be successful there was a need for party systems to include large, clientelist parties “(...) for protecting the interests of the dominant classes and thus keeping them from pursuing authoritarian alternatives” (1992: 9). The class configuration as explanatory approach to the party systems’ emergence and structure thus gives a clue to the party systems role as an independent variable in the democratisation process: a specific party system characteristic was responsible for several countries to stay democratic. At the same time, clientelism as a functional equivalent to the process of interest articulation and aggregation may make the party system prone to fragmentation and may endanger the stability of a democratic regime. The functionality of the party systems thus also potentially induces change in the latter’s shape.

In the same vein, Kitschelt (2000: 872 ff.) suggests that the durable existence of clientelist linkages between (party) elites and citizens can be traced back to the need to reconcile democracy and capitalism. Whereas 19th-century political theory followed the proposition that democracy and capitalism were incompatible because of the dynamic effects of universal suffrage, it was proven empirically wrong by the crafting of political-economic institutions (especially the welfare state) that made the fusion of democracy and capitalism possible. Kitschelt goes on to argue that,

“In the absence of a redistributive welfare state, democratic politicians may contain distributive struggles from spinning out of control and threatening the foundations of democracy by building clientelist citizen-elite linkages wherever the circumstances are conducive [...]. For democracies from India to much of Latin America, clientelist politics has constituted the functional equivalent of the welfare state, appeasing the have-nots to abide by political orders that tremendously advantage the haves.” (Kitschelt 2000: 873).

He then concludes that a lot of current crises of existing party systems could retrospectively be explained by challenges to the prevailing linkage techniques (ibid. 874). Again, a party system characteristic (clientelist linkage mechanisms) is responsible for preventing the democratic process from derailing. Similarly, the functional need to reconcile democracy and capitalism is considered here as affecting structural characteristics of the party system as well. One could also refer to Myron Weiner (1967) who argued more than 30 years ago that the successful clientelist penetration of the Indian electorate by the INC in the 1950's was a major achievement in regime stabilisation and institutionalisation benefiting Indian democracy. Clientelism, seen as emanating from a distinct political culture and partisan strategy is consequently dealt with as explanatory variable for the fulfilment of one of the main functions commonly ascribed to party systems, namely the provision of government stability.

Methodologically, the problem mentioned above shows that there is always the danger of mixing up two different analytical and/or explanatory frameworks for the sake of an analysis that takes into account the interdependence of party systems both as the dependent and independent variable. That there is enough justification for a 'holistic' approach, as attempted in this study, becomes evident in the light of the illustrations of a party system's two-dimensionality outlined above, and, the understanding that the nature of a party system increasingly needs to be considered as an agent of change.⁸⁴ Therefore, the analytical framework depicted in the introduction tries to combine both perspectives by using political and party elites' agency and political elites' perception as the 'missing links' in explanatory approaches to the genesis, mechanics and, to a lesser extent, functions/effects of the respective party systems.

⁸⁴ The fact that there is no convincing analytical model or theory so far that takes into account all systemic interrelations of parties or the party system within the political system (v. Beyme 1988: 202 ff.) should not prevent from trying to tackle both perspectives of party systems research (taking party system as dependent and independent variable) within the same study as was done by some scholars (v. Beyme 1984). It is however often denied legitimacy on the grounds of a supposed lack of analytical clarity (see for example, Grotz 2000: 33). Chapter 5 consequently involves a discussion of the two party systems as independent variables in the light of the arguments about party agency and its impact on party system development put forward in chapters 3 and 4.

1.6. Party agency and political actors: departure from the conventional narrative of party system theory

“(…) a real political sociology calls for a simultaneous exploration of how parties are conditioned by the society and the society is conditioned by the party system. To say that a party system is a response to a given socio-economic environment is to present half of the picture as if it were all. The complete picture requires, instead a joint effort to assess to what extent parties are dependent variables reflecting social stratification and cleavages and, vice versa, to what extent these cleavages reflect the channelling imprint of a structured party system” (Sartori 1990a [1968]: 178).

What Sartori wrote in 1968 about the shortcoming of then current reasoning in the study of parties and party systems goes to the heart of this study's argument and of the analytical framework to be applied in this study, but is still an incomplete and 'flawed' presentation of the 'picture'. His remarks about a necessary consideration of the independent role and impact of the party system on the 'structuring' of cleavages confuse party agency and party system and are confined to only one dimension or aspect of party agency, the interrelation between the party system and society. Sartori does not differentiate between the impact of party agency on the shaping of the party system and the impact of the party system on the structuring of society. These two aspects are of course interwoven and mutually reinforcing but nevertheless need to be separated analytically. Whereas the former refers to a notion of the party system as dependent variable with party initiative, strategy and behaviour impinging on party system development via the 'manipulation' of society or elements thereof, the latter denotes a conceptualisation of the party system and its characteristics as independent variable affecting societal processes more directly. Thus, the former aspect involves an intentional quality, whereas the latter is largely a side-effect of a party system with a distinctive structure. In addition, party agency as conceptualised in this study goes beyond the restraint of the societal dimension to include systemic interrelations between the party system and the state or institutional arrangement of a given polity and, of course, the interaction between the various parties and political forces in a given party system. Similarly, the perspective on the party system as independent variable looks at the diverse state- and society-oriented dimensions closely related to the processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development.

Here, a brief review of what the traditional theoretical paradigms in the study of party systems have to tell is given with short references to how the basic arguments of these paradigms have been (or can be) applied to the regional contexts of (post-independent) India and (post-apartheid) South Africa. This way it shall become clear how and to what extent the approach and analytical framework chosen in this study have to be considered as a departure from the conventional reasoning within party system research and theory.

The cleavage approach referred to in the quote above is without doubt the most prominent approach to the explanation of the configuration of party systems within comparative politics. Pioneered by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), it postulates a more or less axiomatic ‘transmission’ of the social and socio-economic cleavages prevalent in a given society into the party system. On the basis of the European experience of party system formation and development, Lipset and Rokkan identified a historical sequence of political conflicts arising out of, and reinforcing, deeply-rooted social cleavages that became institutionalised ‘benchmarks’ for voter alignments, voting patterns, party identity and partisan attachment. Thus, the sociological dichotomies in terms of religious (state-church), regional (centre-periphery), economic (owner-worker) and social (land-industry) divides, brought to the fore by the national and the industrial revolution, provide the axes around which party competition and partisan mobilisation takes shape and voters develop lasting identities that are difficult to change.⁸⁵ The underlying logic, which made the ‘sociological model’ of party system formation so prominent and so convincing analytically, perceives voting behaviour to be dependent on sociological cues that guide enduring partisan predispositions.

The cleavage thread in its ‘narrower’ variant, which is based on the rather simple general assumption that a given society’s party system reflects the principal (ethnic, racial, religious) cleavages in that society, came into fashion as a prime explanatory approach to party system formation in many of the world’s changing and divided societies.

There have been various refinements and modifications of the cleavage approach, especially with regard to the role of political elites in manipulating social cleavages and the actual

⁸⁵ The stable pattern of party competition and continuity of voter alignments prevalent in West European party systems in the mid-20th century led Lipset and Rokkan (1967: 60 f.) to formulate their ‘freezing hypothesis’ and to conclude that the voting patterns in the 1960’s largely reflect the cleavages that have predominated the respective societies in the 1920’s. Once the party system has taken its ‘original’ shape as a result of existing cleavages at the time of the extension of suffrage, they argued, habits in partisan voting tend to remain stable. Only major societal upheavals and social changes such as civil wars or shifts in the economic basis of a society can alter those habits. See, for example, the argument put forward by Inglehart (1997) that the advent of a post-modern, post-industrialisation national ethos was responsible for the restructuring of European party systems and the incorporation of new parties with a ‘post-modern’ rationale.

processes involved in the politicisation of cleavages.⁸⁶ The basic idea that political parties and the party system are predetermined by, and rest on, clearly identifiable social bases within a given society is still very prominent in recent scholarship and largely predominates theoretical reasoning about party system formation in changing societies.

The other prominent paradigm within party system research and theory could be labelled the institutional approach, which takes the notion of party systems being reflections of institutional rules as its analytical lens. In theory this approach discusses all kinds of institutional rules in a given polity's institutional arrangement such as, the type of representative democracy (presidential vs. parliamentary) or the degree of devolution of political power (federal vs. unitary)⁸⁷, asking why and how the party system is structured. In (scholarly) practice however, there is a clear preponderance of explanatory approaches within the institutional paradigm that focus solely on the electoral system and electoral laws as the most important determinants of party system formation.

The lineage of the institutional approach can be traced back to Duverger (1959) and his formulation of the 'quasi sociological law' that "(...) the simple-majority single-ballot system [as it operates in India, C.S.] favours the two-party system" (ibid. 217).⁸⁸ Many times amended (see 4.1.), Duverger's law remains one of the most influential statements on party system theory within the institutional paradigm. The literature on party systems as reflections of electoral rules has been tremendously expanded since Duverger to include all kinds of aspects of the various electoral systems for example, district magnitude, ballot structure, decision rule or electoral formula.⁸⁹

With regard to the two 'basic' principles of representation, the plurality system and the system of proportional representation (PR) and their concomitant rules of decision, a winner-takes-it-all logic of electoral competition and one where the respective vote share is

⁸⁶ The most prominent and sophisticated of these modifications of the cleavage approach is Bartolini and Mair (1990). Most of these modifications of the cleavage approach, in some way or another, take into account at least some notion of party agency in the determination of cleavages although they conceive cleavages as the more decisive variable; see fn. 102 below.

⁸⁷ In fact, there are an increasing number of scholarly attempts to focus on these aspects of the institutional arrangement in order to explain party system formation and dynamics.

⁸⁸ The rationale of 'Duverger's law', as it is widely known, ascribes a 'mechanical' effect to the winner-takes-it-all logic of the first-past-the-post system (those parties gaining a certain percentage of the vote tend to get overrepresented seat-wise, while those below a certain percentage are left underrepresented or get no seats at all) as well as a psychological effect (as a result of 'sophisticated' voting on behalf of the electorate, which does not want its votes to be wasted and accordingly tends to vote for their first preference among the parties that have a real chance of winning even if this voting decision does not reflect the voter's actual or real first preference).

⁸⁹ The literature is indeed overwhelming and, similar to the cleavage approach, it would not make sense to give a list of 'the' decisive scholarly accounts and approaches. For one of the most sophisticated attempts in the more recent literature within the institutional paradigm, an attempt that seeks to explain the impact of electoral rules (and, to a lesser extent, social cleavages as well) on the strategic coordination of political actors and parties on the basis of a game-theoretic model of rational action, see Cox (1997).

decisive,⁹⁰ the principal line of argument remains relatively steadfast. Plurality systems tend to favour a concentration of the party system or, following Duverger, clear-cut FPTP systems lead to a two-party system, while PR systems, which most often feature a relatively low effective threshold of representation, tend toward multi-party systems, especially in divided societies.⁹¹

In between these two paradigms there is a growing number of scholarly approaches that try to combine (various) aspects of both the cleavage and the institutional (and/or the rational choice/spatial model) threads and try to demonstrate that both are important and that they matter in an interactive sense. For a more general statement within this fold of ‘combined’ approaches, see Neto and Cox (1997) and Ordeshook and Shvetsova (1994). Applications of this kind of approaches to the Indian and the African context have been put forward by Chhibber (1999) and Mozaffar (2001) respectively.⁹²

An additional approach to this standard toolkit of explanatory paradigms, although more elaborate in explaining voting behaviour⁹³, is what could be termed the ‘economic’ or ‘rational choice approach’ in the tradition of Downs’ (1957) economic conceptualisation of representative democracy. This approach is based on a formal spatial model where voters as well as parties rationally weigh up a given party’s issue position or voters’ preferences with their policy or programmatic preference/orientation. Vote choice, parties’ programmatic orientation and, hence the structuring of the party system, are consequently dependent on (individual) assessments of party performance, perception of variance in party position and perception of voters’ preferences.

⁹⁰ Of course, there are many electoral systems that combine elements of both principles of representation and their concomitant rules of decision, as there are systems where the strict adherence to the underlying logic of electoral competition is compromised by all sorts of modifications. As such, the statements about the underlying principles of the two electoral systems in this section have to be seen as based on an *idealiter* understanding of the two systems and the distinctions are nowhere that clear-cut in reality. However, the electoral systems in India and South Africa represent the respective ‘ends’ of the continuum of principles of representation and rules of decision, a clear-cut SMSP system and one of the ‘purest’, i.e. most permissive, systems of PR respectively.

⁹¹ Since the aim of this study is not to cover all the conceptual, methodological and theoretical aspects of the abundant literature within the different paradigms, but to focus on party agency and the impact of a party system distinctively structured on processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development, no attempt is made to go into a discussion of all the relevant institutional and/or cleavage-based aspects that were at one time or another considered to be of importance to party system formation and development; reference to specific aspects and approaches within the two paradigms is made throughout the text.

⁹² Another, more integrative approach to party system formation and development that is specifically preoccupied with one-party-dominance (in industrial countries) is provided by Pempel (1990).

⁹³ In a similar vein, explanatory approaches to voting behaviour with a more psychological bent have to be considered as another attempt within the ‘voting school’ to explicate party system formation and development. The two ‘schools’ conventionally identified as the paradigmatic representatives of explanatory approaches to voting behaviour are the ‘Michigan School’ of the 1960’s (behaviouralism) positing the notion of party identification as an emotional tie to a political party thereby shaping voting behaviour throughout a person’s life, and, the ‘Rochester School’ in the tradition of Downs (1957). Both take the party label as a heuristic device for voters’ preferences/affection for granted.

Within the rational choice approach or paradigm, Dunleavy (1991: 112-146) provides one of the rare attempts at incorporating dimensions of party agency and party system characteristics as independent variables and their impact on the shape and mode of operation of the party system. This is a noteworthy departure from the rational choice paradigm's central argument that parties basically respond to exogenously determined voter preferences (and if they do, this might as well be considered as a strategic *act*). Although he points to similar spheres of agency as those used in this study's analytical framework ('partisan social engineering', 'adjusting social relativities', 'context management' and 'institutional manipulation' as strategic devices for the incumbent party; 'capitalising on social tensions', 'joint institutional manipulation' and 'agenda setting' as the mechanisms, by which opposition parties with a potential to become the next government try to (re)shape voters' preferences), his account remains closely tied to the formal spatial model of party competition. Due to its complete neglect of (party) history and intra-party relations and as a result of the narrow focus on programmatic and policy dimensions of party competition, this approach is limited in its explanatory value for the context of changing societies.

What the cleavage and institutional approaches or paradigms within party system research and theory, especially in their less nuanced manifestations, have in common is, in essence, an inherently deterministic way of explaining party system formation and development and a concomitant neglect of agency in the shaping of party systems (Stokes 1999: 246 ff.). Consequently, they are less able to explain the dynamic nature of a party system and party systems that are above all conditioned by process-related and agentive political factors. For example, the questions of 'how specific cleavages gain salience for party competition' or 'why differently structured party systems emerge despite the same institutional rules guiding electoral competition (or the other way round)' cannot be answered with the conceptual tools developed by the cleavage or institutional approach.

Since electoral systems and social cleavages do not change very often or very easily, the central arguments of these two explanatory paradigms are weakly equipped to explain how party systems change over time or, put the other way round, how one party is able to hold electoral results constant despite a conflicting cleavage structure or contradictory institutional rules for electoral competition. To explain dynamics of the party system (the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance is seen here as an intrinsically dynamic process), one has to look at factors that (may) change (quickly) over time. Party agency is just that, and it offers a much more valuable analytical and explanatory tool if used in conjunction with the

institutional and structural context, i.e. the political opportunity structure wherein parties operate.

Additionally, the cleavage approach is essentially an ‘after the fact’ or post-hoc explanatory approach unable to explain the emergence of parties and a party system. Sartori (1990a: 180) alerted the scholarly community to the static and deterministic nature of the cleavage approach:

“Take the cleavage thread, the assumption that party systems reflect socio-economic cleavages. Under this premises it is fairly obvious, in the first place, that we shall detect past, not emerging cleavages. It is fairly obvious, that is, that we shall obtain not only a static, but also an eminently retrospective picture.”

Adding that there are additional analytical shortcomings if one is to rely merely on a cleavage-based explanation:

“In the second place if we start from societal cleavages it is equally clear that we shall miss all the conflicts which have a non-cleavage origin. These are not only the issue-conflicts (...) but also the within-elite conflicts which remain important even if they largely escape visibility. In the third place, the sociology of politics is likely to miss the fact that ‘objective cleavages’ can be largely manipulated, that is, used as resources, and thereby over or underplayed according to alignment and coalition strategies” [the latter holds true for institutional explanatory approaches as well, C.S.].

The additional problem with most institutional approaches, especially those focusing on the impact of electoral systems, is that they are largely limited to explaining the number of parties in a given system and offer little or no leverage at all in the answering of questions related to a party system’s qualitative aspects or the (power) configuration prevalent in a given party system. The determinism inherent in most approaches in the electoral institutions tradition is also responsible for the fact that the institutionalists’ hypothesising about the impact of electoral rules on the structuring of the party system rarely matches empirical reality. Often, these accounts end up adding one intervening variable after another to save their hypothesised correlation; one-party-dominance is a prime example in that respect.

Although rational choice or spatial model approaches are better suited conceptually to grasp the logic of the dynamic and process-related nature of party system formation and

development and are able to escape the rigid determinism of institutional and cleavage approaches, the problem with them is that they are simply too abstract at the expense of historical and empirical factors and context. Furthermore, their insistence on the programmatic orientation of the party system, on voters' rationality and the market analogy of the party system goes too far.⁹⁴

For all of these approaches or paradigms, one-party-dominance as such is a phenomenon that is difficult to explain and one-party-dominance in India and South Africa even more so.

In the wake of these paradigms within party system theory, one-party-dominance has been explained in a variety of ways: as the result (or a correlate at least) of a distinct electoral system that disproportionally favours the incumbent and dominant party⁹⁵, as a result of one overarching majority-minority cleavage that conceives of the dominant party as being supported by (and representing) a 'natural' ethnic or religious majority of the electorate⁹⁶ or as the result of a specific ideological constellation of the party system with one broad-based centrist party and an ideologically polarised opposition spectrum unable to agree upon an 'ends against the middle coalition'.⁹⁷

There is a grain of truth in all these accounts, but they cannot grasp the overall picture of one-party-dominance and offer even less leverage in explaining the emergence of one-party-dominance in institutional contexts that are diametrically opposed to each other (such as clear-cut PR vs. plurality systems). The same holds true for contexts where the cleavage structure would predict a rather different or even contrary unfolding of a party system's structure or in contexts where programmatic orientation is not the only dimension upon which party politics is based and the extent of voters' knowledge about policy and issue positions is

⁹⁴ In that regard, most of the explanatory models addressing one-party-dominance from a rational choice or spatial model perspective like, for example, Riker's 'Condorcet Winner' (Riker 1976), Sartori's elaboration of polarised pluralism (Sartori 1976) or Laver and Schofield's 'Median Legislator' (Laver and Schofield 1990: 80 ff.) while grasping elements of one-party-dominance, suffer from the (too) basic assumption "(...) that political competition is unidimensional and that parties care mostly about policy" (Cox 1997: 240); see the discussion in 4.1.

⁹⁵ See, for example, Cox's (1997: 238-250) analytically and cross-nationally rather limited explication of one-party-dominance as a correlate of the single-non-transferable-vote (SNTV) electoral procedure, which is said to impede successful co-ordination and candidate nomination strategies of opposition parties. In the Indian context it has often been argued that the Westminster FPTP electoral system acted as a disproportionate electoral 'multiplier' in favour of the INC (Butler et al. 1984). This is of course true, but cannot explain why opposition parties were not able to use the potential advantages of the FPTP system for their own benefit by forging alliances.

⁹⁶ This reasoning is the predominant explanation of ANC dominance and manifests itself most prominently in the so called 'two-nations' or 'racial/ethnic census thesis' that works on the basis of a (rather artificial) black/white – rich/poor cleavage or dichotomy (Giliomee and Simkins 1999a and 1999b); see 2.2.3. and 4.2. for a discussion.

⁹⁷ This is the preferred mode of explanation within the rational choice and/or spatial model paradigm; see 4.1. for a discussion of this explanatory thread.

less pronounced. Especially in the latter, the market analogy of the party system does not carry very far.⁹⁸

Thus, for example, taking into account post-independent India's and post-apartheid South Africa's socio-structural givens and electoral systems, the following conclusions could have been drawn in accordance with the theoretical reasoning within the two most prominent paradigms of party system theory. Simplified, in the case of India the institutionalist, inspired by 'Duverger's Law', would argue that due to the electoral system of SMSP/FTPT a two-party system should have emerged, whereas the scholar in the tradition of Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage theory would forecast that due to the abundant profusion of social cleavages, the party system is prone to extreme (caste-based, ethnic, linguistic) fragmentation or even atomisation.⁹⁹ In the case of South Africa, the institutionalist would say that due to PR the party system should necessarily be characterised by a proliferation of a *plethora* of political parties, whereas the (simple-minded) sociologist would argue that the overarching racial cleavage inevitably leads to a party system structured along the arithmetic of the racial census. Except for the sociologist in the South African case, all other scholars' arguments have been proven wrong empirically. Even the sociologist could be accused of not being accurate in his analysis of the South African electorate for there are many more cleavages prevalent in South African society than just race and it is by now part and parcel of scholarly knowledge that South Africa is made up of several different 'societies'.¹⁰⁰

As a result of most scholarship's unwillingness to leave the boundaries demarcated by the traditional paradigms (and partly also as a result of political science's increasingly positivist

⁹⁸ There is of course also a wealth of other, more context-specific explanations of one-party-dominance such as, for example, tracing its emergence back to charismatic leadership, historical specifics, primordial identities or other cultural predispositions. These efforts, however, are exclusively based on, and confined to, insights gained from detailed case studies and almost always make largely indefinite or voluntaristic reference to the singularity of the phenomenon as necessarily tied to a specific context.

⁹⁹ This is in line with the general scholarly prediction about India's territorial integrity and democratic career at the time sociological interpretations of democratisation gained prominence; see, for example, Harrison (1960: 338). One could also argue that the communal divide as the overarching social cleavage should have had a lasting impact on the nature of Indian party competition. However, a relevant 'transmission' of the communal divide into the party system took place as late as from the mid-1980s onwards. Alternatively, Chhibber and Petrocik (1989) see the cleavage model as a valuable analytical tool to explain party system formation at the regional level, whereas cleavages (and the (putative) effects of the SMSP/FTPT electoral system) were/are not aggregated to the national level. As regards institutional explanatory approaches, some scholars came to the rescue of Duverger by conceding the appropriateness of Duverger's Law to the constituency level of Indian party competition (Sridharan 1997).

¹⁰⁰ In the South African context, the underlying argument of the two most prominent (institutionalist) scholarly advocates of PR and a plurality electoral system respectively, Lijphart and Horowitz, matches with the understanding of the multi-dimensionality of the country's cleavage structure, but still neglects the significance of party agency. Thus, whereas Lijphart (1985: 122) predicted that "[i]n South Africa it is therefore highly probable – nay, virtually certain – that the ethnic factor will reassert itself under conditions of free association and open electoral competition. It is highly unlikely that blacks and whites will confront each other as monolithic entities", Horowitz (1991: 85) came up with the statement: "Eliminate White domination, and inter-African differences will be particularly important"; two predictions or, rather one, that so far simply did not realise.

bias), most scholarly attempts to explain the apparently ‘deviant case’ of India have tried to ‘couch’ the Indian case in one of the existing theories by following the pattern, ‘it may not accord to Duverger’s Law, but if we take into account this intervening variable or this specific aspect of the regional context, it seems to fit the traditional theoretical position’. Likewise, institutionalists and sociologists have a notoriously difficult time (but stick to) explaining ANC dominance¹⁰¹ (in ‘traditional’ terms) despite the prevalence of a PR electoral system and a rather complex and intricate cleavage structure. None of them, though casually referring to the role of party agency, has tried to examine party agency as a possible explanatory factor for one-party-dominance systematically.

Of course, one could argue that the determinism inherent in these two theoretical approaches has long been overcome and that the structuring effects on the party system of either political institutions or the socio-structural make-up of a society depend heavily on other intervening variables and aspects of the specific regional context (which is of course partially true). This would however mean opening the door to some form of cultural and contextual relativism and singular explanation, something no political scientist would agree upon.

Instead, the following chapters will argue that despite such institutionally and structurally different contexts, strategic choices and decisions made by the respective dominant parties’ leadership were crucial for the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance. They will introduce party agency as the ‘missing link’ necessary to explain the similarity in the historical outcome.¹⁰² This is not to deny that the institutional and structural context bears upon party system formation and development, but to argue instead that party agency and strategy is the crucial factor that brings together institutions, cleavage structure and collective actors/individuals and that institutions and cleavages have to be seen as being ‘shapeable’ through party agency.¹⁰³ Therefore, it will also be argued that there are differences in the ‘quality’ of one-party-dominance in post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa that depend on differences in party agency and on the different institutional and structural context.

Finally, since the study is based on a hypothesised causal relationship between party agency and the emergence and mechanics of the two systems of one-party-dominance dealt with in

¹⁰¹ Much less predicting the party system’s future trajectory.

¹⁰² The emphasis on party agency as explanatory factor for the emergence and working of a party system is less incompatible with the modified cleavage approach put forward by Bartolini and Mair (1990) arguing that social cleavages are not automatically translated into a party system but offer easy opportunities for political mobilisation. However, party agency involves more than just the shaping, muting or highlighting of distinct cleavages. A cluster of agentic factors is involved in the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance.

¹⁰³ The same holds true for exogenous factors, which are of course relevant for party system formation and development but are neglected in this study for reasons of space and research focus.

the following, party agency also plays a role when it comes to treating the two party systems as independent variables, an approach, which involves a change of analytical perspective. Moving from the intentional way and manner, by which party agency shapes the party system (as dependent variable), the analysis shifts to the rather unintentional way, by which the specific characteristics of a distinctively structured party system and their working impact on processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development.

But before going into the detailed discussion of how party agency was decisive in ‘achieving’ and ‘maintaining’ one-party-dominance in post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa (chapters 3 and 4) and of what were the consequences of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts in terms of the processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development, it is necessary to outline the two regional contexts in terms of their (party-)political, historical, institutional and structural characteristics. This is done in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: The Regional Context

Before one can analyse the manipulative efforts and the mechanisms of control that the dominant party deploys to achieve and secure its dominance, it is necessary to take stock of the institutional resources and constraints confronting political actors, to analyse the nature and composition of the electorate in terms of the distribution and importance of the relevant cleavages in the two respective societies, and to outline the main ‘players’ in party competition. This chapter delineates the two regional contexts, their institutional set-up, socio-structural characteristics, and the make-up of their respective party systems in terms of their main components, viz. the dominant party and major opposition parties.

This is done for three reasons. First of all, before any assessment of how the two party systems under examination were/are ‘shaped from above’ by political and party elites alike their ‘room to manoeuvre’ has to be defined. This is important not only in terms of their ‘modelling’ of the institutional environment in the formative phase of the party system, but also in terms of their strategic preferences and thinking being moulded by the institutional constraints/resources of the newly formed polity. Second, since the dominant party as aggregator *par excellence* is dependent on its catch-all appeal, its mobilisational efforts have to be adjusted to the cleavage-structure, political culture and clientelist networks prevalent in the given society, for these determine the composition, orientation and (perceived) likelihood of success of the parties which enter into electoral competition. The nature and dynamics of the electorate ought to shed light on the vertical dimension of the respective party systems and, eventually, on whether the “dominant party regimes” (Pempel 1990) have left a lasting impact on state-society relations. Thirdly, what is needed is a depiction of the relevant elements that constitute a veritable party system, namely the dominant party as the *nucleus* of any system of one-party-dominance (since the following three chapters deal extensively with the respective dominant parties, this section is consequently much shorter and less elaborate) and the opposition parties, doomed to remain in the backyard of political power and office but nevertheless of vital importance to the functioning and competitiveness of the system. This is especially important, for it reveals the radius of horizontal interaction between the relevant political actors and guides them in their perception and crucial assessment of what rival parties bring to the electoral market ideologically, organisationally and mobilisationally.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ As already mentioned the term and concept of ‘party system’ is used here to denote a vertical dimension of intermediation between state and society and party agency in terms of how the party interacts with the state system and how it attempts to influence the citizenry, as well as a horizontal dimension of inter-party interaction. A third dimension, which is of special relevance regarding one-party-dominance, is the one of ‘unit’, i.e. the inner-party activities and dynamics of the dominant party that are dealt with in the following chapter (3.3.).

Each section in the following chapter thereby highlights only those (core) institutional features, socio-structural givens and party system characteristics that have been identified as relevant to the emergence and structuring of the respective party system. Regarding the institutional set-up of the two regional contexts only the electoral system, the structure of federalism and the type of government are considered. The socio-structural givens include the cleavage structure, main aspects of the respective political culture and the prevalence of clientelist networks.

In sum, an attempt is made here to provide the contextual basis for the analysis in the following three chapters, which is informed by an approach that blends structure/institutions (constraints and resources) together with agency to explain the emergence, structuring and effects of the party systems of India after independence and South Africa after apartheid.

2.1. India

2.1.1. ‘Tryst with destiny’: historical legacies and independence

When, in 1947, on the eve of India’s independence, Nehru as the country’s first prime minister, heading an interim government, declared that ‘[l]ong years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge’, he was referring to (and probably also had in mind) a more or less complete departure from the country’s colonial history. In the midst of the traumatic experience of partition (creating out of British India, Pakistan and India) and against the backdrop of numerous challenges, preservation of territorial integrity and political order, alleviation of mass poverty, the establishment of a truly democratic body politic etc., nothing else than a ‘fresh start’ could have been the declared goal of the nationalist leaders once the transfer of power was complete. In reality, however, there was greater continuity in political and institutional traditions. The economic, as well as, political legacies of British rule severely strained, but also provided the nascent polity with room to manoeuvre and created incentives for institutionalisation.

The aim of this section is not to provide a detailed (exhaustive) account of the already well-researched period both in terms of the political and economic development of British India and the development of the nationalist movement (for independence). Instead the goal is to highlight some of the more important legacies of this period and the implications of independence that are considered to have been relevant to the shaping of a political opportunity structure and party power configuration, in which the post-independence party

elites were to operate.¹⁰⁵ These legacies can be divided into those reflecting the political and parliamentary experience of the nationalist elite before independence, the administrative inheritance and the social and economic conditions left behind by the British *Raj* (rule).

Contrary to the South African context, in which the transition from apartheid to democracy constituted a break in party politics upon which party political competition had to start largely anew, the foundations supporting the initial emergence of post-independent India's party system were laid long before independence. The course of the independence movement had set the configuration and patterns of competition in the country's post-independent party system insofar as it established the INC as the pivotal political force giving it a crucial organisational as well as strategic advantage over its contenders and encouraging the political elite to use their experience in dealing with the rudiments of a limited democracy's institutional arrangement. During its 62 years of (pre-independence) existence the Congress movement had passed through various phases of political development and reaction to the colonial power, all of which contributed to the distribution of 'political capital' in favour of the INC when taking over the responsibility of government when it came to self-rule. At the same time, the movement's experience was to some extent also a guarantee for the emergence of a competitive system of party governance.

The beginnings of the movement, from 1885 onwards when the INC was founded, were characterised by the emancipatory efforts of a largely middle-class, elite-induced forum of protest.¹⁰⁶ Realising that their bargaining position vis-à-vis the British would improve by establishing a national organ of representation, several interest organisations of the Indian middle class joined together on a nation-wide platform and laid the foundations for a national(ist) political discourse, which at that time was marked by liberal ideas and a strong commitment to democratic procedures (Das Gupta 1989: 58). The organisational deepening of the movement and a concomitant mobilisation and incorporation of more diverse societal interests increased the bargaining capacity of the Congress elite but, at the same time, widened the social and programmatic arenas of conflict, thus furthering the differentiation of distinct political groups within the movement. The secularly inclined 'Liberals' were confronted with a growing influence of more radical, cultural or traditional (Hindu) nationalists, which were responding to an "(...) intensified [colonial, C.S.] repression in India

¹⁰⁵ For a detailed account of the British-nationalist elite/movement encounter and the transfer of power refer to Low (1997) and Menon (1957). For one of the most sophisticated accounts of the unfolding of India's 'political will' and political representation during the first half of the last century, see Rothermund (1965).

¹⁰⁶ At that time, the INC was far from being a "(...) political party in the modern sense" (Brown: 1985: 176) but rather some sort of a 'pressure group' of the Indian middle class, which was again largely the product of the educational system introduced by the British (Mishra 1961).

and enforced mobilization of Indian resources for British expansionism in Asia” (ibid. 60). At the same time, antagonism between Hindus and Muslims gained strength, culminating in the formation of the Muslim League in 1906 and leading to, as well as being reinforced by, the introduction of separate electorates for the two religious communities through the Morley-Minto constitutional reforms of 1909.¹⁰⁷

For a more profound social deepening of the independence movement however, the leadership of Gandhi (following World War I) was needed. He generated and co-ordinated a new *technique* of anti-colonial resistance combining agitational protest against the British and institutional collaboration, on the basis of non-violent, passive resistance (*satyagraha*). Thus, he brought together the peasantry, industrial labour and the national bourgeoisie in their support for the independence movement.¹⁰⁸ This twofold legacy of ‘Gandhian mass and campaign politics’ and the tradition of institutional co-operation with the colonial power was complemented by successive steps taken by the British to introduce (limited) self-government and to extend the franchise among Indian communities in an effort to seek greater consent. The Government of India Acts of 1909 (Morley-Minto reforms), 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford reforms) and, most important, the Government of India Act of 1935, by which “(...) the 1919 model of dyarchy (or separate lists of responsibilities for Indians and non-Indians at the Provincial level) was abolished in favour of the full participation of Indians in all departments of provincial government, and [by which] the franchise was extended further” (Corbridge and Harriss 2000: 7-8), all of these colonial initiatives or, rather attempts at accommodation¹⁰⁹, enabled the Congress elite to gain experience in the (limited) responsibility of government and the organising of election campaigns.¹¹⁰ In fact, the 1935 Government of India Act became the template for independent India’s constitution, a strong indication of the institutional continuity of (late) British constitutional rule in Indian history.

¹⁰⁷ Both these processes proved to be decisive in the later unfolding of the country’s party system and as incentives for the (strategic) behaviour of the post-independent national elite. Whereas the confrontation between the so called ‘moderates’ (liberal constitutionalists) and the ‘radicals’ or ‘extremists’ (mostly cultural nationalists) encouraged the Congress elite, at an early stage, to promote a unifying authority over the interest pluralism of the independence movement (but, at the same time, triggered the emergence of the diverse Hindu-nationalist organisations and, later on parties, such as the *Arya Samaj*, the *Hindu Mahasabha* (HM) or the *Rashtriya Svajamsevak Sangh*, RSS), the exclusive mobilisation of voters by the Muslim League and the resultant communalist divide gave special emphasis to the idea of the ‘secular state’ and the consideration for minorities (Young 1976: 295-301).

¹⁰⁸ Under Gandhi’s leadership the INC also introduced formal membership, membership fees and started to build up an organisational structure along India’s linguistic lines (see 3.3.).

¹⁰⁹ In fact, British-induced experiments with partial self-rule at the local level began in the 1880’s already.

¹¹⁰ In this regard, Weiner more generally refers to the ‘democratically’ benign impact of British “tutelary democracy”, which left behind a differentiated bureaucratic structure and the basis of a representative institutional arrangement for the post-colonial successors of the Empire; see Weiner (1989: 77 f.).

The co-ordination of a mass movement (though without a strong revolutionary impetus¹¹¹) and the gradual involvement in processes shaping the political will and political decision-making in a culturally pluralist environment, required political talent to balance diverging spheres of interest and to create the necessary equilibrium between the establishment of a national authority and the principle of democratic inclusion.¹¹²

Both these attributes or legacies benefited the INC at the time that various political groups and currents of the independence movement were reflected in the nascent post-independent party system. The INC was not only equipped with an outstanding organisational base (at least compared to its contenders) and held a position of unchallenged legitimacy, but could also rely on an apparatus and a cadre of functionaries experienced in conflict-management and trained in the responsibility of government. Thus, in Mitra's view, "(...) the Congress, through vigorous participation in elections, particularly those to the provincial legislature under the 1935 Government of India Act, developed among its cadres an ability for the aggregation of interests, a talent for sustained and coordinated political action, and the skills of administration. It also gave them what few anticolonial movements had - namely, a taste of genuine political competition and the experience of patronage as a tool of political transactions." (Mitra 1996: 637).

In terms of social and economic legacies, the circumstances and conditions prevailing at independence were largely shaped by the colonial power's strategic (and commercial) imperatives and, not least by the impact of the bureaucratic instruments of state intervention created by the British to meet the demands placed on them before and during the course of World War II (Rothermund 1995b: 488). Decades of surplus-transfer to the metropolitan power, the creation of the elite Indian Civil Service (ICS) and a much larger corps of functionaries in the provincial services, a huge bureaucratic apparatus, primarily designed to maintain law and order, to supervise national monopolies, and to regulate customs and industrial production in favour of Westminster and the British war effort¹¹³, and a quasi-feudal mode of production in the agrarian sector, which had been largely 'untouched' by the colonial regime (Frankel 1978: 7) and accounted for over 70% of the labour force and 51.3%

¹¹¹ The lack of a strong revolutionary impetus of the independence movement and a concomitant 'elite continuity' is seen in the literature as having constituted a crucial precondition for the establishment of a liberal democracy and a competitive party system; see, for example, Das Gupta (1989: 66-67). For a different scholarly opinion, see Moore (1966: 495).

¹¹² Nevertheless, the INC's success in achieving independence and securing political power and electoral dominance before independence was based on a franchise that was confined in the 1940's to no more than 30 % of the adult population.

¹¹³ Thus customs regulations, for example, were subject to a policy of 'imperial preference' securing preferential treatment for British commodities.

of national income in 1950-51 (Myrdal 1973: 74)¹¹⁴, had left behind an impoverished economy that was both extremely poor and stagnating. During the first half of the twentieth century, from 1900 to 1946, Indian national income under colonial rule had risen by 0.7 % annually, while its population grew at the rate of 0.8 percent, resulting in a stagnant per capita income, a lesson that was not lost on the generation that would form the post-independent national leadership.¹¹⁵

Low levels of agricultural production and a technologically backward and infant industrial sector (at best)¹¹⁶ contributed to the overwhelming task of socio-economic development that post-independent India faced. The dilemma that there are limits to the extent to which an overwhelmingly agricultural economy can flourish because of the limitations in the demand for agricultural products, combined with the strong interventionist bureaucratic apparatus that was inherited and a largely regulated economy with a relatively small private sector, gave the idea of a plan-based approach to (state-induced) development and economic growth a compelling impetus. At the same time, a structure of society characterised by social hierarchies based on the caste-system, concomitant inequalities in landownership and the continuing existence of landlordism, as well as a complex and hierarchically structured system of ownership, lease and tilling, were responsible for extreme differentials in income and wealth in the countryside. According to Varshney (1998a: 29), “[o]ver 60 percent [of the population] of rural India (...) was landless or owned holdings below 2.5 acres. Taken together, the “subalterns” owned less than 8 percent of the total cultivable land.”¹¹⁷

At the top of agrarian society, especially in the Northeast, were the high-caste *zamindars* (‘absentee landlords’)¹¹⁸, a class of feudal land-holders created through colonial policy to collect revenue for the government. They leased land to tenants, some of which, the ‘substantial tenants’, subleased land again to small landowners. At the bottom was the “(...) class of impoverished poor peasants, sharecroppers, and landless agricultural labourers” (Sharma 1999: 64) primarily drawn from the (former ‘untouchable’) Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ The population of India after partition was estimated at 338.7 million. The census figure for 1951 is 361 million. In fact, the agricultural component of the workforce increased from 55% in the mid-nineteenth century to 74% by 1939.

¹¹⁵ Between 1952-52 and 1964-65, agricultural production grew by 3.42% per annum, (non-foodgrains at 4.79% and foodgrains at 2.75%) given a population growing at more than % per annum (Chaudhuri 1979: 58).

¹¹⁶ In 1950-51 “(...) large-scale industry and mining still accounted for only 6.5 per cent of GNP, and small-scale industry for a further 9.5 per cent” (Corbridge and Harriss 2000: 10).

¹¹⁷ Calculations refer to 1954-55.

¹¹⁸ Also known in different parts of the country as *chakdars*, *jagirdars*, *maqaddam* or *taluqdars*.

¹¹⁹ The SC’s and ST’s were delimited according to census-based lists. New list were issued in 1950 under Articles 341 and 342 of the constitution (GoI 1950a: respective articles).

In the urban areas, the limited amount of manufacturing and industrial development during colonial times had created a small indigenous ‘capitalist class’, which was complemented by a Western-educated intelligentsia drawn from high-caste literati and the emerging urbanised middle class. Indian society, especially its predominant rural component, can best be described as extremely inegalitarian at the time of independence.

The propertied castes and classes (the rich land-owning peasantry, the bureaucratic elite and a tiny class of influential industrialists and members of the indigenous business community) and the group of prosperous ‘tenants’ (enjoying fixed rents and lasting and inheritable rights to the land they occupied), often referred to as the ‘middle peasants’ (all unable to unite upon a common cause), faced a vast mass of small-holding or poor peasants, landless and urban poor. Overall, the poverty estimates of 1961 “(...) suggested that in 1960-1 about 40 per cent of the rural population, and a little under 50 per cent of the urban population, were living in poverty” (Corbridge and Harriss 2000: 12).¹²⁰

Thus, the economic impact of colonial rule in combination with the rigid hierarchies of a traditional society had left behind a critical legacy for the post-independent INC elite. As Kaviraj (1997: 60) has succinctly put it, the “(...) needs of long-term economic strategy and ideological legitimisation in a poor country made an abstractly redistributive programme imperative; but the ends of mobilizing the effective levers of power in the countryside during ordinary times made dependence on rural magnates equally unavoidable. No party can, after all, expropriate its own power (as opposed to electoral) base.” However, only a rapid commercialisation and social transformation of the peasant-dominated agriculture could have provided the surplus (in terms of labour, food and savings) needed to man and feed the emerging working classes and to fund industrial investment (Varshney 1998b: 50).

In terms of administrative legacy, the inherited ‘steel frame’ of the British *Raj*, the small, merit-based elite ICS, half of it Indianised at the time of independence, was held on to with a changed nomenclature. Henceforth, it was called Indian Administrative Service (IAS), “(...) a needed and welcome source of administrative competence [with a strong] potential as a nation-building and state-building instrument” (Thakur 1995: 173), even though it was identified with exploitation and collaboration with the foreign rulers.

This national institution, together with the lower echelons (the former gazetted and non-gazetted officers) constituted a highly effective and professional bureaucratic apparatus of

¹²⁰ These figures, considered to be the first authoritative estimates, are of course highly debated but it is reasonable to suggest that percentages were higher rather than lower. Corbridge and Harriss refer to the estimates of Dandekar and Rath (1971), which were based on a rather modestly set poverty line.

enormous proportions.¹²¹ It proved however, to be a ‘mixed blessing’. As Thakur (1995: 43-44) notes,

“(…) [t]he service was the administrative arm of an alien ruling power. After independence, the civil service became an instrument to implement public policies framed by democratically elected governments. Could the transition from master to servant of the people be made successfully without a major overhaul of the structure of administration? The problem was exacerbated by the very esprit de corps which had made the ICS such a valuable tool for the Raj. The elitism of the service detached it from the village heartland of India. Exclusiveness was a useful asset when the primary purposes of the ICS were revenue collection and maintenance of law and order. It became a liability when the basic thrust of the service was changed to developmental tasks. The generalist orientation and the air of superiority over specialist personnel was to impede the progress towards functionalised task performance. Similarly, the sense of paternalism was to obstruct the move back from dirigisme.”¹²²

Following independence however, quota systems were introduced on the basis of preferential treatment for the socially underprivileged (GoI 1950a: Article 335) and a Union Public Service Commission was established, an independent advisory body appointed by the president and charged with the task of supervising public service recruitment, the provision being that at least half the members of the IAS cadre came from outside the respective region they are allotted to. These developments and, above all, public sector expansion counteracted the consolidation of a bureaucratic ‘esprit de corps’ (endangering the legitimacy and effectiveness of the nascent representative structures¹²³) while minimising the danger of an increasingly deprived bureaucratic ‘class’ or elite with regards to revenue and promotion prospects.

At the same time, a gradual politicisation of bureaucratic structures and personnel took place, largely at the local and regional level, with the INC (as governing party) winning over the

¹²¹ The top echelon of the ICS was a body of fewer than 2000 officers at the time of independence.

¹²² The elitism and professionalism of the Indian bureaucracy, not the least a result of the institutional continuity from the ICS to the IAS, has led Bardhan (1984) to conclude that post-independent Indian bureaucrats constituted a dominant proprietary class of their own exploiting their ‘cultural capital’ and extracting ‘rent’ income from their scarce educational and technical skills.

¹²³ See Alavi (1972) for the concept of the ‘overdeveloped state’ characterising post-colonial Pakistan, which claims that the effectiveness and organisational superiority of the military-bureaucratic elite has undermined the emergence of functioning representative structures and institutions (i.e. a democratic party system).

loyalty of the bureaucracy (Bhambri 1971: 17f.)¹²⁴. On the one hand, this fostered collusion amongst the administrative units and the INC's party organisation, which was paralleling India's administrative structure, but, on the other hand, it also discouraged bureaucratic domination of the institutional arrangement of a representative democracy.¹²⁵

In sum, the administrative legacy of the *Raj* greatly enhanced the Indian state's 'reach' (and its opportunity to rely on a rather effective administrative structure compared to other post-colonial contexts) and the dominant party's capacity to penetrate society and provide patronage.¹²⁶

Another crucial component of the British rule's administrative legacy, apart from the territorial restructuring brought about by the partition of British India, was the task of integrating more than 500 princely states, mollicoddled by the colonial policy of indirect rule at the time of British paramountcy, into a national body politic.¹²⁷ However, what threatened to be a great strain upon the nascent polity's territorial integrity, "(...) intimidating in its complexity and potential for chaos" (Morris-Jones 1989: 76), turned out in the end to be a diplomatic and administrative success. Except for the princely states of Hyderabad, Junagadh and, above all, Kashmir, which remains an unsolved problem to this date, the integration of these states took place smoothly under the energetic leadership of then home and deputy prime minister Sardar Patel, who headed a specially created portfolio of the interim government set up in 1946. By 1948, the task had been largely completed. Nevertheless, the challenge remained for the INC as well as for other parties, to build up an organisation within

¹²⁴ Writing in 1966 Weiner (1966: 434) concluded that "[t]he close liaison between the local administration, the local rural gentry, and the local Congress organization are (...) important factors in national Congress Party strength."

¹²⁵ As LaPalombara and Weiner (1966: 434) emphasised the potential (democratic) functionality of a politicisation of bureaucratic structures in a post-colonial context: "It may very well be that from the stand-point of long-range democratic political development a bureaucracy subject to party patronage, even to a certain amount of political corruption, is to be preferred to one which, while it nicely conforms to the Weberian requisites of a legal-rational authority system, is also by this very reason in a position to distort the development of political parties and interest groups and even to subject them to bureaucratic domination." Interestingly, this point of view, held by two authors committed to a liberal orientation, complies with Alavi's, a neo-marxist's, ideas about the 'over-developed' post-colonial state; see fn. 123 above.

¹²⁶ In this regard, another 'legacy' or rather a 'fortuitous condition' for the catch-all dominant party (or parties in general) was the low level of associational life (interest and pressure groups) at the time of independence (and beyond). This increased the party's prominence, indispensability and its independence from adopting a policy representing a particular opinion or special interest. As Kothari (1994: 215) noted in 1971, "(...) the most important interest groups [were] institutional rather than associational" that is they operated through and within parties, the bureaucracy and the factional network of the (dominant) party. "(...) [I]t is only through parties and factions and their regional allies that the vast heterogeneity of interests are in some measure ordered and articulated. Parties, in turn, may be narrow or broad in their interest coverage (...) but it is still through parties rather than autonomous associations that groups interact at the political level." The level of associational life in India ranked still among the lowest at the end of last century. In 1991, only 13% of respondents in the World Value Survey reported that they belong to at least one association (as compared to 36% in Mexico, 43% in Brazil and 71% in the United States (Chhibber 1999: 17).

¹²⁷ Additionally, popular demands for a reorganisation of the States along linguistic lines were already looming (see 2.2.2.).

these territories of the Indian Union that could be proclaimed in 1950 when the new constitution went into effect.¹²⁸

Given these political, (socio-)economic and administrative legacies however, one should not stretch the ‘continuity metaphor’ too far. In the post-war years, when it was generally known that independence would come sooner rather than later, a series of sudden political changes took place. In addition, “(...) the years 1947 through 1951 were filled with violence and uncertainty” (Weiner 1967: 34-35). As a result of partition in 1947, millions of refugees crossed the Indo-Pakistan border and communal rioting and murder reigned supreme. India and Pakistan saw themselves locked in the first of a row of military confrontations over the disputed territory of Kashmir, Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 and the Communist party had launched an insurrectionary, peasant movement in the *Telugu*-speaking area (*Telengana*) in the former princely state of Hyderabad, which had been forced to accede to the Indian dominion by Indian troops.

Even before these critical years, the seeds of a complex post-independent party power political configuration were sown and the Congress movement had begun to show signs of disintegration and fragmentation in the period immediately after independence.

The most serious antagonism of pre-independence party politics, that between the INC and the Muslim League, had given the INC leadership and provincial candidates in the North a taste of fierce two-party competition based on political mobilisation along one overarching cleavage and had demonstrated the stresses and strains of political competition inherent in the emerging party system. This was especially so in the two provincial elections under British tutelage in 1937 and at the beginning of 1947.¹²⁹ The clever tactical moves of the Muslim League’s leader Jinnah, the Muslim League’s increasing stubbornness over the demand for a separate state after it had fared badly in the elections of 1937 and the INC’s unwillingness to

¹²⁸ Another legacy worth mentioning here is the role of the Indian army. Apart from the army’s apolitical and only partially martial tradition, its near complete abstinence from the struggle for independence contributed to the fact that a military intervention in the formative phase of the Indian republic was rather unlikely (Cohen 1988). This, however, held true for the military in post-independent Pakistan as well, trained and socialised in the same tradition. Yet, in post-independent India, the introduction of integrative, proportional patterns of recruitment, favouring no specific social group, the fragmentation of command structures and the deliberate dispersion of military units, and, above all, the alternative opportunity of a civil career for (political) aspirants (e.g. in the civil services) and the availability of an effective arena of interest articulation and power-seeking in form of the competitive Congress system further reduced the likelihood of a military take-over.

¹²⁹ The two parties’ political bargaining and ‘struggling for an influential space’ within the colonial’s structure of governance and a ‘possible post-colonial polity’ found its clearest expression in the “(...) tussle (...) over a coalition government in UP [Uttar Pradesh, a North Indian British province and later on State of the Indian Union, C.S.] after the 1937 Provincial Assembly elections” and the “(...) tussle (...) in June and July 1946 over a coalition Interim Government [mainly over portfolios because the INC, as the largest party, had been offered the leadership of the interim government, C.S.] after the Muslim League had accepted the [British, C.S.] Cabinet Mission Plan for the constitution of an independent India” (Mehra 2003: 76).

acknowledge the League's strong presence¹³⁰ and its claim to represent India's then 90 million Muslims contributed to the fact that just before independence (after the elections of 1947 when the League swept nearly all seats reserved to Muslim electorates, as did the INC with regards to the 'general seats'), "[t]he two-nations theory of Mr. Jinnah [stipulating in 1940 that there is no room in an independent India for two nations, the Muslims and the Hindus, C.S.] had found political expression" (Spear 1965: 231). History was to bear out the two-nations theory when, in the subsequent year, British India was partitioned. Thus, the potential for an immediate emergence of two-party competition after independence was minimised.

Other political forces also played a role in pre-independence party politics, making their presence felt in the period when independence was approaching and the ground was being paved for the formation of a new polity.¹³¹

The Communist movement had its early stirrings in the Indian trade union movement and in the form of Moscow-trained émigré groups during the early 20th century and formally established itself as the Indian Communist Party (ICP) in 1924. Reconstituted as Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1928, it was characterised by a chequered history of utter ideological contradictions during the nationalist movement and beyond (see also 2.2.5.). Never really sure where to position itself as an elite-based 'class' party in the context of colonial rule and traditional Indian society, receiving directives from the Comintern and in the midst of a popularly supported national struggle for independence represented by the INC, it initially opposed both the British colonial government and the INC-led nationalist movement. Banned by the British in 1934, it followed a theoretical line of supporting the 'nationalist bourgeoisie' and aligning with the INC or, rather, with its socialist wing,¹³² but soon started to denounce the INC's *swadeshi* movement¹³³, to sympathise with the British-Indian wartime home policy

¹³⁰ This unwillingness was most prominently expressed in Nehru's remark in a letter to Jinnah (around the time of the 1937 elections) that "(...) there are only two forces in India today, British imperialism and Indian nationalism as represented by the Congress" (quoted in Brecher 1959: 231). Jinnah is said to have responded, "No, there is a third party, the Mussulmans."

¹³¹ Only those political forces that became significant for national party system development after independence are dealt with here. Among the regional political groups/parties that emerged in the pre-independence period and gained (regional) prominence after independence were the Justice Party in Madras, the precursor of the later on electorally successful *Dravida Kazhagam* (DK) and *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam* (DMK) and the Unionist Party in Punjab.

¹³² This move was also based on the rationale of finding shelter from British governmental repression and in the hope of capturing the nationalist movement from within.

¹³³ The *swadeshi* movement launched by Gandhi sought to protest against British colonial policy by boycotting commodities, especially textiles, that were not Indian. The CPI denounced the movement as a bourgeois manoeuvre and started to express its solidarity with British workers by wearing British clothes.

and to agitate against Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement.¹³⁴ It was therefore compelled to leave the nationalist movement at the beginning of World War II. In 1948, after two groups had emerged within the CPI, fundamentally differing in their assessment of the transfer of power and the political system of independent India, the party took the aforementioned *Telengana* uprising (against the feudal autocracy of the *Nizam* (prince) of Hyderabad) as an opportunity (and revolutionary illusion) to declare a peasant guerrilla war.¹³⁵ Thus, at the time of India's independence the Communists had styled themselves as an anti-system force with a firm revolutionary stand against the 'imperialist bourgeoisie' as represented by the INC leadership, only to return to parliamentary or 'constitutional' communism shortly before the first general elections of 1952 after the tactics of armed struggle had largely failed (Alam 2002).¹³⁶

Another political force, which had gained early prominence in the pre-independence period and was to change its strategy in the critical years after independence, were the diverse strands of opinion and organisations identified with Hindu nationalism. The lineage of the 'Hindu Right' can be traced back to the Hindu reform movements of the late 19th century, notably the *Arya Samaj* (Jaffrelot 1996). A politically more salient manifestation of Hindu ideology emerged with the *Hindu Mahasabha* (HM, beginning as a protest movement against the Muslim League and soon gaining a reputation within the nationalist movement and providing prominent Congress leaders¹³⁷), especially when the Hindu ideologue V.D. Savarkar took up its leadership in 1937, and with the founding of the *Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) in 1925 by Keshav Balram Hedgewar. The latter, first established as a cultural organisation, soon developed into a highly-disciplined, cadre-based activist movement, which

¹³⁴ The 'Quit India' movement was one of Gandhi's last agitational moves to urge the British to leave the subcontinent. The CPI expressed solidarity with the British after Hitler had invaded Russia and the erstwhile 'fascist-imperialist war' had become a 'people's war' (Mehra 2003: 78).

¹³⁵ The CPI launched armed struggles in other parts of India as well. The *Telengana* uprising was only the most prominent.

¹³⁶ The ever-changing tactical line of the CPI towards the INC and the post-independent Indian state comes out best in the following three quotes from 1946, 1948 and 1958. In 1946 it was declared by the Central Committee under P.C. Joshi that "[o]ur tactical line is based on the approach that the political differences between us, the Congress and the League should not come in the way of cooperation between all – in people's common interest, which we are all pledged to safeguard and implement (...)" (CPI 1946: 148). In 1948, a 'Strategy and Tactics' document read as follows, "(...) the forms of struggle are determined by our strategic objective (...) The objective of overthrowing the bourgeoisie combined with the existence of revolutionary period and the rapidly moving revolutionary developments impose on us the military and revolutionary forms of struggle and organization" (CPI 1948: 257). In 1958 a new (draft) constitution (commonly known as Amritsar thesis) designed by then general secretary Ajoy Ghosh postulated that "[t]he CPI strives to achieve full democracy and socialism by peaceful means. It considers that by developing a powerful mass movement, by winning a majority in the parliament and by backing it with mass sanctions, the working class and its allies can overcome the resistance of forces of reaction and ensure that parliament becomes an instrument of people's will for effecting fundamental changes in economic, social and state structure" (CPI 1958).

¹³⁷ The HM had been expelled from the Congress in 1928 (see also 3.3.).

was to become the ideological and activist ‘backbone’ of Hindu nationalist party politics¹³⁸ in post-independent India though it “(...) professed non-involvement in politics (...) [as] a political strategy – its objective being political domination through cultural homogenisation” (Madan 1997: 225, quoted in Corbridge and Harriss 2000: 54). Following the assassination of Gandhi by Nataram Godse, a Hindu fanatic, who once was a *svayamsevak* (dedicated volunteer) of the RSS and was affiliated with the HM, both the RSS and the HM were banned. In 1951 the former president of the HM, P.J. Mookerjee, quit the interim government headed by Nehru, in which he was a cabinet minister, and founded the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh*, BJS (henceforth *Jana Sangh*, JS), which was to become one of the main opposition parties in the post-independent era and a political base for the RSS (Graham 1990).¹³⁹

The political groups and factions within the INC were also important before, and at the time of, independence for they indicated the “(...) evolution of a multi-stream and multi-ideology party” (Mehra 2003: 71) in the tradition of the early rift between the ‘Moderates’ and the ‘Extremists’. The INC was largely successful in giving its internal diversity an institutional shape (see 3.3.) thus holding together the fragile edifice of ideologies, personalities and power-groups. Here the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) is dealt with briefly, it being the only pre-independence political formation within the INC that was to prove of significance in party system development after independence.¹⁴⁰

The CSP was founded in 1934 by Jayaprakash Narayanan and Narendra Deva. Responding to the INC’s more emancipatory (socialist) Karachi resolution of 1931 (but going far beyond in its policy recommendations including for example abolition of the *zamindari* and extensive land reform) but also in reaction to the then more reconciliatory Gandhian stance towards institutional collaboration with the British (Rothermund 1965: 167-168), the CSP was soon to gain prominence as a progressive ‘quasi opposition’ to the ‘parallel government/body politics’ (parallel to the British administrative and government structure) as represented by the pyramidal (and increasingly centralist) INC apparatus (ibid. 164). Initially backed by Nehru’s

¹³⁸ The RSS to some extent constituted (and remains) the ‘mother organisation’ of the various Hindu nationalist and fundamentalist parties, organisations and ‘fronts’ that were later on referred to as the ‘Sangh family’ or *Sangh Parivar*.

¹³⁹ The political significance of the JS and the Hindu Right was not apparent in the period under examination when it was marginalised by Nehru and when secularism as the norm of India’s political system was ‘in full swing’. The successor of the JS, or rather its new *avatar*, the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), founded in 1980 after a brief interlude of ‘centrist politics’ as part of the *Janata Party* (JP), is currently (April 2004) the governing party of India at the helm of a multi-party coalition government.

¹⁴⁰ Other political formations within the INC included, for example, the *Swaraj Party* which dissented from the party line on the question of whether to take part in the provincial legislatures created under the 1919 constitution and the All India Forward Bloc created in 1939 by Subhash Chandra Bose in order to unite all left-wing anti-imperialist forces in the country and in protest to the ‘undemocratic’ politics of the INC. The *Swaraj Party* returned to the INC before independence and Bose left the country to pursue his ‘pseudo-fascist dream’ as the *Netaji* (Leader) of the Indian National Army.

strong socialist inclinations¹⁴¹, the CSP however, fell victim to the party's top leadership (Gandhi, Patel and also Nehru), which gave absolute priority to the nationalist cause and "(...) to the unity of the Congress in pursuit of that end" (Corbridge and Harriss (2000: 48), as well as to the more numerous, Patel-backed conservatives in the Working Committee (WC), the highest executive organ of the party commonly referred to as the (core of the) INC's 'High Command' (see 3.3.). However, the emergence of the CSP and its existence within the INC for a decade-and-a-half provided the INC with the valuable experience of dealing with internal opposition, pluralism and ideological conflict, thus enhancing its ability to hold differing interests within the party. The CSP was nevertheless forced to leave the INC in 1948 (see 3.3.), and its various 'successors', organised outside the INC and worn out by numerous splits and coalescence within the evolving socialist party spectrum, played a prominent role in inter-party competition in the country's post-independent party system (see 2.2.5).

Given the historical legacies and the multi-faceted character of the nationalist movement as sketched above, "(...) [t]he pace of events and the enormity of problems left little time for adjustment to the new role. From a nationalist movement to governing, from opposing and protesting to managing affairs of the state, it was an altogether new political ball game" (Mehra 1999: 239). A lot depended therefore on how quick, efficient and reconciliatory or, for that matter, 'accommodative' the Constituent Assembly would be in terms of coming up with an institutional framework, which would lay the foundation for the nascent polity.

INC dominance in the Constituent Assembly, during the meetings and debates from December 1946 to December 1949, was overwhelming. The formation of the Constituent Assembly (for undivided India) was based on indirect elections (July 1946) by members of the various provincial legislatures who themselves had been elected on the basis of a restricted electorate. 78 of the total 296 seats were reserved for Muslims and 5 for the Sikh community. The INC won 208 (69%) of the seats and the rest went mainly to the Muslim League.¹⁴² Soon after the election the Muslim League members decided to boycott the Assembly because of fears of Hindu domination in the Assembly, and, after partition, only 28 party representatives remained, raising the INC majority to 82% of the seats (Austin 1966: 9-

¹⁴¹ Nehru was however never a member of the CSP. Gandhi too had supported the CSP initially but could not reconcile to the CSP's more radical approach to the struggle for independence and the party's class-based approach to social transformation, which was diametrically opposed to his idea of 'trusteeship' (of upper-caste and capitalist 'trustees' using their wealth on behalf of the masses) as a basis for class conciliation.

¹⁴² However, there were also other parties and independents represented in the Constituent Assembly. Thus, the CPI won 1 seat, the Scheduled Caste Federation another, 3 seats each went to two regional parties from the Punjab and 8 seats went to independents.

10)¹⁴³. Thus, the Constituent Assembly was largely a one-party body acting, at the same time, as the (interim) Indian parliament.

As a result of the nationalist movement's broad and all-embracing character (but also due to the INC leadership's deliberate policy) the INC majority nevertheless reflected the diverse strands of opinion and ideology prevalent in Indian society, including representatives from all the country's minority communities - even though a Hindu upper caste (*Brahmins*, *Kayasthas*) and elitist bias was clearly discernible (Austin 1966: Appendix III).¹⁴⁴ Thus Austin, the author of (probably) the most sophisticated account of the framing of India's constitution, comes to the conclusion that "(...) the Constituent Assembly was a highly representative body" (ibid. 14), despite the limited franchise upon which it was elected. More important however, was the dominant influence and decision-making power of the (often disagreeing) 'tall men' of the INC leadership (especially Azad, then minister of the interim government's cabinet, Patel and Prasad, the Constituent Assembly's president, but, above all, Nehru) who constituted what Austin has termed the Assembly's 'oligarchy' (ibid. 18 f.).¹⁴⁵ Nehru's ideas on the future state (a compromise between a democratic and socialist/interventionist state with a strong central government) were clearly decisive in the framing of the constitution even though he was cautious to 'sell' them to the predominantly more conservative INC members of the Constituent Assembly as a jointly reached, conciliatory consensus.

Thus, when Nehru moved the INC's 'Resolution of Aims and Objectives' (a kind of 'directive' for the debates) in the Constituent Assembly, he declared that

"[t]his resolution is not a part of the Constitution that we are going to draw up and it must not be looked upon as such. It steers in between two extremes of saying too much and too little, and lays down only certain fundamentals which I believe no group, no party and hardly any individual in India can dispute (...) We have given the content of democracy in this Resolution and not only the content of democracy but the content, if I may say so, of economic democracy in this Resolution. Others might take objection to

¹⁴³ Later on, 93 representatives of the formerly princely states were added to the Constituent Assembly seats.

¹⁴⁴ Although there were no representatives of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party (former CSP) and the HM, their views were reflected among Congress members (Austin 1966: 14-15). The members of the minority communities of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Parsis, Anglo-Indians, and Indian Christians accounted for 37% of the membership of the Constituent Assembly (excluding the representatives of the princely states).

¹⁴⁵ As Austin notes, "[a]n Assembly member [Brajeshwar Prasad, C.S.] was not greatly exaggerating the esteem in which his colleagues held these men [Nehru, Patel, Prasad and Azad, C.S.] when he said that the government rested 'in the hands of those who (were) utterly incapable of doing any wrong to the people'. The oligarchy's influence was nearly irresistible, yet the Assembly decided issues democratically after genuine debate, for it was made up of strong-minded men and the leaders themselves were peculiarly responsive" (Austin 1966: 21-22).

this Resolution on the ground that we have not said it should be a Socialist State. Well, I stand for Socialism and, I hope, India will stand for Socialism and that India will go towards the construction of a Socialist State (...) But the main thing is that in such a Resolution, if, in accordance with my own desire, I had put it in, that we want a Socialist State, we would have put in something which may be agreeable to many and may not be agreeable to some and we wanted this Resolution not to be controversial in regard to such matters” (CAD, I, 1947: 59, 64).¹⁴⁶

Such was the spirit, in which the Assembly debates were opened. What the concrete results were of the debates in terms of the institutional arrangement is what the chapter turns to next. The following section deals with the setting of institutional boundaries, within which the post-independent Indian party system would eventually take shape.

2.1.2. The polity: the setting of institutional boundaries

Though constitutional norms and constitutional reality tend to drift apart, and party system formation and functioning are tied to more informal arrangements and social processes, and in any case are heavily dependent on the impact of party agency (following the main thrust of reasoning within this study), some constitutional or institutional provisions (can) have a structural impact on the configuration of, and patterns of interaction within, the party system - basically *qua* party elites’ perception.¹⁴⁷

The Indian constitution, adopted on 26 November 1949 and coming into force on 26 January 1950 (GoI 1950a), envisaged a democratic, parliamentary and federal republic. Despite considerable disagreement within the Constituent Assembly, especially over how to reconcile parliamentary democracy with the socio-cultural heterogeneity and traditions of Indian society, the INC-dominated Assembly opted for the continuation of the British-induced Westminster parliamentarism. The fundamentals of which were at hand in the form of the 1935 Government of India Act. Possible alternatives such as some reference to Gandhian principles of a more indirect form of representative democracy, an extreme decentralisation and devolution of powers based on a system of a myriad of ‘village republics’ and on doing away with the central bureaucracy, were soon discarded.

¹⁴⁶ As late as 1976, the terms ‘Socialist’ and ‘Secular’ were incorporated into the definition of the republic in the constitution’s preamble by the Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act (GoI 1976).

¹⁴⁷ See 3.2. for a discussion of the relationship between institutions and political actors.

However, as this section reveals, several important ‘aberrations’ occurred, and modifications were made to the British parliamentary model, modifications that were designed to take into account the specifics of Indian society.

The Indian electoral system is a relatively clear-cut case of institutional continuity for it followed the outlines of the British Westminster model gradually introduced by the colonial rulers from 1909 onwards. Both the lower house of the national Parliament, the *Lok Sabha*, as well as the Legislative Assemblies (*Vidhan Sabhas*) in the Indian States are elected every fifth year according to the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system through single-member constituencies (GoI 1950a: Articles 81 and 331, GoI 1950b: Act No. 43 of 1950)¹⁴⁸ or, in the words of Duverger (1954: 239), by means of the ‘single-member simple-plurality system’ (SMSP).¹⁴⁹

The (public) justification for the decision to keep the British model of constituency-based plurality voting with its winner-takes-all logic¹⁵⁰ and in-built necessity to mobilise electoral support locally, was the need to secure governmental stability in a country of such vast cultural heterogeneity and social complexity as India.¹⁵¹ The ‘rationalising effect’ on the party system that the plurality system of voting entails was of course a decisive institutional factor, responsible for the fact that general elections in India never produced anything else than ‘manufactured majorities’ (see 1.3.). This greatly benefited the INC though, only as long as the INC could preserve its social inclusiveness and cohesion, and the opposition remained fragmented.¹⁵²

Lok Sabha seats are, in general, allotted to the States in proportion to their population and voting takes place in constituencies of considerably varying size (several *Vidhan Sabha*

¹⁴⁸ There had been several multi-member constituencies for the general elections of 1952 and 1957, largely for administrative reasons such as the States reorganisation in the 1950’s and beyond, but all multi-member constituencies ceased to exist from 1962 onwards. In the elections of 1952 and 1957 there had also been double-member constituencies for both general and Scheduled Castes (SC) or Scheduled Tribes (ST) candidates.

¹⁴⁹ Up to 1971 *Lok Sabha* and *Vidhan Sabha* elections took place at the same time.

¹⁵⁰ The translation of votes into seats in an SMSP system is quite simple. The seat goes to the contestant who gets more votes than any other. Thus, when there are several candidates contesting, either party candidates or independents, a seat can be won on a remarkably small percentage. Indeed, there is no clear relation between the proportion of votes and the proportion of seats a party secures in parliament.

¹⁵¹ Nehru once stated that he could not imagine a weaker government than one elected on the basis of proportional representation (quoted in Morris-Jones 1957: 84); see 3.2. for a different interpretation of the choice for a plurality system.

¹⁵² Opposition fragmentation in India has been measured by the ‘Index of Opposition Unity’ (IOU) developed by Lahiri and Roy (1984). It refers to the extent, to which the parties in opposition to the INC have combined to avoid their votes being wasted (as a result of the winner-take-it-all logic of the SMSP system; opposition unity can be either achieved by forming an alliance or by seat adjustment). It is calculated as the (constituency level) votes of the largest party opposition party as a percentage of the total opposition votes. The IOU was 67 in 1962 and 1967 (it was not calculated before 1962 due to the unavailability of reliable constituency level data) and is therefore not that much of relevance for the period under examination here as well as for the purpose of this study. However, the fact that the IOU rose from 62 in 1962 to 90 in 1977 (when the *Janata* opposition coalition replaced the INC in office) clearly indicates the significance of opposition fragmentation for explaining the INC’s electoral success under the SMSP electoral system (Butler, Lahiri and Roy 1995: 31, based on constituency level data).

constituencies normally form one *Lok Sabha* constituency). Local government or the *panchayati raj* as it is known in India (a system of directly elected village, subdistrict, and district councils), was only slowly introduced in the country and its implementation, largely a prerogative of State legislation until the 73rd Amendment Act of 1993, was far from uniform.¹⁵³ However, the constituency-based SMSP system makes it imperative for politicians and party entrepreneurs to engineer pre-election alliances and to build coalitions locally (Chhibber 1999: 54). The local level is therefore of great significance in Indian electoral politics.

The management of elections (delimitation of constituencies, examination of nominations, supervision of polling etc.) is the task of an independent Election Commission organised at the central, State and constituency level.¹⁵⁴ The *Lok Sabha* and the State assembly elections can be entered into by candidates who are affiliated with and have received the ticket to run on behalf of a political party, but also by independent candidates. Although independent candidates regularly outnumber party candidates, the Election Commission of India's statistics indicate a far greater electoral success of party-affiliated candidates across the board.¹⁵⁵ Anti-defection regulations were not applied until 1985 (see 3.2.) and floor crossing was and remains a prominent phenomenon of Indian parliamentary politics.¹⁵⁶

A special feature of the Indian electoral system is the reservation of legislative seats for the aforementioned 'Scheduled Castes' (SC), the former 'untouchables', and the 'Scheduled Tribes' (ST) or *adivasi* as they are also referred to (GoI 1950a: Article 330 (2)). Whereas any provision for 'communal constituencies' (religiously separated electorates) had been abandoned after independence, these underprivileged sections of Indian society were granted preferential treatment (roughly proportional to their numbers in the population; 15% and 7.5% respectively following the 1961 census) for the sake of uplifting their participation and representation in parliament. Immediately after independence, those constituencies with more

¹⁵³ By 1959, after the Balwantrai Mehta Parliamentary Committee had recommended and stressed the need for decentralisation and the creation of representative bodies at the local level (endowed with a measure of administrative autonomy, charged with some developmental functions, and given some financial means), all of the States had passed *panchayati* acts but it took years for local government to be established (by the mid-1960's there were *panchayats* in all parts of the country) and a uniform pattern of local government was established as late as 1993.

¹⁵⁴ A constituency-based SMSP system is probably the one electoral system most prone to gerrymandering (the partisan drawing of constituencies in favour of a particular party) for only slight changes in constituency boundaries can have serious effects on the electoral outcome. However, as Butler, Lahiri and Roy (1995: 15) have shown on the basis of partisan support over differently sized constituencies "(...) no party has gained any significant advantage by the unevenness of constituency size."

¹⁵⁵ Statistics available at: www.eci.gov.in.

¹⁵⁶ In 1985, the Rajiv Gandhi government introduced anti-defection legislation (excluding bulk defection) in the form of the Tenth Schedule to the Indian Constitution by the Constitution (Fifty-second Amendment) Act, 1985 (GoI 1985).

than 50% SC/ST electorate were automatically 'reserved'. In other cases, double-member seats were created. After the latter ceased to exist (1961), those areas with large SC/ST concentrations were taken into consideration when the constituencies' boundaries were delimited.

Except for the first general election, when no objective criterion such as former electoral performance was available, the Election Commission decided and supervised the recognition of 'national parties' along specified criteria. For the second general election the four parties that received more than 3% of the nation-wide vote were recognised as national parties (parties that won over 3% of the vote in the State elections were recognised as 'State parties'). After 1957, the concept of a national party was abandoned temporarily. Recognition was granted State-wise to parties, which had polled 3% both in the *Lok Sabha* contests at the State and at the *Vidhan Sabha* elections. Prior to the fourth general election in 1967 the requirement of winning 3% of the vote in both elections was discarded. The new criterion introduced was a percentage of votes either in the preceding Lok Sabha or in the preceding *Vidhan Sabha* elections with a cut-off point of 4% of the votes (Butler, Lahiri and Roy 1995: 20).¹⁵⁷

In sum, the Indian electoral system introduced after independence encouraged the concentration of the party system (as a result of the electoral favourisation for those parties capable of winning a mandate in a constituency) and a concomitant, disproportionate translation of votes into seats. It reinforced the need for local mobilisation and alliance-building, 'penalised' opposition fragmentation and inhibited independent minority (party) political representation (as opposed to a PR system with a low threshold for parliamentary representation). The fact that no anti-defection regulation existed in the period under examination gave Indian electoral and parliamentary politics a rather fluid complexion and rationale.

At the heart of India's parliamentary system, in line with the Westminster model, are the prime minister and his cabinet. Although executive power is formally vested in the president, it is here where the real power of governance lies. The president appoints the prime minister and is also authorised to dismiss him. However, by convention, these powers are severely circumscribed and presidential authority is exercised as advised by the prime minister.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Today, 'national parties' are such parties, which are registered with and recognised as such by the Election Commission of India according to standards set by the Commission. The latter state that a party is classified as national, if it either obtains 4% of the vote or 3.3 % of seats in elections to at least four State assemblies or 4 % of the vote/seats in elections to the national assembly from at least four States; see www.eci.gov.in/ge1999/parties/index.htm.

¹⁵⁸ When there are no clear parliamentary majorities, the scope of the president's powers naturally grows. Then, his power to invite the leader of the majority party or coalition in the *Lok Sabha* to form the government gains special importance. Otherwise, his function is that of a ceremonial head comparable to the British monarch.

Thus, the extensive powers vested in the president are in fact put into effect by the prime minister who, with the ministers, controls and co-ordinates the departments of government and determines policy through submitting a program for parliamentary action. In addition, he can dissolve the parliament with relative ease (there are no serious constitutional limitations in that regard) but if defeated on any major issue or, if a no-confidence motion is passed, he must, by the conventions of cabinet government, resign (GoI 1950a: respective articles).¹⁵⁹ Among the most important presidential powers, which are actually the prime minister's, are the authority to suspend fundamental rights and declare a state of emergency under Article 352, to impose the president's rule in a State, under which the president assumes executive power over the State's administration and the State is ruled directly by the union executive (Article 356)¹⁶⁰, with a provision for financial emergency under Article 360, which has not been tried so far (GoI 1950a: respective articles). Article 352 has been applied only once under Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977, the (in)famous period of the Emergency. Emergency powers vested in the president under Article 356 have been tested very often and have given the central government considerable leverage over State politics. Designed to be used in times of crisis¹⁶¹, this article gives the central government a powerful tool that has often been used in a partisan manner (see section 3.2.). These presidential powers were largely a legacy of the (needs of) colonial government.

The Indian parliament, comprising two houses, the *Lok Sabha*, the lower house, and the *Rajya Sabha*, the Council of States or 'upper house', is the supreme lawmaking body of the federal government and can make laws on a wide variety of subjects mentioned in the seventh schedule of the constitution under the 'Union List' (see below). The rationale behind establishing a bicameral legislature (to have an institution to perform a 'federal role'¹⁶²) was of course seriously compromised in the period under examination, when the INC dominated both Houses, and the *Rajya Sabha* was often dismissed as a 'talking shop'.

However, unlike his British counterpart the president is elected indirectly on the basis of a proportional representation formula (GoI 1950a: Articles 54 and 55) by an electoral college comprising all Members of Parliament/*Lok Sabha* (MP's) and all Members of Legislative Assemblies/*Vidhan Sabhas* (MLA's).

¹⁵⁹ Not all articles are listed separately for the sake of clarity.

¹⁶⁰ Under the supervision of the (non-elected) governor, who is the president's representative in the States.

¹⁶¹ The article stipulates that president's rule can be declared on demand of a State's governor's claim that the State can no longer be governed in an orderly manner (according to the constitution).

¹⁶² Apart from providing a supply of additional political offices and additional opportunity for debate. However, even though a bill must be passed by both houses, in view of its larger size, the *Lok Sabha* plays a dominant role in joint sessions. In matters relating to money bills, the *Lok Sabha* has exclusive authority anyway; the *Rajya Sabha* may only recommend changes; it cannot initiate, delay, or reject. In view of the limited powers available to the *Rajya Sabha*, Morris-Jones (1989: 232) has rightly concluded that "(...) the justification for the RS [*Rajya Sabha*] has always been in terms of 'second thoughts' rather than 'states rights'."

The same assessment could have been applied in the time of INC dominance to the *Lok Sabha*, whose role is confined largely to the scrutiny of legislation for its technical aspects anyway, because, reflecting the conventions of Westminster parliamentary democracy, most of the initiative for legislation lies with the cabinet. However, as Morris-Jones, an astute observer of Indian parliamentarism, had written shortly after the death of Nehru: “(...) here is a particular kind of one-dominant-party regime which is perfectly compatible with strong parliamentary institutions” (Morris-Jones 1964: 307).

It may be useful here to reflect briefly on the effects on party system development ascribed to parliamentarism in the literature.¹⁶³ In presidential systems competition for a single, indivisible office, executive independence and the executive’s plebiscitarian legitimation is said to lessen incentives for party discipline and party system institutionalisation and to contribute to the party system’s polarisation. Parliamentary cabinet systems in contrast have been attributed with having a positive effect on a party system’s capacity for compromise and consolidation because of the power-political pressure to engineer parliamentary majorities and the depersonalised appointment of the executive. However, this correlation is based on the implicit assumption that there are several (or at least two) parties capable of obtaining a majority and neglects the dependence of institutional mechanisms on the *dramatis personae* of a given representative democracy’s institutional arrangement.

Thus, parliamentarism in post-independent India started life on the basis of a clear, one-sided party power configuration. The competitive ‘infrastructure’, which is the premise upon which the Westminster model holds the executive accountable, was confined to one, dominant party. Consequently, there was no (urgent) need to evoke a culture of compromise/coalition and party discipline. On the contrary, to ensure a functional equivalent for a weak opposition the internal pluralism or factionalism within the dominant party had to perform a sort of ‘watchdog role’, controlling the executive’s decision-making power.¹⁶⁴ In this regard, the

¹⁶³ The following paragraph draws from Lijphart (1991a).

¹⁶⁴ Kothari (1994: 303) termed this aspect of India’s nascent parliamentarism, a “structural adaptation” of a dominant party to the requirements of a parliamentary democracy in an asymmetrical situation of political competition. “The challenge of structural adaptation was basic; the Congress party had to replace its traditional emphasis (during the movement) on discipline and hierarchy by permitting in its scheme a new style of integration that was based on internal competition and elite turnover.” Of course, the Indian constitution also laid down the principle of judicial review of parliamentary legislation under the auspices of a Supreme Court, designed to be the interpreter and guardian of the constitution. Unlike the British system, where no court may hold an Act of Parliament invalid, all legislation passed in India by the center or the states must be in conformity with the constitution, and the constitutionality of any enactment is determined under the power of judicial review by the Supreme Court. However, as Mitra (1996: 671) asserts, “[T]he leaders of the new republic deeply steeped in the parliamentary tradition, sought to undertake major reforms in the structure of the society and the economy. That was part of the British legacy that India wanted to emulate. The result of the conciliation of these two contradictory principles was a judicial system that is both independent from external control and free to interpret the law. Originally it was intended to be supreme only within the “procedure established by law,” and law itself

interdependence of government and parliament, inherent in Westminster parliamentarism, offered an institutional incentive for factional leaders to adhere to political exchange deals and informal arrangements. In any case, the Nehru- (and Shastri-) led INC elite's commitment to a "collective leadership" (Mitra 1996: 697) and to a general compliance with the procedures and traditions of parliamentary rule, counteracted a more authoritarian use of the executive's room to manoeuvre and facilitated parliamentary oversight over the executive (though, to a certain extent only).¹⁶⁵ The willingness to compromise and to accommodate, the compliance with 'coalitional' (read factional) agreements inherent to the Congress system (4.3.) were therefore due to the dominant party's internal pluralism and factional structure rather than to the institutional mechanisms of the Westminster-based parliamentarism.¹⁶⁶

Another important constitutional/institutional feature of post-independent India's evolving structure of governance at independence was the strong emphasis on economic planning and policy-making and the state's far-reaching, interventionist role in all areas of social and economic life. Although non-justiciable, the 'Directive Principles of State Policy' enshrined in the constitution (GoI 1950a: Part IV, Articles 36-51) postulated in essence that "(...) the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic, and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life" (Article 38). To some extent this "(...) made the constitution a policy document" (Chhibber 1999: 25) and the state an agent of social and economic change.¹⁶⁷ This was to have lasting consequences. On the one hand, nothing other than an economic approach of planned development, for which there was widespread political support¹⁶⁸, was conceived of as necessary to guide the country's economic and developmental

is the domain of the legislature, which, on numerous occasions, has vehemently defended its exclusive right to legislate."

¹⁶⁵ In that regard, the parliamentary system enabled the members of the parliamentary majority to exert a greater influence and to express dissent more freely than would have been the case under a presidential system; see also Khan (1994: 100 f.).

¹⁶⁶ The 'disciplinary effect' of a parliamentary system normally takes effect only with an 'uncertain' distribution of parliamentary power. Where, as in the case of the Congress system, clear parliamentary majorities (even though having been 'manufactured majorities') determine decision-making, party discipline is the result of resolving (pre-electoral) factional conflicts and only minimally tied to voting behaviour in parliament. As Sartori (1994: 113) once declared: "I cannot think of any party system that has evolved into a veritable "system" made of strong, organization-based mass parties on the basis of *internal* parliamentary learning."

¹⁶⁷ The directive principles as well as the fundamental rights appear in the constitution as separate entities. Whereas the latter define the negative obligations of the state and are justiciable, the former define the state's positive obligations (Austin 1966: 51-52) and had been taken in thereupon as an entitlement to the state's continuous expansion and interventionism.

¹⁶⁸ The INC's left wing had established a National Planning Committee, chaired by Nehru, in 1937 already. Interestingly, as Chatterjee (1994: 53) notes, for the centrist group within the pre-independence INC "(...) planning was not only a part of the anticipation of power by the state leadership of the Congress, it was also an anticipation of the concrete forms in which that power would be exercised within a national state." Even members of the nascent group of Indian industrialists and the business community recommended the creation of a national planning committee "(...) under the authority of the central government" (Thakurdas et al. quoted in

trajectory. As a result, a Planning Commission was formed in March 1950, initially headed by the prime minister and established as an institutional body remaining largely “(...) outside the formal constitutional framework” (Kaviraj 1996: 88). Shortly afterwards, “(...) the Secretary of the Planning Commission also served as a Cabinet Secretary, which gave the Commission a unique position in the bureaucracy” (Varshney 1998a: 51). Conceived by the technocrats of the Commission, national planning was under the guidance of key members of the central cabinet and the State executive heads who constituted the National Development Council (NDC), which “(...) was charged with the task of balancing the needs of growth with the imperative of social justice and redistribution” (Mitra 1996: 685). Henceforth, the idea of planning and its institutional underpinnings became a prime device for (central) state interventionism, even compromising the country’s federal structure to the extent that the Planning Commission, in effect, superseded the Finance Commission in its genuine task of co-ordinating shared taxes and distributing grants-in-aid (see below). On the other hand, the development ideology laid down in the Directive Principles was responsible for a continuous expansion of the state in ever larger areas of social and economic life. The state’s pervasive role in public sector employment, domination of industrial relations (labour and business organisations), establishing a ‘quota-permit-*raj*’¹⁶⁹, disbursement of developmental programmes, setting up Development Corporations in the countryside, determining educational policies etc., and a concomitant low level of associational life and independent interest group representation (Chhibber 1999: 51 f., Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 255 f.), made the state the ultimate arbiter in all matters related to the access to crucial state resources, developmental benefits or interest representation. Thus, planning and the accompanying state expansionism and interventionism cut both ways. It gave the governing party a readymade tool with which to intervene in State and local politics, whenever it was deemed necessary, and facilitated the practice of the politics of patronage.

In sum, Indian parliamentarism is a relatively clear-cut manifestation of its British Westminster counterpart (and antecedent), characterised by executive dominance and additionally underpinned by the presidential emergency powers. The second chamber’s powers are limited. However, the strong incentive for the Westminster cabinet government to use its executive authority to stifle dissent was counteracted by the internal pluralism, factional diversity and a relatively low salience of party discipline in the dominant party. The

Austin 1966: 236) in their manifesto ‘A Plan of Economic Development for India’ published in 1945 and commonly known as the ‘Bombay Plan’.

¹⁶⁹ A ‘quota-permit-*raj*’ is a regime based on the disbursement of state largesse, such as quotas for commodities whose supply is controlled by the government, and the giving of permits to set up industries or run specific businesses for which government permission is needed.

strong emphasis on the state's developmental obligation (as laid down in the Directive Principles) made state expansionism and interventionism (through the Planning Commission) a predominant feature of the evolving post-independent Indian polity.

The third and final aspect of India's organisation of government considered here to be a relevant institutional incentive for party system formation is the nature and form in which the post-independent polity embraced the federal principle.

Following the provincial system laid down in the 1935 Government of India Act and against the backdrop of "(...) the political realities associated with building support across a vast nation with many different interests" (Chhibber 1999: 28), the Indian constitution provided for a federal system with a fair degree of State autonomy. However, as A.R. Kidwai brought to my mind (personal interview, see references), since the federal arrangement was the result of a top-down imposition, the constitution (GoI 1950a: Article 1) had chosen to declare that "India, that is *Bharat*, shall be a Union of States", not a federal republic. A three-tier system was envisaged based on a separation of powers or rather, a division of authority between the central or Union, regional or State, and local level of governmental units.¹⁷⁰ However, as in South Africa (see 2.2.2.) Indian federalism features strong centralist tendencies. Largely a result of the turmoil produced by partition, this was also a reflection of the national leadership's fear of separatism and 'balkanisation', the centralist traditions of the pre-independence provincial system and the perceived need for a central authority capable of guiding the country's developmental trajectory. These centralist elements inherent in Indian federalism (as described below), compensated to some extent by the 'federal' bargaining within the Congress system (see 3.2. and 4.3.), have encouraged early scholarly observers to describe the Indian polity as being "quasi-federal" (Wheare 1956: 28). Others have termed it, more accurately, a "co-operative federalism" (Austin 1966: 187).¹⁷¹ As Ambedkar, the Scheduled Caste leader and chief architect of the Indian constitution, had stated when introducing the draft constitution to the Constituent Assembly, Indian federalism avoided a "(...) tight mold of federalism" - like the US-style 'competitive federalism' - and could be "(...) both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of time and circumstances" (CAD, VII, 1948: 33-34).

¹⁷⁰ As already mentioned in the discussion of the electoral system, the introduction and implementation of local government was an uneven process. In general, *panchayati raj* or local government is a three-tier system again comprising the district (*zilla parishad*), the village (*gram panchayat*) and connecting level (*samiti*). The shape and name of this arrangement however varies across States.

¹⁷¹ Austin is following Birch's (1955: 306) definition of 'co-operative federalism' as "(...) the practice of administrative cooperation between general and regional governments, the partial dependence of the regional governments upon payments from the general governments, and the fact that the general governments, by the use of conditional grants, frequently promote developments in matters which are constitutionally assigned to the regions."

With regard to the territorial restructuring of the administrative map inherited by the British, a critical and thorny process of mutual give and take had set in at independence. The challenge of the States' territorial reorganisation, which dominated Indian politics especially between 1953 and 1956¹⁷², saw the central government facing popular pressures and agitation for separate linguistic statehood from various corners of the country.

The decision to redraw State boundaries was reached at only reluctantly. Although the INC had embraced a general commitment to reorganising the States along the criteria of language before independence (and had adopted the linguistic principle for its provincial branches in 1921), the fears of subnationalist tendencies erupting and potentially endangering the process of national integration, loomed large among the national leadership. Finding expression in the recommendations of the Dar Commission and the 'JVP' Committee¹⁷³, both dealt with the question of how to reconcile administrative efficiency, national unity and the country's linguistic heterogeneity. The integration of the 562 princely states had been barely completed when the issue of States reorganisation gained prominence. After the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953 following massive popular protest, the third and largest investigation of the problem by the 'States Reorganisation Commission' ultimately brought forth a resolution in the form of the States Reorganisation Act, reducing the 27 States of the Indian Union (former Governor's provinces, princely states, unions of states, centrally administered areas) to 14 States and 6 Union Territories (the States included Assam (split into Assam and Nagaland in 1963), Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Bombay, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras (later on renamed Tamil Nadu), Mysore (later on renamed Karnataka), Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). In 1960 Bombay was divided into the two States of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Finally, in 1966, with the partition of Punjab into the two States of Punjab and Haryana, the linguistic reorganisation of Indian States was complete for the time being.¹⁷⁴

The division of powers between the central government and the States is defined in the seventh schedule of the constitution (GoI 1950a: Part XI).¹⁷⁵ The 'Union List' provides the centre with the exclusive authority to act in areas of national importance. As the longest list,

¹⁷² For a detailed account of the States' linguistic reorganisation providing insights into the national leadership's, especially Nehru's line of reasoning and changing attitude, see King (1997).

¹⁷³ Comprising then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, INC stalwart and deputy prime minister Vallabhbhai Patel and then party president Patabhi Sitaramayya.

¹⁷⁴ The redrawing of State boundaries is an ongoing process in India and remains a tool in the hands of the central government which has often been used to meet subnationalist (ethnic or linguistic) demands (apart from the integration of former colonies such as Goa and the integration of the former Indian protectorate of Sikkim). Currently, there are 29 States of the Indian Union (including the National Capital Territory of Delhi) and 6 Union Territories.

¹⁷⁵ The following paragraphs draw on Mitra (1996: 665 f.).

including 97 items, it gives the centre control over issues such as defense, foreign affairs, currency, banking duties, and income taxation. The 'State List', consisting of 66 items, deals with issues of more local and regional importance such as public order and police, welfare, health, education, local government, industry, agriculture, and land revenue. Finally, the 'Concurrent List', containing 47 items (e.g. issues relating to civil and criminal law and social and economic planning), falls under the joint jurisdiction of the centre and the States. In case of a conflict with regard to the latter list, *Lok Sabha* legislation takes precedence over State law. Residual power lies with the Union. Apart from the fact that the most crucial domains of legislative competence fall under the Union List, under specific circumstances (as laid down in Articles 256, 257 and 365 of the constitution), the Union Executive can also assume authority over the States' executive and legislative domains (Hardgrave and Kochanek 1993: 129). The most important unitary feature of Indian federalism however, are the emergency powers of the president, described above, which allow the central government to assume executive power in a State.

Finally, the centre's right to intervene in the federal division of powers is additionally buttressed by the constitution's provisions relating to fiscal federalism. The central government has the final voice in determining the rate and levels of taxation and has vast influence over the collection and distribution of revenue making the States heavily dependent on the central government for financial support. Most of the more lucrative taxes like income tax, corporate tax, and customs and excise duties are collected by the central government. The centre shares the funds collected from income tax with the States under a formula devised by the independent Finance Commission, which is appointed by the president every five years to examine financial relations between the centre and the States. The States also have their own (limited) sources of income. However, taxes such as land revenue or irrigation taxes have not been particularly rewarding. Agricultural income is notoriously difficult to ascertain and for political reasons, the States have always been reluctant to levy taxes related to agricultural income. As a result of these provisions of fiscal federalism, the States have been routinely short of funds. These shortfalls have been met through central assistance in the form of loans, grants-in-aid, and overdraft facilities, mechanisms that have compromised the autonomy of the States and have often been used by the central government in a partisan manner. This has been reinforced by the centralising tendencies inherent in the national Five-Year Plans.

Hardgrave and Kochanek (1993: 131) have summed up the unitary features of Indian federalism as, "(...) the constitutional right of the central government to invade the legislative and executive domain of the states; the power of the Center to intervene in state affairs and

exercise supervisory powers over the states; and the heavy dependence of the states on central financial assistance, both for their regular budgetary needs as well as for capital expenditures.”¹⁷⁶ However, the central government in turn depends heavily upon the willingness and capacity of the State governments to implement centrally devised policies. Given the importance of regional political leaders in mobilising electoral support for the ruling party at the national level, especially in the period under examination when the INC ruled nationally and in all the States, it has often restrained from imposing its will and directives on the States. In sum, Indian federalism was characterised by strong unitary features. The State’s legislative and executive powers were seriously compromised by the centre’s emergency powers (both executive and legislative) and the asymmetry of fiscal federalism in India. The interplay of the centre’s authority to redraw State boundaries and the pressures of regional demands has produced a turbulent and chequered process of territorial restructuring in the country’s federal arrangement. However, for administrative reasons the States retained relative autonomy. This autonomy, combined with the extent and complexity of Indian society’s ‘regional’ nature, gave the incentives for a regionalisation of the Indian party system. The role of local government in the period under examination remained inconclusive.

Table 2: Summary of India’s main institutional features

Electoral System	first-past-the-post system on the basis of single member constituencies, reservation of legislative seats for the socially underprivileged (SC and ST), independent candidates can contest elections, recognition of national and regional parties, no anti-defection regulations
Form of Government	clear-cut Westminster-based parliamentarism, strong presidential emergency powers, bicameral parliament with limited power for the upper house, extensive list of Fundamental Rights and (non-justiciable) socially emancipatory Directive Principles, Planning Commission and emphasis on state interventionism,
Decentralisation of the Polity	three-tier system of government, provincial powers restricted, Union Executive may assume executive authority over States, co-operative federalism with strong unitary features, asymmetrical fiscal federalism, uneven introduction and implementation of local government

¹⁷⁶ Other unitary features of Indian federalism include the authority of the central government, acting through parliament, to create new States, to alter the boundaries of existing ones, and even to abolish a state by ordinary legislative procedure without recourse to constitutional amendment; the all-India framework of administrative services; and the national police force.

As shown by this brief discussion of institutional boundaries, within which India's post-independent political and party elites were to operate, institutional mechanisms do not affect the party and political system in a clear-cut, deterministic way and manner, and its effects cannot be assessed in isolation. Social variables, including the country's demographic and societal characteristics, and of course the various original and flexible ways in which party and political elites manoeuvre in response to a given institutional framework do count. The next section therefore turns to the social make-up and political culture of the country's electorate in the period under examination.

2.1.3. The electorate: Socio-structural givens and political predispositions

According to the cleavage approach to party system formation, the cleavage structure of a given society, tied as it is to its social characteristics and processes of social change, is the most important determinant of party system formation and development. Where one relevant cleavage determines the social structure, it is assumed, the party system tends to develop a bipolar alignment. Reality usually looks different and is more complex. Even in deeply divided societies such as India or South Africa, party system formation often defies the basic assumption of the cleavage-based line of reasoning.¹⁷⁷ This is not to deny that the cleavage structure has implications for the way in which the party system unfolds, but that it is up to parties and party elites to decide how they act and react against a backdrop of social cleavages and societal characteristics that confront them in a given context. Therefore, it is necessary to outline these cleavages and characteristics to determine the space available to political parties in their effort to mould the party system in their interest. The following, brief depiction of the Indian electorate after independence, will highlight the nature of the country's cleavage structure, the salient features of its (emerging) political culture and the prevalence of clientelist traditions inherent in Indian society.

The most salient feature of the Indian electorate at independence (and beyond) was its polymorphous and dynamic character. After the partition of British India had stripped the religious antagonism between Hindus and Muslims of a good deal of its rationale, the extreme extent of fragmentation in Indian society and of the constant shifting and appearance of (new) social as well as cultural parameters, was revealed.

¹⁷⁷ As already mentioned in 1.5., following the cleavage approach, the Indian party system should have developed differently.

There was no ‘organic’ majority at the national level that could have fostered the pursuit of an exclusive strategy of electoral mobilisation or the emergence of a nation-wide foundation of social identity and party identification. The religious communities, above all the Hindu community, were cross-cut by linguistic and ethnic divides (apart from the Hindi-non-Hindi divide, which roughly corresponds to the North-South division and constitutes some kind of overarching cleavage with the potential to be reflected in the national party system, see 5.2.).¹⁷⁸

Ethnic and language groups again fell into a plethora of castes/*jati*¹⁷⁹, which most often formed the true or only basis of social interaction and identity, and were increasingly divided along class lines. On top of this, cleavages were geographically bound thus bringing with it varying patterns of social and political confrontation and conflict. Thus, for example, the most salient cleavage in Kashmir and Punjab was/is religion; in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar caste; in the North-East, ethnicity; in Tamil Nadu, regional identity and language; “(...) and in some of the industrial cities as well as parts of the countryside, class” (Thakur 1995: 222).¹⁸⁰ Socio-economic disparities surfaced within religious, linguistic or ethnic groups rather than between those groups (the case of caste divides was different in that regard, especially in the countryside. Here, caste rank and rural economic status were roughly correlated).¹⁸¹ Table 3 below gives a rough indication of the socio-cultural complexity of Indian society.

¹⁷⁸ India’s linguistic heterogeneity is rather complex. Although the vast majority of people speak one of the fourteen languages recognised by the constitution, the 1951 census identified 845 languages or dialects spoken.

¹⁷⁹ As commonly known, the caste system follows the four-fold division (*varna*) of Indian society into *Brahmin* (scholar-priest), *Kshatriya* (warrior), *Vaishya* (merchant) and *Sudra* (peasants and labourers). In reality, however, this classification is almost meaningless, or misleading at least, for it papers over the “(...) baffling complexity of ‘microcaste’ divisions” (Thakur 1995: 7). The appropriate social category when dealing with the Indian caste system is the geographically and linguistically bound *jati*, a relational category of social identity originally linked to occupational background and ranging in size from a few hundred to millions.

¹⁸⁰ For Lijphart (1996: 262-263) this geographical boundedness of cleavages and within-group stratification in India was one of the crucial preconditions for the consociational nature of political bargaining among the country’s post-independent political elite (see 5.4.). Anyway, it is reasonable to suggest that the social differentiation within the diverse religious, ethnic or linguistic groups counteracted against the rise of perceptions of “relative deprivation” (Gurr 1970) between these groups; see also 4.2.

¹⁸¹ However, patterns of caste distribution in rural India varied significantly from region to region. Whereas in the North, East, and Northwest castes are relatively evenly distributed with (more or less) a preponderance of rural households in the upper and middle castes, in the Southern, central and Western regions, the upper and middle castes were only a small minority and the rural population in the South is overwhelmingly low caste (Headrick 1973: 563). Meanwhile, the nature of caste divisions as well as their role in electoral competition have changed dramatically due to policies of positive discrimination of the lower castes initiated by the early INC governments.

Table 3: Selected indicators of socio-cultural differentiation in India (% of total)

Language (Census 1951)		Religion (Census 1951)		Urban/Rural Divide			Literacy	
Hindi, Urdu, Hindustani and Punjabi	42%	Hindu	85.0%	Census	Urban	Rural	Census	Literacy rate
Telugu	9.3%	Muslim	9.9%	1911	9.35%	90.65%	1911	5.9%
Bengali	7.0%	Christian	2.3%	1921	11.20%	88.80%	1921	7.2%
Marathi	7.6%	Sikh	1.7%	1931	12.00%	88.00%	1931	9.5%
Tamil	7.4%	Buddhist	0.5%	1941	13.90%	86.10%	1941	16.1%
Gujarati	4.6%	Jain	0.4%	1951	17.30%	82.70%	1951	16.7%
Malayalam	3.8%	Other	0.2%	1961	18.00%	82.00%	1961	24.0%
Kannada	4.1%			1971	19.90%	80.10%	1971	29.3%
Oriya	3.7%							
Assamese	1.4%							

Source: Statistical Abstract India (various years), Census of India (various censuses, available at: www.censusindia.net, and deMesquita and Park 1979: 67)

The multiplicity of social and societal groups and their mainly local or regional orientation consequently resisted the emergence of powerful, nation-wide religious, social or ethnic movements capable of structuring the party system along cleavage lines.¹⁸² In addition, since cleavages in India were for the most part cross-cutting, nationally oriented political parties had to take into account the prevalence of multiple identities and interests when formulating their mobilisational strategies. Whereas, for example, the voting behaviour of *dalits* (the former untouchables) in Kerala tended to be based on a nascent but already prominent class consciousness (as a result of the CPI's political mobilisation), the same social group in

¹⁸² In the post-independent period, the now prominent but rather “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) of the Hindu-Nationalists, even though it had the potential to determine the formation of the party system right from the beginning of the country as an independent state were it not for the firm secular commitment and strategic thinking of Nehru and the early INC elite (*sic* party agency!), was still largely a chimera. However, even the prominence of Hindu nationalism in recent decades should be conceived of as evidence for party agency, for the somehow ‘engineered’ collective identity of Hindus in India is clearly not borne out by its social significance. Besides that, the abovementioned multiplicity of social groups and their local/regional orientation contributed substantially to the regionalisation of social conflict in India and a concomitant isolation of the political centre from these conflicts (Weiner 1989: 36). As Manor (1988: 89) notes, “(...) [the] complexities and ambiguities in Indian society prevent the political system from having to face the kind of serious conflict that societies more prone to polarization and contradiction might generate.”

neighbouring Tamil Nadu/Madras was politicised around the ideas of (anti-Brahmin) Dravidian nationalism (as a result of the DMK's political mobilisation).¹⁸³

The multipolarity and regional character of the Indian cleavage structure also had implications for the country's class configuration. The Indian class structure at, and following, independence was tenuous and deeply influenced by the country's social fragmentation and correlates with the muted nature of class conflict in India.¹⁸⁴

The comparatively low rate of industrialisation, the success of the Nehru-led industrial strategy notwithstanding, the slow pace of urbanisation and the marginality of an organised workforce and business community, the result not least of a rapidly expanding public sector, have led to a highly uneven pattern of class formation. All other socio-cultural parameters mentioned above have also tended to cut across class divisions. As a result, the development of class-based identities and political mobilisation revolving around appeals to class has been severely inhibited and a relevant class antagonism was and remains largely absent. As a group, India's industrial working class is still quite small and only a minority of it is unionised (Mitra 1996: 646).¹⁸⁵

The rural class system has to be considered as even more complex. The land reforms introduced in the 1950s eliminated some but not all landlords, known as *zamindars* or *jagirdars*, who in colonial times "(...) [acted] as revenue agents and [performed] some local government functions" (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 50). In their place, a powerful new rural force emerged in rural India, largely in the 1960's, composed of a mixed status group of middle-peasant cultivators. These middle peasants, or "bullock capitalists" (ibid. 49), typically operate(d) between 2.5 and 15 acres of land, controlled 51% of the land in 1971 already, and constituted 35% of the rural households and 25% of the total population of the country - again in 1971-72 (ibid. 50-51).¹⁸⁶ The landless and small landowners, divided by caste and increasingly along class lines as well, also did not share a common identity and interest. The small landowners (defined as those holding fewer than 2.5 acres of land)

¹⁸³ Likewise, the nascent political/party identity of Hindus in Northern India differed substantially from the (more secular and less traditional) political outlook of their co-religionists in the Indian South.

¹⁸⁴ The fact that other, more agitative factors were responsible for this 'muted nature' of class conflict in India is taken up in 4.2.

¹⁸⁵ Again, the polymorphous and hardly group-based differentiation of social disparities (in contrast to South Africa) has to be seen as accounting for the absence of a relevant class antagonism. According to Morris-Jones (1978: 221), "Indian society is far from egalitarian but it is perhaps correct to describe it as not (so far) a sharply polarised society in terms of class. Large differences of income and marked contrasts of status there certainly are between top and bottom, but the intermediate stages are many and the slopes of the pyramid are gradual and even."

¹⁸⁶ In the course of their empowerment, as Mitra (1996: 646) notes, "[t]hey challenged urban interests, upper caste dominated parties, and the formally dominant position of the older social notables. However, with the independent mobilization of the former untouchables, who constitute the social layer just below, their position is also gradually being challenged."

normally did not identify with the needs and aspirations of the rural, landless population. As Nayar (1976) argues, the combination of social reform, economic change, and political competition saw political power gravitate, in the turbulent decade of the 1960s (and partially also before) towards the “(...) middle sectors of economic and social life in both urban and rural areas, the educated and professional groups, town merchants and small businessmen in the urban areas and the middle peasantry or *kulaks* in the villages” (ibid. 148-149). He goes on to argue that, “[t]he source of their power lies in the strategic combination of considerable population size with extensive economic resources and significant social status, as against the greater economic power but small numbers of the upper business and land owning classes and the larger numbers but economic destitution of the lower classes” (ibid. 150).

Of the ‘classical’ cleavages (those referred to by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), namely centre-periphery, state-church, land-industry, owner-worker), only partially, if at all applicable to the Indian context, conceptualised as they were on the basis of the (historical sequence of the) European experience of modernisation, only the centre-periphery cleavage tied to a country’s territorial and national integration can be considered as having been of some relevance to the evolving post-independent Indian party system.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, the emergence of a plethora of regional parties, as well as the regional basis of most parties with national aspirations, confirms the relevance of this cleavage.¹⁸⁸ From this point of view, and taking into account the Indian society’s socio-cultural complexity and fragmentation, the prolonged national dominance of one all-embracing umbrella party appears even more surprising.

In sum, the multipolar and regionalised cleavage structure characterising Indian society certainly encouraged Indian party elites to try to win votes and loyalties among specific and regional social sectors and surely reinforced the fragmentation of the oppositional spectrum. It may have also contributed to the absence of a polarisation along one clearly defined cleavage within the national party system. Only the INC was able to transcend the cleavage structure,

¹⁸⁷ This is not to deny that the other cleavages of Lipset and Rokkan’s four-fold pattern did not play a role for the (later) unfolding of India’s party system. However, the processes of social change, identified as being responsible for the manifestation of these cleavages in the party system (secularisation, urbanisation, industrialisation), were a product of parties’ or, for that matter, of the early INC governments’ initiative rather than the basis for Indian parties’ or the Indian party system’s emergence.

¹⁸⁸ Party competition at the national level naturally incorporated the ideological perception of these ‘classical’ cleavages (e.g. CPI, Socialists – owner/worker, *Jan Sangh* – (secular) state-religion), a fact reflecting less the interests and characteristics of the respective parties’ social bases but rather the efforts of party elites to transcend the social segmentation of the electorate. This aspect of the Indian party system conforms to Bartolini and Mair’s (1990: 63) assessment with regards to the development of European electorates, namely that “(...) while a cleavage will give rise to competing party organisations, the presence of particular patterns of party competition does not in itself represent a cleavage.” The fact that with increasing politicisation and undermining of traditional institutions and identities, the significance of even the ‘classical’ cleavages for the party system gained momentum should not obscure the fact that it was the parties and party elites who highlighted these cleavages, not the other way round.

to establish itself as the one, truly national focus and to entrench its electoral dominance nationwide as well as regionally.

The opposition parties did reflect, and were constrained by, the cleavages present in Indian society. Thus, the potential instrumentalisation of religion for conflict and mobilisation through the JS for example, was curbed by the linguistic divide in the Hindu 'majority' between the Indo-Aryan and the *Dravidian* language groups as well as by the minorities' (Muslims, *dalits*, tribals) perception of the dangers that a religious or ethnic Hindu majoritarianism implied. More class-oriented parties such as the CPI or the SP were confronted by varying spheres of influence in the caste structure or amongst ethnic identities and faced the need for an electoral strategy of political mobilisation capable of taking into account the rural and urban sector. The *Swatantra* party, a 'liberal' alternative to the centrist/left-of-centre INC and potential pivot of national opposition in the 1960's, was constrained by the dilemma of having to reconcile its (more or less) 'modernist' outlook with the significance of traditional, socio-cultural parameters and the importance of traditional authorities as intermediary centres.¹⁸⁹ The various emerging regional parties, some of them having gained a degree of national prominence already in the period under examination (the DMK in Madras/Tamil Nadu, the *Akali Dal* in the Punjab, the National Conference in Kashmir), carried additional arenas of conflict into party competition at the national level, thus modifying the 'selectivity' of potential national cleavages even further. The structure of cleavages did produce an 'electoral atmosphere' of social and cultural differentiation, which made electoral success at the national level, in the first place, dependent on the promotion of a multiple appeal. The extreme pluralist setting favoured the dominance of the party with a catch-all character and a definite cross-sectional appeal. The reasons however, responsible for placing the INC in a position to reflect Indian society's multipolar and cross-cutting cleavage structure, are to be found beyond the structural implications of social cleavages.

In addition to the three (traditional) axes of cultural differentiation (religion, language and caste) and to the less relevant but existing class divides, the participation process and the elite-induced processes of social change and modernisation, deeply influenced the country's rapidly changing political culture. It made the confrontation between tradition and modernity, between an elite and mass culture, heavily impact political attitudes and behaviour. However, the growing interpenetration of a modern and secular state and a traditional agrarian society, to a great extent inspired by, and based on, the ideas of a westernised elite, did not result in

¹⁸⁹ As Mehta (1983: 30) concludes, "[o]ne of the reasons for its [*Swatantra*, C.S.] failure was its inability to come to terms with the problems posed by the cultural ethos of the country, (...) the social tensions and cultural puzzles focussed around religion, caste, language and regional identities."

alienating these two cultures, but on the contrary, gave rise to a peculiar coexistence and blending of traditional and modern orientations and beliefs.¹⁹⁰

Morris-Jones (1989: 49 f.) had once described this aspect of the country's post-independent, nascent political culture as the coexistence of three different idioms: the 'modern' idiom of political articulation and discourse, the 'traditional' idiom of social bonding and the 'saintly' idiom of cultural identification. The modernisation process had triggered a process of acculturation characterised by the intermingling of the modern idiom of political articulation with the traditional idiom of social bonds. At the same time, social and political mobilisation was paralleled by the persistence and preservation of parochial identities.

The electorate was, though not merely, an amorphous entity of group-uniform status and decision bearers such as caste or religious leaders or charismatic personalities (Hartmann 1971: 34-36). Political awareness and involvement grew with the penetration and perpetuation of democratic processes and procedures but at the same time, was subject to instrumentalisation as these processes and procedures were adapted to the traditional identities of Indian society (Mitra 1996: 684). With increasing participation and politicisation of the electorate after (and even before) independence, the manipulation of traditional loyalties as a mechanism for political mobilisation went hand in hand with the articulation of social demands by previously peripheral groups and the cost-benefit calculations of the 'rational' (floating) voter. Pinpointing the dynamics and the linking-up of the different modes of political mobilisation during the course of India's post-independent political development and process of participation, Graves (1976: 870-871) once noted that "[t]here is little doubt that continued politicization increased individual political acumen, heightened awareness of the meaning of party identity, engendered a more sophisticated consciousness of the political process (and one's place in it) without reducing local self-interested concerns and/or ascriptive ties (in some cases) in actual voting behaviour."

Looking for example at survey evidence on how the voting decision was reached in India in 1967, the year when the first nation-wide survey ever was conducted in the country (1967)¹⁹¹,

¹⁹⁰ As Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 159, emphasis mine) concluded on the basis of their behavioural analysis of the Indian electorate two decades after independence: "The involvement of the Indian masses in politics is a recent, dramatic, and sustained phenomenon of great significance for modern democracies. It has much more than political relevance, narrowly conceived. It has supported and undergirded the new political institutions of this large nation. It has occurred during a period of remarkable social and economic change. It is an involvement which embraces and transforms the total society. At the same time it reflects and converses the uniqueness of Indian culture. *It is an involvement by "traditionals" who are "moderns" while they remain "traditional".*"

¹⁹¹ The survey was conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) at the time of the 1967 general elections. It was based on a stratified random sample of 1,971 male voters and 316 female voters (total = 2,287) drawn from select constituencies. The sample covered 47 parliamentary constituencies and 94 assembly constituencies spread over all the Indian States – except the Union Territories and the States of Assam

the picture we get reflects the intertwining, described above, of traditional and modern orientations towards the political process and the fact that the post-independent period of political development in India was a time of deep-rooted changes in social and political attitudes. Whereas 26% of respondents reported that their voting decision was still largely dependent on opinion-makers in the family or joint family, only 1% referred to such status bearers as the village head or the caste leader and nearly half of the respondents reported that they had made the decision on their own.

Table 4: How voting decisions are reached – India 1967

Mode of Voting Decision	Per cent
On the advice of head or elders in the family	26
Through joint discussion in the family	20
On the advice of village head or caste leader	1
Voter's own decision	49
Don't know	2
Not ascertained	2
Total	100

Source: Sheth (1975a: 15).

Survey results also show that the level of party identification was already relatively high only two decades after representative democracy and universal franchise had been introduced to a then, still largely traditional and illiterate society. Only 26.7 % of respondents reported that they had no party preference at all or did not answer the question of whether they felt close to a particular political party.¹⁹²

Additionally, 20 years after INC rule and governance, the distribution of partisanship clearly reflects the dominant position the Congress still occupied in the public mind even though an increasing degree of discontent with it was apparent from the same survey (Kothari 1994: 203-204).¹⁹³

and Jammu and Kashmir. There is no other nation-wide survey data available for India before 1967 (Sheth 1975d).

¹⁹² 3.5% of respondents reported that they felt closest to an individual candidate.

¹⁹³ For additional empirical evidence for the arguments put forward in this section see Sheth (1975d) and Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978), both studies working on the basis of the same (CSDS) survey of 1967. See also Field (1980) for a behavioural study of the Indian electorate (covering four States) already conducted in 1966.

Table 5: Party identification (1967), Indian main parties (% of respondents who say they feel close to a party)

INC	Jan Sangh	Swatantra	Socialists (SSP and PSP)	Communists (CPI and CPI (M))
43.1	7.1	5.1	7.4	5.5

Source: Kothari (1994: 202), based on the 1967 survey of the CSDS; 'No Party' entry is 26.2%, 'Don't Know'/'No Answer'/'refusals' entry is 0.5.

In sum, any party involved in political competition in India after independence was confronted by these rather dynamic processes within the electorate and had to take them into account as an 'element of uncertainty' when formulating strategy and 'shaping' its electoral appeal. Analysing the state of the electorate and the resultant political behaviour and processes on the 'supply side' of the party-society encounter at the end of the 1960's, Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 12) concluded, "Indian mass politics is "fluid coalitional politics" with considerable potential for political realignment, elite turnover, and the social redistribution of power. Subgroup and caste political loyalties are by no means rigid, party control is not disciplined, movements into and out of parties are common, and thus coalitional arrangements are tenuous and continuously recalculated. Indian mass politics is thus both dominated by the Congress party and, on the other hand, in a continual state of flux."

The last socio-cultural parameter to be discussed in this section, clientelism or the prevalence of clientelist distributive traditions, was clearly a decisive factor in the Indian party context, an aspect of Indian society that no party could afford not to take into account. Clientelism manifested itself in India in different shades ranging from the social fabric of parochial identities at the local level (Mines and Gourishankar 1990) to the more personalistic network at the regional level. Traditional institutions of social relationships such as the *jajmani* system of reciprocal bonds between (land-owning) status bearers and their 'clientele' as well as other patron-client relationships revolving around local notables were a prime object of co-optation by political parties and were often politicised and 'secularised' in the course of political competition.¹⁹⁴ As a result, Indian parties were extremely factionalised and personalised (see 4.3. and 4.4.), a fact that impeded the formation of ideological blocs and the development of programmatic linkages. Whereas on the one hand, clientelist linkages took the edge off the

¹⁹⁴ See deMesquita and Park (1979: 107 f.) for a discussion of the political instrumentalisation of the *jajmani* system, which was originally 'designed' to perpetuate social domination. One effect of, and evidence for, the clientelist quality of party politics in India, as in South Asia in general, is the fact that almost all surveys report an above-average level of 'contacting government officials' or 'contacting party leaders' as forms of political participation, in comparison to representative democracies of Western provenance; see Ahmed (1975: 23), Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978) and Field (1980).

country's potential for social revolution through the regional and local dispersion and strategic positioning of traditional elites as intermediary centres (Headrick 1973: 565), at the same time reducing the willingness to co-operate or to align within the opposition, they clearly benefited on the other hand, the electoral fortunes of the governing party. The clientelist nature of India's social structure naturally favoured the one party with the greatest access to state resources and with the strongest nation-wide presence.

Clientelism should not be seen as unidimensional, nor as the most important and as a linear determinant of the electoral process and party competition. Although it lost importance as the processes of socio-economic development and social change gathered pace, it was (and remains) however, an important stimulus diffusing representative units and arenas of conflict as well as encouraging the emergence and maintenance of a distinct (transactional) bargaining culture, which contributed substantially to the pragmatic appearance and low level of ideological polarisation of the Indian party system.¹⁹⁵ Lemarchand's (Lemarchand and Eisenstadt 1981: 19) assessment of Third World electoral politics is therefore applicable to the post-independent period of the Indian party system: "Unlike what we find in most of Western Europe (...), where class formation preceded the introduction of universal suffrage, making it possible for parties (...) to organize themselves and articulate their demands in class terms, in much of the 'Third World' electoral processes took place in an environment saturated with ethnic and clientelistic loyalties, with only scattered evidence of incipient class formation. In these conditions the obvious way to contain societal fragmentation was through the organization of political machines."

This section has outlined the main socio-cultural and socio-economic parameters characterising the Indian electorate after independence and has sketched the way in which these parameters acted as incentives and constraints on party and political elites' strategic behaviour. The study now turns to the constituents of the crucial party power configuration prevailing at the national level, the INC as the dominant party and the relevant opposition parties contesting for political power and office in the two decades after independence.

¹⁹⁵ In effect (especially at the regional and local level), 'pragmatic appearance' has to be understood as a euphemism for the party system's patronage character.

2.1.4. The dominant party: the INC as ‘party of consensus’

Apart from the political legacy of party competition, extensive parliamentary and (limited) executive experience in provincial legislatures before independence, the INC had already made moves to ‘become a party’ long before the full responsibility of government was bestowed upon it and preparations for the first general elections had to be made. From 1920 onwards it had begun to open district and provincial offices to spread its ideas and organisation, it had launched membership drives to fill its ranks and had institutionalised intra-party elections for leadership positions. At independence, the INC’s claim to be representing the nation was undisputed and there was a general perception of the ‘leader’ of the nationalist movement as the country’s central political institution, a result of its ‘inheritance legitimacy’ (Nettl 1967), mass base and organisational resources.

“Because of Congress’ popularity and its rule-based internal functioning, no competitor with a similar nationwide mass base ever arose to challenge it for the leadership of the national movement. Congress felt safe, and the Indian national movement was spared the intense internecine conflict and even open warfare that would scar several of the national movements in Africa and cripple democratic functioning after the advent of independence in the early 1960s” (Varshney 1998: 39).

With some exceptions (see 2.2.1. and next section), the spectrum of opposition parties was only beginning to take shape and most of the parties contesting the first general election of 1952 still had to contemplate and define their role within the new political system. The INC in the meantime had already taken over some of the instruments and apparatus of the colonial polity and later on the machinery of the independent state. In addition, most of the opposition parties making their presence felt in post-independent India were (roughly) paralleling and/or emerging out of the INC’s factional mosaic anyway. It is thus no exaggeration to describe the INC in the period immediately after independence as the “party of [national] consensus” (Kothari 1964: 1162). However, even though the INC was quite successful in the task of holding together the disparate elements in the struggle for political freedom and continued to do so after independence for reasons elaborated in the subsequent chapters, it had to confront new ideological, organisational and party power-political challenges. As Kaviraj (1997: 56-57) has succinctly described the situation,

“The Congress, which assumed power in 1947 was not in many respects the Congress that won independence (...) Earlier the objective of the movement was the rather

abstract one of making Independence possible; now the objective of every political group within the broad national movement changed into struggling for determination of the structure of power of the independent state – not an abstract sovereignty, but a far more concrete question of the form of the society and material allocation of advantages. Different political groups showed their common appreciation of this historical fact in their differing ways. Muslim separatism became more strident in demanding a separate state. Communists registered the same urgency by intensifying their struggles for acknowledgement of peasant rights. Congress groups responded to this climate of approaching power by greater ideological polarization and crystallization of political factions.”

Additionally, the organisational state of the INC, even though it was the only party with nation-wide rudiments of a party organisation, was far from all-embracing. Especially in the former princely states, the party's organisation was still in its infancy.¹⁹⁶ At the same time, with the introduction of universal suffrage, a process of broadening its social base had to be initiated. As in the case of the ANC or any dominant party, the pre-independence 'coalition of commitment' was gradually becoming a 'coalition of convenience' (see fn. 304), as rather unscrupulous elements and personalities were increasingly attracted to the party, in search of executive office and state resources for personal gains.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, intra-party factionalism, though prevalent before independence, gained an even stronger momentum. The initial tussle between the Nehru-led progressive and reformist leadership circle and the conservative Patel-led group over policy direction and organisational affairs was largely settled by Patel's death in 1950 that marked the beginning of Nehru's supremacy in the party (even though the party organisation and the governmental wing in the States were and remained dominated by the conservative propertied castes and classes whilst the 'reformists' got weakened). The most pressing problem after independence however, was reconciliation between the governmental and party wing of the INC. Despite the fact that the early confrontations between party president and prime minister (Kripalani vs. Nehru, Tandon vs. Nehru) had largely been resolved by 1951 when Nehru took over the presidency of the party,

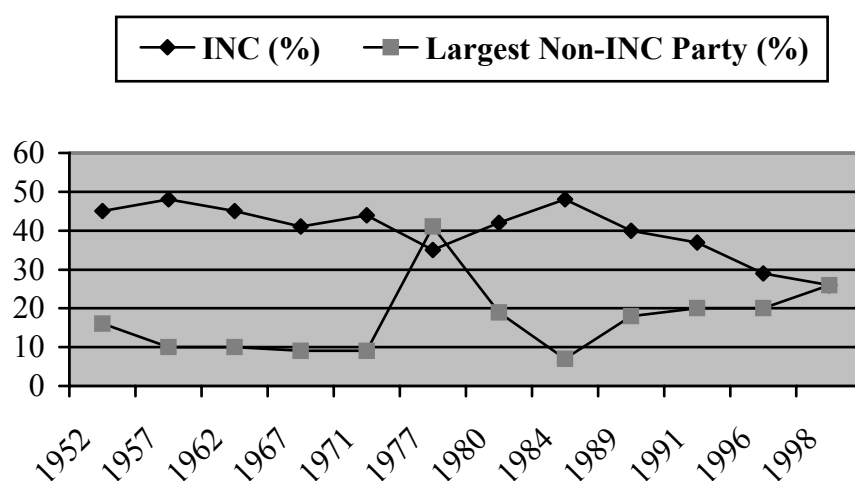
¹⁹⁶ As the 1954 Report of the General Secretaries noted, "(...) in certain areas, especially those which used to be in the Indian States before, even District Congress Committees [the second highest party organisational subdivision in a State, C.S.] have not been formed" (INC 1954: 54).

¹⁹⁷ As Nehru noted even before independence, „[t]he Congress has now attracted into its fold thousands who are not eager for achieving *swaraj* (self-rule) or to join the fight, but are merely seeking personal gains" (cited in Gopal 1976: 393).

the relationship between the two was to prove one of the major bones of contention in the INC's internal affairs up to 1967 and beyond (Kochanek 1968: 3-111).

In terms of electoral performance, INC dominance was clear-cut until 1967, both nationwide and regionally and the party remained electorally dominant at the national level for a long period thereafter.¹⁹⁸ The 'electoral debacle' in nearly half of the States (mainly a result of greater opposition unity) and the historical split of 1969 (a result of party-government and centre-States factional infighting) did not prevent the INC, then led by Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi, from returning, invigorated, to the national electoral scene. As figure 2 below shows the INC had no serious national contender up to 1977 but it also never yielded more than close to 50% of the vote.

Figure 2: Percent of votes of the INC relative to the largest non-Congress Party or coalition (Lok Sabha elections 1952-1998)



Source: Butler Lahiri and Roy (1995, 3rd edition) and Election Commission of India, available at: www.eci.gov.in.

In 1977, after the authoritarian interlude of the Emergency under Indira Gandhi, the INC was replaced for the first time, in the national government and as the strongest party in terms of national vote share, by the *Janata* party coalition. Soon afterwards its electoral dominance was restored and lasted until 1989. From then onwards no party has been able to take up an electoral position on the national scale comparable to that of the INC in the four decades following independence. A veritable multi-party system had emerged with coalition or minority governments ruling at the centre (see also table 8 below).

¹⁹⁸ In fact, in terms of seat share, the INC won 75, 75 and 73% respectively in the three national elections before 1967 while the largest opposition party could manage only around 5 % of the seats on average.

For the period under examination however, a parallel to the current development of the South African party system (see 2.2.4.), “[i]t was within Congress, and not between Congress and the opposition parties, that the major conflicts within Indian politics occurred” (Manor 1988: 95).

2.1.5. The opposition: mere ‘parties of pressure’?

Although the “chief competitive mechanism” (Kothari 1964: 1163) of the Indian party system after independence was rather an intra-party affair (see 4.1.), there was serious opposition outside the Congress framework as well. This is visible from the fact that the combined electoral strength of non-Congress candidates in the first three *Lok Sabha* elections was 55% (1952), 52% (1957) and 55% (1962) of the vote respectively.¹⁹⁹ These figures, normally do not justify the writing off of the opposition as inherently weak. The opposition was however, strongly fragmented, relying mainly on regional strongholds and except for the Socialist Party (SP, the former CSP) in the first elections (10.6%) and the *Praja* Socialist Party (PSP)²⁰⁰ in the second elections (10.4%), no opposition party could garner more than 10% of the vote in the four elections following independence. This led Kothari to conclude that “(...) the Opposition in India is, for all practical purposes, a regional phenomenon. Even the “national” parties are loose coalitions of State parties, which explain the great heterogeneity within opposition parties (...) the Opposition is fragmented and greatly divided (...) [b]ecause they are basically not parties of consensus but parties of pressure, they present an inchoate front (...) [a]gain, however, both the positive stimulation of parliamentary experience and the negative contribution of Congress weakening in parts of the country has set up a corrective trend to such a structure of pressure: the Opposition parties too are found to contain a wide variety of social groups” (ibid. 1165).²⁰¹

As in the South African context (see 2.2.5.), the fragmentation and diversity of opposition demands an attempt at classification. This is not an easy task, for the common typological criterion of classification within party sociology rests on the degree of ideological polarisation along the left-right spectrum, a criterion, which can only be of heuristic value in the Indian context. To be clear, political discourse at the centre, in parliament and among the party

¹⁹⁹ In the State assembly elections the figures were 58% (1952), 55% (1957) and 56% (1962) respectively. Of course, the picture one gets with regard to seat share is different. Here the respective figures were 26% (1952), 25% (1957) and 28% (1962) for *Lok Sabha* elections and 32% (1952), 35% (1957) and 40% (1962) for State assembly elections.

²⁰⁰ The PSP was a merger of Kripalani’s *Kisan Mazdor Praja* Party (KMPP) and the SP.

²⁰¹ For an overview of opposition party politics in the period under examination, see Weiner (1957), Hartmann (1971), Fernandes and Sirsikar (1984) and Morris-Jones (1989).

leadership (Morris-Jones' 'modern idiom') took place within the confines of such 'classical' categories of 'left' and 'right' ('traditional' and 'modernist') and there was a lot of debate around such issues as 'free-market' vs. 'interventionist state' or 'individual freedom' vs. 'social equality'. These labels however, more often than not contained a rather different meaning compared to their usage in the context of European party systems. Moreover, social parameters such as region, religion, language and above all, caste, cross-cut any 'classical' distinction, which could be drawn for the sake of classification. The modern idiom of political discourse rarely matched the voters' perception. In addition, a general ideological eclecticism or, for that matter pragmatism, characterised Indian parties at any point in the development of the post-independent party system.²⁰² Nevertheless, since opposition parties are grouped around the 'political centre', here represented by the INC, and national political discourse incorporated the labels commonly referred to in the discussion of a party system's ideological polarisation/classification²⁰³, there are identifiable 'poles' along a left-right continuum. These are taken here as a basis for categorising the opposition for the sake of analytical simplicity.

²⁰² Moreover, there is a certain irrelevance of ideological distance (along the left-right spectrum) in the case of one-party-dominant systems in general, or for that matter, in changing societies. The very essence of such a system is in the existence of an initial, more or less, broad national consensus brought about by the imperatives of nation-building and the dynamics of democratisation. The subsequent launching of a historical project, which gives "(...) particular shape to the national political agenda" (Pempel 1990a: 4, see 3.1.) as a result of the dominant party's "(...) long-standing presence at the core of government" (ibid.), and, consequently, a comparatively low degree of (inter-party) competitiveness, adds to this irrelevance. The latter is meant in terms of the closeness or distance of the electoral margins among the competitors, and is not to be confused with competition itself as an essential feature of a one-party-dominant system (in South Africa, this 'low level of competitiveness' was additionally reinforced by another, context-specific feature, which further added to the low weight of the 'ideological distance' variable: the initial power-sharing provision of the Government of National Unity (GNU, see 2.2.2.) that brought together those components of the party spectrum (ANC, NP, IFP) actually anticipated to represent the ideological poles around which the 'new' party system was beginning to gain shape). In discussing his 'simplified model' of types of party systems according to his combined criteria of fragmentation and ideological distance (polarisation) Sartori comes to the conclusion that "(...) a strongly predominant party results from low [inter-party, C.S.] competitiveness; and if the competitiveness is low, it follows that the variable 'ideological distance' does not carry much weight in the electoral arena" (Sartori 1990: 348). Sartori tried to tackle the difficulty of classifying a party system that displays a relatively low level of ideological polarisation in terms of parties' policy orientations and the legitimacy parties accord to the political system, but one that is nevertheless sharply polarised such as the South African party system (1990: 337). He comes to the conclusion that "[if] the number of parties grows and yet all the parties still belong to the 'same world' – i.e., accept the legitimacy of the political system and abide by its rules – then the fragmentation of the system cannot be attributed to ideological polarisation. In this case the fragmentation is presumably related to a multidimensional configuration: a *segmented*, polyethnic and/or multiconfessional society". Sartori remains however, undecided as to whether these party systems should be gathered into a subgroup of their own.

²⁰³ These labels however, connotative of such classical issues as market-friendly vs. state-interventionist, were increasingly reflected in the perception of the respective parties' support base. Thus, Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 102), using a calculation of the percentage of strong party identifiers who favour some controls of the state over the economy, report the following picture of party placement on the left-right continuum on the basis of the aforementioned CSDS survey of 1967 (a picture that largely reflects the categorisation chosen in this section).

'Left'	-----	CPI (76%)	-----	INC (57%)	---	SSP (52%)	-----	JS (35%)	-----	SWA (26%)	-----	'Right'
		100% for controls				50%						0% for controls

One should however, keep in mind that the left/right distinction cannot be applied without qualifications in the context of post-independent India's party system. Thus 'right' can mean conservative (in the 'modern' sense), communal²⁰⁴ and traditionalist²⁰⁵, whereas 'left' denotes communist or socialist parties but which can also characterise a party inspired by Gandhian ideas of 'trusteeship' (or *sarvodaya*, a Gandhian-type 'socialism') and village-based social radicalism, as in the case of the 'socialist' KMPP led by former INC president Kripalani (Morris-Jones 1989: 180 f.).²⁰⁶

Thus, on the left side of the party spectrum, a subdivision has to be made between the Communists and the Socialists (or non-communists). The Communists (CPI) were initially successful in increasing their vote share in the first three elections after independence, growing from 3.3% to 9.9%. These figures are however, somewhat misleading for in the 1952 elections a fair amount of CPI candidates contested as independents or under the banner of another (regionally prominent) party.²⁰⁷ In addition (and this held true for all parties except the INC), net vote gains in the post-independent period have to be seen in the light of increasing candidate nominations and a wider coverage of constituencies. All opposition parties at the time had to tackle the problem of building-up constituency organisation and increasing their supply of candidates. Consequently, concentrating first on contesting elections where a party was at its strongest, had a compelling logic - given the specifics of an SMSP electoral system.

In the case of the CPI, the regional 'pockets' of support were clearly delimited. It was and remains strongest in its 'Bengali homeland' in West Bengal and in the southern State of Kerala, even though in the immediate post-independent period it was electorally strong in the South (Andhra Pradesh, Madras), the Punjab and Bihar as well. However, it gradually lost

²⁰⁴ In the sense that a party basically displayed political concern for the interests and demands of a religious community.

²⁰⁵ 'Traditionalist' would mean that a party is characterised by a leadership-style based on ideas and attitudinal patterns typical of 'traditional' society (e.g. charismatic leadership) or uses symbols and concepts (prayers at party meetings, concepts of duty) of traditional society.

²⁰⁶ Of course, none of these distinctions avoids great overlapping. Another analytical differentiation of the Indian party system's nature of inter-party competition (similar to the one used in the South African context) could refer to Almond et al.'s (2000: 94 f.) threefold distinction of consensual, conflictual and, following Lijphart, consociational or accommodative party systems. This categorisation incorporates the amount of trust prevalent among parties in a given party system and classifies a party system according to its ideological polarisation and the amount of trust parties have in each other and the political system. The Indian party system would, more or less, fall into the consociational or accommodative category with conflictual as well as consensual traits, but where finally "(...) political leaders are able to bridge the intense differences between antagonistic voters" (ibid. 94). In this regard, LaPalombara and Weiner's (1966: 36) older (twofold) ideological-pragmatic dimension, accounting for the attitudinal preferences that guide political and party elites in their perception of the political process, such as willingness to compromise (pragmatic) or strong commitment to fixed goals (ideological), is even more plausible, for it traces polarisation back to parties' attitudinal preferences and the collaboration and confrontation actually taking place.

²⁰⁷ In the 1952 elections for example, CPI candidates contested in the former princely states of Travancore-Cochin and Hyderabad as independents and as 'People's Democratic Front' respectively.

momentum in these regions during the course of post-independent party system development and with the rise of regional parties in these areas. In fact, the CPI is the only party that was able to topple an INC State government before 1967.²⁰⁸ It defeated the INC by a margin of 17 seats in the 1957 *Vidhan Sabha* elections in Kerala. Soon afterwards however, the Communist government of Kerala was dismissed by the central government under the aforementioned provision for president's rule (see 2.1.2., 3.2. and 4.1.). The party's chequered history of ideological contradictions (see 2.2.1.) surfaced again prominently in 1964 in the wake of the Sino-Soviet schism and the border clashes between India and China that culminated in the Chinese invasion of Indian territory in 1962, when the CPI split into the CPI and the CPI (Marxist) and the two parties came to be known as 'pro-Moscow' and 'pro-Peking' respectively. The underlying rationale of the split however, though "(...) stemming from conflicting applications of doctrine to the Indian situation" (Morris-Jones 1989: 197), had much to do with the Communists' views of and attitudes towards the INC (Rothermund 1969: 91).

In essence, while the CPI could imagine co-operating and collaborating with progressive INC politicians, the CPI (M) stuck to its hard-line class orientation, which regarded the INC as the 'class enemy'. As a result of the split, the party was divided in fairly equal parts and the two parties deprived each other of their combined electoral strength, resulting in a decline of the vote share from 9.9% in 1962 to 5.0% (CPI) and 4.4% (CPI (M)) respectively in 1967. Henceforth, the CPI's electoral support was more evenly spread over the country, whereas the CPI (M) was and remains clearly tied to its regional strongholds in West Bengal and Kerala. Except for the latter States, the Communist movement has remained a relatively marginal force in Indian politics from 1967 onwards.²⁰⁹

The post-independent electoral career of the faction-torn Indian Socialists, once an organisation within the INC (see 2.2.1), was characterised by a succession of various mergers and splits, a result of clashing leadership personalities and orientations but often also induced by the INC party leadership (see 4.2.).

²⁰⁸ There were two other States where non-Congress ruling parties existed before 1967. In Jammu and Kashmir the National Conference, under the charismatic leadership of Sheikh Abdullah ('the lion of Kashmir'), took over government in 1952 already (although from 1953, after Sheikh Abdullah had been arrested, the party under Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed "(...) virtually became the Kashmir unit of the Congress", Chatterjee 1997: 11). In Nagaland, a State created in 1963, (independents contesting in the name of) the tribal-nationalist Naga National Organisation came to power in 1964. However, due to the special status of Kashmir and the low significance for the national party system of the tiny 'tribal' State of Nagaland, these regional parties are not conceived of as relevant to the purpose of this study.

²⁰⁹ For a detailed account of the Communist movement's early history refer to Overstreet and Windmiller (1959). For an insightful study of the 1964 split, see Rothermund (1969).

Table 6: Lok Sabha Elections (1952-1967), seats/vote share of main parties

Party	1952	1957	1962	1967
INC	364/45%	371/47.8%	361/44.7%	283/40.8%
JS	3/3.1%	4/5.9%	14/6.4%	35/9.4%
CPI*	16/3.3%	27/8.9%	29/9.9%	42/9.4%
Socialists**	21/16.4%	19/10.4%	18/9.5%	36/8.0%
Swatantra	-	-	18/7.9%	44/8.7%
Independents	38/15.9%	42/19.4%	20/11.1%	35/13.7%
Total of seats	489	494	494	520
Total of candidates	1874	1519	1985	2369
Turnout	45.7%	47.7%	55.4%	61.3%

Notes: * includes CPI and CPI (M) in the 1967 elections ** category includes KMPP and SP in 1952, PSP in 1957, PSP and SP in 1962 and PSP and SSP in 1967.

Source: Butler, Lahiri and Roy (1995, 3rd edition)

After an attempt at (socialist) unity by merging the former CSP, renamed Socialist Party (SP) following its ‘withdrawal’ from the INC, with Kripalani’s ‘Gandhian’ splinter group, the KMPP, into the *Praja* Socialist Party (PSP) (largely as a result of the 1952 elections, in which both the SP and the KMPP had polled surprisingly well²¹⁰ and anticipated an even stronger performance by combining their strength), the socialist vote share nevertheless declined in 1957 (see table 6 above). The unity was to prove fragile anyway and in 1962 two socialist parties (PSP and SP) contested elections separately for a second time²¹¹, once again largely as a result of a leadership tussle over the question of co-operation with the INC. Another attempt at unification after the 1962 elections did not even survive until the next elections in 1967. The PSP-SP merger into the *Samyukta* Socialist Party (SSP) lasted a little bit more than a year (see *The Statesman*, March 25, 1965, for details of the PSP-SP merger and Hartmann 1971: 83 f.) and in 1967 once more, two socialist parties (PSP and SSP) contested elections and both fared badly in the *Lok Sabha* as well as in the *Vidhan Sabha* elections. Due to their factional infighting the (combined) socialist vote share declined from 16.4% in 1952 to 8.0% in 1967.

²¹⁰ The SP got 10.6% and the KMPP 5.8%. The vote was relatively evenly spread over the country. It was however, gathered in by a very large spread of candidatures. In addition, the SP, expecting to become second largest party in the first parliament, was beaten by the CPI seat-wise (the CPI got 16 seats while the SP got 12 seats).

²¹¹ At the end of 1955 already, a faction of the PSP under Lohia had left the PSP to ‘renew’ the SP and in a few constituencies the two parties had put up candidates against each other.

Thus, up to the elections of 1971 there were four relevant socialist parties (SP, KMPP, PSP and SSP) competing amongst each other as well as against the ‘democratic socialism’ of the INC. Despite minor electoral successes, especially in the *Hindi*-speaking areas, they were never able to entrench themselves in the Indian party system in the long run.²¹²

On the ‘right’ side of the party spectrum, there were the ‘communal’ Hindu parties, nationally most prominent in the shape of the newly formed, *Jana Sangh* (see 2.2.1.), which was often referred to as the parliamentary arm of the Hindu nationalist, cultural organisation, RSS, and its affiliates (the so called *Sangh Parivar*) and is the predecessor of the current ruling *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP).²¹³ The *Hindu Mahasabha*, the first and foremost party political manifestation of Hindu traditionalism and nationalism, experienced a steady decline in national vote share and soon disappeared from the electoral landscape (its waning popular support had set in already before independence but especially after the assassination of Gandhi by one of its former members; it could only muster close to 1 per cent in the first general elections). The electoral performance of the JS on the other hand improved from 3.1% in 1952 to 9.4% in 1967 though it was unable to make a great impact (in the period under examination) outside the five main States of the north-Indian Hindi-belt (Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and, later on, Bihar) and beyond its traditional support base among the urban, educated and high-caste middle class (professionals, small businessmen/shopkeepers, and white-collar workers). In contrast to the other communal Hindu parties, the JS could improve its, initially marginal and isolated, role in the party system for several reasons. It had a cadre-based, tight organisational network at its disposal - backed by the RSS; it did not rely on a communal appeal alone and tried hard, though awkwardly, to represent a more elaborate programmatic line with distinct policy positions (such as its rejection of the INC’s policy proposal to introduce co-operative farming); and it loosened its claim to (communal) exclusiveness (its membership was open to non-Hindus; the rejection of the proposal for such an opening was one of the reasons why the JS founder,

²¹² Writing at a time when he could not know that the socialists would never recover from their chequered history of post-independent electoral performance after 1971, Morris-Jones (1989 [1964]: 181) came to the conclusion that “[t]he socialists’ failure at least up to 1967 to unlock the political energies of the poorer peasantry and landless labourers (still closed in village worlds) and of the industrial workers (still unorganized and essentially rural or, if organized, contained within Congress or communist control) does not mean that the socialist parties are finished, only that they have had to play the waiting game.” For a detailed account of the history and post-independent development of the Indian socialists, refer to Fickett Jr. (1976).

²¹³ The *Ram Rajya Parishad* (RRP) was another minor Hindu nationalist party (by far the most orthodox and traditionalist). It was mainly the political vehicle of the feudal aristocracy in the former princely states and thus regionally confined (primarily to Rajasthan). Its national vote share oscillated between 0.38 and 2.03% from 1952 to 1962, before vanishing altogether from the electoral scene in 1967.

Mookerjee, resigned from the HM to form a new party). However, it remained below the 10% margin in the period under examination.²¹⁴

The other party of the 'right', the *Swatantra* Party, founded in 1959 and making its first electoral appearance in 1962, can look back on an enigmatic career that illustrated one of the many attempts by a faction within the INC, to establish itself as an independent formation in the Indian party system. The *Swatantra* Party initially attempted to countervail left-leaning tendencies within the INC, especially after the INC's Nagpur resolution of 1959, which advocated a socialistic pattern of society, and gave itself the image of the only 'truly liberal' party in India at the time. It stood for economic liberalism and championed private-sector employment. It was strongly supported by the business/industrialists community and associations such as the newly formed 'Forum of Free Enterprise'. When the Nehru government announced the introduction of 'joint co-operative farming' to overcome food shortages and to raise agricultural productivity, it soon gained appeal among the landed peasantry in the countryside. After it had managed to win over support from several influential princely families and to engineer electoral alliances with locally prominent parties, it made an impressive first appearance in the national party system in 1962, becoming at once the second largest opposition party (its support was concentrated in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Orissa).

Although it was able to gain support among the INC clientele in the elections of 1962 and 1967²¹⁵, it always lacked mass appeal and could never develop a firm programmatic outlook and policy orientation apart from a vaguely defined liberal conservatism and criticism of INC policies. After massive losses in 1971, it finally disappeared from Indian party politics altogether (assimilated into the *Bharatiya Lok Dal* (BLD) in 1974), eventually having only an ephemeral impact on the country's party system.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ The party's founder Mookerjee had envisaged a more open, programmatic (liberal) and flexible party in an effort to make inroads into the INC's support base and to expand the party's support base beyond its core constituencies. Under the leadership of his successor Upadhyaya however, from 1955 onwards, the party adopted a style of highlighting party discipline and control, concentration on its Hindu nationalist constituency, sustaining the Hindu traditionalist cause and preserving its link with the RSS. This approach did not yield an overwhelming expansion of its electoral appeal and support but nevertheless, spared the party the kind of 'deinstitutionalisation' that haunted almost all other Indian parties in the period after 1967 when mass defections plagued the party system and especially the INC. For a detailed account of the JS's history and post-independent development, refer to Baxter (1969) and Graham (1990).

²¹⁵ In fact, it could improve its electoral performance seat-wise from 18 to 44 seats in 1967 thus becoming the largest opposition party in the *Lok Sabha*. Vote-wise the increase was less impressive (see table 6 above).

²¹⁶ For an account of the *Swatantra* Party's emergence and (short) history, see Erdmann (1967).

Table 7: Lok Sabha elections (1952-1967), seats/vote share of main parties by main States (with at least 18 seats)

1952				
	INC	JS	CPI	Socialists (SP, KMPP)
Bihar (55)	45/45.8%	0/0.4%	0/0.4%	6/19.3%
Bombay (45)	40/50.1%	-	0/1.3%	0/20.2%
Madhya Pradesh (29)	27/51.6%	0/4.9%	0/0.4%	0/18.3%
Madras (75)	35/36.4%	-	8/8.9%	8/15.1%
Orissa (20)	11/42.5%	-	1/5.8%	1/16.8%
Punjab (18)	16/42.8%	0/5.6%	0/5.0%	0/2.2%
Uttar Pradesh (86)	81/53.0%	0/7.3%	0/0.3%	2/17.8%
West Bengal (34)	24/42.1%	2/5.9%	5/9.5%	0/10.9%
Hyderabad (25)	14/40.1%	-	-	1/13.4%
Rajasthan (20)	9/41.4%	1/3.0%	0/0.2%	0/4.3%
1957				
	INC	JS	CPI	Socialists (PSP)
Andhra Pradesh (43)	37/51.5%	0/0.1%	2/12.0%	0/3.6%
Bihar (53)	41/44.5%	0/0.1%	0/5.1%	2/21.6%
Bombay (66)	38/48.7%	2/3.4%	4/6.3%	5/8.7%
Kerala (18)	6/34.8%	-	9/37.5%	1/7.2%
Madhya Pradesh (36)	35/52.1%	0/14.0%	0/0.4%	0/16.1%
Madras (41)	31/46.5%	-	2/10.1%	0/3.6%
Mysore (26)	23/55.5%	0/2.5%	0/1.5%	1/18.7%
Orissa (20)	7/40.0%	-	1/4.8%	2/15.4%
Punjab (22)	21/51.3%	0/16.0%	1/16.8%	0/0.6%
Rajasthan (22)	19/53.6%	0/11.1%	0/4.8%	0/1.3%
Uttar Pradesh (86)	70/46.3%	2/14.8%	1/1.7%	4/15.3%
West Bengal (36)	23/48.2%	0/1.4%	6/19.0%	2/5.7%

1962					
	INC	JS	CPI	Socialists (PSP, SP)	Swatantra
Andhra Pradesh (43)	34/48.0%	0/1.2%	7/21.0%	0/0.1%	1/14.9%
Bihar (53)	39/43.9%	0/2.3%	1/6.4%	3/18.8%	7/18.2%
Gujarat (22)	16/52.6%	0/1.4%	-	1/7.2%	4/25.0%
Kerala (18)	6/34.3%	0/0.7%	6/35.5%	0/9.9%	0/0.2%
Madhya Pradesh (36)	24/39.6%	3/17.9%	0/0.9%	3/17.6%	0/0.7%
Madras (41)	31/45.3%	0/0.1%	2/10.2%	0/2.1%	0/10.5%
Maharashtra (44)	41/52.9%	0/4.4%	0/4.1%	1/5.4%	0/0.3%
Mysore (26)	25/52.7%	0/2.7%	0/1.5%	0/14.5%	0/7.8%
Orissa (20)	14/55.5%	-	0/5.1%	2/18.2%	0/1.2%
Punjab (22)	14/41.3%	3/15.2%	0/4.7%	1/2.3%	0/4.3%
Rajasthan (22)	14/37.6%	1/9.3%	0/3.0%	0/3.7%	3/18.1%
Uttar Pradesh (86)	62/38.2%	7/17.4%	2/3.6%	3/19.0%	3/5.0%
West Bengal (36)	22/46.8%	0/1.1%	9/29.4%	0/4.6%	0/1.0%
1967					
	INC	JS	CPI/CPI (M)	Socialists (SSP, PSP)	Swatantra
Andhra Pradesh (41)	35/46.8%	0/1.4%	1/18.8%	0/0.6%	3/13.8%
Bihar (53)	34/34.8%	1/11.1%	5/10.2%	8/25.2%	0/3.4%
Gujarat (24)	11/46.9%	-	-	0/1.7%	12/39.9%
Haryana (9)	7/44.1%	1/19.9%	0/2.5%	0/5.9%	0/5.6%
Karnataka (27)	18/49.0%	0/2.3%	0/1.6%	3/7.7%	5/14.3%
Kerala (19)	1/36.2%	0/1.4%	12/22.6%	3/8.4	0/2.3%
Madhya Pradesh (37)	24/40.8%	10/29.6%	0/1.4%	0/8.7%	1/2.7%
Maharashtra (45)	37/48.5%	0/7.4%	2/5.1%	3/6.3%	0/1.0%
Orissa (20)	6/33.3%	0/0.6%	0/3.9%	5/20.5%	8/30.9%
Punjab (13)	9/37.3%	1/12.5%	0/6.2%	0/0.4%	0/4.7%
Rajasthan (23)	10/40.0%	3/10.3%	0/2.8%	0/2.7%	8/27.0%
Tamil Nadu (39)	3/41.7%	0/0.2%	4/8.7%	0/0.1%	6/9.2%
Uttar Pradesh (85)	47/33.4%	12/22.2%	6/4.5%	10/14.0%	1/4.8%
West Bengal (40)	14/39.7%	0/1.4%	10/24.8%	2/3.2%	0/0.8%

Source: Butler, Lahiri and Roy (1995, 3rd edition); the State of Punjab has been divided into the States of Punjab and Haryana in 1966 and both States are therefore included in the 1967 table.

Apart from these main opposition parties, which, together with the INC, won 85% of the popular vote on average in the first four elections after independence, there was a plethora of regional or one-State parties and independent candidates, which were of minor relevance for the composition of the *Lok Sabha*. Nonetheless, they had an impact on the national party

system through their electoral successes at the regional level (in *Vidhan Sabha* elections), which increasingly made the nationally prominent parties dependent on their regionally varying support bases.²¹⁷

Of these regional parties, two more prominent ones are worth mentioning. The *Sikh* party *Akali Dal*, contesting solely in the Punjab, and the *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam* (DMK), a pro-*Dravidian* and anti-caste/Brahmin political formation largely confined to the State of Madras, later on renamed, Tamil Nadu. The former was constantly involved in strategic pre- and post-electoral deal-making with the INC, going out of operation in 1957 but coming back in 1962 and gaining support with a campaign demanding a separate State of Punjab, the *Punjabi Suba* (realised in 1966 when the former State of Punjab was divided into the Sikh-dominated Punjab and the largely Hindu-dominated State of Haryana).²¹⁸ The latter instead steadily improved its electoral performance in the South over the first elections until it made a “(...) storming advance (...) to 40 per cent of the poll” (Morris-Jones 1989: 198) in Tamil Nadu in 1967, capturing almost all *Lok Sabha* seats from that State and coming to power with an absolute seat-wise majority.

Overall, before 1977 the potential for a breaking up of the national one-party-dominant system (in electoral terms) came primarily from the Indian States and a concomitant regionalisation of the party system. The most serious manifestation of this trend were the electoral alliances of opposition parties in 1967 and the *Samyukta Vidhayak Dals* (broadly based multi-party coalition governments) coming to power in nearly half of the States of the Indian Union after that year’s ‘critical election’. This should however not disguise the fact that up to 1967 the INC’s (national and regional) dominance was in ‘full swing’ and no opposition party was seen as having any chance of replacing the INC from power at the centre and in the States. The reasons for this manifestation of prolonged and overwhelming party political dominance, given the prominence and diversity of post-independent opposition party politics described above, is what the next chapters will turn to.

²¹⁷ In contrast to the South African party system, with the exceptions of the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu/Natal, the Indian party system, according to Brass (1990: 99), “(...) was never a single one-party-dominant system. Rather it consisted of a national party system with links to the states and seventeen regional multi-party systems in which the Congress was dominant” (see 4.2.).

²¹⁸ Soon afterwards however, internal feuding led to a split of the *Akali Dal*, from which it had difficulties to recover.

Table 8: Lok Sabha Elections (1952-1999), % of valid vote cast/seats won by parties represented*

Parties	1952	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999
INC/INC(I)	45.0/364	47.8/371	44.7/361	40.8/283	43.7/352	34.5/154	42.7/353	48.1/415	39.5/197	36.5/232	28.8/140	25.8/141	28.3/114
BJS/BJP/BLD	3.1/3	5.9/4	6.4/14	9.4/35	7.4/22	41.3/295	-	7.4/2	11.5/86	20.1/120	20.3/161	25.6/182	23.8/182
SWA/JD	-	-	7.9/18	8.7/44	3.1/8	-	-	-	17.7/142	11.8/59	8.1/46	3.2/6	4.0/22
CPI	3.3/16	8.9/27	9.9/29	5.0/23	4.7/23	2.8/7	2.6/11	2.7/6	2.6/12	2.5/14	2.0/12	1.8/9	1.5/4
CPI (M)	-	-	-	4.4/19	5.1/25	4.3/22	6.1/36	5.7/22	6.5/33	6.5/35	6.1/32	5.2/32	5.4/33
ICSS/INCUI	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3/13	1.6/5	0.3/1	0.4/1	-	-	-
INCO/LKD/JPS	-	-	-	-	10.4/16	1.7/3	9.4/41	5.6/3	-	-	-	-	-
JP/SJP	-	-	-	-	-	-	19.0/31	6.7/10	-	3.4/5	-	0.1/1	-
TDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.1/30	3.3/2	3.0/13	4.0/16	2.9/12	3.9/29
PSP/KMPP	5.8/9	10.4/19	6.8/12	3.1/13	1.0/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SOC/SSP	10.6/12	-	2.7/6	4.9/23	2.4/3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SAP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.2/8	1.8/12	0.8/3
AIC(T)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.5/4	0.1/1	-
BSP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.6/11	4.7/5	4.7/14
Others**	16.5/47	7.6/31	10.5/34	10.0/45	13.8/53	9.9/52	8.5/35	10.0/44	12.2/44	12.1/41	24.6/131	29.7/150	30.1/168
Independents	15.9/38	19.4/42	11.1/20	13.7/35	8.4/14	5.5/9	6.4/9	8.1/5	5.2/12	3.9/1	6.3/9	2.4/6	2.7/6

Notes: *Only parties registered as national have been considered; renaming of parties has not been taken into account (see abbreviations in respective cells). **For a break-up of this category up to 1991 see Butler, Lahiri and Roy (1995: 3rd edition). Indian National Congress (Indira) (INC); *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* (BJS), *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), *Bharatiya Lok Dal* (BLD); *Swatantra Party* (SWA); *Janata Dal* (JD); Communist Party of India (CPI); Communist Party of India/Marxist (CPM); Indian Congress Socialist Sarat Chandra Sinha (ICSS), Indian National Congress (Urs) (INCUI); Indian National Congress (Organisation) (INCO), *Lok Dal* (LKD), *Janata Party Secular* (JPS); *Janata Party* (JP), *Samajwadi Janata Party* (SJP); *Telugu Desam Party* (TDP); *Praja Socialist Party* (PSP), *Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party* (KMPP); Socialist Party (SOC), *Samyukta Socialist Party* (SSP); *Shiromani Akali Dal Party* (SAP); All-India Congress (Tiwari) (AIC (T); *Bahujan Samaj Party* (BSP).

Source: Butler, Lahiri and Roy (1995: 3rd edition) and Election Commission of India (1996, 1998, 1999) available at: www.eci.gov.in.

2.2. South Africa

2.2.1. Prelude to SA's first democratic election in 1994: legacies of apartheid and politics of transformation

The time was ripe for a political transformation of South Africa's encrusted regime structures when in the last decade of the 20th century the Cold War era came to an end so unexpectedly and abruptly. No military solution was in sight given the weakness of the liberation movement's military wing and the strength of the apartheid state's security apparatus (Welsh 1994b: 23), but the drying up of foreign direct investment (for political and/or economic reasons) proved to be a crucial factor. The need for local capital to compete internationally, the increasing integration of global capital markets and the internationalisation or, for that matter, globalisation of resistance against an outlived apartheid system combined with growing domestic resistance from labour movements and civics in the 1980's contributed to the apartheid regime's realisation that their politico-economic model was no longer financially affordable. The crisis of the gold industry in the 1980's acted as a final precipitating event (Natrass/Seekings 2000: 43). As such, the end of apartheid not only involved a racist regime coming to its senses to recognise that white minority domination over the African majority was simply no longer ethically bearable at the end of the 20th century, but was also a matter of rational choice based on cost-benefit calculations.

Surprisingly enough, in the end the mainly elite-induced process of negotiating the transition showed a remarkable preponderance of conciliatory attitudes on both sides, challengers and incumbents, at least with regard to political transformation. Additionally, the concept of democratic constitutionalism was never at stake (at least among the main negotiators), only individual institutional provisions of the interim constitution to be bargained were subject to disagreement. This 'political miracle', as it was termed by the bulk of international observers, was less due to some sort of a 'harmonic consensual agreement' between the leading negotiation partners, the ANC and the National Party (NP), but more due to a shared (rational) understanding of mutual dependence, political as well as economical.²¹⁹

Politically, it was a matter of balancing representative democracy and (principally white) minority rights on the one side, and on the other, an understanding on the part of the ANC that the country, more or less, relied on the governmental and administrative skills of the still

²¹⁹ Consequently, the bargaining over the transition and the interim constitution was as much characterised by conflict based on sometimes harsh attempts to safeguard (partisan) interests as it was by compromise in the light of a growing perception that there was simply no other alternative available and that the costs of not reaching a settlement were simply too high (Schmidt 1996: 372-373, Southall 1994: 630).

white-dominated state apparatus to guarantee a smooth transition to a fully inclusive, non-racial democracy. In economic terms, it was clear, and few would have denied, that some sort of redistribution had to be implemented to ensure a real improvement for the African majority, i.e. the ANC's constituency.²²⁰ At the same time, in the interest of macroeconomic balance and stability, not the least of which was the need to maintain the confidence of the business community, excessive deficit spending was out of the question to say nothing of far-reaching land reform and nationalisation.

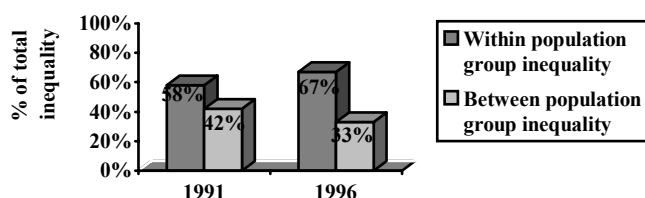
Without a doubt, the apartheid state left behind serious economic, social as well as political deformations. The economic and social legacy of apartheid "(...) decades of state-reinforced material inequality" (Lodge 1996: 197) covered the whole range of structural problems and deficits that semi-industrialised countries are facing in an increasingly competitive global economy: growing unemployment, unmet infrastructural needs, deficits in human capital, and great inequality in the distribution of income. With a Gini-coefficient²²¹ of 0.68 in 1991 (Whiteford and van Seventer 1999, UNDP 2000), staying constant up to the end of the decade (1999: 0.69)²²², South Africa was and still is one of the least egalitarian societies in the world.²²³ As Herbst (1994: 147) noted just before the elections of 1994 in an assessment of

²²⁰ Even the staunchest defenders of white supremacy would have agreed to this, albeit not to promote social justice but driven by the simple fear that oppressors all over the world have of being overrun by the formerly oppressed.

²²¹ The Gini coefficient is a number between 0 and 1 that indicates the level of income inequality within a population. A value of 0 indicates perfect equality (everyone has the same income), while a value of 1 indicates perfect inequality (one person or household has all the income). As the Gini coefficient becomes larger and closer to 1, the extent of inequality increases.

²²² What one can deduce from relevant aggregate data during the 1990's is a remarkable shift from inter-racial to intra-racial inequality that undoubtedly reveals the 'winners' of the country's economic development since 1990 (Figure 1) with the "average household income in the richest 10% of African households [being] over two hundred and fifty times higher than the average income in the poorest 10%" (Natrass/Seekings 2000: 4) by 1996.

**FIGURE 3: SOURCES OF INCOME INEQUALITY
in SA**



Source: A. Whiteford and D. E. van Seventer, 'Winners and Losers: South Africa's Changing Income Distribution in the 1990's', in *WEFA Southern Africa*, (Pretoria: 1999), p. 19, calculated using Theil index.

²²³ The World Bank (1996) gives a slightly lower figure for 1993/94 (0.584) than the one calculated by Whiteford and van Seventer (1999) and subsequently by the UNDP (2000). The difference stems from the fact that the World Bank uses household expenditure data from one year for its calculations whereas Whiteford and van Seventer use census measures of household income for all the years. Nevertheless, the World Bank rated South Africa as third most unequal society in the world only topped by Brazil and Guatemala.

the structural challenges a 'new' South African government would face, "(...) the transition to a non-racial future involves much more than simply the enfranchisement of the 86 per cent of the population that is black ['black' is used in this article to denote the African, Asian and 'coloured' populations, C.S.]. It also involves the transformation of a sophisticated economy from providing primarily First World lifestyle for five million whites to supplying all 37 million South Africans with the basic necessities of life." Although factors other than apartheid policies have contributed to these structural deficits (such as globalisation, the shift from a demand economy in a protected domestic market to a supply-side economy, or the decline of the mining industry), almost all of them are, at least indirectly, linked to the political economy of the apartheid regime. The apartheid policies and characteristics of the regime that were of special relevance to the development of these structural deficits include: homeland policies, discriminative labour acts, industrial decentralisation, wage policies, 'job reservations' and educational policies. The costs in maintaining the apartheid system comprised direct costs such as those involved in the repression of domestic resistance as well as indirect costs such as those produced by the impact of economic sanctions imposed by the international community (Piazolo 1994: 72 f., Weimer 1992: 184-185). Forty-two years of institutionalised racial segregation (and a much longer history of racial discrimination)²²⁴ left behind a situation where, according to the UNDP/World Bank 'Poverty and Inequality Report' of 1998, most households experience(d) either outright poverty or vulnerability to poverty, this despite South Africa being an upper-middle-income country in per capita terms. This bleak picture of about 19 million people or just under 50% of the population living below the poverty line is mainly a result of outright discrimination in terms of wages and employment coupled with the neglect in infrastructural investment for the communities of the African majority, primarily in the areas of housing, education and primary health. At the same time and less commonly known, economic growth has been declining since the mid-1970s with a meagre rate of only 1.5 per cent per year reached in the 1980s (Gelb 1991: 4), before the political transition from apartheid to democracy was set in motion. Consequently, the aforementioned structural deficits as part of the apartheid's (social and economic) legacy were linked to an overall picture of the country's economy that ran counter to any radical efforts at redistribution (such as far-reaching land reforms, extreme deficit spending or nationalisation

²²⁴ The institutionalisation of an apartheid-style political programme can be traced back to before 1948. Indeed, a plethora of laws that laid the foundation for the later establishment of the apartheid system were enacted before this date, right from the beginning of the South African Union as a sovereign state in 1910. The year 1948 is taken here as point of reference because it was the election of the Afrikaner (Afrikaans-speaking South Africans of Boer descent) dominated Nationalist government (National Party), which lasted until the transition to democracy was set in motion, and was responsible for the institutionalisation of racial segregation, or 'apartheid' as it became widely known, on a massive scale.

of key industries), especially in the light of a global discourse (and economy) that would probably not allow such a kind of economic trajectory to flourish. As such, the dilemma that the ANC and its allies faced as the putative governing party, or, for that matter, which any changing society's new government faced at the beginning of the last century's last decade was to "(...) balance the requirements of programmes to diminish poverty with those policies which can help to promote growth" (Lodge 1996: 198). Additionally, while trying to fulfil this task, "(...) the government will be influenced by the imperatives of meeting the expectations of its most powerful constituencies and securing the loyalty or, at least, the acquiescence of the former beneficiaries of apartheid" (ibid. 198). This dilemma should be kept in mind when analysing the political opportunity structure available to entrepreneurial party elites in the attempt to entrench their party's dominance. As an intervening constraint the apartheid's social and economic legacies determine(d) to a great extent the leeway between structure and choice thus bearing greatly upon political actors' decision-making.²²⁵

Not only did social and economic legacies have an impact on post-apartheid political development and party system formation, but also the distinct political legacy in terms of political predispositions and democratic inclinations or commitment as well as (varying) experiences with competitive (parliamentary) party politics and formal, institutionalised democratic practices. The latter was naturally limited to the white minority²²⁶ and the value of this experience is to be questioned given the racially exclusive character of the entire political system (though my interview partner R.W. Johnson (see references) ascribed to the functioning 'white' party system a positive impact on post-apartheid party system development). The practical experience of representative politics and party competition, as well as enjoyment of liberal rights and freedoms for the African majority was extremely restricted²²⁷ or, for that matter, practically non-existent, though some observers concede "(...)

²²⁵ For a more general approach that blends structure and agency with regard to party formation (with special reference to Eastern Europe and the post-soviet Russian party system), see Perkins 1995; for the application of a structure-agency approach to the post-apartheid negotiation process (with special emphasis on the organisational context and intra-group interaction), see Velickovic (2002).

²²⁶ But even the racially exclusive representational system introduced in 1910 often fell short of substantial democratic rights (e.g. as regards the treatment of white critics and dissidents of the apartheid state), more and more so when "(...) the security legislation and successive states of emergency of the 1980's (...) concentrated power in the national security establishment and emasculated parliament" (Mattes and Thiel 1998: 129-130). Interestingly enough, within the racially exclusive party system of the apartheid state, the NP had succeeded in establishing a system of one-party-dominance by means of monopolising and manipulating political institutions, a process feared of by many observers as going to be reconstituted by the ANC after its electoral victories in 1994 and 1999; see, for example, Southall (1994) and Giliomee (1998).

²²⁷ Reference is made here to the various forms of restricted participation before 1948 when the Afrikaner Nationalist government was elected and apartheid-style racial segregation was institutionalised (some forms of this participation such as elections to the township advisory boards lasted even longer than the critical juncture of 1948) (Lodge 1996: 190), as well as to the "(...) nominally democratic 'Black local authorities' or self-governing 'bantustans' imposed by Pretoria, [which] lacking resources and legitimacy, became breeding

that even the very restricted experience black South Africans had of the rights and freedoms associated with liberal democracy may have helped to influence their political values” (Lodge 1996: 190).²²⁸

More importantly, a result of African resistance politics before 1990, especially during its heyday in the 1980’s when African participatory bodies and popular movements gained momentum and populist politics gained ascendancy, has been a distinct activist culture and perception of democracy as participatory and emancipatory among the African community. This persists until today and pervades much of the political disagreement over policy and decision-making in the ruling tripartite alliance, or, between the ANC and its former allies as well as between the party’s leadership and its rank and file.²²⁹

Asked in an 1995 Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) national survey, whether key procedural elements of democratic governance such as majority rule (30 %), regular elections (27 %), complete freedom to criticise the government (25 %), competition with at least two strong parties (24%), and protection of minority rights (21 %), should be considered

grounds for massive corruption, political assassinations, and successive coups leading to dictatorships and *juntas* (Mattes and Thiel 1998: 130).”

²²⁸ From 1977 onwards the then government of P.W. Botha initiated an awkward process of restructuring the politico-economic model of apartheid and loosening restrictions on political participation for the African community but did not alter the foundations of the apartheid system fundamentally. These half-hearted attempts at ‘restructuring’ the apartheid state only fuelled popular resistance and contributed to even greater mobilisation of resistance against apartheid that was countered by the adoption of the ‘total strategy’ which saw an increasing reliance by the government upon military means of control. For a detailed account of African politics and resistance before 1990 see Lodge (1983), and the five-volume *From Protest to Challenge* by Karis et al. (eds.) (1972-97), which covers the period from 1882 until 1979 with two additional volumes planned that take the story up to 1990 including a political who’s who for 1964-1990.

²²⁹ The most prominent manifestation of political disagreement based on different notions of democracy as a consequence of apartheid or, rather, as a consequence of the struggle against apartheid, are the growing tensions between the ANC leadership and COSATU (the latter being a vital part of the tripartite alliance) over the shift in macro-economic policy from the more redistributionist, participatory and state-interventionist ‘Reconstruction and Development Programme’ (RDP) to the basically neo-liberal and pro-capitalist ‘Growth, Employment and Redistribution’ programme (GEAR). Whereas disagreement between the ANC leadership and the trade union movement is basically over the substance of democratic governance and policy-making (procedural vs. economic/emancipatory), the relationship between the ANC government and the civics movement is determined by different views about the nature of decision-making (participatory vs. centralist). A quote from a 1998 Report on ‘Civil society and the State in South Africa: past legacies, present realities, and future prospects’ by the ‘Community Agency for Social Equity’ (CASE) and the ‘South African National NGO Coalition’ (SANGOCO), which can be considered a successor of the ANC affiliated ‘United Democratic Front’ (UDF), the most important (anti-apartheid) civil society umbrella body in the 1980s, highlights the tension-ridden relationship between the new government and civil society organisations: “Already in 1990 the centralist approach of the ANC began to clash with the more participatory approach of the UDF. Sharing the overarching goal of putting to rest the legacy of apartheid rule, many civil society organisations accepted the leading role of the ANC. Once the goal of democracy and majority rule was achieved, however, the rifts between civil society and the ANC as the leading force in the new government resurfaced”; see p. 32 of the internet document available at: www.case.org.za/htm/civilsaf.htm. Even between the ANC leadership and rank and file there were different perceptions of what ‘democracy’ actually meant, or, more precisely, how it should be reached. This was apparent especially during the transition period and negotiation process when there was open (sometimes even hostile) debate between the ANC leadership and its youth organisation and exiled military wing (*Umkhonto we Sizwe*) over the transition to democracy (negotiations vs. armed struggle), and, between the ANC leadership and the (township) civics over involvement in the decision-making process; see Velickovic (2002: 16) and Ottaway (1991: 69 f.).

as “essential” to democracy, only a small number of respondents rated these procedural elements in accordance with the normative ideal of a liberal democracy (percentages given in brackets). On the other hand 48 % of respondents rated ‘equal access to houses, jobs and a decent income’ and 23 % identified ‘a small gap between rich and poor’ as “essential” to democracy (IDASA survey quoted in Mattes and Thiel 1998: 127). Furthermore, the year-long struggle against apartheid and the experience of a racially exclusive access to political power and economic resources not only furthered the emergence of a highly politicised, primarily urban, African community, trained in direct political action, but also contributed to the rise of a specific group perception of politics among the African community making “(...) it likely that objective differences within groups will remain subordinate to enduring perceptions of homogenous group interests. Because group membership determined access to power in the past, it is likely that South Africans will continue to perceive access to the state and the distribution and redistribution of resources in this light” (Mattes and Thiel 1998: 130).²³⁰

Additionally, past (race-based) discrimination made it relatively clear that the views of the African community and the white minority about the nature of the new polity and constitution differed substantively. Soon after the initiation of constitutional negotiations it became apparent that the whites were to a larger extent attached to a polity structured along consociational lines including minority protection and a strong emphasis on proportional representation whereas the African majority, in light of their numerical dominance, was far more oriented towards majority rule as the key element of a functioning democracy.²³¹

Finally, to conclude this brief discussion of apartheid’s political, social and economic legacies it is necessary to point out the administrative heritage of the apartheid era. According to Lodge (1996: 196) the apartheid state was heavily interventionist (in terms of policy-making, especially in the area of industrial relations), possessed a huge civil service²³² and a

²³⁰ The theme of (homogenous) African/white group identity perception is prevalent in almost all explanations to the ANC dominance given by my South African interview partners (see references), or, for that matter, South African academics in general.

²³¹ Of course, as Mattes and Thiel (1998: 131) rightly point out: “This is probably less an indication that whites are better educated about democracy than a reflection of their minority status, which leads them to value potential mechanisms of minority protection.”

²³² There were approximately 358.000 (30.5 %) persons employed in state departments and 818.000 (69.5 %) employed in the nine provincial authorities in 1997/98 (Kotzé 2000: 89), an obvious indication of serious ‘overstaffing’ given a population of 40.6 million people according to the 1996 census. The total number of employees in the public sector (including education, parastatals, public corporations and marketing boards) was 1.634.819 in June 1993 and 1.885.443 in March 1995 (South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) 1994/95: 476-477, SAIRR 1995/96: 268-271). Both, the job tenure for (principally white) employees in the public service - as part of the so called ‘sunset clauses’ (transitional rules, or, for that matter, concessions of constitutional protection for the white minority and/or former incumbents of power and office (like, for example, the homeland administrations) in order to speed up the negotiation process and to guarantee an orderly

comparatively extensive administrative reach. This did not necessarily mean that it was efficient as well. Public service was and still is 'overstaffed' to a serious extent and competitiveness of recruitment, once limited by political and racist principles, is again threatened by the politics of affirmative action as part of the ANC government's redistributionist policies. Corruption was prevalent at all levels, and was particularly notorious in the former homeland administrations that had to be (re)integrated into the new federal set-up comprising nine more or less autonomous provinces.²³³ Additionally, as a result of the apartheid state's asymmetric infrastructural investment and neglect of the 'home-grown' 'independent' or 'self-governing' African 'national states' (referred to either as 'homelands' from 1972 onwards or – in a derogative sense – as 'bantustans') the coverage of public/administrative services is very uneven thus limiting the reach of the state and endangering effective delivery.²³⁴

The size of the public sector, the consistently high level of corruption and the limited or, for that matter, uneven (administrative) reach of the state imposed a serious burden from the past on the scope of action available to emerging political elites.²³⁵ Nevertheless, in comparison to other semi-industrialised, democratising countries, or, for that matter, other sub-Saharan democratising countries, the 'new' South Africa has also inherited a fairly effective state apparatus with a complex bureaucracy and a well-developed infrastructure. In general, as Lodge (1996: 197) summarised the political and administrative legacies of the apartheid era in 1996: "A relatively efficient bureaucracy with its own authoritarian predispositions may be checked by a fractured democratic tradition inherited from liberal and legalistic strains which survived in white parliamentary politics and black resistance. But in both, the historical legacy includes also strong veins of autocracy and intolerance. At best, tradition will offer ambivalent support for a post-apartheid democracy."

transition) negotiated by the ANC and NP before 1994 -, and the need to restructure the racially based composition of the public service by means of positive discrimination, contribute to the continuation of this legacy of a huge civil/public service; see also Southall (1997: 15) and Lodge (1996: 196).

²³³ The apartheid regime had embraced some kind of pseudo-confederation during the tenure of prime minister Verwoerd in the 1960s by creating legally 'independent' territories allocated to the African populations as 'reservations'. In reality, the rationale of the creation of these 'national states', which were completely dependent on the central government, was to declare all Africans 'citizens' of one of these homelands thus turning them into foreigners in their own country and entrenching racial segregation even further.

²³⁴ The provinces that experienced the least effective governance, government administration and delivery of services after 1994 were Eastern Cape, *KwaZulu-Natal* and Northern Province. According to the Department of Public Service and Administration report on provincial governance released in 1997 these provinces were on the verge of collapse (RSA 1997). All three of these provinces had to (re)integrate former homeland administrations; see also Pottie (1999: 27).

²³⁵ Again, apartheid's administrative legacy should be kept in mind when dealing with the political opportunity structure wherein political and party elites are acting. As Levite and Tarrow (1983: 315) had formulated in their comparison of the dominant party systems of Italy and Israel regarding the primacy of politics and party strategy in the up-holding of party dominance: "In our view, party strategy is only primary within the limits of political opportunity, which in turn is dependent on the structural parameters within which politics operates."

Despite the manifold legacies of the apartheid era, sketched above, and party traditions of the apartheid state, South Africa's party system is essentially a product of the country's transformation process. All the established parties of the South African party system as well as the nationally relevant movements and anti-apartheid groups were deeply affected by the political reform process initiated by President De Klerk. Most of the formerly banned parties or movements representing the African majority were confronted for the first time with having to prepare themselves for electoral competition (organisationally as well as programmatically), to take part in the elaboration of a constitution and making themselves available for government responsibility, in sum, in having to think about the future shape of the country and their role within its political system.²³⁶ For the parties of the *ancien régime*, i.e. the nationally relevant parties representing the white minority apart from the Democratic Party (DP), it meant to realise their minority status and in the end, to learn the ropes of 'real' opposition politics.²³⁷ It was in the course of the negotiation process or transition period leading to the elections of 1994 that the rules and nature of party competition were established anew and the emerging party system of a post-apartheid South Africa began to take shape. Party strategies during the negotiation process were shaped by a number of factors including the high level of uncertainty regarding electoral support for the respective parties, the perception of putative majorities as well as of anticipated losers in the transition, the vagaries of alliance-building fuelled by the plethora of opinion polls conducted between 1990 and

²³⁶ The same holds true for the *Inkatha* Freedom Party (IFP), the political representation of the ethnic group of the *Zulus* founded in 1975 as a cultural (liberation) movement (*Inkatha YenkuluYesizwe*) committed to non-violent resistance against apartheid, which was never banned (as a cultural organisation and within the limits of the *KwaZulu* homeland) thus having bigger organisational resources at its disposal. Nevertheless, the IFP had to undergo the same challenging process of restructuring or transformation from movement to party as all the other African liberation movements and organisations. Additionally, there were also those formerly banned African movements that initially rejected any participation in the negotiation process and were committed to a revolutionary transformation of the South African society, most prominently the PAC and AZAPO (though the PAC took part in the elections of 1994). Both parties took part in the elections of 1999.

²³⁷ The Conservative Party (CP), principal right-wing parliamentary opposition to the NP since 1982, tried to embrace some kind of neo-apartheid ideology after the initiation of the transition process through NP President De Klerk by demanding a *volkstaat* (a demarcated territory wherein the principle of Afrikaner self-determination would be realised), but soon had to realise that – in a democratic South Africa – it would never go beyond a minority of the Afrikaner electorate and consequently committed itself to extra-institutional pressure and resistance (as did the right-wing extremist groups such as the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB)). The segment of the white (Afrikaner) Right accepting a more moderate approach and participation in the democratic process (but not giving up the idea of a *volkstaat*) finally grouped together in the Freedom Front (FF) under the leadership of former South African Defence Forces (SADF) chief Constandt Viljoen – soon also recognising that they were subject to the status of a permanent minority with a declining vote share in the elections of 1994 and 1999 from 2.17 % to 0.8 %; see van Rooyen (1994). The DP, founded in 1989 and basically the successor of the Progressive Party (PP, successively named Progressive Reform Party and Progressive Federal Party) – for long the repository of white (principally Anglophone) liberals in opposition to the apartheid state –, had campaigned for the abandonment of apartheid already in 1989 and continued to promise 'effective' opposition in a new South Africa by holding the balance as a centrist party (between the ANC and the NP); see Welsh (1994a). For some time, the NP as the prime representative of the apartheid regime had to display an oppositional stand toward the ANC while, at the same time, sitting in cabinet due to the provision of the GNU; see 2.2.2.

1994²³⁸, the varying estimates of the electorate's size in a fully enfranchised South Africa and, finally, the expected impact of the new electoral system of proportional representation. All these affected not only the configuration of (party) political forces to be established, but also the institutional arrangements of the interim constitution under which the 1994 elections were to be held.

As such, the dynamics of the negotiation process prior to the election of 1994 "(...) revolved around two major concerns" (Southall 1994: 630): first and foremost, the forging of "(...) a constitutional compromise which would marry South Africa's accession to (black) majority rule to the guaranteed protection of (principally white) minority rights; and second, the determined effort to secure support for such a settlement from across the entire political spectrum" (ibid.: 630). The first concern was largely a question of the appropriate constitutional engineering with a strong institutional focus as the most obvious manifestation of the delicate attempt to balance all stakeholders' interests involved and to formulate clearly defined rules for their interaction.²³⁹ The second, despite its idealistic undertones, was largely a question of what kind of social and political forces were able and willing to take part in the process of framing the new political order spearheaded by the ANC and the NP.

According to respective perceptions of electoral support, estimates of (electoral as well as bargaining) success, the possibility of alliance-building, the capability of organisational build-up and/or reformation and the anticipated success in winning over respective followings, each party involved in transitional politics designed its strategy accordingly and determined what it could bring to the negotiating table. The South African case is a prime example of political actors (party elites) making use of the political opportunity structure (as well as being constrained by structural and institutional factors such as organisational inadequacy) thus turning the transition into a matter of balancing relative power positions and the availability of resources (Velickovic 2002). Political elites in South Africa during the transition were not operating in a vacuum, as process-oriented theoretical approaches to (democratic) transition tend to suggest²⁴⁰, but were dependent on accommodating and disciplining their respective constituencies and/or having access to state institutions in order to a) seek approval from the

²³⁸ Southall (1994: 637) – considering the reliability of the various opinion polls conducted between 1990 and 1994 – comes to the following conclusion: "Not many such efforts could legitimately claim to have overcome the numerous difficulties associated with polling the majority African segment of the electorate, such as the general lack of telephones, the inaccessibility of substantial communities because of political violence, and the sheer remoteness of rural populations, all of which added up to the polling results being generally regarded as little better than sophisticated 'guesstimates'."

²³⁹ One of the most visible manifestations of this institutional focus and debate about the (putatively positive) impact of appropriate constitutional engineering were the deliberations about electoral reforms and the 'ideal' electoral system to be applied; see Krennerich and de Ville (1997).

²⁴⁰ The classical reference in this regard is Burton and Higley (1987) and, more context-sensitive, O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986).

respective followings for their bargaining positions and policy conclusions and b) to contest (and secure) specific rights and privileges to be agreed upon in the new constitutional order. The main negotiation partners, the ANC and the NP, went through an especially thorny process of convincing their respective constituencies that the line taken was in the best interest of their supporters ('in the best interest of the country as a whole' as it was publicly declared²⁴¹) and, at the same time, using their organisational resources to maximise their positions. After the initial infighting between various factions and allies, especially between the 'old guard' of 'exiles' and 'Robben Islanders'²⁴² and the members of the former military wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* as well as militant youth activists many of whom had not given up the idea of a successful armed struggle²⁴³, the consultative approach of the ANC leadership proved, retrospectively, to be much more successful in ratifying (but sometimes also substantively changing) its constitutional and policy proposals with and because of its rank and file (especially during two big conferences in December 1990 and July 1991 and various more informal consultations thereafter). The NP basically adopted a top-down approach of decision-making after having once sought to obtain a mandate from the white electorate. A referendum in 1992, held under threat of De Klerk's resignation, had asked, "Do you support continuation of the reform process which the State President began on February 2, 1990 and which is aimed at a new Constitution through negotiation?" (Strauss 1993: 339).²⁴⁴ From then on, the NP leadership took it, more or less, for granted that its constitutional and policy proposals, having been outlined during the referendum (basically, safeguards for minorities, representation of regional interests, an electoral system of proportional representation, executive power-sharing, the up-holding of a free market economy and participatory democracy), were in the interest of the bulk of its clientele despite being ratified only by the bigger part of the white electorate.

The different approaches taken by the ANC and NP to seek approval from their constituencies were also reflected in the way that the party leadership tried to use the political opportunity

²⁴¹ This is obvious from the various references (in speeches, interviews, press articles) to the need of establishing a 'rainbow nation' (ANC) and 'participatory democracy' (NP), respectively.

²⁴² These terms refer to those leaders operating from neighbouring countries or from within the international community and to those leaders formerly imprisoned on Robben Island respectively.

²⁴³ One of the main reasons for the ANC's success in generating organisational cohesion and, probably, the most visible step towards an institutionalisation of the party's broad support base, was the founding of the tripartite alliance itself (the ruling coalition since 1994), the organisational manifestation of the ANC's long-standing partnership with the COSATU and the SACP (see 2.2.4.), once thought to be possible contenders for the same clientele as the ANC. Disagreement between the ANC and its allies over the coalition's policy positions, especially between the ANC and COSATU, were, nevertheless, part and parcel of the transition period and, once again, threaten the alliance's coherence.

²⁴⁴ The referendum yielded 68.7 % 'Yes' votes and 31.3 % 'No' votes with a turnout of the white electorate of 86 % of registered voters.

structure. The NP relied heavily upon a general perception of the blackmail potential ascribed to it as the ruling party still controlling the state apparatus, particularly through the security forces and state bureaucracy, a fact that was strongly influencing the ANC's negotiation strategy.²⁴⁵ The ANC, on the other hand, especially after the failure of the second 'Convention for a Democratic South Africa' (CODESA II) conference²⁴⁶ in May 1992, fell back on the politics of 'rolling mass action'. The organising of general strikes (in close cooperation with COSATU) and mobilisation of political protest on a large scale to resolve deadlocks in negotiations was ample evidence of the ANC using its specific resources, namely its mobilisational skills and broad support base to enforce its claims.

Other political groups/parties and societal forces, cognisant of the fact that the ANC and NP clearly dominated the negotiation process and in constant fear of becoming the permanent 'losers' in the new political and constitutional order, also tried to make use of the (more) limited resources available to them in the period of constitutional negotiations from 1990 – 1994. In particular the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), but also groups of the extremist white Right, and, to a smaller extent, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) used their 'chaos power', i.e. the threat of political violence and of breaking away from the bargaining table, to extract a higher political price for their continuing participation in the negotiation process. Political violence, already threatening to become endemic after the end of apartheid, reached a new acme after the failure of CODESA II. The bloodbath in Bisho, capital of the homeland of

²⁴⁵ As Joe Slovo, member of the National Executive Council (NEC) of the ANC, and at the time the Chairman of the South African Communist Party (SACP), formulated in a strategic paper that paved the way for the breakthrough in ANC-NP negotiations by suggesting the adoption of the 'sunset clauses', "(...) we should not underestimate the danger of the counter-revolution in the period following a major transformation. The extreme right will target Secs of the white community, in particular the incumbents (hundreds of thousands) in the civil service, army and police who fear for their jobs and for their economic future. Precisely because racism gave them a monopoly of skills and experience, their potential for destabilising a newly born democracy is enormous. Hence, in addressing areas of compromise, we should also consider measures which will help pre-empt the objectives of the counter-revolution and reduce its base." (Slovo 1992: 36; also available at the SACP's website: www.sacp.org.za/people/slovo/negotiations.html; see also the ANC's 'Negotiations: A Strategic Perspective' document as adopted by the National Working Committee (NWC) on 18 November, 1992 (ANC 1992).

²⁴⁶ The two CODESA (I & II) conferences - multi-party forums created to negotiate an agreement on a transitional government and Constitutional assembly, roughly the equivalent of the various 'roundtables' in post-Cold War Eastern Europe or the 'National Conferences' in so many post-colonial states – paved the ground for the creation of transitional structures, especially an interim constitution, but failed to reach an agreement on the issues of the quorum for matters affecting the constitution, and the role of the Senate in a future federal South Africa. In retrospect, the decision of both the ANC and NP as the main negotiators was heavily affected by their individual estimates of popular support and their partisan interest in delaying and abridging the transition period respectively. Nevertheless, after confidential negotiations between De Klerk and Mandela (and, more important, between the ANC's general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa and the new (NP) government negotiator Roelf Meyer) leading to the codification of a 'Record of Understanding' in September 1992 wherein the ground rules for the elaboration of the constitution, the interim constitution and government and the holding of elections was agreed upon by the two parties, the successful installation of a Multi-Party-Negotiation Forum (comprising – more or less – all political parties) was to follow in March 1993, and, after several months of bickering and bargaining as well as the abandoning of the IFP, PAC and white Right from the bargaining table, the constitutional compromise was formally adopted.

Ciskei, where ANC supporters trying to enter the town were shot down by the homeland troops, and the massacre of ANC supporters by Inkatha members in the township of Boipatong became the most overt manifestations of how fragile the negotiation process was.²⁴⁷

The IFP, realising that its image as a national political force was in decline, was also demanding the greatest autonomy for its regional stronghold KwaZulu-Natal. The unruly homeland governments of Ciskei and Bhoputhatswana, unwilling to be (re)integrated into the new territorial order without appropriate compensation, and the diverse groups of the white Right (insisting on their own *volkstaat*), were all aware that they would fare badly in the upcoming elections. Grouping together in a coalition of convenience, which came to be known as the 'Concerned South African Group' (COSAG)²⁴⁸, they stepped down from the multi-party negotiation forum thus rendering impossible a smooth and peaceful holding of elections. Southall (1994: 632) comments on the disruptive potential of these socio-political groupings:

"Given the dictatorial controls exercised by Lucas Mangope's police within Bophuthatswana (which denied the ANC and other liberation movements access to freely campaign and organise); given the virtual civil war between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha in the province known as Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) and in the rural areas of Natal (which had ripped African communities apart since 1990, and been responsible for the bulk of some 14,000 violent deaths); and given the open war-mongering by the neo-fascist Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB), and the shadowy yet close connections between the right wing and the security forces (which had themselves been heavily implicated in fuelling intra-communal African violence and attacks upon supporters of the ANC): the need to defuse the destructive potential of the Freedom Alliance, if a negotiated transition was to be achieved and elections successfully held, was paramount."

²⁴⁷ In contrast to the already high figures for fatalities due to political violence at the end of the 1980s during the heyday of popular resistance against apartheid – Innes (1990: 32) reports 661 such deaths for 1987, 1.149 for 1988, and 1.403 for 1989 –, the number of fatalities rose up to 3.699 in 1990, 2.672 in 1991 (South African Institute of Race Relations 1991-92: xxxiv), 3.446 in 1992 (Human Rights Commission 1993), and 4.398 in 1994 (*Sunday Times*, June 5, 1994), the bigger part of deaths resulting from fighting between IFP and ANC supporters; one should note, however, that the figures vary according to different definitional concepts of political violence. Southall (1994: 633, fn. 2), for example, gives figures of 3.400 for 1990, 2.580 for 1991 and a total of 2.450 fatalities from political violence for the period between September 1984 and December 1988 – according to Howe (1993); the trend of rising political violence during the negotiation process is nevertheless very clear; see also du Toit (1998).

²⁴⁸ After combining with another white conservative party, Constandt Viljoen's *Afrikaner Volksfront*, COSAG was renamed 'Freedom Alliance' (FA).

Nonetheless, the first of the two major concerns in the negotiation process mentioned above was largely settled by the end of 1993 with the creation of transitional structures/institutions aimed at generating a political climate conducive to the holding of free and fair elections early in 1994 (*ibid.* 631). Most important among these four institutions were the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) and the Independent Election Commission (IEC)²⁴⁹, which finally laid the foundation for the 1994 elections (27 April) and the interim constitution, adopted in late 1993, and put into effect on the date of the elections.

In retrospective, it was not simply a tit-for-tat arrangement of ‘a constitutional compromise which would marry South Africa’s accession to (black) majority rule to the guaranteed protection of (principally white) minority rights’, or, as Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: 8) put it, “[u]nder NP guidance the white minority ceded power permanently to blacks in return for qualified constitutional protection of its property and the maintenance of a market-oriented economy.” Rather, the NP – and, to a lesser extent, other parties with a putative minority status ascribed to them such as the DP and IFP – was realising that it could garner enough support to play an active and influential role in the new political order. As the then NP Minister for Constitutional Development stated as early as 1990: “I now have a complete new vision of the future (...) it is possible for us to be part of the majority instead of only thinking of ourselves as a minority which needs special protection.”²⁵⁰

Regarding the second concern (the attempt to secure support from the entire political spectrum for the new constitutional order), what became clear during the negotiation process was what the relevant parties/political groupings brought to the competitive market ideologically, organisationally and mobilisationally. The NP was in a relatively secure position as the main negotiating partner of the ANC and as the one party to benefit from the (principally) white fear of an almost complete ANC dominance.²⁵¹ In contrast, the liberal DP failed to sharpen its image as the only white party not discredited by the apartheid past, and to break out of its urban, white, English-speaking, middle-class support base in order to make inroads into the African electorate. The diverse groupings of the white Right fragmented over the decision of whether to join in the constitutional negotiations and take part in the elections or to refuse any participation in the elaboration of the new political order. Finally, only the FF

²⁴⁹ The other two transitional institutions were the Independent Media Commission and the Independent Broadcasting Commission, basically designed to generate equal opportunities for electoral campaigning.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Friedman (1990: 46).

²⁵¹ Additionally, according to opinion polls and surveys in the run-up to the elections, there were clear indications that the NP could muster enough support of non-white voters (including a large proportion of the Coloured vote) to guarantee its continued influence even in a qualified majority system let alone a system with clearly defined minority safeguards and constitutional provisions for power-sharing as was envisaged to be adopted in the new South Africa.

accepted to take part in the elections after the ANC had given in to some of its demands.²⁵² The FF, however, was foreordained to play only a marginal role in the years to come, for the idea of Afrikaner self-determination that it propagated, reminiscent of the decades of white (Afrikaner) rule that had just passed forever, was no longer suitable in a democratic, multi-racial South Africa.

The remaining political force of national relevance, the IFP, which had “(...) always tried to portray itself as one of the ‘big three’ [together with the ANC and NP, C.S.] political forces in the country” (Mattes: 1994: 13), agreed to take part in the elections just one week before the vote. This was crucial as the IFP had been effective in threatening the negotiation process by launching a quasi-civil war in KwaZulu-Natal thus rendering the campaigning of other parties, especially the ANC, almost impossible. The ANC and the NP government desperately wanted the IFP ‘on board’ for the sake of an all-inclusive settlement and for fear of the disastrous effect the violence in Natal could have on the legitimacy of the entire elections. While the IFP’s muscle flexing was crowned with success insofar as it could get through a series of demands (for example, the recognition of a special status for the Zulu king) and created a favourable starting position for the elections in KwaZulu-Natal, it had to realise that in the new South Africa it would have to compete against the ANC essentially as an ethnic party of the Zulus and a regional party confined to the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The PAC, whose military wing had assaulted several white civilians in the period of constitutional negotiations, after serious factional infighting, suspended the armed struggle and declared its participation in the elections. Despite the increase in political violence in the years following De Klerk’s historical speech of February 1990²⁵³, the radical elements of the party spectrum (white Right and African Left) had either vanished or had been reduced to mere remnants of a past political order²⁵⁴, while the ANC, NP, DP, IFP and, to a lesser extent, the PAC remained the main blocs around which the post-apartheid party system was beginning to take shape.

What have been the results in terms of the new institutional arrangement that the negotiation process brought to the fore? The following section deals with the setting of institutional boundaries within which the evolution of the post-apartheid South African party system would eventually occur.

²⁵² Basically, the recognition that the idea of a *volkstaat* would be part of the constitutional considerations in the Constitutional Assembly to be elected in 1994 and the concession of a double ballot at the national and regional level.

²⁵³ Including the murder of the very popular Chris Hani, general secretary of the SACP and former *Umkonkho we Sizwe* leader, by a white right-wing extremist.

²⁵⁴ The same applies to the former homeland regimes that were seen as illegitimate creations of the apartheid regime.

2.2.2. The polity: the setting of institutional boundaries

Some years ago Lijphart (1996) made an attempt to justify the basic logic of his consociational theory against the “one major deviant case” displayed by the resilience of Indian democracy. Democracy’s compatibility with a regional context of a deeply divided society, according to consociational theory, is conceded only under the condition of an institutionalised power-sharing arrangement comprising as its main characteristics “(1) grand coalition governments that include representatives of all major linguistic and religious groups, (2) cultural autonomy for these groups, (3) proportionality in political representation and civil service appointments, and (4) a minority veto with regard to vital minority rights and autonomy” (ibid.: 258). Grand coalition governments and proportionality in political representation, commonly identified with an electoral system of proportional representation (PR), are of course the principal manifestations of consociational theory’s rationale. Lijphart now put the inclusive consensus-style of the Congress System at the heart of a consociational grand coalition despite India’s institutional features of a majoritarian, Westminster-styled winner-take-all democracy.

In contrast to the interpretative acrobatics Lijphart had to undertake to turn India into an “impressive confirming case” (ibid. 259) of consociational theory, the South African case is a more clear-cut one. Lijphart, who figured prominently in the scholarly debate about ‘what institutional devices serve South Africa best’²⁵⁵, thus preparing the ground for constitutional engineers, could witness a near one-to-one realisation of his ideal of a consociational power-sharing system in the country’s 1993 interim constitution.²⁵⁶ With regard to the two basic principles of a power-sharing system, the interim constitution²⁵⁷ was straightforward: First, the ‘grand coalition’ character was manifest in the constitutional provisions (RSA 1993: Sec 88) for a ‘Government of National Unity’ (GNU) whereby all parties that crossed a hurdle of 5% of seats (20) in the National Assembly elections and 10% of seats in the Provincial Legislature elections were allowed to participate in the respective executives.²⁵⁸ Though the GNU was designed to last only up to the second democratic elections of 1999 (held under the

²⁵⁵ See Lijphart (1985, 1990, 1991a) as main references; see also Horowitz (1991) for the argument of Lijphart’s main scholarly opponent regarding the debate about constitutional engineering for South Africa. A comprehensive summary of the scholarly debate about the pros and cons of the various electoral systems with regard to the region is given in Reynolds (1993, 1999b).

²⁵⁶ „ (...) it [South Africa’s democracy, C. S.] is not only a power-sharing system but close to the optimal power-sharing system that could have been devised.” (Lijphart 1994: 222). Lijphart’s praise for the South African interim constitution’s power-sharing ethos notwithstanding, at least one component of his consociational model, an explicit minority veto, is missing.

²⁵⁷ Republic of South Africa (RSA) (1993).

²⁵⁸ Additionally, all parties with at least 20 % (80 seats in the National Assembly) of the national vote, or, the two largest parties, were entitled to a deputy presidency (RSA 1993: Sec 84).

condition of the final constitution²⁵⁹, which was worked out by the Constitutional Assembly (National Assembly and Senate) between 1994 and 1996 and was adopted in 1996, coming into effect in 1997)²⁶⁰, this initial power-sharing requirement - at least - offered the opportunity to become a guiding principle of South Africa's democratic transition.²⁶¹ Second, an electoral system of proportional representation is prescribed for the composition of all main representative bodies, primarily the National Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures. At the local level a mixed system of proportional representation and constituency-based plurality voting can prevail. The 1996 constitution, like the 1993 (interim) constitution, requires a structure, which results "in general, in proportional representation" (RSA 1993: Schedule 2, RSA 1996: Sec 46 (1d)).

Additional institutional features of the South African electoral system of direct relevance to the formation of the party system, or as institutional incentives to the manipulative efforts of party elites, underpin the assumption put forward in 3.2. that the choice for PR was as much guided by partisan interests as it was by more altruistic principles.

The specific PR system chosen is a closed list system (or 'pure proportional system'), combining regional and national party lists and allocating seats among the competing parties according to their proportional entitlement to the 200 'regional' (those calculated on the basis of the respective party's vote share on the provincial level) and 200 'national' (those calculated on the basis of the respective party's total vote share) seats of the National Assembly using a Droop quota and the highest remainder principle.²⁶² The same method applies to the Provincial Legislatures elections on the basis of one provincial list submitted by each party contesting the elections. Accordingly, there is much room to manoeuvre for the party leadership in determining who gets elected while, at the same time, accountability of MP's to their constitutions is much less than it would have been in the case of a plurality system (Mattes and Thiel 1998: 133). On the other hand, in terms

²⁵⁹ RSA (1996).

²⁶⁰ In practice, the GNU came to an end only two years after its instalment when the NP decided to step out because the difficulties involved in displaying an oppositional stand toward the ANC while, at the same time, sitting in cabinet, became more and more intolerable for the leadership of the party.

²⁶¹ Indeed, the participation of the IFP, once entrenched in bitter rivalry with the ANC, in the GNU outlived the provisions of Sec 88 of the interim constitution. Although there was no need for the ANC as the majority party to share governmental power after the 1999 elections, the IFP retained its three cabinet seats in the newly formed government under Thabo Mbeki. Whether this was really a manifestation of the ANC party leadership's power-sharing ethos or rather an attempt of outright co-optation of an opposition party shall be discussed in 4.1..

²⁶² To arrive at a distribution of National Assembly and Provincial Legislature seats in proportion to the respective party's share of the votes cast, a quota is determined by dividing the total number of votes cast in the election by the number of seats to be filled, plus one. The result is then rounded down to the nearest whole number. Then, one is added. Consequently, each party's total votes are to be divided by the quota - thus showing how many seats it is entitled to. The unallocated seats are distributed according to the principle of the highest remainder. If the number of unallocated seats is exceeding five, the additional seats are distributed according to the average number of votes per seat for each party; see EISA (1999: 4-8). The quota for a seat in the National Assembly was 48.712 votes in 1994 (own calculations) and 39.844 votes in 1999 (EISA 1999: 16).

of representativeness, inclusion ('drawing extremist parties into the mainstream of political life') and accessibility ('making people feel that their vote makes a difference') the South African electoral system clearly outperforms any plurality counterpart (Reynolds 1995).²⁶³ At the local level every town or community is subsumed under the category of metropolitan, urban or rural and divided into several wards. Here proportional representation may coexist with ward-based plurality voting of individual candidates, but in the end, elections are bound to result in proportional representation.

The vote takes place in large, multi-member districts and there is no threshold for parliamentary representation to be imposed, apart from the effective one arising from the allotment of seats to the National Assembly, i.e. the Droop quota. As a result, small parties can rely on the electoral system to provide them with seats in parliament and, thus, had always expressed their preference for PR over any kind of plurality system. The NP and IFP did the same, although they probably would have survived even the most rigid plurality system because of their regional strongholds in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.²⁶⁴ Large, multi-member electoral districts on the other hand put the emphasis of the voters' decision on the parties contesting the elections and not on individual candidates representing constituency-based interests,²⁶⁵ in part a necessity given the combined regional and national party-list system.

Finally, another institutional feature of South Africa's electoral system shall be mentioned, for it is of direct relevance to the argument put forward in 3.2. The interim constitution of 1993 entailed an Anti-Defection Clause (RSA 1993: Schedule 2, Clause 23A) stating that any representative would lose its mandate if he or she abandoned the party upon whose list he or she had been elected. This clause was introduced for the sake of securing proportional representation, multi-party democracy and government stability. The Anti-Defection Clause had been retained with the final constitution (RSA 1996: Schedule 6, Annexure A, Item 13) albeit as part of the transitional provisions and, as such, pending upon ordinary legislation without the need of a two-thirds majority as would have been the case with a constitutional

²⁶³ See table 1 (1.3.) for the almost exact translation of votes into seats in contrast to India's single-member, simple-plurality electoral system.

²⁶⁴ The extremely low threshold as well as the almost perfectly proportionate translation of votes into seats naturally minimises the incentives to form cross-party coalitions and increases the likelihood of party factions to split.

²⁶⁵ Additionally, a closed list PR system with large, multi-member electoral districts obviates the potential danger of gerrymandering in a constituency-based electoral system. Due to the separate ethnic/racial settlements and skewed local population distribution, an enduring legacy of racial segregation codified in the Group Areas Act repealed in 1991, the large electoral districts, concomitant with administrative units, further political representation of all ethnic/racial groups and favour the moderate big parties. Since the single largest problem in the constitutional debates about the electoral system was voter accountability, many of the larger parties allocated constituencies to their members on an informal basis; see Beukman (2000: 37).

amendment.²⁶⁶ There was no similar constitutional provision at the local level; here, a constitutional amendment would have been needed. After legislation had been passed on the combined parliamentary strength of the ANC, NNP and DP/DA, allowing floor crossing within specified time periods²⁶⁷ at all three governmental levels (RSA: 2002a-d: Acts 18-22 of 2002)²⁶⁸ and after the opposition United Democratic Movement (UDM) had challenged the constitutionality of the legislation, the Constitutional Court on the 4th of October 2002 declared that the ‘floor crossing legislation’ was constitutional. It did however, not approve of the legislation applied at the provincial and national level for procedural reasons, but allowed it to apply at the local level (Knirsch and Schwab 2002: 52).²⁶⁹ Since then, (party) political power configurations at the local level have changed tremendously, especially in the Western Cape. Finally, at the end of 2002, legislation was passed by parliament allowing ‘floor-crossing’ within specified window periods at all three governmental levels with even more incisive consequences for the country’s party political power configuration (see 3.2.).

For the sake of analysis of party agency in the context of the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance, which is to follow in the next two chapters, what has to be kept in mind regarding the South African electoral system is the use of one of the ‘purest’ (and simplest) forms of PR, namely the closed-list system combining regional and national party-lists on the basis of large, multi-member electoral districts (no specified constituencies) with one of the lowest thresholds in the world. An additional feature of the electoral system of great relevance to party system formation is the initial provision for an Anti-Defection-Clause that in the meantime has been legally compromised and practically abolished.

The high degree of representativeness inherent in the South African PR system aside, “PR alone would not have ensured multiparty government in South Africa, as a dominant party single party could have formed an administration unilaterally [as it probably would have done if not for the sake of its leadership’s strategic thinking, C.S.] had the interim constitution not exhibited *consociational* features” (Reynolds 1995: 90).

²⁶⁶ Moreover, the final constitution provided for the possibility of passing a law that would allow for party mergers and splits in parliament without the respective representatives losing their seat/mandate.

²⁶⁷ 15 days in the second and fourth year after an election.

²⁶⁸ In the case of the local level a constitutional amendment had taken place.

²⁶⁹ Since legislation on floor crossing for the national and provincial level was passed in accordance with the transitional provisions of the constitution (Membership Act) effective only up to the elections of 2004, the Constitutional Court came to the conclusion that making use of the Membership Act before 2004 was not appropriate. If legislation on floor crossing would have been subject to a constitutional amendment, the National Assembly in all probability would not had any problem to get rid of the Anti-Defection-regulations altogether. This is what happened in December 2002 when parliament approved legislation that allowed for elected representatives on all levels to change their political affiliation by ‘crossing the floor’. The political initiative for the legislation on floor crossing and its political implications are of enormous importance in terms of party agency in determining the South African polity’s institutional arrangements and will be discussed in greater length in 3.2..

The centrepiece of South Africa's institutional power-sharing arrangements was the aforementioned GNU, which turned the election results, fairly reflective of South African society as a whole, into a prescription for government formation. Claims for the codification of consociational features by minority party representatives' and scholars notwithstanding, the GNU essentially served two functions: "It provided a mechanism for jointly drafting the rules of the game, and it acted as a confidence-building device" (Maphai 1998: 106). However, apart from PR, most of the power-sharing provisions of the interim constitution (and, it seems the power-sharing ethos of the negotiation process and transition period has as well) have long gone by now and observers describe the South African parliamentary system as only a "partial escape from Westminster" (Calland: 1999a: 8). The concentration of executive power and an executive-dominated form of cabinet government being the most important institutional manifestation of this parliamentary tradition.²⁷⁰ Indeed, many institutional and, more so, procedural features of South African parliamentarism are reminiscent of its Westminster-based origins²⁷¹ such as the provision that the cabinet must consist of MP's only (though the final constitution allows for the appointment of at least two people who are not members of the National Assembly) or the tradition of the Speaker and the Whip. On the other hand, the final constitution (as was the case with the interim constitution) represents a significant departure from the Westminster model. The South African parliament is now truly bicameral with the Senate, created by the interim constitution, transformed into a National Council of Provinces (NCOP, RSA 1996: Sec 60 f.), a body of 90 seats indirectly elected by the nine new Provincial Legislatures, "(...) which (...) attempts to provide a basis for what is termed 'co-operative government' between the central and provincial levels" (Southall 1999: 19).²⁷² Additionally, the president, based on nomination from parliament has no genuine power anymore to dissolve parliament anymore. Actually, the term 'President' is a bit of a misnomer, for the office, representing a powerful executive position compared to the norm in

²⁷⁰ For an overview of South Africa's parliamentary set-up and the working of its parliamentary institutions, see Mathisen (2001), Calland (1999b) and Kotzé (1996). Current as well as comprehensive information on the South African parliament is available on the website of IDASA's Political Information & Monitoring Service (PIMS, www.idasa.org.za/) as well as through the same institute's newspaper *Parliamentary Whip*.

²⁷¹ Until 1983, the apartheid system of government was a clear-cut imitation, although republican since 1961, of the British parliamentary system with a dual executive comprising an essentially ceremonial head of state (President) and a politically dominant head of government (Prime Minister), the latter and his cabinet accountable to the directly elected parliament, but equipped with the right to dissolve parliament; according to the British tradition of parliamentary sovereignty there was no juridical examination of legislation passed by the parliament. The Constitution Act, 110 of 1983 introduced a fusion of head of state and head of government into one office (President) and expanded parliamentary representation to incorporate Coloureds and Asians in a tricameral parliament; see Malherbe and Rautenbach (1999).

²⁷² Nonetheless, the role of the NCOP is basically limited to representing provincial interests at the national level; furthermore in contrast to the interim constitution it has no genuine/final veto-power; see below for a description of South Africa's federal arrangement.

parliamentary systems of government, resembles more the mandate of a 'Prime Minister' in the British parliamentary tradition. The National Assembly on the other hand can, by simple majority, pass a vote of no confidence and force either the president or the cabinet to resign (Sec 102; in the first case the president has to reshuffle the cabinet, in the latter case both, president and cabinet, have to resign and the parliament has to nominate a successor within 30 days; otherwise parliament will be dissolved, Sec 50, 1).²⁷³ Furthermore, the National Assembly can only be dissolved after three years of its term by a majority of its members (Sec 50, 2). Apart from this restriction bestowed upon the president, his or her competence is wide reaching²⁷⁴. As head of the executive the president is, for example, developing and implementing national policy, assenting and signing bills, appointing commissions of enquiry, proclaiming national referenda in terms of an Act of Parliament, and, he may proclaim a national emergency, though only with the consent of parliament (RSA 1996: Sec 37). The president also has to appoint a number of external statutory watchdog committees ('State Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy') to protect the constitution, support democratic governance and monitor executive power such as the Auditor-General, the Public Protector, the Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission or the temporary Truth and Reconciliation Commission (RSA 1996: Chapter Nine of the Constitution).

Nevertheless, constitutional supervision is, above all, a matter of the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court (RSA 1996: Chapter Eight of the Constitution, Sec 176), whose members are appointed by the president on recommendation of a Judicial Services Commission (RSA 1996: Secs 174 and 178), supervises the adherence to basic rights laid down in the extensive Bill of Rights, which also contains far-reaching and justiciable socio-economic rights²⁷⁵, but no explicitly stated group rights, and, examines the constitutionality of legislation and orders.²⁷⁶ In the South African context, the latter is especially important, for – given the potential for conflict in the South African society (as the only post-apartheid society in the world) - there is a great need to clarify constitutional provisions and to recognise a plethora of demands for constitutional amendments, which require a two-thirds majority of parliament (and a supporting vote of at least six provinces as represented in the NCOP). It is clear that this majority is within the reach of the ANC as the dominant party; in fact, after the

²⁷³ Apart from a vote of no confidence, the National Assembly can, by a two-thirds majority, remove the president on the grounds of serious violation of the Constitution or law, serious misconduct, or inability to perform the functions of office (RSA 1996: Sec 89).

²⁷⁴ A fact that has caused some observers to call the South African political system 'semi-presidential', see, for example, Lane and Ersson (1997: 12).

²⁷⁵ In general, the Bill of Rights gives more weight to aspects of 'equality' than to aspects of 'freedom'.

²⁷⁶ Additionally, the Constitutional Court has to settle conflicts between the different levels of government and administration.

elections of 1999 when the ANC, having campaigned around the issue of its ‘need’ for a two-thirds majority in order to change the constitution thus enabling it to bring about ‘black empowerment’, failed narrowly to win a two-thirds majority, the small (mainly Indian) Minority Front (MF) “(...) pledged its single parliamentary vote to the ANC (...), giving it the additional seat it “needed”” (Friedman 1999b: 9).²⁷⁷

After the NP’s withdrawal from the GNU (shortly after the adoption of the final constitution and partly as a result of it) the institutional focus shifted from the power-sharing arrangement within the government to aspects of the effective working of the government, including the (independent) role of the Constitutional Court and, most importantly, the functioning of the parliament and the relationship between parliament and the executive arm. As regards the effective working of the executive, then Deputy President Mbeki created the Co-ordination and Implementation Unit (CIU), around which some sort of “kitchen cabinet” (Calland 1999a: 7) was established, geared towards a proper co-ordination of policy-making and implementation and integrating and synchronising state departments. This occurred after the operation of government had been investigated by a Presidential Review Commission (PRC), which heavily criticised the whole of the public service and national governance²⁷⁸ in terms of effectiveness and also made suggestions as to reorganise and institutionalise the so far poor co-ordination of policy-making and implementation. In the meantime, the CIU has moved to the Presidency and his role in shaping policy is becoming more and more crucial (ibid. 8, see also van Zyl Slabbert, 1999). The Constitutional Court has proved its (relative) independence several times now, to an extent that, among other decisions, it declared that the final constitution did not accord with the non-derogable Constitutional Principles of 1993 in several aspects and, therefore, needs amendment in this regard.²⁷⁹

Finally, the relationship between parliament and the executive is of crucial relevance to Westminster-based parliamentary systems, especially when a dominant party holds a clear majority for the government is basically recruited from the parliament²⁸⁰, and the “(...) potential alternation of government, the real (and only) safety valve of the Westminster

²⁷⁷ The watchdog role of the Constitutional Court also entails an examination whether legislation or constitutional amendments are in accordance with the non-derogable Constitutional Principles laid down in 1993.

²⁷⁸ See RSA (1998a); an investigation into provincial governance with similar devastating results was undertaken by the Department of Public Service and Administration, which released a report in 1997, see RSA (1997).

²⁷⁹ Such was the case with regard to the lack of autonomy in local government, the effectiveness of executive oversight and aspects of industrial relations (a guaranteed right of trade unions to go on strike vs. no right for employers to proclaim a lock-out); see RSA, Constitutional Court (1996).

²⁸⁰ In consequence, the dilemma emerges over how to find a proper median between party loyalty and cohesion and executive oversight.

model, is unavailable” (Giliomee 1998: 131).²⁸¹ In this regard, two aspects are of interest: the extent to which parliament is able (and willing) to practise executive oversight and the proper working of the parliamentary committee system. The latter is basically a matter of experience and, after the dust of elaborating a constitution and setting up new structures and procedures for the NCOP had settled, the revitalised committee system began to function smoothly with some of the portfolio committees playing a significant role in determining legislation and shaping policy (Calland 1999b: 29-43). As regards executive oversight, however, the record is a mixed one. There have been attempts to challenge the executive branch, but overall, when it came to politically, highly controversial decisions, deference to party discipline won over the constitutional duty to oversee the executive (Lodge 1999b: 72). This has been facilitated by the fragmentation and weakness of the opposition. In general, although the constitution has provided the South African parliament with formal and substantive powers enabling it to play an important role both in overseeing executive power and in shaping public policy, governmental institutions as a whole have been designed in a way that, rhetorical emphasis on the principle of consensus notwithstanding, a clear majority (party) can (theoretically) exclude the opposition from all participation in decision-making.

An additional feature of South Africa’s structure of governance is the way, in which macro-economic policies are planned and co-ordinated. This is done in such a manner that the economic trajectory of the country is to some extent linked to governmental and institutional authority and thus has been above and beyond popular participation.

Since 1996, corporatist arrangements, following the lines of the strong corporatist tradition in South Africa’s labour relations, most notably the bargaining culture of the National Manpower Commission, increasingly displace parliamentary decision-making as the parameter of macro-economic decision-making. Shortly before the 1994 elections the ANC had launched the mainly COSATU-designed Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a mixed-economy redistributive agenda that became the official development programme of the new Government of National Unity. A special RDP office under the authority of a cabinet minister was created in order to centralise economic co-ordination and to allocate funding for development projects. Yet, despite some real progress in social infrastructure, the RDP did not live up to its expectations mainly due to poor implementation records and departmental disputes over the allocation of resources. Economic policy preference of the ANC’s leadership had also changed not the least because of growing pressures from international economic orthodoxy and domestic capital. In 1996, the RDP

²⁸¹ As noted above, the South African parliamentary system is not a clear-cut Westminster system, though it has retained basic institutional features from this parliamentary tradition.

ministry was shut down and responsibility of the programme transferred to the office of then vice-president, Thabo Mbeki. Soon after, though the government claimed to remain committed to the RDP goals, the new Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR), basically a neo-liberal and pro-capitalist macro-economic framework²⁸², was adopted and became the guiding macro-economic policy of the government. A corporatist body, the National Economic and Development and Labour Advisory Council (NEDLAC) created in 1995, was to secure the co-ordinating role of the RDP office, to mediate the GEAR policy goals, to reach some kind of social accord about the government's embrace of fiscal conservatism and to enhance popular participation in economic decision-making, especially in negotiating labour market policies.

As such, the South African parliamentary system is characterised by its Westminster origins, though there are main points of departure from Westminster such as the truly bicameral parliament, the PR electoral system, a codified Bill of Rights, constitutional supremacy and a greater amount of power bestowed on the legislative than one normally finds in 'classical' Westminster systems. In terms of macro-economic policy-making the state attempts to place decision-making above everyday politics, while, at the same time, relying heavily on corporatist arrangements.

The third aspect of South Africa's organisation of government of crucial relevance (as an institutional incentive) to the formation of the party system is the federal character of the polity. The South African Republic entails a provincial system that has many features in common with a truly federal system, but at the same time has retained a strong unitary character.²⁸³ It is, furthermore, a three-tier system of government based on the principle of co-operative (not competitive) government to promote co-ordinated governance of the national, regional/provincial and local level (Chapter 3 of the Constitution). The territorial restructuring into nine provinces (Eastern Cape, Eastern Transvaal, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Northern Transvaal, North-West, Orange Free State, Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV), Western Cape; Eastern Transvaal, Northern Transvaal, Orange Free State and PWV were later renamed Mpumalanga, Northern Province, Free State and Gauteng, respectively) is based on recommendations for the division of the country into development regions suggested in 1981. The former homelands were (re)integrated into the territory of the Republic thus

²⁸² The major policy components of GEAR included a lessening of exchange controls, trade liberalisation, flexible labour markets (within certain limits), deficit reduction targets, stabilising monetary policies based on market interest rates and (bargained) privatisation of state assets.

²⁸³ On the different parties' views whether South Africa's is truly a federal system and what improvements/changes were advocated for the final constitution, see Kotzé (1995); for an overview of the parties' positions and suggestions on the country's future 'federal' shape during the negotiation process, see Schumacher (1996: 130-182).

additionally affecting the already economically and population-wise very uneven provincial configuration of powers and competences.

The rationale behind the division of executive authority (and, to some extent, legislative authority as well) between central, regional and local level was, quite obviously, to offer minority parties the protection of their regional and/or local power bases and the prospect of gaining office in an otherwise ANC-dominated post-apartheid South Africa (Lodge 1999b: 13). Provincial and, more so, local powers are however, very restricted. The ‘compensation’ of smaller parties through a federal devolution of power was not so far-reaching given that the ANC was committed to idea of a strong central government. The provinces, each with its own governmental structure and legislature, have relatively few areas of exclusive legislative competence (Schedule 5)²⁸⁴ and even within these, bills can be overruled by parliament in the form of legislation in the interest of national security, national economic unity or essential national standards; in the interest of the establishment of minimum standards required for the rendering of services; or in the interest of the prevention of unreasonable action taken by a province which is prejudicial to the interest of another province or the country as a whole (Sec 44, 2 in accordance with Sec 76). In the area of concurrent legislation, provincial competence can topple any bill, but only if it does not have the consent of a two-thirds majority of parliament.²⁸⁵ In general, the provinces’ role in shaping policy is limited, since in most domains legislation has to follow principles laid down in central government policies. Additionally, fiscal federalism is heavily weighted in favour of the central government. Finances are administered centrally and allocated to the respective level’s budget via the ‘Financial and Fiscal Commission’ (FFC), which takes into account national, provincial and local interests. Provinces also have only very restricted revenue-raising powers. Writing in 1999, Pottie (1999: 30) notes, “[a]t present, provinces’ own revenue amounts to only 5% of their total budget and is collected primarily from user charges such as motor-vehicle licensing and hospital fees.” Consequently, provincial governments are heavily dependent on national payments.

In terms of political representation, the provinces co-operate in national legislation and politics in two ways: via the 200 ‘regional’ seats allocated to the National Assembly (those seats drawn from the parties’ ‘provincial to national’ lists), and, via the second chamber of parliament, the aforementioned NCOP. The newly created NCOP comprises of 10 delegates from each province, six permanent delegates drawn from the Provincial Legislature in accordance with party political strength in that legislature, and four special delegates,

²⁸⁴ Among others, these are ambulance services, liquor licences, cultural matters or provincial roads and traffic.

²⁸⁵ Concurrent legislation comprises areas like education, health, housing, environment, trade, agriculture etc.

including the provincial premier. Each provincial delegation has only one vote in the legislative decision-making process, where decisions take place on the basis of a provincial majority of at least five provinces. This bloc voting and majority provision shall ensure that the NCOP represents provincial, not partisan interests (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 31, 1996). However, in the context of South Africa's dominant party rule, as Pottie (1999: 21) points out, "(...) the block voting procedure of the NCOP (...) consolidates the provincial power of the ANC in the national government since it holds a majority in six [now seven, C.S.] of the nine delegations." In any case, in areas of exclusive national competence, the NCOP disposes of only a suspensive veto and the principle of co-operative government stands in the way of any kind of competitive federalism where the sub-units vie with each other and the national government in the struggle over scarce resources and political power.

Local government as the third tier of South Africa's federal set-up has been and still is a very controversial feature of the country's institutional development that has been undergoing continuous restructuring since 1993. The final constitution codified the guarantee of municipal self-government for the transitional municipalities (Sec 151, 3) elected in November 1995 according to the Local Government Transition Act adopted in 1994. This act also prescribed the elaboration of a new municipal system that was established after the local elections in December 2000. The new system reduced the number of municipalities from 843 to 284, which are categorised as metropolitan areas/councils ('unincities'), district municipalities/councils, local municipalities/councils, and, in addition, District Management Areas (DMA) in sparsely populated parts of the country (Monare 2001). Nevertheless, "(...) much needs to be done to translate the paper structures into governing bodies, especially away from the major cities" (Johnston 2001: 15). The demarcation of the new municipalities was grounded on the need to facilitate developmental and administrative efficiency, to guarantee economic viability, to speed up delivery of basic services, to enhance democratic accountability of local government, to 'empower' communities and to get rid of the racially based 'old' municipalities inherited from the various apartheid structures of local government (RSA 1998b).

Nonetheless, the process of demarcation was heavily contested. In particular the creation of the metropolitan areas was subject to criticism from the white opposition parties and trade unions alike. Whereas the former accused the ANC of concentrating power by abolishing the hitherto existing smaller units, thus rendering the primarily white residential areas electorally 'ineffective', the latter feared "(...) the opportunities which these large units offer for corporatisation and privatisation of services, bringing with them the threat of job losses"

(Johnston 2001: 16). Consequently, in the metropolitan areas, local election campaigning more often than not reflected national issues and the results generally mirrored (national) partisan divisions (Lodge 1999b: 44 f., Johnston 2001: 16). Additional criticism, coming from all quarters of the political spectrum, was directed against the deficient financial subsidisation leading to a lack of autonomy and competence of local government (*Sowetan*, March 12, 1998).

Another challenge to the new municipal system comes from the *amakhosi* (chiefs) or traditional (tribal) leaders that need to be integrated into the local government structure, especially in rural areas. Traditional leaders are granted a special status by the constitution (Chapter 12 of the constitution).²⁸⁶ On the national level, they are represented in the National Council of Traditional Leaders and on the provincial level there are Houses of Traditional Leaders in six of the country's nine province (all except Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng). Both institutions have advisory functions in legislative matters concerning traditional leadership and indigenous/customary law. It is on the local (rural) level where their influence (and privilege) is felt and where they insist they should play a more crucial role. The relationship between traditional leadership and elected rural local government regarding responsibilities, functions and privileges still needs to be clarified.

In sum, the institutional shape of South Africa's federal arrangements prioritises the national level. Provincial and local powers are restricted and fiscal federalism is heavily weighted in favour of the central government. Furthermore, the principle of co-operative government prescribes consensus-seeking (instead of competitive bargaining) for inter-governmental decision-making thus giving precedence to national executive and legislative authority. Effective working of the newly established local government structures as well as provincial administrations is far from realised and remains subject to ongoing debate about relative powers and status within the context of co-operative governance. The role of traditional leaders in local government affairs remains inconclusive.

²⁸⁶ Apart from their eminent societal status in rural areas, traditional leaders in South Africa have a strong (political) lobbying power, first of all via their own interest organisation, the ANC-aligned 'Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa' (CONTRALESA), but also via their affiliation to political parties (ANC, IFP, UDM).

Table 9: Summary of South Africa's main institutional features

Electoral System	closed-list PR, no threshold for representation, large, multi-member electoral districts, anti-defection clause (floor-crossing meanwhile allowed at all three governmental levels)
Form of Government	Westminster-based parliamentarism, bicameral parliament, extensive Bill of Rights, constitutional supremacy, limitations of executive authority despite strong presidential prerogatives), special institutional provisions for macro-economic policy planning and implementation, strong corporatist arrangements
Decentralisation of the Polity	three-tier system of government, provincial and local powers restricted, co-operative government/federalism, asymmetrical fiscal federalism, special status for traditional leadership

However, the institutional order is just one of the parameters affecting the formation of the party system. Just as important, or even more so, is the actual configuration of power relations dependent upon the social forces at work as well as the way in which the various political elites manoeuvre in relation to the institutional framework (Lane/Ersson 1997: 1). A major realisation for political leaders of the 'negotiated revolution' was the inevitability of coalition partners and alliance-building in view of the respective electorates. In the two years following the elections of 1994, the requirement of the GNU made this perception rather obvious. The withdrawal of the NP from the GNU has not 'freed' the government from the vagaries of coalition-building, but has, more or less, shifted coalitional bargaining and bickering from the inter-party arena towards ANC alliance politics at the national level with inter-party competition prevailing at (most of) the regional and local level, a process that characterised the Congress system in India right from independence.

Before going deeper into discussing the interdependence of institutions, actors and structures (chapters 3 and 4), the ground has to be set for analysis by taking stock of the socio-cultural and socio-economic make-up of the South African electorate in terms of cleavages, political culture and clientelist networks.

2.2.3. The electorate: socio-structural givens and determinants of political behaviour

In any given society where political order is based on the principle of representative democracy the electorate is naturally considered to be the most important connecting link in the interrelation between the political, party and social system. In a competitive setting of political representation voting behaviour eventually determines the composition, estimates of success and strategies of the contesting parties.²⁸⁷ Voting-behaviour in ‘deeply divided’ societies is almost always tied to societal characteristics, a conclusion that is present in much of the party system theory so far.²⁸⁸

The first and probably most important societal characteristic is the structure of cleavages prevalent in a given society. The one overarching cleavage that springs to mind when dealing with South Africa is surely that of ‘race’ (however ill-defined). Indeed, the racial cleavage is the favourite explanatory tool for whatever South African political phenomenon used by political scientists and politicians alike, the party system being no exception. Most prominent among these explanatory approaches is of course the ‘two nations’ thesis that simplifies South Africa’s societal diversity into two broad groupings, blending the categories of race and economic position, and stipulates a national division of South Africans into rich-white and poor-African. A corollary of this thesis, though more sophisticated and implicitly based on a denial of the two nations thesis, is the ethnic census theory, which argues that voting in South Africa is basically a matter of ascriptive or primordial identities (ethnic or racial, conceptualised as the ‘classic’, apartheid-derived categories of Black, White, Indian and Coloured) and not of preferences. Voting behaviour therefore is just a reflection of the respective ‘racial’ or ethnic population share.

Both the two nations thesis and the ethnic census theory are to some extent (on sociological and perceptual grounds) misleading, although the racial divide, construed either as the two nations thesis or the ethnic census theory, is still the most crucial parameter for the party

²⁸⁷ At the same time, the vigour of institutions like parliament, provincial governments, the electoral system or local councils depends as much on what happens outside and around them as on their inner life – that is, it depends on society and its socio-structural givens and political predispositions.

²⁸⁸ Even the ‘rational actor approach’ in the tradition of Downs (1957), and its ‘Rochester School successors, based on a formal spatial model where voters/parties weigh up a party’s issue position or voters’ preferences with their policy or programmatic preference, implicitly ties voting behaviour to societal characteristics, since the individual cost-benefit calculation involved in the act of voting depends on how the individual (as a member of a certain societal group, maybe one that shares common political interests; or society as a whole, in contrast to other societies) values future or past party performance. The same holds true for the programmatic/affectional linkage approaches of the ‘Michigan School’ of the 1960’s (behaviouralism) positing the (socially determined) notion of party identification as an emotional tie to a political party thereby shaping voting behaviour (more or less) throughout a person’s life (see 1.6.).

system's structuring.²⁸⁹ For one, there are many more cleavages prevalent in South African society than just race and South Africa is made up of several different 'societies' or, for that matter, 'nations'. Apart from the traditional (apartheid-derived) classification that accounts for two more categories than just 'black' and 'white' (Indian, Coloureds), the ethnic breakdown of the African majority, estimated at 76.7% of the population²⁹⁰, gives a fairly convincing picture of the rich ethnic/linguistic diversity of the country's population. Most prominent within this population group is of course the Xhosa/Zulu divide, but there are other ethnic/linguistic divisions that are of importance, in numerical terms at least.

Table 10: Selected indicators of socio-cultural differentiation in South Africa

Population Groups	Ethnic / Language Groups	Religion	Urban/Rural Divide
Total population: 100% 40,583,573	Afrikaans 14.4% 5,811,547 English 8.6% 3,457,467 IsiNdebele 1.5% 586,961	Christian 75.5% 30,051,008 Islam 1.4% 553,585 Hinduism 1.4% 537,428 Judaism 0.2% 68,058	Urban 53.7% 21,781,807 Rural 46.3% 18,801,765 Total 100% 40,583,573
Black: 76.6% 31,127,631	IsiXhosa 17.9% 7,196,118 IsiZulu 22.9% 9,200,144 Sepedi 9.2% 3,695,846 Sesotho 7.7% 3,104,197	African Traditional Belief 0% 17,085 No Religion 11.7% 4,638,897 Other Religions/Refused 9.8% 3,940,536 Total 100% 39,806,597	
Coloured: 8.9% 3,6446	SiSwati 2.5% 1,013,193 Setswana 8.2% 3,301,774 Tshivenda 2.2% 876,409 Xitsonga 4.4% 1,756,105 Other 0.6% 228,275 Total 100% 40,583,573		
Indian: 2.6% 1,045,596			
White: 10.9% 4,434,697			

²⁸⁹ See Johnson and Schlemmer (1996) and Giliomee and Simkins (1999a, b) for applications of the ethnic census argument to South African voting behaviour. The argument goes back to the more theoretically informed considerations about voting behaviour in deeply divided societies of Lijphart (1977) and Horowitz (1985).

²⁹⁰ Population figures in this paragraph are based on the 1996 census available at Statistics South Africa's website at: www.statsa.gov.za/RelatedInverseSites/census96/HTML/1.htm. A new census took place in 2001 but no figures had been released at the time of writing. Nevertheless, since the period of examination is from the 'end' of apartheid (taking De Klerk's speech on 2 February 1990 as a starting point) until now, the 1996 census represents an even better midpoint.

Moreover, the African population group (as well as, though to a lesser extent, the other population groups) is permeated by other relevant cleavages, most notably the urban-rural divide and the class cleavage.²⁹¹ Most of the 46.3% of South Africa's population living in rural areas belong to the African majority (56.7% of this population group compared to 16.6% of Coloureds, 9.4% of whites, and 2.7% of Indians); nevertheless, the percentage of urban Africans is very high compared to what one normally finds in sub-Saharan Africa, especially as more and more rural dwellers are attracted to the prosperous urban centres of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban. There is no relevant institutional manifestation of the urban-rural divide so far, although that may change very easily considering the fact that there is a strong correlation between rurality and poverty (despite 46.3% percent of South Africans being rural, 72% of poor people live in rural areas (UNDP 2000: 53)) on the one hand, and an increasing within-group inequality in urban areas, especially within the urban African majority, on the other hand.²⁹²

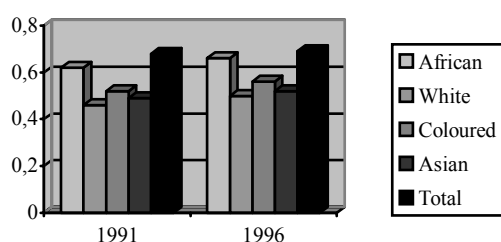
In terms of class divides, the African-white income gap is still the most prominent (the same holds true as far as employment/unemployment is concerned, a sharpening division between African employed and African unemployed notwithstanding), but the class nature of the African majority (the ANC's primary constituency) is incrementally changing.²⁹³ What is crucial as an indicator of this changing class nature is the fact that intra-racial inequality now accounts for more of the country's overall income inequality than inter-racial income disparities.²⁹⁴ An African business/entrepreneurial class and professional middle class is clearly emerging though it may be too early to speak of a veritable African middle-class. At

²⁹¹ Other relevant cleavages include religion (ranking third as source of identity according to the IDASA survey 'Opinion Poll '99', see fn. 298 and www.idasa.org.za), and cutting across ethnic, racial and class lines), geography or, more precisely, centre-periphery, gender and the generational cleavages; see Naudascher-Schlag and Schilling (1994) and Schumacher (1994: 51-127).

²⁹² Increasing within-group inequality is a countrywide phenomenon, see figure 3.

²⁹³ Within population groups Gini coefficients have risen substantially between 1991 and 1996 (0.03 among Asian households, 0.04 among all other population groups' households).

Figure 4: Gini coefficient according to population groups, 1991-1996, SA



Source: UNDP (2000: 60).

²⁹⁴ A similar trend of a more evenly distribution of racial groups can be observed in terms of occupation patterns and levels of education.

the same time the salience of the class cleavage is reflected institutionally. In fact, it is the most institutionalised cleavage apart from race and ethnicity. With one third of South Africa's formal workers unionised, COSATU in power, a long history of trade union activism and a strong corporatist tradition, one can imagine the lobbying power of South Africa's working class (the government's labour-friendly legislation and the growing tensions within the tripartite alliance in the aftermath of the government's shift from the RDP to GEAR are ample evidence of the trade unions' importance). Confrontations between labour and big business as well as between (unionised) African employed and African unemployed (and those informally employed as well as those nearly four million economically active people outside both the formal and informal labour market) seem likely to develop into even more durable manifestations of the class cleavage.

In addition to these significant distinctions within the African community, there is the white minority, which is no monolithic bloc. The division into Afrikaners and English, manifest in political institutions and party competition since the founding of the Union in 1910, is the most well known of intra-white cleavages and dates back to a long history of bitter rivalry and mutual domination. Political representation reflected this cleavage with the NP strongly attached to Afrikaner nationalism and the DP, and its small liberal predecessor parties, based on the support of the English minority. Post-apartheid South Africa saw a *rapprochement* between the two distinct identities due to their shared material interests and fear of losing their privileges and although the NP's (now NNP's) Afrikaner affiliation and the DP's English bias is still visible, both parties achieved a short-lived strategic merger at the local level between June 2000 and November 2001.

The same diversity, on a smaller scale, holds true for the Coloured and Indian population groups, though the latter is probably more homogenous due to its regional concentration in the Durban area. Nevertheless, within these population groups there are major divisions too, such as the Hindu-Muslim religious divide within the Indian community (49.92% Hindu, 22.8% Muslim, 18.5% Christian) or the urban-rural divide within the Coloured community (83.4% urban, 16.6% rural), to say nothing of the latter's (historical) failure to create a shared identity.

Of course, not all these cleavages are salient in the sense that they constitute a fertile ground for political mobilisation at a nationally relevant level, but they do potentially contribute to the 'pool' of issues party elites may use to when it comes to electoral campaigning. The racial cleavage stands forth as the most prominent 'tool' of political mobilisation, though. Recent survey results indicate that 'race' is no longer the primary source of social identity for South

Africans.²⁹⁵ ‘Race’ ranks second (21.5% of respondents) behind ethnicity (28.5%) and is only slightly more frequently cited than religion as the source of identity (19.0%; class 12.0%, occupation 3.2%; N=2200). As such, the mobilisational prominence of ‘race’ is not supported by social significance.

Apart from the fact that the sheer number of cleavages in South Africa, as well as the survey results cited above, makes the sociological and perceptual foundations of the two-nations thesis appear quite implausible, cleavages in the country are for the most part also cross-cutting, thus contradicting the arguments of the ethnic census advocates. However, cross-cutting cleavages or identities are kept in the background when a common context (a political party) advocates a racial identity (or ethnic identity, as is the case with the IFP and used to be with the NP in apartheid South Africa). In the words of social anthropologist Robert Thornton (1994: 8-9):

“South African identities cross-cut each other in multiple ways and in multiple contexts. There is no fundamental identity that any South African clings to in common with all, or even most other South Africans. South Africans have multiple identities in multiple contexts, depending on factors of expedience, recruitment and mobilization, and the company one keeps. In many similar multi-cultural countries or ‘hetero-nationalist’ states, the same condition applies. In South Africa, however, South Africans have multiple identities in multiple contexts. A person might be a Zulu, or an Afrikaner, or a Jew in a context of a common political party (...) A muslim, or a Coloured, may span many religious, political, social and cultural contexts and thus link them together into a social universe. These identities, then, can be said to be multiply cross-cutting, in that, each overlaps a range of contexts, or a common context or institution may contain many identities within it.”

Considering the socio-cultural and socio-structural givens of the South African electorate in the context of voting-behaviour or political commitment, one has to question whether the latter is a mere reflection of structural conditions. The determinants of political behaviour

²⁹⁵ In the summer 2000, as part of the ‘Afrobarometer’ project on public opinion in Southern Africa (Afrobarometer 2000, see also notes to figure 5), IDASA asked 2200 South Africans, representative of the country’s respective population groups, which group they belonged to (apart from being South African). Within the population groups results varied significantly. Whereas whites, for example, cited class as the most important source of identity (48.6%), for Africans and Indians, ethnicity outdistanced all other categories (24.0% and 65.5% respectively). However, except for the Coloureds, ‘race’ never emerged as the most important source of social identity.

may arise from experiences and expectations of performance or social change as well.²⁹⁶ Political behaviour emanates from a distinct political culture that may or may not be the result of historically shaped cleavages. Assessments of popular attitudes in South Africa often come to the conclusion that voter commitment to political parties is the result of deeply entrenched or even cemented loyalties and is unlikely to change easily for a variety of reasons including racial or ethnic solidarity, an expression of national liberation, cultural predispositions, or expectations of patronage.

Schlemmer (1999), for example, arguing on the basis of survey data stretching from 1991 to 1996, states that “(...) the period since the first open elections has been one in which a kind of unwritten distinction between “new” and “old” South African politics and political parties has been established. Despite good intentions and hopes to the contrary, the effect of this has been to perpetuate the polarisations created by apartheid and the liberation struggle. The political field has, as it were, been *cordoned off* into two major *symbolic camps* – a significant defeat for open pluralism” (ibid. 282). In addition, he attaches a ‘hegemonic orientation’ to the African electorate that highlights unity instead of performance and is hostile to political pluralism and the principle of opposition (ibid. 298).²⁹⁷

This picture may hold true to some extent, since group perception of politics or perceptions of homogenous group interests are still of relevance in structuring voter preferences. Indeed, racial divisions in actual voting behaviour as well as racial composition of support bases remain significant as is apparent from a look at the population group-wise constitution of the ANC’s and N(N)P’s vote (as the parties most well known for their respective ‘racial’ affiliations) in the general elections of 1994 and 1999.

²⁹⁶ In this regard, D.L. Sheth’s (1975a: 3) comment on common explanatory approaches to Indian voting-behaviour after independence remains valid and applies to the South African context as well: “To be sure, a rational and politically discriminating voter is as mythical an entity as an irrational member of a herd. Voters do respond to the pulls of the [representational, C.S.] system and do get drawn into politics through their primordial sentiments activated during election campaigns and similar political stimuli. These, however, may well be treated as predispositions formed during one’s political socialization rather than as determinants of one’s political behaviour. The fact that an individual seeks membership of several groups suggests the complexity and heterogeneity of his changing needs. His interests also are flexible and negotiable. It is, therefore, unrealistic to assume that all his choices can be explained in terms of his membership to these groups.”

²⁹⁷ Empirical evidence from the surveys he cites tells a slightly different story of Africans choosing partisan preference on the basis of their material circumstances/living conditions (to a lesser extent party performance as well) and not because of symbolic orientation; partisan preference in the survey features much internal variation within the African electorate and substantial African minorities favoured power-sharing and constraints on majority power.

Table 11: Population group-wise constitution of the ANC's and N(N)P's vote in the general elections of 1994 and 1999

	1994		1999	
	% of ANC's vote	% of NP's vote	% of ANC's vote	% of NNP's vote
Black	94%	14%	90%	18%
Coloured	4%	30%	7.5%	44%
Indian	1.5%	7%	1.5%	7%
White	0.5%	49%	1%	31%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
(approx. vote)	(12.200.000)	(3.900.00)	(10.600.000)	(1.100.00)

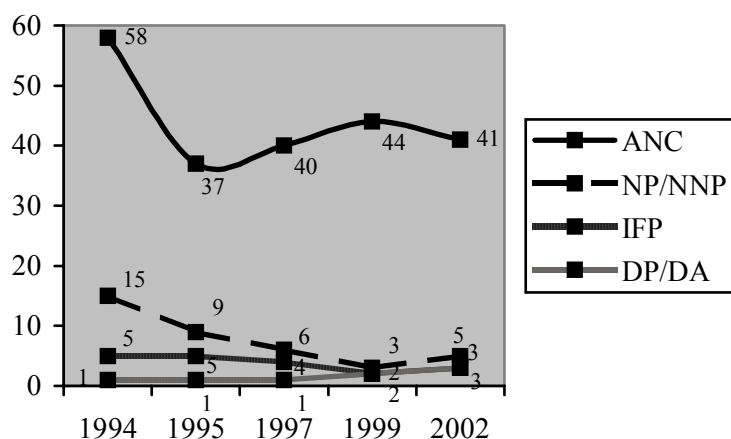
Source: Reynolds (1999:181, 184).

The comparatively even spread of the NNP's vote in 1999 stems partly from the fact that the (liberal white) DP, which had outrun the NNP in the elections by a margin of nearly 3%, drew conservative whites into its fold as never before. The DP's vote in 1999 (increasing from a meagre 1.73% of the national vote in 1994 to 9.56% in 1999, thus becoming the new official opposition) was constituted as follows: 77% White, 5% Coloured, 12% Black and 6% Indian (Reynolds 1999: 183).

However, more recent survey data reveals that commitment to political parties/party identification has dropped significantly. This trend is also confirmed for party identification according to population groups or, for that matter, along racial lines²⁹⁸ - a clear indication that the pool of 'floating votes' (and the possibility of electoral re-alignment) is increasing (although ANC identification remains intense). A party wishing to retain its hold over the electorate must take this into account.

²⁹⁸ See Mattes, Africa and Jacobs (1998) and various press releases of the 'Opinion '99' (# 1-# 3) survey conducted by a consortium consisting of IDASA, EISA, Markinor (Pty.) Ltd., and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SACB); the sample size was 2.200. Some of the results may be found on IDASA's website at: www.idasa.org.za. For a wholly different interpretation of survey data see Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer (2001: 45-48).

Figure 5: Party identification in South Africa, main parties (1994-2002; % of respondents who say they feel close to a party)



Source: Mattes, Africa and Jacobs (1998) for 1994-1997, Mattes, Taylor and Africa (1999a) for 1999, Afrobarometer (2003, Briefing paper No.6, 'Political Party Support in South Africa: Trends since 1994', available at IDASA's website at: www.idasa.org.za) for 2002; sample size varying between 2,200 and 3,400 respondents. Compare to respective population group's share of total population outlined in table 10.

Moreover, survey results also indicate that voting behaviour was and (increasingly) is far more performance-based than the advocates of deeply entrenched party loyalties (for whatever reason) assert (Mattes, Taylor and Africa 1999a, 1999b, Mattes and Piombo 2001). This goes hand in hand with a trend in rising political awareness (which is however, not always translated into a generally higher participation level nor a higher degree of political involvement) and a generally high voter turnout. Voter turnout 'went up' from an incredible 87% (of estimated voting population) in the founding elections of 1994 to an even higher 89.3% (of registered voters) in 1999 (which was, in fact, a decline in turnout, see fn. 299 below).²⁹⁹ It would seem, therefore, that the South African electorate is (or has become) far more sophisticated in terms of judging their representatives than political analysts of voting behaviour in divided societies normally predict. Albeit there is an important qualification: when it comes to the actual voting decision, the 'old' partisan racial or ethnic ties still apply to a great extent. In addition, there is no strong evidence supporting a view that sees the

²⁹⁹ There was no voters' roll in the 1994 elections for the sake of societal inclusion and administrative simplicity. Turnout figures therefore represent the ratio of ballots cast to (estimated) voting age population. In 1999 voters were registered and the turnout reflects the ratio of ballots cast to registered voters. The IEC released a figure for registered voters as representing 80% of the eligible electorate, whereas a more widely accepted survey gave a figure for registered voters as representing 76% of the actual voting age population. In the first case the turnout, reflecting the ratio of ballots cast to voting age population, would have been 72%, whereas in the latter case the turnout would have been 68%. This is a rather different figure from the incredibly high 89.3%. However, a turnout of around 70% still remains above average, compared to second-generation elections in other changing societies and even compared to turnout figures in established democracies of western provenance (Reynolds 1999: 177-179). Turnout in local elections declined from 51% in 1996 to 48% in 2000, but the qualifications as regards turnout figures for national elections apply as well.

electorate as characterised by political apathy (Friedman 1999a) although a trend towards disengagement from active politics is discernible (see 5.1. and 5.3.); the electorate, as one study indicates, is rather “(...) one that is relatively engaged and discerning, critical in some aspects and satisfied in others” (Mattes, Taylor and Africa 1999: 3).³⁰⁰

In this regard, Johnston (1997a: 4) made an interesting distinction between three different models of political culture that are of relevance to the shaping of electoral competition and political representation. In his first category of managerial politics,

“(...) competition revolves around claims to govern (especially to manage the economy) more effectively, perhaps more justly and honestly than rivals. The electorate’s expectations of politics and politicians are not high and party loyalties are not firmly set (...) [political] rivals claim to be professional custodians of citizen’s interests. Technical expertise, honesty and integrity are among the qualities which they claim, but there need be no particular emotional bond between parties and voters (...) [In ideological politics] competition revolves around rival conceptions of how society and the economy should be organized (...) rivals claim to represent voters by virtue of their understanding of truths about society (...) [In heroic politics] competition takes the form of the struggle for basic rights and/or the expression of primary identities, ethnic or national (...) A vital element of the claim to represent in heroic politics includes voters’ ability to recognize themselves in their representatives. This creates a strong and lasting bond between representative and electorate which may have strong emotional or even mystical overtones.”

It would appear that the South African electorate is following in the footsteps of its political leaders: the period until, about halfway up to the elections of 1999, was overtly dominated by features of a heroic and ideological political culture (echoed, for example, in policy orientation, strains of charismatic leadership or strong (emotional) bonds between the electorate and representatives), since then and especially since the beginning of the post-Mandela era, a more managerial political culture has gained ascendancy. This transformation is not only reflected in policy shifts (from RDP to GEAR) and the predominance of technocratic ‘solutions’, but also in voting behaviour and popular attitudes, particularly as the

³⁰⁰ This view is sustained by the prevalence of a relatively well-developed civil society and vigorous associational life primarily in South Africa’s urban areas. Of course, the country’s political culture also comprises lasting parochial traits, predominantly in the rural areas. For an overall different view of the South African electorate’s participative ethos see Schlemmer and Johnson (1996).

(common) 'history of struggle' (or memory of 'good old days') is fading from peoples' memory. However, the perception of democracy as a zero-sum game and of electoral competition as determining group access to (state) resources remains a prominent feature of South Africa's political culture.

Finally, the remaining societal parameter of relevance for the formation of the two respective party systems is the prevalence, or rather the strength, of a clientelist culture or clientelist networks within the two societies. A clientelist culture may function as an incentive for party elites to engage in specific linkage strategies and a clientelist network may facilitate the use of patronage politics or "linkage by reward" (Lawson 1980: 17-18). At the same time, both contribute to dispersing and diffusing arenas of conflict in the (inter)party political sphere and to a declining importance of (party) ideology. However, clientelism can take rather different forms. On the one hand, we find "(...) the kind of old-style, more personalistic clientelism characterised by a chain of transactional relationships, with notables themselves as the source of largesse and object of loyalty at the local, or periphery level (...)", on the other hand one encounters "(...) the situation where the party organisation, through its access to local or national government, is able to distribute resources to broader categories of people, who are coincidentally potential supporters" (Randall and Svåsand 2001: 87). As such, the 'patron' does not necessarily have to be the traditional (tribal) authority that guides political behaviour on the basis of parochial identities, nor the company owner, the youth league leader, popular politician or any other leader of societal substrata, whose authority is based on a mixture of professional success, traditional values, charisma and the promise to reward in some way the 'family'. It can also be the party activist, party leader or party caucus that strategically benefits "(...) classes of people closely linked to its ideological profile and electoral strategy" (ibid. 87). Both forms are prevalent in South Africa. The former, for example, is visible in the (constitutionally anchored) role and importance of traditional leaders (the most prominent manifestation in the party arena are the strong patron-client relationships characterising the IFP's party-citizen linkages at all levels, between local leaders and their followers as well as between Buthelezi and the 'Zulu people'), but also in factional in-fighting between party figures representing a specific (ethnic, generational etc.) clientele and network of supporters.³⁰¹ These are indications that South Africa still displays the relevant features of a 'strong society' where a high level of social control exists, within society's boundaries, that

³⁰¹ Another case in point would be the former homeland leaders like, for example, Lucas Mangope, former president of Bophutatswana, now leader of the United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) that won 3 seats in the 1999 elections basically appealing "(...) to those who had a material interest in that administration, such as its former civil servants" (Friedman 1999b: 5).

can only be partially and incrementally permeated by the state (Migdal 1988). The latter form of clientelism finds expression in the ANC-dominated government's cooptation of key social groups by granting them special privileges or preferential treatment. Union-friendly labour legislation and civil service recruitment through affirmative action are the most prominent cases in point. In this second case however, the party acts as most parties all over the world do, or seek to do, including established democracies. As such, it is doubtful whether this form of clientelism is really tied to specific societal characteristics or traditions. A party's patronage politics may only be facilitated by the susceptibility of a prevailing clientelist culture and by pre-existing clientelist networks. In addition, as regards the first form, clientelism is not as endemic or pervasive as in most other sub-Saharan or, for that matter, changing societies. One reason may be that in South Africa (partial) class formation preceded universal suffrage thus suggesting different channels of party organisation and interest articulation. In a similar vein, the historical sequence of state formation in South Africa obviates against a predominance of clientelist linkage-structures, a phenomenon one finds in most of the country's sub-Saharan co-democratisers and which was predominant in the Indian post-independent party context. As Lodge (1999b: 58) notes: "The state's historical formation was undertaken by when the country was dominated politically by a settler minority. Thus it is less likely than in other parts of Africa to be influenced by the persistence of old, pre-industrial cultures of tribute".

This section has given a broad outline of the social and cultural forces at work in post-apartheid South Africa. Together with the institutional set-up, these are the relevant resources (or constraints) that shape the political opportunity structure available to political actors in their effort to manipulate party system formation. We now turn to what are, according to this study's focus on party agency and strategy, the most important constituents of the country's party system: the ANC as the dominant party and the spectrum of opposition parties.

2.2.4. The dominant party: the ANC and the tripartite alliance

The dominant party as the *nucleus* of any one-party-dominant system almost always presides over the creation of the polity and, as in the case of India and South Africa, also stems from a year-long struggle as a liberation movement.³⁰² Consequently, its share of popular legitimacy is larger and the support base at its disposal more inclusive than any of its possible contenders. Its strategy is a determining force in constitutional engineering. Yet, whereas in

³⁰² In fact, the INC and ANC are the oldest liberation movements in their respective continents with the ANC founded in 1912 and the INC in 1885.

post-partition India there was no doubt that only the Congress could dominate the political process and party landscape for it was the sole political movement practised in parliamentary politics and able to initiate state- and nation-building, organise participation and mobilise masses, the ANC had to compete with rival liberation movements (PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and the Azanian People's Organization, AZAPO). In addition, the ANC had to come to terms with its concomitant (liberation) organisations (UDF, COSATU, SACP), to build up an organisational network from the fragments of its internal and exile wings, to weave together its different factions and, at the same time, it was confronted with opposition from parties representing the white minority some of them already with a long experience in (exclusive) parliamentary politics. Nevertheless, the ANC was able to gain control over a fairly unified African electorate, to present itself as the primary bargaining partner of the ruling NP and, in the course of the negotiation process that led to the first democratic elections of 1994, succeeded in ensuring its pre-eminence over all other political forces in the country. After 30 years in exile and decades of clandestine activity, it had to bring together under a single structure the various disparate elements of the liberation movement it was spearheading, symbolically at least.³⁰³ It must be seen as one of the many puzzles surrounding the transition to democracy how quickly the ANC eventually succeeded in cementing together such a wide range of social groups and ideological preferences/positions. It was a tough process comprising hefty negotiations and struggle over leadership (Ottaway 1991: 70 f.) eventually leading to the founding of the 'Tripartite Alliance' (1990), the organisational manifestation of the ANC's long-standing partnership with COSATU and the SACP, only one, but the most visible, step towards an institutionalisation of the party's broad support base.

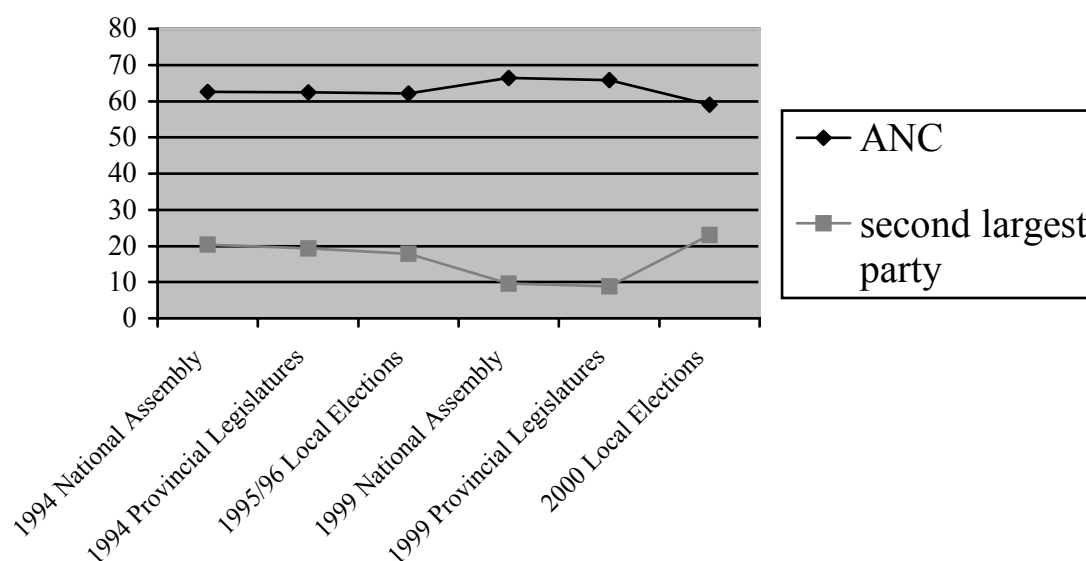
COSATU was and is an independent umbrella organisation that represented half of South Africa's unionised workers in 1996. Since its founding in 1985 (and its adoption of the ANC's most important policy document before 1990, the 'Freedom Charter'), it had been a close partner of the ANC in the liberation struggle. There were/are also cross-cutting memberships between the ANC and COSATU. The SACP, never a veritable mass-based organisation but more of a tightly organised cadre movement/party, heavily influenced the

³⁰³ As Lodge (1999: 2) notes on the liberatory character of the 'democratic breakthrough' in South Africa: "The ANC's victory at the polls was not just the triumph of a political party. Rather it signified the political supremacy of a broader liberatory movement whose constituents included the ANC itself – an organisation which until its legalisation and homecoming 1990 had been constituted by a 15.000-strong exile body largely, though not exclusively, oriented to guerrilla warfare, and which by 1991 had built a branch structure inside South Africa embracing a membership of 500.000."

ANC's strategies and policy positions through a history of key leaders with ANC/SACP double membership and mutual support dating back to the 1950's.

In terms of electoral performance, the ANC's strategy of alliances and keeping its 'broad church' outline while simultaneously working towards a more disciplined and united party has paid off so far and will probably remain successful as long as internal tensions do not outweigh a certain degree of unity. As figure 6 below shows, the margin between the ANC and the respective second largest party in all the relevant elections since 1994 is well beyond what one normally finds in electoral democracies. However, the narrowing of the gap in the 2000 Local elections shows what a more united opposition can attain, even though the aforementioned merger between the DP and the NNP was a rather short-lived affair. In the next section the picture of opposition parties in South Africa's emerging one-party-dominant system is more closely scrutinised.

Figure 6: Electoral performance of the ANC and second largest party in National/Provincial (1994, 1999) and Local elections (1995-96, 2000)



Note: Provincial Legislatures figures are aggregate votes; difference in national and provincial election results is minimal due to the double ballot for combined regional and national party lists; there are, however, strong variations across the nine provinces (see next paragraph); second largest parties were as follows: National Assembly 1994: NP, Provincial Legislatures 1994: NP, Local Elections 1995/96: NP, National Assembly 1999: DP, Provincial Legislatures: DP, Local elections 2000: DA.

Source: Reynolds (1994: 200) for Provincial Legislatures results 1994, EISA (1999: 42) for National Assembly Results and Provincial Legislatures results, 1999, Engel (1999) for Local Elections results 1995/96, Johnston (2001: 17) for Local Elections results 2000.

Growing centralisation in the ANC's decision-making processes, demonstration of a top-down style of party discipline and a declining importance of the alliance's consultative mechanisms notwithstanding (see 3.3. and 4.3.), the ideological and social diversity of the tripartite alliance as a 'political movement in power' is still highly visible. The rising antagonism between the rather pragmatic, neoliberal policy-approach of the government and the more activist and participatory stance as well as emancipatory vision of the party's support base is especially evident. By far the most prominent manifestation of this antagonism is the frequent clashes of ideas between the ANC leadership and COSATU over macro-economic policy-making since 1994. Nine years after the first electoral success of the alliance the 'family spirit' of the ANC (leadership and activists), SACP and union leadership, forged by decades of common struggle (Friedmann 2000: 16), remains, but is becoming increasingly conflict-ridden and difficult to sustain, relying more and more on the incentive 'to share the fruits of power'. As such, the ANC and the tripartite alliance are gradually shifting from being a 'coalition of commitment' to a 'coalition of convenience'³⁰⁴ with all the implications such a process may have for party cohesion, party-government relations and the determination of coherent as well as democratic policy. Due to poor electoral performance and fragmentation of opposition parties, and the lack of serious ideological conflict between the opposition and the ANC-led government, over both sides' constitutional commitment and market-friendly policy-orientation, the future role of the South African party system will be shaped within the alliance.

2.2.5. The opposition: robust, co-optive and co-operative

Despite opposition parties in a one-party-dominant system having practically no chance of taking power (at least at the national level), they nevertheless have an essential function in guaranteeing the competitiveness of the party system and determining the dominant party's strategy. As such, the opposition's presence is felt not only in the counting of votes and seats (even though a certain degree of numerical strength is essential at the party system level), but also in the use of other avenues to express dissent and impose constraints on the dominant party. Most notably this is done by exerting a latent threat on the dominant party to the extent that if the latter is straying too far from the national consensus it represents (however defined), there is a real possibility of realignment within the electorate.

³⁰⁴ The distinction between 'coalitions of commitment' and 'coalitions of convenience' stems from Horowitz (1985: 328) and originally refers to more durable agreements based on amicable ethnic relations and more opportunistic arrangements for the sake of electoral alliance.

On the one hand, the opposition's presence is even more evident in post-apartheid South Africa than it was in India after independence since right from the inception of South Africa as a democratic state in 1994, there were three provinces in which the ANC did not yield an absolute electoral majority, ranking only as the second largest party in two of them: in the Western Cape the NP held the position of strongest party with 53.3% of the provincial vote, in KwaZulu-Natal the IFP gained control with 50.3% of the vote, and in the Northern Cape the vote was relatively equally balanced between the ANC and the combined opposition of the NP, FF and DP eventually resulting in a tacit arrangement of multi-party co-operation in the provincial parliament. On the other hand, the overall margin between the ANC as the dominant party and opposition parties in terms of votes is far wider than it ever was in India and the ANC's popular vote share is much bigger than the INC's was – the latter's never exceeding 50 %. However, the discussion of (party) opposition in post-apartheid South Africa has necessarily to begin with the constitutional provision of institutionalised power-sharing in the form of 'Governments of National Unity' (until 1999) which at the national as well as at the provincial level entitles all parties gaining more than 5% and 10% of the vote respectively participation in government. The NP's hope that this arrangement would lead to a two-player game (ANC and NP) at the national level and in most of the provinces³⁰⁵, thus vesting the party with a factual veto power, was upset by the last-minute decision of the IFP (and, to a lesser extent, the FF) to take part in the elections, eventually winning 10.54% of the national vote and securing a victory in its home province of KwaZulu-Natal.³⁰⁶ Consequently, the NP was just one of two 'junior-partners' in the national GNU, its control of the Western Cape and minority representation in the governments of 5 provinces notwithstanding. The ANC's clear majority in the government and parliament (and one coalition partner at least, likely to support the ANC on most issues³⁰⁷) made it fairly obvious that the GNU in all probability would represent an 'inclusive government' with one party dominating policy-making and

³⁰⁵ This hope was based on the assumption, nurtured by opinion polls and the unwillingness of the IFP and the FF to take part in the elections, that it would yield much more than 20% of the national vote and would perform fairly well in most of the provinces with no other party securing more than 5% in national and more than 10% in provincial elections.

³⁰⁶ In addition, the FF's last-minute decision to take part in the elections (winning 2.17 of the national vote and having a strong performance in the North West, Gauteng (then PWV), Mpumalanga (then Eastern Transvaal), Free State (then Orange Free State) and the Northern Cape) took away much of 'white' support for the NP. The IFP's strong performance in KwaZulu-Natal, its regional stronghold, was, however, subject to serious election irregularities.

³⁰⁷ Having secured participation in national government, the IFP had all the more reason to co-operate with the ANC and not to join the NP in criticising the ANC. On the one hand, it was the NP, which eventually had dismissed the IFP in favour of bilateral negotiations with the ANC during the transition period and had wanted to establish a two-player power-sharing arrangement. On the other hand, unlike the NP, an IFP supporting ANC positions of social transformation was less in danger of losing support from its main constituency (poor, rural and migrant worker Zulus).

legislation (increasingly using its numerical strength) rather than a real power-sharing arrangement. All other parties apart from the ANC, NP and IFP gained only a total of 6.5% of the national vote securing 23 seats in a parliament of 400 seats (FF (9), PAC (7), DP (5), ACDP (2)). Meaningful opposition to the ANC's policy positions, therefore, had to come out of the ruling coalition by means of dissent between the coalition partners or, for that matter, between the NP and the ANC. Additionally, the vote for the NP also reflected a general perception that the NP was the only viable alternative to African majority rule and that the party, given the constitutional provision of the GNU, could find itself in a position that would enable it to secure minority positions in the new order. That is why the decision of the NP to step out of the GNU had serious consequences. For one, extensive realignments within the opposition's vote-bases gained momentum, there being no reason anymore to vote for the NP because it had lost its potential to safeguard minority interests as a partner in the GNU. For another, a process of deinstitutionalisation of the NP had set in, brought about by the fact that for the first time since 1948 it had to learn the ropes of opposition politics and was confronted with the problem "(...) how best to retain its *Afrikaner* power base while also gaining support from voters other than whites and coloureds" (Breytenbach 1999: 119). Hence, it was after the withdrawal of the NP from the GNU (and the IFP's decision to remain some sort of an 'opposition' in a ruling coalition with the ANC) that the 'real' picture of the state of the opposition began to take shape.

The fragmentation and diversity of opposition in South Africa raises the question of how to categorise the various emerging trends of opposition politics after 1996. Common typologies in party sociology based on western empirical references like the categorisation according to a left-right spectrum cannot be applied to the South African regional context without qualification. Although an ideological contestation over such 'classical' issues as 'free-market' vs. 'interventionist state' or 'libertarian' vs. 'authoritarian' are of importance to the country's party competition (most notably in the debate about macro-economic policy), this is merely one dimension among a plethora of other divides. Ideological delineation is further complicated by "(...) a range of cross-cutting ideological similarities, undermining both individual party positioning and opposition differentiation from government" (Booyesen 1999: 251).³⁰⁸

³⁰⁸ On the basis of an analysis of prospects for opposition party collaboration on the eve of the 1999 elections, Booyesen (1999: 250-251) makes the point that "[there] was often little in terms of socio-economic policy that differentiated various opposition parties from another. For example, the DP and the IFP concurred with the ANC on the GEAR economic policy. Some opposition parties converged with the ANC in terms of Africanism (for instance the IFP)."

Nevertheless, there are identifiable ‘poles’ around which opposition to the ruling party or, for that matter, to the constituents of the ruling coalition/alliance, was and is going to rally. On the one hand, these poles are inevitably tied to the respective party’s real or presumed racial or ethnic constituency and image, given the South African realities. On the other hand, they are rather to be found in the differing styles of opposition or differing opposition strategies (basically differing in their approach to the ANC) than in policy or ideological divisions (following Schrire 2001).³⁰⁹

As such, the opposition spectrum in South Africa after 1996 could be categorised in the following way: In the first category one finds the ‘white moderate’ parties (DP and NP/NNP), which, apart from their sharing the bulk of the white electorate, a general commitment to the new constitutional order and a market-friendly policy-orientation, distinguish themselves through their rather different approaches to opposition politics.

Following its (internally disputed) withdrawal from the GNU, the NP confronted factional infighting over its future trajectory, between a more ‘modernist’, reform-oriented and a traditional, ‘conservative’ wing. The former wing, grouped around the NP government’s chief constitutional and transition negotiator Roelf Meyer, argued that party competition in South Africa needed to be totally restructured so as to reflect the political paradigm change, and that the only way for the NP to survive as a meaningful (opposition) party was through a complete renewal, distancing itself from its history (admitting the wrongs of the past) and re-establishing itself as a truly non-racial party centred around a Christian-democratic, social-Christian centrist core. The latter wing, centred around former Executive Director Marthinus van Schalkwyk, wanted to stick to the party’s core values and the *Afrikaner*/Coloured-based electorate, concentrating on its regional strongholds in the Western and Northern Cape. The conservative faction finally got the upper hand and van Schalkwyk succeeded party president De Klerk who resigned in August 1997. However, in the course of the party’s reshuffling as an opposition party, beginning with van Schalkwyk’s accession and its strategic change to a

³⁰⁹ It may be noted that there is a general trend nowadays towards more technical or technocratic approaches to governance superseding the ‘old ideological battles’ prevalent in party competition up to the 1990’s. Hence, there is a predominant focus in South African party competition on the government party’s commitment to delivery and on procedural aspects of democracy. In addition, a survey of the major parties’ 1999 election manifestoes reveals that most of the slogans used to identify individual party (policy) positioning were directed either at the status and pace of ‘delivery’ (of jobs, basic services, economic growth etc.) or on the prevention and fighting of crime – in sum, mainly technical aspects of policy implementation. The more ‘genuine’ ideological divergences that were strongly present before 1994 (such as the controversy about individual rights/strong central government (ANC, AZAPO, SACP, COSATU) vs. federalism/group rights (IFP, NP, DP) or planned economy/nationalisation (ANC, AZAPO, SACP, COSATU) vs. free market economy/private property (IFP, NP, DP)) had given way to rather pragmatic approaches to policy (and the polity) once post-election political and coalitional bargaining had started (Booyesen 1999). For an outline of the party placements on these issues before 1994 see Schumacher (1994: 183).

politics of “cooperative opposition” (Schrire 2001: 31), the party faced waning popular support and electoral decline culminating in the 1999 elections, by which time the renamed party (New National Party, NNP) had lost 13% of its support between 1994 and 1999. This forced the party leadership to rethink its policy of ‘constructive co-operation’ with the ANC-led government, as announced by its new leader van Schalkwyk soon after De Klerk’s departure (*The Star*, September 30, 1997), and to explore the idea of closer opposition co-operation and a united opposition party.

A different approach to opposition politics was chosen by the DP, which had traditionally defined itself as the country’s voice of liberal and free-market values and whose antecedents had opposed the NP on the grounds of defending the rule of law, individual freedoms and advocating dialogue with the liberation movements throughout the apartheid era. Soon after its dismal performance in the 1994 elections and particularly after the NP’s withdrawal from the GNU, when it saw its close contender’s constituency ‘up for grabs’, the DP engaged, under its new energetic leader, Tony Leon, in what Schrire (2001: 31) has termed “robust opposition”, which “(...) has, in general, not been based on profound philosophical conflicts with the ruling party”, but is essentially about opposing vigorously the actions (and members) of the government (ibid. 32).

The DP’s rather pragmatic strategy, of trying to retain its overwhelmingly white middle-class support base while simultaneously aiming at the Afrikaner vote and searching for potential alliance partners in nearly every corner of the opposition spectrum (*Financial Mail*, May 22, 1998), brought it the reproach by most other parties of being racist or ‘white-based’, rendering its coalition potential, negligible. In terms of electoral performance however, the DP’s aggressive anti-government stance (most evident in its 1999 ‘Fight Back’ election campaign) proved to be extremely successful. It more than quintupled its share of the vote in the period between the two national elections, becoming the official opposition in 1999 with a total of 9.56% of the national vote drawn mostly from former NP supporters. Despite their rather different styles of opposition, the continuing dissension on strategic positioning vis-à-vis the ANC and the DP’s major electoral gains at the expense of the NNP, the two ‘white moderate’ opposition parties tried to redefine their oppositional positions and to combine their electoral strength. In 2000, the DP and NNP announced that they were joining together as the DA, contesting the local elections at the end of the same year on a single platform.

Table 12: Electoral performance (% of votes) of main parties and seats won in South African National Assembly and Provincial Legislature elections (1994-1999)

Party	Total		Eastern Cape		Free State		Gauteng		KwaZulu-Natal		Mpumalanga		Northern Cape		North		North West		Western Cape	
	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999
ANC	62.65 (252)	66.35 (266)	84.39 84.35 (48)	73.91 73.80 (47)	77.42 76.65 (24)	81.03 80.79 (25)	59.10 57.60 (50)	68.16 67.87 (50)	31.61 32.23 (26)	39.77 39.38 (32)	81.87 80.69 (25)	85.26 84.83 (26)	49.80 49.74 (15)	64.40 64.32 (20)	92.73 91.63 (38)	89.30 88.29 (44)	83.46 83.33 (26)	80.53 78.97 (27)	33.60 33.01 (14)	42.62 42.07 (18)
NP/NNP	20.39 (82)	6.87 (28)	10.60 9.83 (6)	3.32 3.22 (2)	14.53 12.59 (4)	5.00 5.20 (2)	27.58 23.88 (21)	3.85 3.89 (3)	15.67 11.21 (9)	3.96 3.28 (3)	10.27 9.00 (3)	2.37 2.48 (1)	41.94 40.48 (12)	22.49 24.17 (8)	3.64 3.25 (1)	1.72 1.70 (1)	10.10 8.84 (3)	2.83 2.29 (1)	56.24 53.25 (23)	34.38 38.39 (17)
IFP	10.54 (43)	8.58 (34)	0.24 0.17	0.30 0.33	0.62 0.51	0.45 0.57	4.13 3.66 (3)	3.54 3.51 (3)	48.59 50.32 (41)	40.45 41.90 (34)	1.59 1.52	1.41 1.41	0.47 0.42	0.44 0.53	0.15 0.12	0.32 0.34	0.45 0.38	0.45 0.52	0.65 0.35	0.20 0.18
DP	1.73 (7)	9.56 (38)	1.24 2.05 (1)	6.38 6.29 (4)	0.54 0.57	5.87 5.33 (2)	3.00 5.32 (5)	17.69 17.95 (13)	1.61 2.12 (2)	9.76 8.16 (7)	0.42 0.56	4.97 4.48 (1)	1.29 1.87 (1)	5.78 4.77 (1)	0.18 0.21	1.69 1.42 (1)	0.37 0.50	3.72 3.26 (1)	4.18 6.64 (3)	14.18 11.91 (5)
PAC	1.25 (5)	0.71 (3)	1.99 2.04 (1)	1.00 1.14 (1)	1.70 1.81	1.03 1.15	1.25 1.47 (1)	0.69 0.73	0.62 0.73 (1)	0.28 0.26	1.36 1.63	0.61 0.65	0.97 0.93	0.64 0.66	1.06 1.27	1.21 1.41 (1)	1.53 1.73	0.68 0.74	1.00 1.06	0.50 0.49
FF	2.17 (9)	0.80 (3)	0.65 0.80	0.31 0.33	3.68 6.03 (2)	1.75 2.11 (1)	3.68 6.17 (5)	1.10 1.25 (1)	0.46 0.51	0.20 0.23	3.51 5.66 (2)	1.30 1.70 (1)	4.32 5.97 (2)	1.59 1.66 (1)	1.51 2.15 (1)	0.53 0.65	3.10 4.63 (1)	1.16 1.38 (1)	1.97 2.06 (1)	0.66 0.40

ACDP	0.45 (2)	1.43 (6)	0.38 0.51	1.11 0.96	0.33 0.45	0.92 0.90	0.48 0.61	1.17 1.16	0.46 0.67	1.82 1.81	0.34 0.48	1.10 1.12	0.32 0.40	1.61 1.53	0.26 0.38	1.09 1.10	0.25 0.35	0.90 0.94	0.97 1.20	3.11 2.79
								(1)		(1)						(1)				
UDM	-	3.42 (14)	-	12.88 13.60	-	1.65 1.67	-	2.15 1.95	-	1.29 1.17	-	1.40 1.42	-	0.94 0.90	-	2.57 2.51	-	1.42 1.29	-	3.07 2.40
				(9)				(1)		(1)						(1)				(1)
UCDP	-	0.78 (3)	-	0.12	-	0.73 0.78	-	0.21 0.24	-	0.09	-	0.21 0.23	-	0.25	-	0.10	-	7.48 9.57	-	0.11 (3)
FA	-	0.54 (2)	-	0.19 0.16	-	0.83 0.81	-	0.85 0.89	-	0.30 0.33	-	0.75 0.80	-	0.70 0.53	-	0.37 0.32	-	0.56 0.55	-	0.55 0.26
								(1)												
MF	0.07 (1)	0.30 (1)	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.17 1.34	1.45 2.93	0.04	0.04	0.12	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.08
								(1)	(2)											
AZAPO	-	0.17 (1)	-	0.13	-	0.18	-	0.14 0.16	-	0.15 0.17	-	0.09 0.10	-	0.38 0.41	-	0.49 0.54	-	0.11	-	0.06
AEB	-	0.29 (1)	-	0.18 0.17	-	0.39 0.40	-	0.29 0.31	-	0.20 0.20	-	0.38 0.40	-	0.51 0.53	-	0.37 0.40	-	0.47 0.51	-	0.19 0.18

Notes: Only parties at least once represented in the National Assembly were taken into account. Figures in brackets give number of seats won in the National Assembly (total column) and in the Provincial Legislatures (all other columns). Standard Figures give parties' vote share for the National Assembly votes (total and by province). Figures in bold give % of votes for each party in the Provincial Legislature elections. All other figures give % of votes in National Assembly elections (total and by province). African National Congress (ANC/Tripartite Alliance); National Party/New National Party (NP/NNP); *Inkatha* Freedom Party (IFP); Democratic Party (DP); Pan Africanis Congress of Azania (PAC); Freedom Front/*Vryheidsfront* (FF); African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP); United Democratic Movement (UDM); United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP); Federal Alliance (FA); Minority Front (MF); Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO); *Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging* (AEB).

Source: Reynolds (1994: 183) for number of seats won in 1994 National Assembly elections, EISA (1999) for all other figures.

The attempt however, was short-lived. Just one year later, the DA split from the alliance thus reinforcing opposition fragmentation once again. Meanwhile, the 'pull of power' seems to have regained prominence within the NNP and the politics of 'constructive co-operation' with the ruling party has found expression anew, most notably in the NNP's 'collaboration' with the ANC in the tactical tug of war regarding the aforementioned floor-crossing legislation. The DP, now DA, continues to play its part of representing a 'robust opposition' to the governing coalition.

The second category of the opposition spectrum could be termed 'African moderate' and currently comprises only the IFP. The IFP has so far pursued yet another opposition strategy, namely one of carefully balancing a general commitment to the ANC-led government, of which it has remained a part (retaining its three cabinet seats) though there was no need for the ANC as the majority party to share governmental power after the 1999 elections and the ending of the constitutional provision for a GNU, and the preservation of its image as an autonomous political entity.³¹⁰ The latter is especially important with regards to the party's core constituency of rural Zulus in those areas of KwaZulu-Natal where the authority of traditional leaders is still very powerful, for the party's national representation relies solely on its provincial strength. Like the white moderate parties, the IFP is fully aware that its potential electorate remains demographically limited to its ethnic support base. Participation in government by means of an ANC-IFP coalition is probably the most rational strategy in order to retain some policy-making leverage (and, of course, political office). Stepping out of the coalition would almost certainly lead to massive defections to the ANC. Due to coalitional constraints therefore the IFP's electoral campaign message rests on three hardly distinctive positions: undiluted support for capitalism (coupled with frequent attacks on the ANC's alliance partner, COSATU), promotion of greater regional powers, and protection of traditional leadership. The 'fig-leaf' character of these issues is further reinforced by the fact that the ANC has already captured most of the IFP's positions, particularly by shifting its macro-economic policy from the RDP to the GEAR programme and in accepting Zulu nationhood as a monarchy. Despite efforts to show its political autonomy, the IFP's lack of a clear ideological posture inevitably increases as it continues to endure its coalition with the ANC, leading one political analyst to conclude that during the 1999 campaign the "(...) IFP presented itself as "neither opposition nor government"" (*Daily News*, May 20, 1999). Ultimately, the IFP's status (and autonomy) as an opposition party hinges on its mobilising

³¹⁰ This strategy has been termed by Schrire (2001: 31) as 'cooptive opposition' (as compared to 'robust' and 'cooperative opposition') in his threefold distinction of opposition strategies in South Africa.

(blackmail) potential in KwaZulu-Natal and its continued control over that province as a patronage base.

In-between both categories, a new party has emerged at the beginning of 1998, which falls into the 'centrist-moderate' class, but whose support base and image is not as racially or ethnically determined as other parties in this class, but is in fact the most representative in South Africa in terms of population groups. The United Democratic Movement (UDM), led by former Transkei military chief and ANC dissident, Bantu Holomisa, and the NP's chief negotiator and post-1994 dissenter, Roelf Meyer, is the first newly founded political party in post-apartheid South Africa. It polled a remarkable 3.42% of the national vote in the last elections winning 14 parliamentary seats with a strong performance in the Eastern Cape province³¹¹ drawing much of its support from Holomisa's former *entourage* in the reintegrated *Transkei*.

The third category comprises the 'Africanist left-wing' party political opposition including basically the PAC and AZAPO. In addition to their organisational weakness and incompetence, both faced the dilemma that after 1994 the ANC had absorbed whatever they had to offer as distinguishing features (except for a certain anti-system attitude, which proved to be no longer attractive amongst a post-apartheid electorate). Consequently, the 1999 elections saw the "virtual annihilation" (Booyesen 1999: 249) of these elements in the country's party system.

In the fourth category is the mainly Afrikaner-based 'white right' party political opposition, most prominently Constandt Viljoen's Freedom Front (FF), which had all but collapsed between 1994 and 1999 losing nearly one third of their 1994 national vote share and retaining only 3 of its previously 9 seats. The newly formed *Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging* (AEB) is also part of this group and has further contributed to the white right's fragmentation. After the *Volkstaat* Council³¹² (to some extent the FF's *raison d'être*) had been disbanded in 1999, the poor electoral performance of the FF further added to the perception that "(...) reality is that (electorally at least) the white right is ancient history when it comes to modern South African politics" (Reynolds 1999: 186).

³¹¹ In fact, the Eastern Cape was the only province in the 1999 elections where the ANC actually lost electoral support.

³¹² The FF's participation in the elections and integration into the new South Africa's political order was initially dependent on the adoption of two clauses in the constitution stipulating the right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and linguistic heritage (Sec 235) and the establishment of a Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (Sec 185). As a consequence of these clauses a *Volkstaat* Council was set up, "(...) comprised of Viljoen's followers, to investigate the feasibility of an Afrikaner ethnic state" (Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer 2001: 40).

Finally, there is a residual category of special interest organisations like such basically regionally or ethnically rooted parties as the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) appealing to conservative evangelicals, the Minority Front (MF), mainly representative of KwaZulu-Natal's Indian community, former Bophuthatswana homeland leader, Lucas Mangope's UCDP, or former Rugby Football Union president, Louis Luyt's Federal Alliance (FA).

Overall, what emerges from this short overview of party political opposition in South Africa, is that even though opposition parties may not represent a credible electoral threat to the ANC, due to their fragmentation, historically determined racial or ethnic outlook and constituencies and the deployment of a wide array of differing opposition strategies, their strength in some of the provinces, their 'critical mass' as parliamentary opposition and the very possibility of future opposition unity, has the potential of being a latent threat to the dominant party. This is probably more so through a potential realignment of opposition politics occurring from the ground-up, rather than being leadership driven (Seekings 2001).

However, any serious realignment of opposition parties depends heavily on their positioning vis-à-vis the ANC as the dominant party, for it is the ANC who, till now, represents the broadest national consensus available and, as we will see in the next chapters, has a number of assets, which it can employ to raise and/or sustain the barriers for breaking into its electoral monopoly.

Chapter 3: The ‘Achievement’ of OPD in India and South Africa: Actors, Structures and Institutions

„As the organisation of the people, it is our responsibility to ensure that these masses use the precious democratic rights they won through struggle, to determine their own destiny. It will similarly be critically important that, when the time comes, again we mobilise these masses to go to the polls to vote, in both urban and rural areas, involving both the old and the young and drawing in everybody without regard to race, colour or gender. Once again, only our movement, and no other political formation, is capable of carrying out this national mobilisation. We will do this work as confirmation of our commitment to a democratic system which involves the masses of the people, consistent with our confidence in these masses to continue to be their own liberators. Similarly, we must mobilise the masses to return the ANC to power with an overwhelming majority so that we continue our work for the genuine emancipation of all our people.”³¹³

“The Indian National Congress, alone of all political parties of our democracy, belongs to all of the country. There is not a village in India, not a mohalla, where there is not a Congress presence. That presence rises and falls --that is the essence of democracy. But the essence of nation-building is that no section of the people must feel that there is not a place for them in the premier political party, the natural party of governance. Other parties represent a region, a class, a creed, a caste, an interest. The Congress alone represents, and is represented in, every region, every class, every creed, every caste -- and in every interest which is in the interest of the nation. That is why, whenever the Congress has secured the people's mandate to govern the country, it has never faltered in fulfilling its mandate to the end, and that is also why whenever any other party or group of parties has been entrusted by the people with the duty of governance, they have never failed to falter, falling out among themselves in a matter of months, endangering the unity, the security, the progress and the prosperity of this great nation. The Congress is the glue, the bonding adhesive, that holds the polity of this country together.”³¹⁴

³¹³ Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on the 87th Anniversary of the African National Congress, January 8 1999 (ANC 1999a, emphasis added).

³¹⁴ Golden Jubilee Resolution passed at the 80th Plenary session of the INC in August 1997 at Calcutta (AICC 1998: 160, emphasis added).

These statements, once again, bear witness to the strong belief underpinning the INC's and ANC's perception of a 'natural' claim to national governance. To some extent, this belief is a product of the parties' long history as liberation movements that were always oriented towards an all-inclusive representation of the respective societies they are embedded in. It also however, displays a certain strategy of the INC and ANC, namely, to promulgate that they pursue a 'historical project'³¹⁵ of social transformation. This message is enshrined in the 'slogan' of an all-inclusive national integration, the 'building of an Indian nation' and the realisation of the widely cited 'rainbow nation' respectively.³¹⁶ Or, to put it another way, the dominant party aims at launching "(...) a high-visibility programme which, by convincing the mass electorate that the government will transform their lives, secures an intense identification between the party and a majority in the electorate. This is more than an issue of good governance – usually such projects are in the realm of the politics of “redemption”” (Schlemmer 1999: 290).

Whether termed 'organisation of the people' or 'glue that holds the polity together', the meaning is obvious and no political opponent 'should' deny that only the respective dominant party, or, former liberation movement can function as the legitimate intermediary between state and society. The notions of 'party' and 'movement' are more or less used interchangeably in a bid to reassure the respective party's clientele (i.e. the 'entire' society) that a) the party has not forgotten where it comes from (an all-encompassing, broadly representative front against colonialism, apartheid etc.), and, that b) the 'party in

³¹⁵ The initiation of a 'historical project' – “a series of interrelated and mutually supportive public policies that give particular shape to the national political agenda” (Pempel 1990a: 4) - that lays the roots for a long-lasting support base is generally considered to be a necessary element in the consolidation of one-party-dominance (ibid. 340 f.). In this study, the (rhetorical) projection of a national democratic consensus on the dominant party and its 'image-building' as guarantor of an orderly and stable democratic transition and modernisation (the ideological underpinning of the policies mentioned above, so to say), is considered to be equally part and parcel of the 'grand design' of a historical project.

³¹⁶ The 'blending' of movement and party characteristics is even clearer in Nehru's statement about the INC in 1954, during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India (the period of examination this study deals with primarily, i.e. 1947-1967): “The Congress necessarily has to function as an electoral organisation, but that is not its only or its most important task. It has been our proud privilege to be the soldiers in a mighty national movement which brought freedom to this country. We cannot allow Congress to shrink now into just an electoral organisation (...) Our party organisation must be something more than a party. It must win confidence and respect by patient and self-sacrificing service, and thus live in the hearts of our people.” (*The Statesman*, January 23, 1954). In the same vein, soon after his release from prison, Mandela refers to the ANC's 'movement' character in a strikingly similar manner, referring to a rhetorical device quite often used to reinsure the respective party's claim to legitimacy and governance: “The ANC has never been a political party. It was formed as a parliament of the African people. Right from the start, up to now, the ANC is a coalition, if you want, of people of various political affiliations. Some will support free enterprise, others socialism. Some are conservatives, others are liberals. We are united solely by our determination to oppose racial oppression. That is the only thing that unites us. There is no question of ideology as far as the odyssey of the ANC is concerned, because any question approaching ideology would split the organization from top to bottom. Because we have no connection whatsoever except this one, our determination is to dismantle apartheid.” (*The Washington Post*, June 26, 1990).

government³¹⁷ will continue to promote an emancipatory concept of democracy that goes far beyond ‘democracy’ in its minimalist Schumpeterian sense, just as it had promised during its ‘heroic’ past as a liberation and/or social movement.

There is no doubt that, initially, party dominance in the context of decolonisation or the struggle for liberation relies heavily on ‘symbolic capital’. This is derived from the respective party’s role in the struggle for (national) freedom and is often coupled with charismatic leadership usually that of an undisputed national hero.³¹⁸ However, symbolic capital in terms of an automatic acceptance of the liberation movement as the “repository of the legitimacy of the state” (Thakur: 1995: 283), which is based on the movement’s ‘historic mission’ and the promises made before independence or transition to democracy, is easily and rapidly exhausted when it comes to the task of effectively running an elected government. Even in the formative phase of the polity (and, hence, the party system) symbolic capital is an insufficient guarantee for the dominant party to establish control over the electorate especially when there are rival or additional liberation organisations as was the case in South Africa.³¹⁹ Or, as in India, where a process of decomposition of the hitherto composite freedom movement set in, during which many members and factions left the parent organisation represented by the INC before the founding election of 1952.³²⁰ Additionally, the mere fact that a party is looking back on a common ‘history of struggle’ cannot tell us why and how the dominant party is able

³¹⁷ As opposed to the ‘party in the electorate’, which is primarily geared towards gaining votes/expressing people’s demands and is (not necessarily) dependent on the vagaries of decision-making and governmental responsibility, and, to the ‘party as organisation’ primarily occupied with political recruitment and the channelling of (societal) interest. The threefold distinction between ‘parties in government’, ‘parties in the electorate’ and ‘parties as organisations’ originally refers to the work of Key (1964). See also Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) and Randall and Svåsand (2002b) for recent modifications of these categories.

³¹⁸ In our two cases the memory of this history was coupled with the charismatic leadership of such towering figures as Nehru and Mandela reinforcing further both parties’ electoral appeal.

³¹⁹ Such as the PAC, the most prominent of these rival or additional organisations, which was responsible for the coordination of a plethora of anti-apartheid protests (less prominent in this regard was the AZAPO); the BCM offering a distinct ideology towards the anti-apartheid struggle backed mainly by university students’ protests (for PAC, BMC and AZAPO resistance see Gerhart (1978)); and, closely allied to the ANC but nevertheless a separate organisation, the UDF, which was bundling the anti-apartheid resistance of the civics movement. Even the trade unions – now merged into COSATU – and the SACP, though officially allied with the ANC since the founding of the ‘Tripartite Alliance’ in 1990, were, at some stage or another, potential competitors of the ANC in the (democratic) struggle for political power.

³²⁰ The fact that the INC never won 50% or more of the national vote, with a vote share of 45% in the founding elections of 1952, provides ample proof of the potential ‘fragility’ of the dominant party’s support base in a system of one-party-dominance. However, compared to the break-up of so many liberation movements immediately after independence or in the transition to democracy, the INC was relatively successful in managing to retain its cohesion after independence. In the same vein, Lodge (2001: 23) states, with reference to the decline in identification with the ANC from 58% to 35% in IDASA polls conducted between 1994 and 1998, that “[i]t does mean historic nationalist movements – on all sides – cannot depend upon their emotive communal appeal to remain “parties of belonging”. Instead, activist politics – measured through civic-style participation – has become more parochial in orientation, with the grand narratives of national liberation being displaced by localised feelings of injustice over the harsh treatment by municipal officials and provincial bureaucrats of indigent rent defaulters, evicted shack dwellers, and elderly claimants seeking their entitlements.”

to maintain dominance after the euphoria of liberation or democratic breakthrough has abated and the founding elections of a new polity have taken place.³²¹

However, the room for manoeuvre of party elites in nascent democracies is greater and they can have a profound impact on party system formation. It is in this formative phase of a party system's evolution that the foundations for continued party dominance in a competitive environment are laid, although the distinct strategies of *how* party elites attempt to shape the party system in their interest are not easily detected.³²² That is why systems of one-party-dominance are to some extent 'achieved' and not entirely emanating only from 'below', i.e. from society, when in fact they were often structured from above. Whereas most of the literature conceives of party system formation as a reflection of society, the following therefore suggests a top-down approach (Mainwaring 1999: 60).

Right from the beginning, the dominant party must 'achieve' dominance in a way and manner that goes far beyond harping constantly on the past struggle against racial or colonial oppression. The initiation of a 'historical project' to mobilise and consolidate enough support for the party's initial ascent to power as well as for its continued dominance of the electorate and public sphere is only one of many devices available to the dominant party. Even the framing of the constitution is not above and beyond partisan politics for the negotiations leading to the crafting of a new constitution do not take place behind a "veil of ignorance" (Rawls 1999 [1971]: 118) where "[they] [the parties involved, C. S.] do not know how the various alternatives will affect their own particular case and they are obliged to evaluate principles solely on the basis of general considerations" (ibid. 118). This would be the 'best case' scenario, i. e. the one attaining the fairest result, as envisaged by Rawls. On the contrary, constitutional engineering is particularly prone to manipulation and partisan creativity, even more so in a context where one party outdistances all others in terms of popular support and organisation. As such, party agency gains specific momentum during the

³²¹ As mentioned in chapter 2, several surveys conducted in South Africa for example, from the first elections in 1994 onwards, show that 'race' (as a label connotative of this common 'history of struggle') is not only no longer the primary source of social identity, but also that its relevance for party identification is less important than presumed and that performance ratings of the parties running for election are becoming more and more of a decisive factor when it comes to the voting decision (see, for example, data on South Africa collected by IDASA, website at www.idasa.org.za) as part of the 'Afrobarometer' project (Afrobarometer 2000 and 2002); see also Mattes, Gouws and Kotzé (1995: 390) and Mattes and Piombo (2001). Even before the founding elections, survey data indicated that material circumstances were much more relevant for the voting decision than the 'symbolic capital' of the respective parties (Schlemmer 1999: 288 f.).

³²² As Pempel (1990b: 341) notes: "Rarely can one predict long-term dominance at the time of a party's first ascension to power. Dominance is more easily recognized in the cycle of its continuance than in the seeds of its generation. Only with hindsight do the particular events that mark the beginnings of one-party dominance take on greater clarity."

negotiation process taking place before the founding election as well as when dominance starts getting entrenched, electorally at least.

Additionally, as already mentioned, no given post-colonial or Third Wave democratic context is a ‘flattened landscape’ regarding the organisational state of affairs of the parties entering into electoral competition. Obviously, in most of the cases the dominant party has an organisational advantage. With the shift from movement to party however, it undergoes a difficult transition demanding cautious organisational planning and renewal. Furthermore, the dominant party has to craft a careful and pragmatic mobilisational strategy in order to lay the foundations for a long-lasting support base.

Thereby, the specific strategies for the ‘achievement’ of one-party-dominance in the two regional settings naturally vary, given the differing time frame, the specific institutional context and a socio-structural framework bearing only slight similarities. However, the basic pattern of party agency, as this chapter attempts to reveal, is similar and the processes involved are comparable. Hence, the core question of this chapter: What role did party agency play in the emergence/achievement of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa?³²³

There are – *grosso modo* - three processes whereby political elites are able to shape or alter party systems during the formative phase of a party system’s evolution. Each of these were crucial in the ‘achievement’ of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa: The first and second (3.2 and 3.3.) comprise direct intervention via mergers, schisms, the creation of new parties, organisational ‘mainstreaming’ and intra-party consensus-building, or legislative/constitutional engineering, thereby creating new ‘mechanics’ of the party system. The third process (3.1.) – functioning at a more indirect but also more fundamental level – includes evoking the aforementioned historical project through manifestos, propaganda and policies. This helps to define the ideological space of the party system and to structure voters’ preferences along a commitment to the historical project/national consensus created by the dominant party. These three manifestations of party agency can be categorised as representing the three spheres that make up a party system’s basic dimensions: society-oriented party agency (3.1.), state-oriented party agency (3.1.) and the party system’s inner-space (3.3.).

The following analysis examines these three aspects of party agency taking into account the interdependence of, and interaction between, political actors/party elites and the structural/institutional context described in the preceding chapter.

³²³ Nevertheless, given the difference in context, the question of ‘how a system of one-party-dominance emerged in the two countries’ requires a multi-layered answer comprising (an intricate mix of) institutional, structural and party agentive factors.

Since “[p]arty dominance characteristically arises when a coalition of interests develops a successful approach to overcoming a crisis and this programme may keep the party safe from defeat for many years” (Simkins 1999: 49), the chapter will begin with an analysis of the two dominant parties’ launching of a historical project. This is followed by an assessment of the dominant party elites’ manipulative efforts in devising (and altering) relevant aspects of the polity’s institutional arrangement. Finally, the crucial process of organisational renewal and ‘mainstreaming’ of the dominant party will be examined. The agentic nature of these processes requires a ‘soft’ handling of respective indicators. Due to the diachronic comparison and the topical, dynamic nature of party political processes in South Africa, the analysis of the ANC will be much more concentrated and specific than that of the INC. As explained in chapter 1, these processes are most visible during the heyday of one-party-dominance. Thus, in the case of India the following will focus on the period 1952-67, commonly referred to as the ‘Congress system’, though references to the post-1967 period will occur where they underpin the argument. Though the focus is on partisan motives of the dominant party, this is not to deny that opposition parties are/were guided by the same motives and that the ruling party’s strategic action yielded ‘public good results’.

3.1. Political actors as ‘inventors’ of a national consensus/historical project

In both countries the dominant party’s ascent to power occurred at a moment of crisis: the transition from colonial rule/apartheid to democracy and universal suffrage with its concomitant aspects of uncertainty, choice and (necessary) decision. As DiPalma (1990: 162) – following Pempel – rightly observes, “[t]his condition makes the politics of transition nonroutine and offers the parties capable of seizing leadership a lasting opportunity to hegemonize the political game, political culture and political economy, while possibly isolating and delegitimizing (...) contending parties and social formations.”³²⁴

So, whilst it is relatively obvious that the end of colonial rule and apartheid catapulted the INC and ANC into a position of dominance, their endurance and long-term electoral success was not secured. It remained up to the dominant party to take this window of opportunity to hegemonise public discourse and perception in such a way and manner that established the

³²⁴ One has to add ‘co-opting’ and ‘co-operating’ to the listing of the dominant party’s options of preferable/favourable interaction with opposition, see 4.1.

party's democratic legitimacy and identity and projected it as the sole (credible) party able and willing to initiate a historical project of nation-building and social transformation.³²⁵

The 'invention' of a historical project - termed this way to reflect the agentive character of the process involved - comprises two key dimensions: a) the initiation of ideologically sustained emancipatory policies of social transformation and national integration (these policies are intertwined with governmental authority) and b) the (rhetorical) projection of a national democratic consensus on the dominant party based on the latter's commitment to inclusive and open electoral competition and, simultaneously, its 'image-building' as indispensable guarantor of an orderly and stable democratic transition and modernisation. Note that the historical project, actual policies initiated to underpin and enforce its transformative agenda notwithstanding, is also a project in the realm of political discourse. It may well be - in fact, it is part of the dominant party's strategic arsenal - that in practice the dominant party's adaptation to its environment is more important than its innovative capacity or, for that matter, its actual interest in social transformation (Weiner 1967: 15). The underlying premise of the analysis here is that the two dominant parties are primarily concerned with winning elections or in other words, achieving dominance.

In India the 'historical project' was centred less around a specific programme with detailed socio-economic objectives, despite the specific but rather abstract targets of the five-year-plans. Instead there was a broad national consensus of more general liberation goals and a developmental trajectory comprising the well-known ingredients of secularism, democratic socialism, mixed economy, non-alignment and nationalism.³²⁶ This 'national ideology',³²⁷ promoted by the INC was reinforced by a strong commitment to constitutional accountability and unhindered electoral competition.

³²⁵ DiPalma (1990) does not consider the importance of the launching of a historical project (of nation-building and social transformation) by the dominant party as an essential contribution to the emergence of one-party-dominance but he focuses solely on the dominant party's strategy "(...) in response to a compelling problem of democratic legitimacy and identity" (ibid. 175). He comes up with a discussion of several strategies of which *garantismo* (interpartisan cooperation in the constitutional process and cooperation for the express intent of creating an open political market) seems to him to be the most appropriate in establishing party dominance. DiPalma is however, not dealing with changing societies but with European industrialised countries. Nevertheless, he emphasises the role of (strategic) party agency in establishing dominance to the point that he argues that objective explanatory factors (socio-structural, institutional) for party dominance do not hold.

³²⁶ These policy orientations, which were pervaded by a strong sense of and desire for 'autarchy' - have to be seen in the light of the country's socio-religious heterogeneity and the ideological 'flavour' of the time. The Congress government after independence was neither constrained by the imperatives of a global market nor by a dependence on a largely minority (white) controlled economy. The ANC's strategy in this regard naturally differed substantially.

³²⁷ Of course, the ideological creed of the Congress (especially its economic ideology) was not shared by all elements in the party, particularly conservative. But direct confrontation on the grounds of ideological issues was largely avoided; see Kaushik (1985: 479 f.)

Likewise, the fact that the INC's left-of-centre consensus³²⁸ was partly institutionalised in form of the constitutionally enshrined, non-justiciable Directive Principles and the independent Planning Commission³²⁹, encouraged a merging of the dominant party's programmatic consensus and government authority in the perception of the electorate. This contributed strongly to the programmatic indetermination of the opposition and had lasting consequences. For decades to follow the ideological differentiation of opposition parties was shaped more around the INC's capacity to implement its policies than around the policies themselves (Narain and Lal 1969: 205 f., Davey 1972). As late as 1967, after the critical elections had brought several opposition parties into government at the State level, the programmatic determination (and formula of success) of some of these parties was based on the statement that they "(...) are implementing the Congress Programme better than the Congress" (Kothari 1994: 194).³³⁰ In the same year, only 30.6% of respondents in the CSDS national survey could distinguish between various political parties along the lines of programme and policy (Sheth 1975: 123).³³¹

Furthermore, the INC's appearance as a 'system within the (party) system' ("party of parties", Narain 1970: 1605) encompassed most of those national elites (and their followings) identified with the freedom movement and the governmental authority/interim government of the young polity. This contributed to the image of Indian politics after independence as a "one-class sphere" (Krishna 1967: 25) or a "cosensually unified" (Burton et al. 1992: 10 f.) undertaking and added to the initial transformation of the party into a national projection.

³²⁸ As Kothari (1994: 144) notes: "Harping constantly and in an almost tiresome manner on the themes of democracy, socialism, planning, non-involvement in power-blocs, and related ideas, he [Nehru] created a framework of discourse which laid the semantic and symbolic basis of national unity."

³²⁹ The backing and equation of the INC's left-of-centre consensus with constitutional and governmental authority above and beyond the electoral arena was a prime device for transcending the party's historical project into a national political agenda. A comparable strategy was pursued by the ANC with regard to the RDP (see next para).

³³⁰ About the continuity of these 'basic national policies' (of secularism, mixed economy, non-alignment etc.) even after the erosion of the Congress system, see Mitra (1990a: 10). Since the dominant party in a system of one-party-dominance occupies the ideological 'fulcrum' of party competition because of its liberatory or revolutionary credentials and the fact that it represents the bulk of the national electorate, there is a 'natural' lack of ideological points to attack anyway. Apart from taking up an anti-system position - opposition parties almost always are left with no option of choosing an electoral strategy other than positioning themselves as more or less willing to co-operate with the dominant party or as more or less critical of the dominant party's or, for that matter, the government's performance. Consequently, there may well exist an ideological party in a pragmatic party system. Such is the case, if the general ideological thrust of the dominant party (social transformation) is agreed upon by all other stakeholders in the party system and party competition is rather a matter of debate about the 'means' (to reach that goal) and not of the 'ends' (social transformation).

³³¹ The party's statement in its 1967 election manifesto that "(...) the Indian National Congress has placed before the country the goal of a democratic socialist society. The nation has accepted planned development as the method for the attainment of this goal (...)" (INC 1967: 2, emphasis added), is therefore not too much of an exaggeration.

Of course, as Pempel (1990a: 5) relativises long-term rule by a single political party in the context of post-colonial societies, the anti-colonial movement to some extent had “(...) papered over social diversities as a means of achieving national independence”. However, the INC leadership did everything to prevent the image of the party as a catch-all,³³² socially heterogeneous and consensually unified organisation from fading. Moreover, just as Nehru declared in 1953 that “The Congress is the country and the country is Congress” (quoted in Randall 1988a: 88), he had – immediately before the country’s first general elections in spring 1952 – stressed the point in a report to the AICC that only the Congress could be able to hold the country’s social heterogeneity together and provide national integrity, the party’s democratic commitment notwithstanding:

“Some people criticise us for desiring what is called a single party rule and point out the necessity of an effective opposition. I do not understand this criticism and I entirely agree that a democratic legislature should have an effective opposition. But it is equally true that in times of crisis a large measure of unity and national purpose is essential. When disruptive and disintegrating forces are at work, it becomes every man’s duty to combat them the best way he can. The Congress still remains the most potent weapon to combat these forces” (quoted in Zaidi: 1981b: 167).

However, the party leadership realised that the common denominator of the anti-colonial struggle would soon vanish (a vote share of 45% in the founding elections was a clear indicator that the INC representation of the ‘national consensus’ was not unanimously accepted), less so because of an early translation of cleavages into the party system or as a result of controversies over the consensus fundamentals but because of elite disagreement about how to reach the desired policy outcomes.³³³ The party elite therefore had to lay the foundation for a more long-lasting image as the party of national consent, social transformation and “generous shelter” (Morris-Jones 191978: 225). Plus, it had to initiate the

³³² Whether the Congress was really a catch-all party or rather a national aggregation of State parties tied to very specific social groups is highly debated in the scholarly literature (see especially 4.2.; for a summary of the debate see Chhibber and Petrocik 1989). However, here, we are more concerned with the projection of the party as a catch-all party.

³³³ Kothari /1994: 162) aptly describes what is likely to happen in the context of changing societies when party formation is primarily based on the one goal of political emancipation: “Political dissent was thus a function of fragmentation of the *Political* center of society rather than a projection of autonomous interest in the social and economic spheres (...) It was not from the diversity of social interests but the fragmentation of political groups themselves that oppositional activity found its stimulus (...) Most of the dissenting elites had at one time belonged to the Congress and shared much of the social and intellectual background of Congressmen.” See also Morris-Jones (1989: 108 f.).

relevant policies. As Jalal (1995: 38) puts it from a more functionalist and less partisan point of view,

“(...) Congress emerged from the anti-imperialist struggle committed to two potentially contradictory objectives: (1) the social transformation of India and (2) the projection of a single unified nation. Needing to minimize social conflict to achieve the second objective, the Congress was awkwardly poised to preside over the magnitude of changes needed for the effective attainment of the first. Despite the inherent tension between the two, both objectives required the establishment of a political system dominated by the Congress – one whose legitimacy would be assured by a conscious accommodation of dissent from an array of social groups occupying strategic positions mainly within but also outside the movement.”

A passage from the first INC election manifesto clearly reveals the party's effort to transmit to the electorate this twin message of its “consensual authority” (Kothari 1964: 1162) and social transformative, emancipatory agenda: “The objectives of the Congress, which have been embodied in the Constitution of India, still remain in a large measure, unrealised. The time has come for our struggle for emancipation to enter into its second phase of realising those objectives, without which political freedom can have little meaning for most of us” (Zaidi 1986: 34, emphasis added).³³⁴

The actual policies initiated by the INC governments are even more revealing. They portray an anticipatory stance, which made it possible for the party to act simultaneously as guarantor and beneficiary of a broad-based democratisation and process of social change. Policies of land reform in the 1950 (especially the abolition of the feudal landholding and revenue system of the *zamindari*, see 2.1.1. and Moore 1966: 450 f.) in favour of a social group of 20 millions new tenants, expansion of the public sector, positive discrimination in form of reservations and quota for the socially oppressed and politically marginalised, the establishment of Community Development Programmes, state-led urbanisation and industrialisation, labour-friendly legislation, linguistic reorganisation of the States (see 3.2.), rehabilitation programmes for the refugees from East and West Pakistan, the three-language formula (giving official status to Hindi and the respective vernaculars and declaring English as an additional official ‘link language’) – all these initiatives contributed to the image of an INC inspired by a developmental ideology. Based on its commitment to state intervention, this

³³⁴ Note the statement that it was the INC that gave India its constitution, it being simply a reflection of the party's objectives.

facilitated the attempt to reshape the identity of the nation in such a way that the electorate believed in the party's goodwill to achieve economic liberation (that it 'will change their lives') and that (political) outsiders or minorities could also recognise a place in it for themselves.

These policy initiatives were rarely aimed at radical reform. On the contrary, the INC more than once sought to 'sell' basic need measures – especially in the area of food policy – for more radical approaches³³⁵, and those policies truly concerned with redistribution were, most often, blocked by vested interests at the State-level (they required State-level legislation) or tardily implemented (if at all) due to the power of local elites.³³⁶ Nevertheless, they bestowed upon the party the aura of a legitimate agent of development and social change. This strategy paid a rich dividend. Apart from the symbolic value and real progress attached to these 'policies of national consensus' encouraging long-term identification and alignment with the ruling party, two components of this consensus/strategy were especially crucial in the long run.³³⁷ On the one hand, the secular ideal behind INC policy and its concession of a separate personal law, guaranteed the alignment of the Muslim constituency, and, on the other hand, policies of social reform, especially the institutionalisation of reservations and quota for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, secured the support of the socially oppressed, i.e. the (former) untouchables and the *adivasi* (Enskat and Mitra 1999: 136). Together with the regionally dominant castes allied to the INC for other reasons (see 4.2.) these groups constituted roughly one third of the Indian electorate (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 48, Rösel and Jürgenmeyer 2001: 299), a vote pool that – coupled with the specific conditions of the Indian electoral system – almost always guaranteed electoral majority.³³⁸

³³⁵ As Weiner (1967: 465) notes: "Indeed, famine areas have often given a larger vote to Congress, for economic distress has often provided Congress and the government with an opportunity to demonstrate its concern and, in most instances, its capacity to provide welfare."

³³⁶ There is a whole bunch of (neo-Marxist) critique of the INC's 'conservative' approach to social change, its socialist rhetoric notwithstanding. For examples see Bardhan (1985), Frankel (1978) and Kaviraj (1996).

³³⁷ These interventionist and transformative strategies were, of course, only one of the INC's devices to attract social support and were often superseded by more accommodative and adaptive strategies comprising - most often - the co-optation of traditional elites (see 4.2.). With regard to the interventionist strategies mentioned above, see also the discussion of what Swamy (2003) calls "sandwich tactics" in 4.2..

³³⁸ Thus, in the 1962 elections, for example, the Congress held 80.3 % of the Lok Sabha seats reserved for the SC's (69.2 % of the *Vidhan Sabha* seats), 58.1 % of the seats reserved for the ST's (50.0 %) and 73.9 % of the seats in constituencies, where Muslim candidates had been elected (73.5 %), see Krishna (1967: 55). Additionally, as Krishna (ibid. 56) goes on to argue, "The critical importance for the Congress party of the support of these groups [SC's, ST's and Muslims, C.S.] may be appreciated when it is realized that in nine out of thirteen States (other than Gujarat, Madras, Maharashtra and Mysore) it would cease to be a majority party without it; in eight of the nine the withdrawal of the support of Scheduled Caste M.L.A.s alone would lose it legislative majorities." As Weiner (1989: 217) notes, "Although ecological analyses confirmed by field reports indicate that these groups [religious minorities, SC's and ST's, C.S.] provide the Congress with a large share of their vote than does the rest of the electorate, no hard data are available to indicate what the percentage of the Congress vote in 1980 or earlier was from each of these communities. *But if the Congress won only 50 percent of the vote of these minorities, then it needed to win the support of only 35 percent of the remaining caste Hindu*

In a sense, Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage model is reversed in the Indian context: it was the INC that initiated and determined processes of modernisation and social change (and the resultant political manifestation of cleavages) and which monopolised them during the period of one-party dominance (always positioning itself on both ends of the respective cleavage's continuum, see 4.1. and 4.2.). Only after this initial 'push' by the INC did a differentiation of cleavages gained momentum, and, gradually, a 'belated' manifestation of these cleavages in the party system set in.³³⁹ Of course, these cleavages and their concomitant mobilisation opportunities were again initially controlled and monopolised by the Congress (Rösel and Jürgenmeyer 2001: 320).

This line of argument that highlights the (partial) control of the dominant party over political participation/interest articulation concurs with Arian and Barnes' (1974: 601) statement that "(...) here is one of the strengths of the dominant party: it controls not only the status quo but also the pace of change. By intelligent trimming it can remain at the center of the action (...) and its strategic stance vis-à-vis society is in the long run more important than its dealings with other parties. For if it maintains an intelligently open stance toward the evolution of its society, if it remains attuned to fundamental changes, it can cement its dominance even further by aiding and facilitating that which it cannot prevent while it repels much else." The argument also corresponds with Chhibber's (1999: 18-19) more recent reinterpretation of the Indian party system's evolution that gives parties (especially the INC) an active role in the shaping of the country's party system by tracing back linkages between social cleavages and party systems to party competition and state policy. He shows for example, how a concrete policy, namely the adoption of the Mandal Commission Report, which advocated quotas for the backward castes in government jobs and educational institutions, proved to be responsible for the restructuring of the party system in Uttar Pradesh along caste lines (ibid. 135-159). Interestingly, two of my Indian interview partners (A.R. Kidwai and Sadiq Ali, see references) named the INC's failure to anticipate caste consciousness as the most important reason for the decline of the party's dominance.

In sum, the INC-induced 'historical project' as well as the party's actual policies, triggered an elite commitment to the legitimacy of the parliamentary system and party competition, a general acceptance of the INC as the primary embodiment of this consensus, and a broad-based approval of the dominant party's social transformative and accommodative policies, and was rewarded 'materially' (in terms of votes) and symbolically (in terms of identification

population to net a national vote of 40.7 percent. And if the Congress won 60 percent of the minority vote, then with the support of 35 percent of the remaining electorate the national Congress vote would be 44.5%."

³³⁹ Except, if counting the divide 'democratically vs. authoritatively inclined forces' as a cleavage of its own.

of the party with processes of social change and nation-building). The latter is especially important for even if the pace of social transformation was incremental rather than impressive, the economy was more often languishing than dynamic, and nation-building continued to be a thorny process, a discourse emerged that promoted the image of the INC in the first two decades after independence as the sole (and natural) guarantor of the country's democratic transition and social change.³⁴⁰ The picture we get, thus accurately conforms with what Duverger (1954: 308-309) wrote about dominant parties in general more than 50 years ago:

“A dominant party is that which public opinion believes to be dominant. This belief could be compared with that which determines the legitimacy of those who govern: the two are distinct but closely related. Even the enemies of the dominant party, even citizens who refuse to give it their vote, acknowledge its superior status and its influence; they deplore it but admit it.”

In South Africa, party leadership within the ANC was well aware that the historical legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle and the envisaged ideal of a ‘rainbow nation’ would not sufficiently guarantee the symbolic capital needed for a continued monopolisation of the national agenda. The latter was however, necessary for prompting a lasting voter attachment to, and identification with, the dominant party. The level of political awareness of the electorate, the changed nature of mobilisation and campaigning at the end of the millennium, the strong activist tradition of civil society, the demographically and regionally concentrated constituencies of the NP/NNP and IFP in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal respectively and the presence of a white minority still occupying the commanding heights of the economy, all these factors were early indicators that even before the founding elections of 1994 “(...) a large electoral majority was by no means guaranteed, and that voters would have to be won over” (Lodge 1994: 28). At the same time, the relatively open, capitalist nature of the economy, its embeddedness in an increasingly globalised international market, a strong labour force and the dependence on domestic (white) capital dictated to some extent a more balanced approach to the crafting of a historical, socially transformative agenda, relying less on state interventionist policies and more on corporatist arrangements. “Nevertheless”, as Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: 24) aptly describe the imperatives for the dominant party in the

³⁴⁰ Later on the INC – by virtue of its modernisation and democratisation efforts and ethos – was to become a victim of its success, triggering an increasing political assertion and participation of middle and lower castes, of diverse regional and social interests eventually leading to the emergence of a multi-party system.

country's semi-industrialised context, "black South Africans insist that their government makes it possible for them to catch up materially with the dominant white socio-economic group. This ultimately is what keeps the party together as an all-class black party despite the different ideologies, conflicting interests and clashing programmes of action which are joined under the same roof" (Giliomee and Simkins 1999a: 24).³⁴¹ For these reasons, the ANC's approach to hegemonising the political discourse was much more managerial and specific, though equally oriented towards creating the grand narrative of a historical project as in India. This was particularly the case with the (rhetorical) projection of a national consensus on the dominant party and its democratic, participatory commitment.

Even before the founding elections, the ANC did not take chances and meticulously built up its image. A row of wide-ranging surveys was commissioned to gain a clear picture of the electorate and its expectations. It also got into what could be termed 'auditing with the electorate' (or, for that matter, with its main constituency, the African majority) through the establishment of people's forums (wherein prominent party leaders would be confronted with addresses and questions from the audience)³⁴², door-to-door canvassing or the publishing of nominations for candidate lists and the holding of conferences to debate the nominations (Lodge 1994: 27 f.). All these measures should highlight the party's commitment to a participatory and consultative process of decision-making (in contrast to the INC's more tutelarian approach). They also however, "(...) prompted the ANC to fight the election as a contest about issues rather than merely as a 'freedom poll'" (ibid. 29). The party leadership had realised that it was in need of some sort of programmatic appeal, to be identified as the (only) party able and willing to bring about 'A Better Life for All' as promised by its election manifesto (ANC 1994a). That is why shortly before the elections of 1994 the RDP was launched, the centrepiece of the party's social transformative agenda. This was basically a "(...) co-ordinated, centrally planned and interlocking approach to the national upliftment of the formerly disadvantaged" (Schlemmer 1999: 290) and became the official economic and development programme of the GNU. The RDP set out some fixed socio-economic targets, especially in the areas of housing, health and education, but was principally a bold statement

³⁴¹ Of course, symbolic acts to further national integration like the retaining of the old *Afrikaans* national anthem, *de Stem* (together with the ANC's *N'kosi Sikelele Africa*), or Mandela's coating of the jersey of the white-dominated national rugby team, the *Springboks*, were crucial parameters for the ANC to become a national projection ('the party of reconciliation') as well. But the rationale underlying the party's claim to dominance and its supporters' demands and expectations is naturally one of political economy.

³⁴² The 'forums' were a campaigning strategy borrowed from the 1992 Clinton campaign. The ANC had hired Stanley Greenberg and Frank Greer, the spin-doctors of Clinton's electoral victory in the US presidential elections (Lodge 1994: 29).

about (a general vision of) social justice and the transformation of society with little reference to concrete mechanisms of change (Blumenfeld 1997: 87).³⁴³

The coordination of the programme was allotted to a special office under the auspices of a cabinet minister thus coupling the RDP with governmental authority – as was the case with the Indian Planning Commission. Moreover, and probably more importantly, the ANC's obligation to power-sharing, as manifested in the GNU, helped elevate the RDP to some sort of 'national ideology' transcending its partisan nature.³⁴⁴ The slogans of 'change' and 'delivery' became the hallmark of public discourse and the RDP developed into an "icon of the new South Africa" (Munslow and Fitzgerald 1995: 53).³⁴⁵ The subsequent suspension of the RDP (1996) and the adoption of the neoliberal GEAR macro-economic framework contributed to a decrease in credibility of the governing party in terms of capacity and willingness to 'deliver' and, at the same time, produced tensions within the tripartite alliance. Nevertheless, the RDP reassured the dominant party's support base of its good intentions and the ANC has remained firmly committed to the social transformative ethos of the RDP at the rhetorical level. The party is constantly reassuring the electorate of its commitment to the RDP. In fact, its 1999 manifesto (ANC 1999b) makes numerous references to the RDP, whereas GEAR (or the fundamental shift of its macro-economic policy) is not mentioned at all. What has changed is that reference is now made to the RDP as a 'vision' (or even an "RDP of the soul") and not as a programme with concrete targets. At a deeper level, however, and in terms of strategic policies (some real progress in social infrastructure the RDP brought about notwithstanding) the other aspect of the ANC's attempt to convince its constituency of its 'good intentions' was the envisaged transformation of ethnic/racial imbalances within the bureaucracy and private sector by means of affirmative action and – though to a lesser extent

³⁴³ The participatory emphasis of the ANC's 'historical project' is especially relevant in a context where development process is part of an emancipatory vision of democracy. Consequently, a strong public obligation to democratise and popularise the policy-making process is reflected in the RDP base document (ANC 1994b) as well, promoting a 'commitment to grassroots, bottom-up development which is owned and driven by communities and their representative organisations' (ibid. 15), and, stating that 'Democracy is not confined to periodic elections. It is, rather, an active process enabling everyone to contribute to reconstruction and development' (ibid. 7); see Natrass and Seekings (1998: 218).

³⁴⁴ The withdrawal of the NP from the GNU and the closure of the RDP office did not end the ruling party's attempt to make its social transformative vision of development look like a *national* consensus. On the contrary, despite the shift from RDP to GEAR and the centralist manner, in which the new macro-economic framework was established (see fn. 411 and 4.3.), the tripartite NEDLAC bargaining forum and the societal corporatism it was envisaged to espouse were thought of to reach the kind of social accord necessary to 'sell' GEAR (which according to the dominant party was still inspired by the RDP ethos) as a 'national consensus'.

³⁴⁵ The careful wording of the document and the avoidance of highly disputed items such as 'redistribution' or 'nationalisation' as the means to reach RDP goals made it possible for the other parties in the GNU to support the programme. In fact, "(...) following the election President Mandela insisted that the NP and IFP accept the RDP as a requirement for participation in the Government of National Unity" (Natrass and Seekings 1998: 219). Mandela himself declared in an interview that the programme did not entail "(...) a single mentioning of nationalisation (...) not a single slogan, whereby we could be linked to marxist ideology" (*Sunday Times*, May 1, 1994).

– the ‘appeasement’ of its unionised workers support base by means of relatively labour-friendly legislation. Whereas the RDP’s main emphasis was on the satisfaction of basic needs (not surprising for a party with overwhelming support from the poor in an extremely inequalitarian society), the main thrust of the ruling party’s policies (evident in the shift from RDP to GEAR) has been directed more towards promoting the (growth-oriented) interest of an African bourgeoisie and less to its “(...) more inclusive, more popularly based tradition” (Southall 1997: 25).³⁴⁶ As a consequence of the party’s shift from RDP to GEAR and its increasingly ‘Africanist’ policy orientation, the ‘historical project’ represented by the RDP has become less based on a national consensus, at least at the elite level. This was confirmed by most of my South African interview partners. However, they also hinted at the fact that the ANC currently tries to compensate for its neoliberal turn by evoking emotional support for some sort of ‘new historical project’ (mainly in the less dangerous field of regional and international relations). The ‘African Renaissance’, first publicly referred to by Thabo Mbeki in 1997, is an invocation of traditional (indigenous) values and forces of renewal coupled with the opportunities that the ‘brave new world’ of modern technology has to offer, and a process of political, economic and cultural re-engagement with the rest of the continent. It has to be seen, whether the African Renaissance, especially in its most recent institutional/programmatic manifestation, the ‘New Partnership for Africa’s Development’ (NEPAD), will yield the same communal appeal as the RDP.

Now, what about the electorate? Has suspending the RDP drawn away the emotional appeal that the ANC had mustered as the party that would bring about ‘A Better Life for All’? The party’s attempt to bind voters by sketching the broad outlines of a (basically African) historical project of renewal and societal transformation is naturally best reflected in its mobilisation model. A model which stands in stark contrast to the principal opposition’s modus to attract voters. Johnston (2001: 19) compares the mobilisation models of the ANC and DA in the light of the 2000 local elections as follows:

³⁴⁶ As Giliomee (1998: 135) remarks: “Although the ANC came to power promising to ameliorate the plight of the black poor, the groups that have come to figure most prominently in government policy are unionized workers and the black middle class, whether privately employed or civil servants (...). The government is committed to a program of transformation that seeks as a first step to entrench a black labor and managerial aristocracy.” From a partisan point of view, furthering a labour aristocracy and managerial (middle) class (in the private or public sector) has to be seen as the most appropriate strategy for the ANC to shape and reproduce its political following, since their empowerment is possible with relative short-term effort. An upliftment of the (rural) poor is only feasible within a long-term framework. The INC elite in India did face a similar dilemma (one even more problematic given the country’s more dominant and lasting rural bias). Likewise, despite opposite rhetoric, policy priority was given to urban, unionised workers.

“Over the last two elections, the DA (...) has achieved a remarkable feat of remobilisation of the white electorate, which it has extended to other minorities. It has done so by stripping down the relationships between voter and party to instrumental and minimalist proportions. It does not seek to make lasting attachments through grand narratives of value and project or through bonds of lived experience. It makes no claim to leadership beyond managerial and technocratic competence (...) By contrast the ANC (...) is burdened with grand narratives (revolution, African nationalism and socialism, the African Renaissance), all of which raise great expectations, none of which defines the party exclusively and some of which are contradictory. Its mobilising model is through complex and deep communal relationships (not necessarily racial ones) and common experiences, expressed in a constellation of linked organisations.”

As table 13 below shows, popular perception regarding the competence of all major parties to run the national government shortly before the second elections of 1999 is clearly biased in favour of the ANC. This is not merely a reflection of the imbalance in partisan strength (normally, the incumbent gets a lower score than its electoral strength and the distance between the ruling party and the opposition parties is smaller), but rather the ‘acknowledgement of the dominant party’s superior status and influence’. Of course, this is only a proxy for the party’s success in convincing the electorate of its indispensable role as the initiator of social transformation. In fact, it acts better as an indicator of voters’ disdain or disillusionment in opposition parties and their ability to manage and improve the country’s political and economic trajectory.

Table 13: South Africa: Opinion Poll ’99 – competence to run the national government

	September 1998			April 1999		
%	Good/very good	Poor/very poor	Don’t know	Good/very good	Poor/very poor	Don’t know
ANC	77	19	4	72	24	4
DP	21	34	45	23	41	36
NNP	28	55	17	22	57	20
PAC	17	42	41	16	49	35
UDM	10	29	61	14	38	48
IFP	14	61	25	13	62	25
FF	7	44	49	6	52	42

Source: Press release No. 4/7 (Mattes and Africa: Party Support and Voting Intention IV: The Opposition, p. 2) of the ‘Opinion ’99’ survey, see 2..2.3, fn. 298. for details of the survey. The question asked was: ‘Please tell me whether you think ____ would be able to do a poor job or good job running the national government if elected?’

Table 13 also corresponds to the findings of table 14 below. In terms of representativeness, the ‘national consensus character’ is clearly reflected in popular perception of the ANC as a ‘party of and for all South Africans’, whereas opposition parties continue to be perceived of as somewhat sectarian. Moreover, the scores of the main opposition parties (DP and NNP) have declined substantively between the founding and second elections, whereas the ANC’s remained stable, despite the shift from RDP to GEAR in-between elections. In a divided society like South Africa’s and given the country’s history of racial exclusiveness, a party’s image as inclusive is an important prerequisite for voters to consider it electable (and for continued support).

Table 14: South Africa: Opinion Poll ’99 – Who do parties represent?

	September–October 1994			September 1998			April 1999		
%	All	Only One Group	Don’t know	All	Only One Group	Don’t know	All	Only One Group	Don’t know
ANC	77	17	6	71	25	4	75	21	4
UDM	N/A	N/A	N/A	22	5	74	33	5	62
NNP	39	38	24	32	44	24	29	22	49
DP	39	14	47	24	20	56	28	22	49
PAC	24	36	40	26	23	51	28	25	47
IFP	16	54	30	20	46	34	27	41	32
FF	8	49	43	6	36	57	8	36	55

Source: Press release No. 4/7 (Mattes and Africa: Party Support and Voting Intention IV: The Opposition, p. 2) of the ‘Opinion ’99’ survey, see 2.2.3., fn. 298 for details. The question asked was: ‘Do you think _____ looks after the interests of all in South Africa or after the interest of one group only?’

These findings, coupled with a fairly stable voter support pattern for the ANC in the two general elections held so far, correspond to what Schlemmer (1999: 291, 294) suggests on the basis of his own survey on dissatisfaction among Africans with the RDP’s record of delivery: “(...) one must ask the question of whether it [the RDP, C.S.] might not have achieved the aim of securing the *sympathy* of many in the electorate through the very good intentions which it signalled for nearly two years (...) The stability of the levels of support for the ANC exists in contra-distinction to the evidence of dissatisfaction encountered in the results (...), and it would suggest a fairly resilient “bonding” which has occurred between the ANC and the mass of the black electorate.”

Overall, the ANC tried to induce a perception within the electorate of the party as an initiator of a process of social change and to portray itself as the standard bearer of the democratic quality of this process. This was similar to the INC's effort and success in institutionalising a historical project of social transformation and democratisation immediately after independence but the projection of a national democratic consensus on the dominant party was thereby even more deliberately engineered than in India. The ANC's initial emphasis on participatory aspects in the formulation of its historical project or, for that matter, the RDP, and the party's initial (strategic) willingness to participate in a power-sharing arrangement of democratic consolidation have contributed to an overall perception of the party as the only credible guarantor of 'A Better Life for All' and secured intense identification between the party and the bulk of the electorate.

However, following the suspension of the RDP (and the end of the GNU), the goal of social transformation was increasingly based upon the single rationale of a (justified) racial transformation of society or, for that matter, attainment of demographic representativity. In the course of this process the "(...) ANC has largely succeeded in placing 'transformation' outside the boundaries of acceptable political debate" (Giliomee, Myburg and Schlemmer 2001: 42). The emphasis on policies of affirmative action, the shift from RDP to GEAR and the promotion of a new African elite hint at another aspect of the ANC's historical project, which accords with the general perspective on dominant parties: that they must not only dominate electorally but also governmentally. In the words of Southall (1997: 12), the dominant party, on the basis of its electorally legitimated state power, "(...) must be able to set the political agenda, implement its favoured policies and thereby take advantage of opportunities to use resources to shape and reproduce its political following."

3.2. Political actors as determining agents of institutional arrangements

The second process through which party agency makes its presence felt in the achievement of party dominance involves the shaping of political institutions and the manipulation and interpretation of the existing institutional arrangement in a given context. (Dominant) party elites try to ensure that the polity's institutional arrangement works in favour of the dominant party. This means there are institutional guarantees for the dominant party to play off its organisational advantage and electoral dominance against opposition parties or other threats to its dominance. The most crucial moment, at which party elites can have leverage over the institutional arrangement of the polity, is of course during the process of constitution-making. Here, the foundations can be laid for a lasting dominance supported by institutional rules.

However, ‘determining’ the institutional arrangement does not only (and not most prominently) comprise the crucial moment of constitution-making³⁴⁷. On the contrary (and as we will see from evidence from our two regional contexts), determining the institutional arrangement gains specific significance when the institutional fibre of a polity is already agreed upon and the (party) players begin to ‘test’ the rules of the game by means of constitutional amendment where available but also by the way and manner in which institutional rules are interpreted.³⁴⁸

By the same token however, the institutional arrangement has to be seen as affecting the dominant party elites’ strategies. This is the case when it is considered to suit the dominant party’s interests. In this regard, institutions – understood here according to North (1992) to be the ‘rules of the game’ laid down in constitutional provisions, electoral systems, federal arrangements etc. – are both, subject to choice as well as causers/formers of strategies and – to a lesser extent – of preferences and attitudes.³⁴⁹ The following highlights only the specific features of the two countries’ institutional arrangement, which are considered to be of particular relevance for the purpose of this study. These include the federal arrangement or, more precisely, centre-states relations in the Indian context, and to a lesser extent also the expansive role of the state as the agent of social and economic transformation, and two special characteristics of South Africa’s electoral system: the list aspect and the rules governing defections. It is therefore not an exhaustive account of how party elites or political actors in general shape and determine their country’s institutional arrangement.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Especially if one is to take into account that the making of the constitution is, most often, constrained by the compromise and reconciliatory nature of a foundational regime bargain and characterised by inter-partisan cooperation.

³⁴⁸ In general, in the early stages of democratisation the institutional arrangement is less decisive in shaping party and party system development. As Kitschelt (1992: 9-10) holds for the central Eastern European context: “In central Eastern Europe, the institutions of democratic governance are either still in process of evolving or they are brand new. At least in the early stages of democratic stabilization, such institutions are endogenous to party competition. Electoral laws, for example, result from certain divisions among parties and subsequently reinforce or change them. In the same way, the choice of presidential or parliamentary government and the extent of territorial centralization of powers in part derive from preexisting configurations of parties (...) political institutions, at least initially, have little impact on the formation of party alternatives and party strategies, although they obviously affect electoral outcomes.”

³⁴⁹ This line of reasoning follows more the rational-choice variant of new institutionalism, which concedes to actors the ability to continuously question their (institutional) environment (Shepsle 1989). More resolute neo-institutionalists give institutions some kind of ‘ontological’ prominence. The main argument here being that it is above all party elites/political actors’ determination of the institutional arrangement that matters and not the independent effect of institutions on party elites’ behaviour and action. As long as the institutional arrangement suits the (dominant) party elites’ strategic interest there is no need to alter the ‘rules of the game’.

³⁵⁰ This focus is mainly due to reasons of space and the necessary concentration on those features that – to my opinion – illustrate the political actors’ role in determining an institutional arrangement in the interest of the dominant party most obviously. Among the other institutional features that are of significance is the electoral system in the Indian context (however, the correlation between the SMSP electoral system and the INC’s manufactured majorities’ is relatively clear-cut and well –researched) and the federal arrangement in the South African context (however, the executive dominance of the central government is overwhelming and self-

The fundamentals of the Indian constitution were formulated long before the Constituent Assembly (elected on a limited franchise) actually gathered to discuss the more controversial features. Apart from the fact that there was a ‘blueprint’ available in form of the Government of India Act of 1935 (see 2.1.1. and 2.1.2.), the long time span of the nationalist movement and an extended period of pre-independence parliamentary practice for the indigenous political elite had provided room for detailed discussion and previous agreements (Kothari 1970: 101). Interestingly, the institutional features most prone to political manipulation after independence were also among the most highly debated in the Constituent Assembly and their resolution was most obviously tied to INC predominance in the assembly. These included the role of the president and governor (especially the question of the president’s emergency powers) and, closely related, the nature of the country’s centre-state relations (Morris-Jones 1989: 83 f.). INC leaders were aware of the benefits of a Westminster SMSP electoral system (a benefit that would last however, only as long as opposition remained fragmented and in a cumbersome organisational state). Alternative electoral regimes³⁵¹ were thus not considered but provisions were sought to give Indian federalism³⁵² a unitary shape, which would enable the INC to influence or, for that matter, to alter developments of the party system to its advantage when necessary.³⁵³

This unitary shape of Indian federalism has been described as taking two specific forms: as “federalism from above” (Rothermund 1995a: 385, “Föderalismus von oben”) due to the uniformity of jurisdiction and administration, financial supremacy of the central government, appointment of the governor by the president and the right of the national parliament to alter the

referential). In both regional contexts the Westminster nature (executive dominance) of the parliamentary system is an obvious case in point.

³⁵¹ The main argument in favour of a plurality system in the Constituent Assembly debates was of course the need for governmental stability in a divided society. There was however, considerable resistance to the decision from the socialists, Communists and representatives of various religious communities. They suggested changing the prevailing electoral system to some form of PR. Hartmann (1971: 16) describes the reactions of Ambedkar (a vehement critic of the INC) and Nehru: “(...) Dr. Ambedkar energetically opposed the proportional representation system. He stressed that for the minorities a properly functioning Government is necessary which cannot be achieved through the principle of proportional representation. Nehru added that he could not imagine a weaker Government than that which is elected on the basis of the system of proportional representation.”

³⁵² India’s federal set-up is of course a major aberration from the adapted Westminster model.

³⁵³ A similar rationale holds true for the INC dominated Constituent Assembly’s avoidance of consociational features when drafting the constitution. As Kothari (1994: 299) notes (rather altruistically): “Keenly aware of the damage that rule by simple majority can do to a nascent democracy in a highly plural society (...) the leadership of the Congress sought consensus on basic issues essentially through a process of accommodation. But seemingly “accommodative” doctrines of representation such as proportional representation, indirect elections, special representation to religious minorities, and a Swiss type of cabinet were rejected in the interest of unity and with a view to enabling the polity to be autonomous of the basic cleavages of Indian society.” In the same vein, during the late independence movement, ‘seemingly’ consociationalist demands (such as the Muslim demand for separate electorates) or corporatist demands (such as the Congress socialists demand that labour unions and peasant organisations should be allowed to affiliate with the INC) were equally rejected, see Low (1988).

(territorial) boundaries of the States, and as “federalism bound by revocation” (ibid. 389, “Föderalismus auf Widerruf”) because of the president’s power (‘on the aid and advice of the national executive’) to impose central executive rule in a State on the basis of a report by the State’s governor (‘or otherwise’) announcing constitutional government is no longer possible, thereby toppling elected State governments. Both aspects proved to be of real (and potential) advantage³⁵⁴ for the dominant party, but have likewise produced contradicting trends of centre-periphery relations with regard to party-political ‘federal bargaining’.³⁵⁵

The handling of the president’s rule provision is a clear-cut example of political actors’ determination of the institutional arrangement arising out of partisan motives.³⁵⁶ It allowed the dominant party – as party in command of the central government – to influence state party politics, even intra-party politics.³⁵⁷ Thus, a constitutional feature designed to preserve national unity was used more than once as a partisan instrument. This was the case for example with the imposition of president’s rule on the CPI government of Kerala in 1959.³⁵⁸ There have also been incidents when president’s rule was imposed on the basis of constitutionally justifiable reasons for instance when the State’s linguistic reorganisation produced political turmoil.

Under the prime ministership of Indira Gandhi from 1966 onwards the number of instances of the imposition of president’s rule quadrupled during a legislative period and it became even more of a partisan instrument (see table 15 below). This occurred as other devices (see chapter 4) of the INC failed to secure command over the party’s factional stability in the context of centre-States relations (and over the electorate). Party centralisation and a more

³⁵⁴ The disciplinary effect of a latent threat of central intervention has to be considered as equally important to actual intervention.

³⁵⁵ Thus, unlike Nehru’s preference for a ‘co-operative federalism’, INC dominance under Indira Gandhi, which is of secondary interest here, “(...) used different types of federal resources at different points in time to advance the fortunes of her party (e.g., her critical decisions in the area of inter-state boundary disputes, location of capital projects, and allotment of discretionary financial grants in 1970 were aimed at bending the Congress (O) [the rival INC organisation of the time, i.e. after the party’s split of 1969] states into supporting her party), she relied quite heavily on presidential dismissals and suspensions to get rid of the non-Congress state governments” (Dua 1987: 361).

³⁵⁶ The constitutional provisions regarding president’s rule and the role of the Governor, essentially an appointed delegate of the central government, consequently have been a ‘bone of contention’ in the Constituent Assembly Debates and were pushed through against a lot of resistance (Rothermund 1965: 215).

³⁵⁷ An example of the latter being the first ever invoking of president’s rule in the country, in Punjab in 1951, when the Congress Parliamentary Board – after heavy factional infighting between two rival INC leaders – tried to work out an agreement with the INC chief minister Bhargava and, having failed, moved the prime minister and president to declare president’s rule for that province (Kochanek 1968: 255-58).

³⁵⁸ Kerala’s communist State government – the only non-Congress government until 1967 – was dismissed by the governor “(...) on his instinctive conclusion that the minds of and feelings of the people had experienced a tremendous shift against the communist ministry. (No actual or public opinion poll was held to document such a shift of electoral opinion.)” (Thakur 1995: 88). Having brought the State government under central governmental control, the INC, staffed with a prolonged period of central government rule to influence State politics profoundly and to consolidate and determine a strategy for recovery, fared much better at the next round of *Vidhan Sabha* elections in Kerala.

confrontational style towards the opposition resulted in heavy reliance on direct political intervention, gradually replacing the intricate mix of factional balancing, more equilibrational centre-States relations and an accommodative or even consensual stance towards the opposition that had prevailed during the Nehru era. As Chhibber (1999: 98) concludes on the basis of data drawn from the Lok Sabha Secretariat:

“From 1967 to 1987, intraparty factionalism was the impetus for invoking president’s rule on seven occasions. In these cases, severe intraparty factional conflict prevented the emergence of a relatively stable ruling coalition in a state. As the national party could not bring about a compromise among the different factions in the state party, it introduced central rule until factional differences within the state party could be resolved. On the 45 other occasions, the power of the central government was invoked by the ruling national party to undermine a state government that was in the hands of an opposition party or coalition. More often than not, this intervention was successful. The national party performed much better in almost three-fourths of the state assembly elections subsequent to the period of central rule. Political intervention in state politics, therefore, was one reliable way for the national party to ensure its electoral success.”

Table 15: The imposition of President’s Rule on States of the Indian Union, 1952-77

1952-56	1957-61	1962-66	1967-71	1972-76
4	2	4	16	15

Source: Basu (1993: 449-451); based on dates of imposition.

Despite the institutional opportunities for control by the Centre, which were inherent in Indian federalism, the INC under Nehru’s leadership for the most part opted for some kind of ‘co-operative federalism’ – at least with regard to political intervention. This meant that party leadership intervened whenever factional or societal disputes in the States threatened to go off the rails (as was the case with the linguistic reorganisation), but, at the same time, giving the States enough autonomy to manage conflicts and policies (especially policy implementation) on their own without endangering the authority of the central government (Kothari 1969: 1637).³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ As Thakur (1995: 82) remarks on this somewhat ambiguous stance towards centre-State relations of the INC leadership under Nehru: “(...) Nehru’s legacy to Indian federalism was somewhat mixed. On the one hand, he was determined to that his Congress Party would rule not only at the centre but in all states as well. If the people

This proved to be a very successful strategy – not the least for containing the emergence of a nationally potent opposition. It allowed for the differentiation between one national and diverse regional party systems by furthering the proliferation of second level party competition and creating additional electoral and governmental arenas.³⁶⁰ The partial and uneven introduction of *panchayati raj* (local government) from the early 1960's onwards added a third tier to India's federal structure and contributed further to the dispersion of political power and electoral competition. This reinforced the rationality of opposition parties as collective actors that saw an electoral strategy focusing on regional strongholds as a proven device to compensate for their disadvantages in organisational resources.³⁶¹ Additionally, the practice of a co-operative federalism under Nehru largely prevented the translation of (controversial) regional issues into party competition at the national level, the rather exceptional case of linguistic identity notwithstanding. The latter is, however, ample proof that the residual power of the centre inherent in India's federal arrangement (in this case the right to alter the territorial boundaries of the States) was a readymade tool in the hands of political actors keen to redefine the rules of party competition and to avert the threat to national integrity (represented by the INC government).

Moreover, co-operative federalism was further reinforced by the States (linguistic) reorganisation, which began in 1956 and created linguistically homogenous units on the basis of the respective vernaculars acting as parliamentary, administrative and educational languages. A process, which was accompanied by a gradual regionalisation of the INC apparatus as well.³⁶² In general, the fact that the administrative structure of the INC did not

could not see the wisdom of this when electing state assemblies, then the goal could still be achieved by behind-the-scenes manipulation and the use of constitutional tricks for bringing about the downfall of state governments. On the other hand, for most of the Nehru period central and state politics were largely autonomous. Several states were ruled by strong chief ministers from within Congress, and a sort of bargaining model of federalism operated to mediate between a strong government in New Delhi and strong governments in the states."

³⁶⁰ Nehru's - or rather the Working Committee's (the highest executive organ of the party) - handling of India's federal arrangement consciously tolerated a difference of patterns of party competition and conflict-management at the national and State level (within certain limits) thus contributing to the emergence of regionalised party systems as a basis for the national dominance of the INC. Because of varying patterns of competition (and varying social bases) at the regional level, the national mandate of the INC has to be considered – to some extent at least – as an aggregate of successful factional coalitions of diverse party systems at the regional level - until the delinking of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections in 1971 (Chhibber and Petrocik 1989). As Arora (1989: 196) notes: "(...) the Congress functioned as a federation of regionalist units, but only to the extent that its centralist core remained intact." The relatively low volatility rate of 14.8 between 1952 and 1967 (see table 1) as standard indicator of a stable social base of party support thereby veils the often substantial volatility at the regional level. In the words of Sisson and Vanderbok (1987: 395): "(...) while there is relative consistency of Congress support in terms of votes aggregated on the national level (...) there have been pronounced fluctuations of Congress support in the states."

³⁶¹ Of course, this strategy eventually also prompted the regionalisation of India's party system and thus contributed to the end of one-party-dominance as more and more (regional) opposition parties came to power in the States.

³⁶² As Jürgenmeyer and Rösel (2001: 298) note (translation by C.S.): "This [the States reorganisation, C.S.] initiates a consequential transformation, an enforced and more profound impact of its organisation and a

mirror the country's electoral units (constituencies) but the country's administrative units thus 'doubling' the federal structure and facilitating communication between party line and elected representatives was a major advantage for the dominant party (the party in command of most administrative units) in blurring the line between party and state (deMesquita and Park 1979: 8). In the course of regionalisation, the INC succeeded in co-opting regionally dominant castes and village authorities, thus broadening its already vast support base (Rösel and Jürgenmeyer 2001: 298).³⁶³

A corollary of the bias inherent in Indian federalism towards the central government is the role state intervention has played in the social and economic trajectory of the country and, consequently, the evolution of India's party system. The highly interventionist nature of the state in India, reinforced by the asymmetrical nature of India's federal arrangement, especially its fiscal federalism, and the independent role of the Planning Commission,³⁶⁴ made access to and control of the state a *sine qua non* of party control and attractiveness. Additionally, the relative autonomy of the States in implementing policies and allocating resources (as long as co-operative federalism prevailed) provided for the extensive use of patronage to mobilise and entrench voters' support. This had lasting consequences for the way party elites played out the institutional arrangement to their partisan advantage. Since the disbursement of state resources (through policy prioritisation and regional distribution at the national level and actual implementation, provision of services and resource allocation at the State level) was dependent on executive office, access to state agencies became a major partisan instrument in defining the clientelist space of the electorate and thus structuring voters' and regional/local elites' preferences (Chhibber 1999: 66 f.).³⁶⁵ Consequently, due to the pivotal role the INC accrued to the state, executive office was the 'highest price at stake'. Fighting to capture it and gaining access to state resources via the party in control of almost all state agencies was

regionalisation of the Congress apparatus. The anglicised Congress elite is now complemented by regional Congress apparatus with their respective vernaculars, and it is mainly them, who represent the initiators and beneficiaries of an enforced membership recruitment (...)."

³⁶³ For a detailed description and analysis of how the close liaison between party and administration, the expansion of governmental services and policy areas and the nature of factional competition and conflict helped the INC to engineer the tacit alliances with these dominant social actors at the district level refer to the seminal work of Weiner (1968, especially pp. 459-481). For the interplay of dominant castes and INC factions at the regional level, here Uttar Pradesh, see Brass (1965).

³⁶⁴ As Morris-Jones (1989: 87) describes the way the Planning Commission was established (rather untypical for the 'consensual ethos' of the INC approach to constitution-making: "(...) the new body [the Planning Commission, C.S.] came suddenly upon the scene – unannounced by the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 and only hurriedly preceded by an appropriate statement from the Working Committee of the Congress Party – and it seems likely that few foresaw the part it would play or the controversy that would soon surround it."

³⁶⁵ Again, as in the case of political intervention via president's rule, the national disbursement of economic resources was a major (central government) device initiated by Indira Gandhi to uphold INC dominance as the other, more organisational based devices of the dominant party such as the specific interaction with the opposition (4.1.) or intra-party conflict management mechanisms (4.3.) were gradually fading.

the political battleground (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987, Morris-Jones 1966). This rationale enabled the INC to play the politics of patronage and to turn the dominant party into the centre of gravity. Chhibber (1999: 67) provides empirical evidence for the “(...) executive, office-seeking, orientation of the party [Congress, C.S.] (...)” as a basis for its electoral dominance in form of a simple correlation analysis with data drawn from the CSDS survey of party elites conducted in 1967.

Table 16: Why workers affiliate with a political party, India, 1967 (mean scores)

Reason	Other Parties	INC	F
Build personal position	2.17	2.38	7.75**
Access to important people	2.28	2.41	2.95*
Build status in the community	2.36	2.52	2.95**
Influence government policies	2.56	2.38	6.68**

Source: Chhibber (1999: 67), CSDS 1967 elite survey (as part of overall survey), see 2.1.3. for details on the survey.

Note: Responses were scaled from 1 to 3, with 1 indicating that a particular issue was not important and 3 that it was very important. *Significant at 0.05 ** Significant at 0.1 ($N = 550$)

Table 17: Basis for nomination as a party candidate, India, 1967 (mean scores)

Basis	Other Parties	INC	F
Candidate's own ability	1.25	1.43	10.386**
Recognition of work done in the area	1.27	1.41	5.96**
Status in party organization	1.59	1.71	2.78*
Connection with leaders	2.00	1.70	15.00**
Backing of special groups	1.95	1.84	3.16*

Source: Chhibber (1999: 67), CSDS 1967 elite survey (as part of overall survey), see 2.1.3. for details on the survey.

Note: Responses were scaled from 1 to 3, with 1 indicating that a particular issue was important and 3 that it was very important. *Significant at 0.05 ** Significant at 0.1 ($N = 550$)

As is evident from the two tables above, gaining access to state agencies (to enhance personal position, to be close to important people, to enhance status in the community) was for INC activists a more important reason to affiliate with the party than for other parties' activists. Furthermore, for INC party elites access to state agencies (connection to leaders, backing of special groups) was a necessary prerequisite for getting a ticket to contest elections that was more important than for other parties' elites. Hence, the INC mobilised support through its

ability to deliver state resources to its followers and its general willingness to engage in patronage politics. In the words of Kothari (1964: 1167): “The Congress, when it came to power, assigned a positive and overwhelming role to government and politics in the development of society (...) [and] (...) the Congress in power made for a concentration of resources, a monopoly of patronage and a control of economic power which crystallized the structure of its power and made competition with it a difficult proposition.”

In sum, the INC leadership’s early constitutional engineering of a federalism ‘with a unitary face’ and the concomitant opportunities for political intervention by the centre as well as its (strategic) shaping of a co-operative federalism allowed the party to intervene in party competition at the regional level when it experienced waning popular support. At the same time however, the INC established a dual process of political contest, a monopolisation of the political process by an amorphous, socially heterogeneous coalition of interests at the national level and an increasing intra- and inter-party competitiveness at the regional (and local) level that eventually strengthened the party’s organisational penetration (and domination) of society. Additionally, the INC’s emphasis on state interventionism and its institutionalisation allowed the party (as the seemingly invincible, ‘party in power’) to take advantage of its control over executive office and to mobilise support as well as to define the clientelist rationale of party competition along patronage (partisan) lines.

In South Africa, interestingly enough, the ANC opted for an electoral system that ran counter to partisan interests, for a first-past-the-post system would have clearly benefited the ANC as the putative majority party in most of the constituencies. This seems to be only one of the many enigmas surrounding the preparatory, bilateral ANC-NP ‘talks about talks’ and the debates about a future Constitution that took place in the two CODESA conferences and the ‘Multi Party Negotiation Forum’.³⁶⁶ The option for an electoral system of proportional representation however, can be seen either to be an example of the ANC’s goodwill for compromise³⁶⁷ or ideological commitment to integrate as many societal groups as possible into the political system (see, for example, Sisk 1994: 12, and Pottie 2001: 154), or, as an indication that the ANC, aware that it would yield enough electoral support to overcome the

³⁶⁶ The ANC’s initial preference – despite opposite rhetoric – was a plurality system (Asmal 1988). The constitutional provisions regarding the electoral system laid down in the interim constitution have been retained with the final constitution adopted in 1996. Nevertheless, the debate about a reform of the current electoral system (the main point being the introduction of a constituency-based system) has continued since the elections of 1994 and has regained momentum. At the moment, a commission under the leadership of Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, former President of the PP, is working on a draft suggesting substantial changes to the current system, which shall be considered for legislation before the elections of 2004.

³⁶⁷ Lijphart (1994: 229) even goes further, stating that „The ANC’s high-minded stance on PR runs completely counter to the conventional wisdom that political parties act on the basis of their narrow partisan self-interests – putting political scientists who operate on this assumption to shame!”

power-sharing requirements, was, nevertheless, geared towards establishing majority rule (Mattes 1994: 7, Sisk 1995: 190). In other words, to turn South Africa into what was once termed by Nelson Mandela, a “(...) normal democracy as the world knows it”.³⁶⁸

The latter line of thinking that ascribes a strategic incentive to the ANC's choice of PR concurs with the assumption that the putative benefits ascribed to PR in the context of deeply divided societies, depend on the actual configuration of political forces in the party system as well as on the strategic thinking of the party elite. Like any other political institution, the electoral system may produce incentives for political actors to act, behave and decide in accordance with the expected outcome ascribed to the electoral system. However, there are also ways to manipulate the electoral system, and there are configurations wherein the putative benefits/disadvantages of an electoral system do not matter at all. As such, democratic consolidation is as dependent if not more on the goodwill of the relevant stakeholders as it is dependent on the electoral system, however carefully engineered the latter may be.³⁶⁹

For the ANC the adoption of PR was attractive for yet more reasons: On the one hand, the closed-list variant of PR was adopted which meant that ultimately it was the party leadership which decided who would be nominated as a candidate for contesting elections thus enabling the party to ‘punish’ rebellious or unpopular MP's.³⁷⁰ On the other hand, a corollary of the

³⁶⁸ Quoted in *Argus*, November 5, 1991. As Joe Slovo, the ANC's principle strategist in the negotiations leading to the country's founding pact and advocate of incorporating power-sharing elements in the constitution (in the short term), made it clear that the ANC was not acting on behalf of a moral demand (*The Independent*, October 30, 1992). For a discussion of the ANC's ‘rational’ behaviour with regard to other consociational features of the country's institutional arrangement, such as the symbolically highly valuable GNU, see Maphai (1998) and Friedmann (1994).

³⁶⁹ Sisk (1993: 87), writing before the agreement on South Africa's electoral system was reached, lists other arguments as to how PR actually served the ANC's interests: “First, the combined regional and national party-list system that the ANC has proposed would obviate the need to delimit any constituencies other than large regions defined by economic development criteria. This is an important feature given the skewed local population distribution resulting from racial segregation under the Group Areas Act, which has since been repealed but leaves an enduring legacy. The very simplicity of PR also serves the interests of the ANC. Not only is PR's straightforward translation of votes into seats easily understood, but it also lends itself to a method of balloting that is easily accessible to the many illiterate voters who form the bulk of ANC support. Each voter has a single vote that can be cast for one and only one party, and parties could be denoted on the ballot by well-known symbols (...). The ANC would have the advantage of campaigning as the leader of the struggle against apartheid rather than as the backer of specific (...) persons or policies (...). Most important of all, however, the ANC's opting for PR bespeaks a concern for the politics of inclusion. The ANC has been sensitive to a crucial aspect of electoral-system choice: the need to consider not only what is desirable, but also what is *possible* given the preferences of others. The ANC knows from its own experience how effectively guerrilla movements can impede a regime's stability to implement its policies. Proportional representation can help avert that prospect, which looms in both left-wing and right-wing versions.”

³⁷⁰ However, whereas in principle the PR list electoral system gives the party leadership a strong instrument at hand to impose discipline on its cadres, the ANC has also (again, strategically) used this device to display its readiness to ‘represent every section of South African society’. In the words of Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: 17): “The ANC has forestalled criticisms of a black bias by drawing up its party list in such a way that 30 per cent of those elected to Parliament come from the coloured, Indian and white communities despite the fact that these communities contributed only six per cent to the overall ANC vote.” As a result the ANC's education

South African electoral system was the, since largely abandoned, prohibition of floor-crossing or the Anti-Defection Clause, a further encouragement to stay within the dominant party in order to 'share the fruits of power'.³⁷¹

The combination of a closed list electoral system of proportional representation and an anti-defection clause was established as a means to protect proportionality of the legislature as decided at elections and to protect multi-party democracy by reinforcing the position of smaller parties in the proportional system. On the other hand, as Welsh (2001) notes on the favourable effect of the anti-defection clause for the ANC in the context of South Africa's emerging one-party-dominant system: "(it) [the Anti-Defection Clause] gives the leadership a tight grip on the compilation of lists and ensures that, once elected, MPs toe the party line or face expulsion from Parliament."³⁷²

However, the recent 'quasi-removal'³⁷³ of anti-defection regulations in South Africa is an even stronger indication of party elites' manipulative efforts to alter the rules of competition: The *rapprochement* between the ANC and NNP in order to overcome the anti-defection clause and to facilitate the forming of an ANC-NNP coalition at the local level and later on at the provincial level, is an overt manifestation of this effort's partisan nature (taking place 8 years after the founding elections!) and which therefore deserves greater attention.

As already mentioned, DP and NNP, in a bid to concentrate their strength, were joining together as the DA³⁷⁴ in 2000 and quite successfully contested the local elections in the same year with a unified electoral list.³⁷⁵ In November 2001 however, the NNP withdrew participation in the electoral arrangement because of factional infighting over appointments, the party's future trajectory and basic values. In reality however, the NNP had already begun to work towards a tacit agreement with the ANC aimed at expanding the ANC's majority at the national level, helping it to acquire absolute majorities in the Western Cape (where an

minister and former member of the party's Constitutional Committee, Kader Asmal, defended the list PR system on the grounds of its incentive to enhance party representativeness: "With the list system, you can have internal coalitions ... so the ANC – if it has sense – could have an Afrikaner white high up on the list, have an English-speaking white high on the list, a Muslim Indian high on the list, a Hindu Indian high on the list, women very high on the list; that allows for representation by people who are representing particular groups in a party. So you don't have a party of your own representing a social, cultural, or ethnic group. ... The list system is more likely to offer representativity." (quoted in Sisk 1993: 89).

³⁷¹ See Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: 16): "Indeed, it [the closed PR list electoral formula] suited the ANC so well that it would have had to invent it if it did not exist."

³⁷² Whereas a consensus on PR, i.e. the principle of proportionality, was reached as early as 1991 and was codified in the 'Declaration of Intent' of the first CODESA bargaining forum, the debate about the concrete shape of the PR electoral system was much more controversial, see Sisk (1993).

³⁷³ Legally, and anti-defection regulation still prevails, floor crossing is only allowed within specified window periods and is based on the requirement that at least 10% of a party's representatives have to 'cross floor' in order to enforce their defection.

³⁷⁴ The third component of the DA was the numerically negligible Federal Alliance (FA).

³⁷⁵ On average the DA won about 22% of the votes in the local elections.

NNP/DP (DA) coalition was ruling) and *KwaZulu-Natal* (where the IFP shared provincial power with the DP/DA) as well as in most Municipal Councils (especially Cape Town) in exchange for participation in ANC-led governments at the local and provincial level.

The problem now was to alter the existing electoral law, which entailed the Anti-Defection Clause, in such a manner that it would allow the floor crossing needed to engineer the desired majorities and coalitions. At the local level, where there was no distinction between DP and NNP representatives anymore, the additional problem was to render it possible for the former NNP representatives of the DA to regain their original party affiliation. Consequently, in 2002, ANC and NNP collaborated to pass legislation to allow floor crossing. Floor crossing at the local level went ahead shortly within the designated window period after the Constitutional Court's judgement (see 2.2.2.) on the legislation's constitutionality was handed down. Parliament redrafted legislation so as to conform to the court's requirements for the provincial and national level and finally, the *Constitution of South Africa Fourth Amendment Act* (RSA 2002e) was passed allowing floor crossing along the same lines for the provincial and national levels as for the local level (except that no MP or MPL can become independent), including an initial 10% threshold-free window period of 15 days opening on March 28 2003.³⁷⁶ However, a legislator may only once 'cross floor' during a legislative period.

The floor crossing period at the local level had already altered the party political landscape tremendously. Altogether 555 councillors (7 %) changed party affiliation and a lot of local governments were toppled, most important the municipality of Cape Town, which went to an ANC/NNP coalition. In terms of 'net gains/losses' the ANC was the definitive winner whereas the DA lost much of its NNP wing (well over half of the DA's councillors) as well as control of or participation in 19 municipal councils. The NNP regained 340 of the 612 former NNP members of the DA plus additional 14 from other parties and gained participation in 21 municipal councils as compared to the 15 once controlled by the DA.

³⁷⁶ The floor crossing legislation entails an additional specification that confines floor crossing to the requirement that at least 10% of a party's representatives have to 'cross floor', but only after an exceptional and out-of-turn first window period immediately following its commencement, during which the 10% requirements for defections or subdivisions will not apply.

Table 18: Control of Municipal Councils in South Africa: gains and losses due to floor crossing in 2002

Party	Gained	Lost
DA	-	15
ANC/NNP coalition	20	-
ANC/NNP/IFP coalition	1	-
ANC/DA coalition	-	3
ANC/DA/IFP coalition	-	1
ANC/IFP coalition	-	1
IFP	-	1
Total	21	21

Table 19: Councillors gained and lost in South Africa due to floor crossing in 2002

Party	Members Gained	Members Lost
ANC	128	16
DA	17	417
NNP	354	0

Source: Independent Election Commission of South Africa: www.elections.org.za

The most important political consequence that the permission of floor crossing at the national and provincial level brought about, was that it “(...) gave the ANC two of the three political domains denied to it by the voters in the 1999 elections, and almost gave it the third” (Myburgh 2003). It gave the ANC a two-third majority in the National Assembly, the proportion needed to amend the constitution, and an absolute majority in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature. In *KwaZulu-Natal*, the ANC would have taken provincial power with an absolute majority as well had it not been for the Constitutional Court, which made five legislators, who had defected to the ANC before the constitutional status of the floor crossing legislation had been settled, lose their seats.

Table 20: Seat-wise consequences of 2003 floor crossing in South Africa at the national level (main parties)

Party	Seats after 1999 Elections	% of Seats	Defectors	After Floor Crossing	% of Seats
ANC	266	66.5	9	275	68.75
DP/DA	38	9.5	8	46	11.5
IFP	34	8.5	(3)	31	7.75
NNP	28	7.0	(8)	20	5.0
UDM	14	3.5	(9)	4	1.0

Table 21: Seat-wise consequences of 2003 floor crossing in South Africa at the regional level (main parties)

	1999 Elections	% of Seats	Defectors	After Floor Crossing	% of Seats
<u>KwaZulu-Natal</u>					
ANC	32	40.0	3	35	43.75
IFP	34	42.5	(2)	32	40.0
DP/DA	7	8.75	(1)	6	7.5
NNP	3	3.75	(1)	2	2.5
<u>Western Cape</u>					
ANC	18	42.86	4	22	52.38
DP/DA	5	11.9	2	7	16.67
NNP	17	40.48	(6)	10	23.81

Source: Independent Election Commission of South Africa: www.elections.org.za

Apart from the party-political realignments taking place, five new parties were formed as a result of the floor crossing window period, thus reinforcing opposition fragmentation even more. The party most heavily affected by defections was the UDM, previously considered to be a serious upcoming contender for the ANC – at least in the latter’s perception. Additionally, recent survey data indicate that there was no significant mid-term realignment of party support and sentiment. This was however, the ANC’s postulation and the Constitutional Court’s argument: that there had been a shift in public opinion (manifest in the split of the DA) and that therefore the floor crossing legislation and the lifting of the 10%

requirement in the initial floor crossing window periods were justified. What is evident from the survey data is that an alienation of voters had taken place, especially in the provinces most affected by defections, the Western Cape and *KwaZulu-Natal*. Here, one third of respondents (32% and 27% respectively) said they would not vote if an election were held tomorrow, a considerably higher figure than in any previous opinion poll (Afrobarometer June 2003).³⁷⁷

Hence, the main arguments of the current debate over floor crossing legislation and its implications revolve around the partisan nature of the ANC's efforts to remove the Anti-Defection Clause. Whilst most observers concede that the Anti-Defection Clause, in combination with the list system of proportional representation, had given the ANC leadership too much power over its public representatives, the floor crossing legislation, by changing the proportionality of the elected parliament, has enabled the ANC to strengthen its dominant position in the political and party system. Moreover, given the 10% requirement and the governing/dominant party's advantage in attracting defectors and preventing its own party members from crossing the floor through state patronage, the floor crossing legislation has made it all the more unlikely that there will be many defections from the ANC to smaller parties.

In the context of one-party-dominance the problem of floor crossing vs. anti-defection legislation has competing implications: in theory, an anti-defection clause serves the dominant party's interests insofar as it reinforces party discipline and coherence. This was, according to some observers (including the bulk of my South African interview partners), the ANC's hidden agenda at the time of devising the country's electoral system.³⁷⁸ However, in practice, floor crossing, combined with a one-party-dominant system, also serves the dominant party. If a one-party-dominant system prevails, the incentive to abandon the dominant party is naturally less attractive than it is to defect from smaller parties. The advantage of the dominant party in terms of rewarding willing defectors is simply much greater than that of smaller (opposition) parties with almost always no chance of power and office. As Engholm and Mazrui (1969) have shown, the combination of floor crossing and one-party-dominance can produce a centripetal effect in a 'bad' sense: massive floor crossing created several African de facto one-party states in the 1960s before their constitutions changed. In this sense, the handling of the floor crossing legislation in South Africa is one of the clearest indications that party elites continuously try to ensure that the institutional arrangement works in their

³⁷⁷ These results and the concomitant indication of disillusionment and apathy among the electorate are confirmed by evidence from another survey (MarkData), see Schlemmer (2003).

³⁷⁸ Normatively, permission of floor crossing and a concomitant loosening of the party's grip over its representatives would be a preferable option in a one-party-dominant context.

favour (in this case, ensuring that the dominant party is able to play out its electoral dominance against opposition parties).³⁷⁹ The ANC, cognisant of the fact that its dominant position would last into the foreseeable future, realised that the advantages of floor crossing and the concomitant politics of defection would by far outweigh that of the anti-defection clause.³⁸⁰

To be clear, and this holds true for both regional contexts, electoral systems or federal arrangements do little to explain one-party-dominance (see also Esping-Andersen: 1990: 57). As institutional devices, consciously engineered or interpreted in a partisan manner, and as incentives however, they can reinforce one-party-dominance if the “ (...) politician of the dominant party (...) makes the appropriate decisions...” (Arian and Barnes 1974: 614). Interestingly and in contrast to what most of the scholarly literature has to say as well as my South African interviewees (except for Steven Friedman), none of my Indian interview partners accorded any significance to the electoral system (or the institutional arrangement as such) in shaping the party system. They all, however, hinted at the importance of societal factors and social forces (see references). This is also – more or less - the case with the 33 representatives from Indian politics, civil service, academia, the judiciary and the media interviewed about the development of the Indian party system by Singh and Saxena (1996). In the South African case, the PR system produced anything but a symmetrically balanced multi-party system reflecting the country’s cleavages (and was anyway prone to manipulation by party elites as one can see from the elaboration above). And it is reasonable to suggest that even the plurality system in India, although disproportionately benefiting the INC (and therefore in the interest of INC constitutional engineers), was not the cause of the specific one-party-dominant configuration of the Indian party system emerging after independence but did only confirm the social trend towards (and electoral advantage of) that party, which was best capable of breaking up the narrow confines of particularistic interests in a divided society

³⁷⁹ Under the current arrangement, for example, the 10% requirement ensures that “whereas a single member of any of the parties with less than ten MPs could defect (...) at least twenty-seven MPs would have to conspire to defect (as a bloc) from the ANC, with all the attendant risk of exposure and expulsion if the attempt were to fail.” (Myburgh 2003: 35).

³⁸⁰ Another (manipulative) determination of the country’s institutional arrangement, although, as such, common to advanced democracies, took place before the 1999 elections when legislation was passed (RSA 1997b) ruling that only those parties would get public funds that could prove a certain amount of popular support through their electoral record, i.e. those parties represented in parliament either at the national or provincial level, unlike in 1994, when public funding was shared among registered parties (for details, see Southall and Wood 1998b) – a regulation to the disadvantage of newly created parties like the UDM (or those having boycotted previous elections). Public funding for the main political parties in 1999, for example, was as follows: ANC (30.897.681 Rand), NNP (10.481.069 R), IFP (5.142.284 R), FF (2.151.086 R), DP (1.689.346 R), PAC (887.938 R); see KAS (1999: 13). Public funding in 1999 totalled to an amount of 53 million Rand, which is only a fraction of the estimated 300-500 millions from private donations to the parties. The ANC is considered to have been by far the biggest beneficiary of these donations (Tshitere 2002: 4).

or, as in the case of the INC, to provide an opportunity for articulation (and accommodation) *and* an overarching identity for these interests.³⁸¹

3.3. Political actors as interventionists and accommodationists

Finally, party elites do act as interventionists and accommodationists through mergers, schisms, party switching, organizational ‘mainstreaming’ and intra-party consensus-building thus changing the organisational balance between dominant party and opposition, reinforcing the dominant party’s organisational strength and advancing the transition from movement to party.³⁸² As Mainwaring (1999: 56) has noted: “Rarely are these actions [party switching, mergers, schisms, C.S.] of politicians responses to below. Although the “electoral connection” (Mayhew 1974) may explain a wide range of politicians’ behavior, in most third-wave democracies it does not explain politician’s decisions to change parties, nor does it explain party mergers and schisms. These strategic decisions can have lasting effects.”

In anticipation of electoral competition and in view of the ‘quality’ of a party’s dominance, party elites have to lay the organisational foundations for a lasting domination of the party system and the national policy agenda.³⁸³ This occurs before the transition to a competitive party democracy or immediately after its introduction and during the process of its consolidation. Two kinds of (organisational) intervention and accommodation are of particular relevance with regard to this study’s focus on one-party-dominance: a) some sort of organisational ‘mainstreaming’ has to take place, which means that the dominant party has to get rid of those elements/political forces that could have been accommodated with relative ease during its time as a movement. At the same time, the dominant party has to craft an organisational structure (including the forging of strategic alliances) that makes it possible to attract support from a broad range of social strata. And b), the basis for a(n) (organisational) balance must be found between the dominant party’s more open, participatory and its more centralised, coherent characteristics. This balance is necessary to manage the tension between

³⁸¹ A recent study on electoral laws and competitive party systems in Africa comes to the conclusion that “(...) in Africa, plurality systems do not produce significant institutionalized opposition and PR does not lead to a multiplication of parties and fragmentation of the opposition, as one would perhaps expect on the basis of the western experience” (Boogards 2000: 189).

³⁸² Nevertheless, the ‘movement character’ of the dominant party or, rather, the ‘blending’ of movement and party characteristics remains one of its main, emotionally appealing, assets. However, in terms of everyday transactional politics, party competition, recruitment and mobilisation, some kind of ‘organisational renewal’ needs to take place right from the beginning in a bid to outdistance possible contenders organisationally.

³⁸³ The opportunistic nature of most cases of party switching or defection seems to fit less in the list of strategic, partisan intervention in the party system or organisational matters of the dominant party. However, as we have seen from the South African case, even party switching is not beyond partisan engineering. It has to be seen as a corollary of the dominant party’s carefully crafted organisational advantage and therefore is of special relevance in a context of one-party-dominance as is further elaborated in the section on India below.

the dominant party's indispensable internal pluralism (of interests) or, for that matter, its catch-all character, and its more pragmatic, *realpolitik* and strategically inspired calculus of (party) coherence and (governmental) authority, based on the implications of the electoral process.³⁸⁴ This balance can be described further as involving i) the crucial relationship between the party's organisational and governmental wing and ii), the careful maintenance of an equilibrium between 'party' and 'movement' characteristics.

In India, some sort of 'purification' of the nationalist movement represented through the INC had set in already in the 1930's. As stated in 2.1.1., the movement's leadership expelled the right-wing, nationalist 'Hindu Mahasabha', till this time an organised group within the INC, on the grounds of communalism and later on, the Communists, following their support of the British war effort and opposition to the INC's 'Quit India' resolution (Kothari 1994: 158, see also 2.1.1.). Even more serious steps were taken towards 'organisational mainstreaming' in 1948, just after independence, when party organiser and stalwart Patel persuaded the Working Committee to amend the party's constitution in order to forbid the existence of other parties within the INC, with a separate membership, constitution and programme, culminating in the withdrawal of the Congress Socialist Party (Weiner 1967: 40).³⁸⁵ The then party president Pattabhi Sitaramayya address to the party's fifty-fifth annual session at Jaipur in December 1948 clearly reflects the rationale of this bold move towards a more orthodox political party³⁸⁶:

³⁸⁴ Indeed, the need for a balance between 'interventionism' (for the sake of coherence) and 'accommodation' (for the sake of making the party attractive to a broad spectrum of societal interests) has to be considered as pivotal in the context of a system of one-party-dominance. As Graves (1976: 878) notes with regard to the Congress system: "(...) the most crucial point of tension within this party system lay between increasing structural fragmentation and the capacity to contain it within manageable limits through consensual strategies. A major characteristic of predominant party systems is the existence of a centrist party which, as it would seem, is engaged in fulfilling that role. Indeed, a basic feature of the Indian party system was that phenomenon of Congress consensus." And Brass (1984: 78), on the basis of empirical evidence from a survey of governmental stability, internal factionalism and intra-party competition in the Indian states between 1962 and 1967, goes even further by declaring that "(...) the political decay of a dominant party does not depend so much upon external factors in its environment, such as political participation and competitiveness, as upon internal factors relating to party organization and party leadership." In that sense, the crucial moment for the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance is the one when the party organisation develops a capacity to overcome Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy', following which the "(...) preponderant elements of the movement, the men who lead and nourish it, end by undergoing a gradual detachment from the masses, and are attracted within the orbit of the "political class"" (Michels 1959: 392).

³⁸⁵ Not all of the Congress socialists left the INC, a fact that, later on, gave the party the opportunity to persuade socialist party politicians to return to the (socialist) 'mother party' and to engineer splits within the socialist party spectrum.

³⁸⁶ Three years later another faction within the INC underwent a similar fate. The Democratic Front, organised by former general secretary and failed candidate for the party presidency, Kripalani, was a formation critical of the party's attitude towards the movement's traditional goals and which wanted to 'purify' the party. On the initiative of then party president Tandon, who later resigned under pressure from Nehru was forced to dissolve itself (Kochanek 1968: 35 f.).

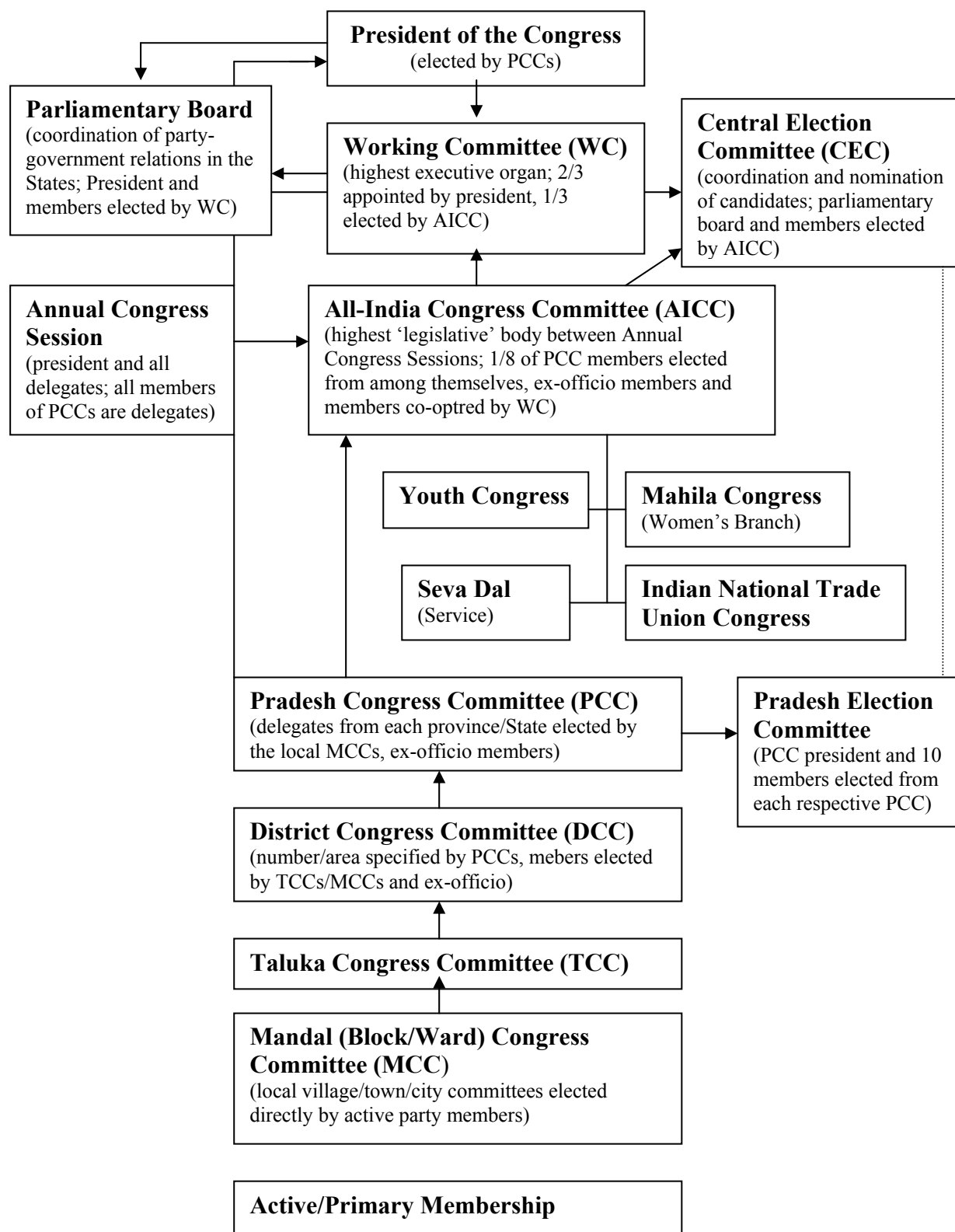
“(…) no school of thought however patriotic its votaries, and however up-lifting its ideals, can remain within an organization and carry on propaganda against its tenets and its policy (…). This knocked down the very basis of the approach and the attitude of the Congress in regard to its political problem and a natural result was a separation of socialist friends from the Congress. It is inevitable that during periods of transition viewpoints differ, but an undue emphasis on them is apt to promote schisms where concerted thought ought to hold all groups together. Institutions having their own roll of membership, their own constitutions and programmes have a tendency to drift from parent institutions. The Kisan [peasant, C.S.] organizations while free to pursue their occupational problems, cannot while their leaders are in the Congress Executives and their links are with the Congress, function as a parallel body to the Congress without weakening the latter. When we realize the magnificent work before the Congress, we readily admit that for its achievement it must first consolidate and purify itself.” (quoted in Zaidi 1981a: 223-224).

The INC under Gandhi's stewardship was extremely successful in mobilising India's diverse interest groups and social strata under the banner of the nationalist movement, basically by combining institutional co-operation with the colonial rulers and means of mass protest and direct action (see 2.1.1.). The time however, had come to lay the foundations for more effective organisation both at the level of the 'party in government' and of the 'party in the electorate' without losing sight of the party's broad social base and coalitional character.³⁸⁷ Patel's ideal of a more tightly-knit body of activists forming a strong disciplined political party would probably have been self-destructive. However, that the INC had developed a mass base before independence could not conceal the fact that, at least at the level of the 'party in the electorate' or, for that matter, at the district level and below, there were no adequate organisational resources to deal with party organisational matters other than those grouped around electoral competition.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Gandhi was much more sceptical when it came to making a shift from nationalist movement to political party immediately after independence. On the eve of his assassination, he argued even for the dissolution of the INC as a political organisation. Were it not for the pragmatic and passionate efforts of Patel and later Nehru to "tame the nationalist movement" (Weiner 1968: 36) and to build-up a viable political organisation, one could speculate whether the INC would have been able to achieve or maintain a dominant position in Indian politics for so many a years.

³⁸⁸ For the difficulties of the INC in developing an effective organisation in the pre-independence era, see Low (1988); for the post-independence era see (Chhibber 1999: 75-78) and Franda (1962).

Figure 7: Basic (classic) structural chart of the INC



Source: adapted from Kochanek (1968: appendices I and II), Weiner (1967: 41), Björkman (1987: 53), Björkman and Mathur (1996: 227) and INC (2000).

Note: Size of party organs is not given because of varying membership base due to various (party) constitutional amendments.

There was at hand however, an elaborate, pyramidal organisational structure of elective party bodies for national-decision-making (fig. 7), whose origins can be traced back to the aegis of Gandhi, beginning in 1920, and which facilitated the development of a functional form of ‘federalism’ within the party’s structure roughly corresponding to the country’s administrative units.³⁸⁹ Thus, within the individual States, the primary units – the block (*mandal*), town and ward Congress committees – were eventually brought together under several State-level Pradesh Congress Committees (PCC).³⁹⁰ These in turn, elected 1/8 of their members to represent the respective State at the All-India-Congress-Committee (AICC), which to some extent was the national ‘legislature’ of the party. All members of the PCCs took part in the Annual Session, which constituted the electoral college for the election of the party president. The AICC delegated most of the national decision-making to the Working Committee (WC), which together with the Parliamentary board, responsible for the coordination of party-government relations at the State level, and the Congress Election Committee (CEC), responsible for the selection of candidates for national and State assembly elections, formed the so called ‘high command’ of the party, the most decisive locus of power within the party’s national decision-making process.³⁹¹

As a result the national organisation was built on a formally extensive field structure. These lines of communication and responsibility were supported by various auxiliaries, such as the Youth Congress or the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), which were represented on recommendation of the WC at most of the party’s organisational levels.

Although there was a discernible centralist element inherent in this structure³⁹², internally the Congress organisation was largely federal and decentralised, incorporating various opportunities for debate and intra-party elections until 1972. As Kochanek, on the basis of probably the most elaborate examination of the INC organisation of that time, concludes: “Though the leadership did indeed dominate the decision-making levels of the party, methods were elaborated and multiplied whereby a highly diversified mass membership could be consulted on policy and organizational issues” (Kochanek 1968: xx). Thus, party interests from below (regarding, for example, the nomination of candidates for public office) could be accommodated with relative ease, but intervention or reconciliation from above prevailed

³⁸⁹ With the exception that the INC’s provincial units were organised along linguistic lines to guarantee effective communication with the people, a fact that proved to be of advantage when the States were reorganised along linguistic lines as well.

³⁹⁰ In fact, the PCC members, known as ‘delegates’ were elected from single-member constituencies of about 100.000 people at the block-level, not from the intermediate *taluka* or district units.

³⁹¹ The PCCs exercised a similar focal role at the regional level.

³⁹² Manifest in the predominance of government members in the WC, the supremacy of the governmental wing in the determination of national policies and the de facto subordination of the party president to the prime minister after a short period wherein Nehru held both offices.

when it was in the ‘national interest’ or when lower level interest articulation was too conflict-ridden.

With Patel’s death and against the backdrop of Nehru’s towering leadership, the ‘open umbrella image’ of the party, that had characterised much of the pre-independence movement’s history, once again gained impetus. This time though it was less based on emotional appeal and more on the promise of patronage³⁹³, thus gradually leading towards an increasingly fragile, first equilibrium of the party’s post-independence organisational history: “(...) the combination (...) of a capacious appeal and a distinctive, autonomous, purposeful party life” (Morris-Jones 1978: 252) or, in other words, a balance between the party’s ‘movement’ and ‘party’ characteristics. In the context of a divided society this proved to be essential in the attempt to synchronise the working of the ‘party in government’ and the ‘party in electorate’ and to the party’s capacity in holding together its socially heterogeneous support base. The tension inherent in this balance was gradually resolved by organising the party at the field level into an adjunct of the state (in a manner however, that provided room for the expression of diverse social identities), and by eventually giving shape to the rather peculiar, less carefully balanced second organisational equilibrium of INC dominance, the one between the organisational and the governmental wing of the party. After Nehru’s death this was increasingly played out in the area of centre-States relations, gradually opening the door to the regionalisation of the Indian party system.

The former manifested itself in a strong executive bias of the party as mentioned above and in an increasing assertion or, for that matter, accommodation of local and regional identities.³⁹⁴ As Gray (1971: 30) remarks, the party at the field level resembled to a great extent Duverger’s description of the ‘caucus-type’ of a political party on a smaller scale:

“Their activity is entirely directed towards elections and parliamentary alliances, it has a seasonal character, the framework of the administration is embryonic: on the whole

³⁹³ As Sadiq Ali (1959: 6) notes retrospectively of the 1957 elections: “(...) [party] organisation [at the lower level, C. S.] (...) was weak, loose and riven by group politics (...) The Congress has of course always been a mass party but hitherto its mass character has been more on the emotional side. The organizational framework was there but it was far from adequate to the needs of the people and the pressures of democracy. The Congress has now to turn its attention to its organizational weakness at the foundational level.”

³⁹⁴ Following Khator (1999: 348), the “(...) Nehru administration consciously designed a two-pronged strategy for the party government partnership. Under this strategy, the government provided the nexus for forging national unity, while the Congress offered the place for groups (ethnic or otherwise) to express their diversity. In the 1950s-60s, when national leaders asked the people to identify themselves as “*Bhartiyas*” (Indians), party leaders encouraged them to assert themselves as *Tamils*, or *Bengali*, or *Maharashtriyans*. The Congress not only sustained, but promoted, regionalism among groups by letting the scuffle for power as regionalists within the party. Social complexities made the Congress a necessary feature of the political system, just as they ensured that the Congress would remain a broad coalition of interests.”

their leadership is in the hands of their parliamentary representatives, and is very markedly individual in form: real power in them belongs to a particular group revolving round a parliamentary leader, and the life of party stems from rivalry amongst such small groups The party is concerned only with political questions: doctrine and ideological problems play a very small part in its life and membership is generally based upon interest or habit." (Duverger 1954: 18)

The latter, monitored by an intricate array of party-government intermediaries and power brokers, ensured executive dominance while, at the same time, permitting a considerable amount of autonomy for party bodies dealing with the more mundane task of 'getting the vote'. In other words, "(...) the parliamentary wing publicly identified itself with the basic values of secularism, bureaucracy planning, nonalignment and egalitarianism which formed the basis of the modern state. The organisational wing acted as the intermediary between the state and the society, modifying the 'primordial' to suit the 'modern' and adapting modern institutions to the norms of a traditional society" (Mitra 1990b: 85). Thus, both equilibria succeeded in establishing some sort of a "two-tier political agenda – a national agenda with issues of stability and unity, and a state/local agenda with issues of self assertion and diversity" (Khator 1999: 349), the latter more often a euphemism for patronage-based office and power-seeking. In terms of partisan effectiveness, this dual process practically guaranteed INC dominance at the national level. In terms of state-society interaction it allowed for an amalgamation of modernist principles and the structural features of a still largely traditional society.³⁹⁵ In addition, continued attempts at 'revitalising' the organisational structures characterised the party from the mid-1950s onwards. They reflected the organisational flexibility of the party necessary to adapt itself to a changing environment and to prevent a potential rigidification of detrimental (oligarchic) practices and tendencies within the party (Morris-Jones 1967). The most prominent example of these attempts at 'revitalising' was of course the 'Kamaraj Plan' of 1963, unique in any party's history, that tried to reverse the executive bias in party-government relationships whereby "(...) leading Congressmen who are in Government should voluntarily relinquish their ministerial posts and offer themselves for fulfilling full-time organizational work" (INC 1963: 12-14), thus preventing (and anticipating) the harms that a long time in power can do to a party's organisation. As a result

³⁹⁵ Khan (1989: 63) offers a more picturesque portrayal of the INC that nevertheless grasps the logic of its organisational manifestation: "The Congress is the counterpart of Hinduism in political culture. Like Hinduism it is amorphous, resilient, hospitable to diverse strands of dogma and interpretation, non-rejectionist, tolerant and accommodating, capable of internalizing dissent, and seeking to reconcile the irreconcilable. And like Hinduism it is multi-level and multi-structured, including the sublime and the ridiculous. India is a classic de-polarised polity (...) This given dominant ethos of India has been utilised by the Congress, both by accident and design."

six top-ranking central government ministers and six chief ministers resigned. The rationale of the Kamaraj-plan is clearly reflected in an AICC statement at Jaipur in October 1963:

“The K.P. has, no doubt, provided a new approach for revitalising the organisation. We must now take early and adequate steps for spreading the message of the Congress more vigorously and cultivating the largest possible popular base for the party. In the first phase, we should, as Congressmen, compose and forget our quarrels and differences and subject ourselves, as in the course of the freedom struggle, to the discipline of the organisation in letter and spirit. As Congressmen wedded to a common struggle it does not behove us to pull in different directions. Fissiparous tendencies demonstrating themselves in groupism and factionalism in the organisation must be put down promptly and with a heavy hand.” (quoted in Zaidi 1985: 339)

Finally, in terms of organisation, strictly for electoral competition, and in terms of membership, the hiatus between the INC and the opposition parties was extraordinary. The clearest indication of this is the fact that up to 1971 the number of candidates contesting *Lok Sabha* elections for the INC exceeded the number of candidates of any of the opposition parties by more than 90%³⁹⁶. A less appropriate measure, because of lack of reliability, is the membership figures for the main parties during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India.

Table 22: Party membership of main Indian parties, 1957-61³⁹⁷

INC					
Year	Primary members	Active members	PSP	CPI	Jana Sangh
1957	4.509.641	68.015	141.651	125.000	74.863
1958	10.087.190	133.964	95.677	218.532	209.702
1959	2.664.023	57.770	274.752	178.718	202.937
1960	4.791.736	88.279	251.092	121.823	215.370
1961	9.458.005	138.518	340.992	-	274.907

Source: Krishna (1967: 39), Sadasivan (1977: 291 f.) and Hartmann (1971: 145).

Although the reliability of membership figures for Indian parties is doubtful, these figures at least indicate the substantive gap between the INC and opposition parties.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Based on figures given in: Government of India (various years). *Statistical Abstract India*.

³⁹⁷ These years have been selected for they were the only ones, for which membership figures were available for all the main parties. The Swatantra Party ‘claimed’ to have 336.000 members in 1960 (Krishna 1967: 38).

Given the above, the principal threat to the electoral ascendancy and continued electoral dominance of the INC came from its own internal factional disputes and infighting. However, and similar to the ANC, the INC was the net gainer of defections during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India and, as long as it dominated executive office, at practically all levels (Kashyap 1974: 16).³⁹⁹ When there were first signs of electoral weakness after 1967 and it became clear that in the States at least, there was a real chance of toppling INC-governments thus gaining access to state office and patronage, more defectors flowed out of the INC than in.⁴⁰⁰

As long as the INC was able to uphold its intricate structure of internal pluralism, ideological pragmatism, organisational coherence and factional balance, defections represented no serious problem. It is therefore no wonder that defections grew to serious proportions when India's party system experienced the first traces of electoral uncertainty, when the "(...) emergence of a 'market type' polity" (Morris-Jones 1978: 146) set in and the (organisational) quality of INC dominance changed.⁴⁰¹ From then on the politics of defection gained momentum culminating in the period of unstable coalition politics that has characterised the Indian party system for nearly 20 years now.⁴⁰²

However, the INC's 'openness' and its internal factional disputes were a necessary quality of the party's dominance even before 1967 and helped to accommodate its socially diverse support base. Since the INC was the only party that could guarantee access to state resources, most defectors eventually returned to the party anyway. That INC politicians were

³⁹⁸ One could argue that the number of active INC members (the distinction between active and primary members was made shortly after independence to open up the party to a vast number of affiliates while retaining a core of select cadres) was often less than those of opposition parties (Chhibber 1999: 77). However, at election time, the primary members were to a large part responsible for campaigning (that is why INC membership appears to be tied to elections, compare the figures for the respective election years in table 22 above).

³⁹⁹ In the period 1957-1967 the INC had a net 'gain' of defectors of 285 as compared to a net 'loss' of 21 for the Jana Sangh, 80 for the Swatantra Party, 25 for the SP/SSP, 102 for the PSP and 11 for the CPI. In the one-year period of 1967-1968 the INC 'lost' 36 defectors (Kashyap 1974: 16).

⁴⁰⁰ In an interesting parallel to the South African case, though reversed, the introduction of anti-defection regulations by Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 has been criticised on grounds that it was hurriedly enacted without public debate and opposition consultation (Gehlot 1991: 330) and primarily designed in a bid to "erect the kind of walls around the ruling party that its organization had had the strength to generate in the 1960s, but which had wasted away when the organization decayed after 1969" (Manor 1988:85).

⁴⁰¹ The 'ideological pragmatism' of the INC therefore has to be seen as rather ambivalent. As Singh (1981: 28) notes on INC pragmatism: "While pragmatism of its leaders helps the predominant party to make, with relative ease, compromise on policies and tactics, it works as a double-edged sword. For if the loyalty of party activists to the party organization comes under serious strain in times of crisis (e.g., loss of predominance in electoral competition), members do not feel constrained by the ideological bonds to the party, at any rate to the same extent as members of more doctrinaire parties. Consequently, in such circumstances the party becomes vulnerable to massive defections and schisms (...)." In the same vein, Manor (1988: 70) comes to the conclusion that "(...) the highly disciplined, ideologically oriented parties of the Marxist left and the Hindu chauvinist right remained almost entirely immune to this new trend [of defections after 1967]."

⁴⁰² In this light, the increase or continuation of defections after 1985 – despite the introduction of the anti-defection law – is an indication that the party organisation of the INC had never regained its strength after the decay in 1967/69 and confirms the exceptionalism of Rajiv Gandhi's electoral victory as noted by most observers.

characterised by a relatively weak sense of party loyalty is visible from the fact that a substantial number of them, which had failed to secure a party ticket, contested elections against the official nominees. Thus, in 1962 for example, “(...) 884 INC members were suspended or expelled for contesting elections against official nominees” (Chhibber 1999: 71).

In sum, as Mitra (1994: 166) recapitulates the effective process of intra-party interventionism and accommodation during the period of the Congress system: “Thus, throughout the early decades after Independence, Congress leaders demonstrated tremendous political skill in achieving a national organization that was sensitive to local variations, did its job in terms of getting the vote out at election time, maintained links with the population between elections, but nevertheless left ultimate policy-making to the prime minister as the leader of the parliamentary wing.”

In South Africa, the three distinct organisational entities that had shaped the ANC movement during last century’s struggle against apartheid, had to be brought together or rather, ‘mainstreamed’, in order to trigger the ANC’s ‘organisational rebirth’ and to evolve from movement to party: a) an exile wing based in Lusaka, neighbouring countries and in European capitals comprising, on the one hand, of a political cadre highly centralised and bureaucratic, and, on the other hand, of a military (guerrilla) branch, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, with an estimated membership base of about 7.000; b) an internal wing or mass movement of grassroots organisations, township civics and trade unions grouped around the loosely structured UDF, (and the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), a formation that in 1989 brought together trade unions, the UDF and certain churches in a defiance campaign) and the disciplined, relatively well-organised COSATU respectively; and finally c) the small but morally authoritative and highly influential group of leaders released from prison, the so-called ‘Robben-Islanders’ centred around Mandela (Ottaway 1991: 69 f.).

Despite leadership struggles over power and office the ANC was also cognisant of the fact that to survive as a party, it had to retain the ‘best’ or most useful from all these elements and to abandon those features it no longer needed or, which could have even been detrimental to its electoral and governmental prospects, a strategy, which finally proved advantageous.

As a result *Umkhonto* had to be disbanded for to be credible a democratic political party cannot possess a military wing. The suspension of the armed struggle in 1990 and the agreement to a fusion of *Umkhonto* and the South African Defence Forces (SADF) in the form of a joint national army in 1992, initiated the separation of the ANC and its armed wing.

The relationship of the ANC to civil society organisations was more ambiguous. On the one hand, UDF structures were obviously too participatory, decentralised and often inchoate, to guarantee coherent and effective decision-making at this critical juncture and to harmonise with the more top-down leadership style of the National Executive Committee (NEC), formally the party's main policy-making body⁴⁰³. On the other hand, as a result of the ANC's activist legacy, the organisations of civil society, especially the township civics, were considered to be the 'essence' of democratic participation in society, a necessary bond between party leadership and functionaries and 'what is going on' at the grassroots societal level. Nevertheless, while many of its cadres were nominated in its own leadership structure, the ANC sidelined and ignored the UDF resulting in the latter choosing "(...) to go into voluntary liquidation in 1991" (Dube 2000: 106).

In consequence to the ANC's double ambition of effectively seizing and managing power and to represent society, the party's stance towards civil society organisations remains ambivalent to this date. The South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO), to some extent a successor of the UDF, and the MDM are formally closely allied to the ANC, and the party leadership always emphasises the importance of party-civil society relations and the need to broaden co-operation with civil society organisations, rhetorically at least.⁴⁰⁴ In reality however, active participation of civil society and community organisations in decision-making remains shallow unlike during the more consultative approach in the negotiation period, when the popular legitimacy and mobilisational capacity of these organisations was 'helpful'. Civil society organisations shall for example be incorporated in decision-making through the corporatist NEDLAC bargaining forum.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰³ In this regard, Ottaway (1991: 73) tentatively refers to the tensions between the ANC's external and internal wing and the power ambitions of the former that probably led to the conclusion that to "(...) base the new A.N.C. on the U.D.F. structures risked marginalising the exiled leadership."

⁴⁰⁴ President Mbeki made this clear in his address to the ANC's 51st National Conference, December 2002, in Stellenbosch when he stated: "The matter of the revitalisation of the mass democratic movement (MDM), and the improvement of our links with the non-governmental development community, or the so-called civil society organisations (CSO), also relates to the need for us not to allow the emergence and consolidation of a rift between genuine mass and transformation organisations and our organisation. We must admit that some of the negative developments with regard to both these sectors have arisen from our own failure to maintain the necessary continuous contact with them as well as the weakened participation of our members in these various structures. We have to attend to this deficiency" (Address of the President, Thabo Mbeki, at the opening of the 51st National Conference of the African National Congress, Stellenbosch, 16 December 2002). Consequently, the conference incorporated in its resolutions the following points: "We must also develop a programme to establish relationships with progressive NGOs and civil society structures in order to mobilise them into a broad movement for transformation. ANC cadres at all levels should participate in civil society structures. Conference reaffirmed the important role of SANCO in advancing the objectives of people-centred development and called on ANC structures to strengthen our relationship with SANCO at all levels" (ANC 2003a and 2003b: 3).

⁴⁰⁵ Despite civil society representation in NEDLAC which was hailed by some as establishing "a unique form of quadri-partism", community organisations are only present in one of NEDLAC's four chambers (development) with tripartite representation in all of the four chambers (labour market, trade and industry, public finance), see Report on 'Civil society and the State in South Africa: past legacies, present realities, and future prospects' of

The case was different with regards to the ANC's relationship with COSATU. The ANC was well aware that to re-establish itself inside South Africa and to effectively position itself in the negotiation process and the 1994 elections, it had to rely on the organisational as well as mobilisational capacity of COSATU. Indeed COSATU contributed to the democratic transition and the forging and evolution of the tripartite alliance in a substantial way (Webster 2001: 84). As a mass-based organisation with substantive 'blackmail-potential' it provided the ANC with the means of mass action (strikes, 'stay-aways') and mobilisation to break deadlocks at important moments and in the securing of electoral support. Its extensive infrastructure and trained personnel provided the ANC with the ability and capacity to formulate positions on the future institutional shape of the country (new constitution, NEDLAC) and in relevant policy-fields, its contribution was especially relevant in economic policy-making where it initiated and advocated the RDP at a time when the "(...) ANC came under increasing pressure to declare its economic policies in some detail" (Simkins 1998: 110). Finally, its involvement in the alliance put a stamp of popular legitimacy on the elite-focused negotiation process later on, providing the ANC with popular credibility especially among its core electorate of unionised African workers as represented by COSATU.

COSATU, on the other hand, increasingly realised that the most feasible way to retain its influence over governmental policy-making in an era of neo-liberal globalisation where labour is more and more marginalised, was to remain in the alliance and act as a latent threat to the government if policy-making strayed too far from its original redistributive and labour-friendly intentions. However, with the government's economic policy reversal from RDP to GEAR and an ANC overtly asserting its hegemony over the alliance, the latent threat more often turns into open debate and active opposition. As such, the ANC-COSATU alliance, while still one of mutual benefit and dependence, has become more confrontationist as the realities of power and office take effect.

A similar relationship, though one based on yet different premises, exists between the ANC and the SACP. The SACP's prominent role in the struggle against apartheid and in the negotiation process (especially then party leader, Joe Slovo's, initiative for an agreement to the 'sunset clauses', stipulating security measures for the white employees in the civil service, the army and the police, when a negotiated settlement seemed to be out of reach, and then general secretary, Chris Hani's, mobilisation of support for alliance positions) contributed to the party's initially prominent role within the alliance. As long as the vagaries of electoral competition and alliance-building remained high on the agenda the ANC was in need of the

the 'Community Agency for Social Equity' (CASE) and the 'South African National NGO Coalition' (SANGOCO), p. 34, available at: www.case.org.za/htm/civilsaf.htm.

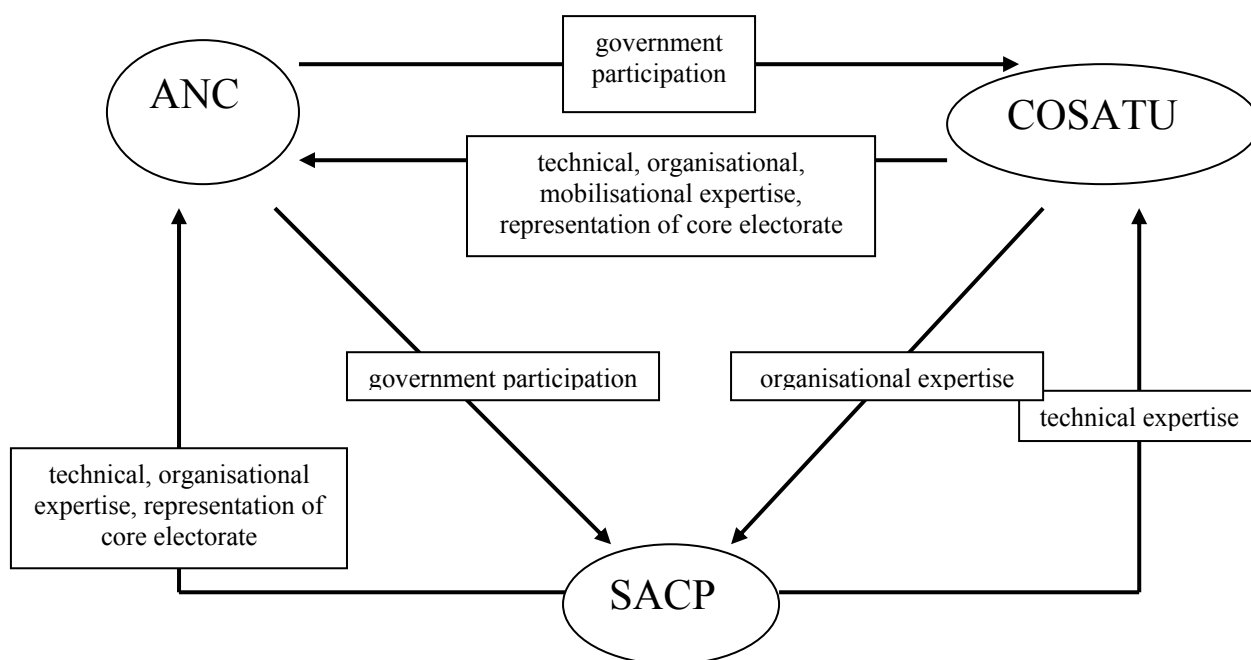
SACP's technical expertise, support among the urban working class and moral authority of some of its leaders. The ANC however, showed a remarkable neglect of the SACP's core ideological policy positions after its subsequent massive electoral successes in 1994 and 1999, again highlighted by the adoption of the neo-liberal GEAR programme as the government's macro-economic policy. Since the SACP does not have a mass base comparable to COSATU's, it is in an even weaker position vis-à-vis the ANC. Its long-term viability as a completely independent organisation is to be doubted and, as a result, there is a strong incentive to stay within the alliance.

The 'brain drain' of SACP and COSATU key leaders into government positions (as well as their placement on ANC electoral lists and their election to the NEC) and a continuing high degree of overlapping or dual memberships in the upper echelons of all three organisations, add to the perception that in order to stay in power and to get through a minimum of labour and socialist interests, the SACP and, to a lesser extent COSATU, will continue to discipline the party and to moderate their position in the face of growing oppositional activism from the rank and file (McKinley 2001: 75).⁴⁰⁶

In conclusion, it can be emphasised that the tripartite alliance has laid the organisational foundation (and remains the organisational basis) for the ANC's continued electoral, governmental and discursive dominance. It has been therefore an essential, elite-engineered 'merger' to achieve dominance. The symbiotic and synergetic coherence of the alliance is depicted in figure 8 below. This chart profits from the interview with Ebrahim Fakir, Parliamentary Researcher at IDASA and R.W. Johnson from the Helen Suzman Foundation (see references).

⁴⁰⁶ The recent *rapprochement* between the ANC and the IFP, the latter being part of government without a need for the ANC as the majority party to share governmental power after the 1999 elections, is ample evidence that the ANC is looking for potential coalition partners beyond the margins of the tripartite alliance, a fact that puts the SACP and COSATU under even greater pressure to give in to the ANC's claim to leadership.

Figure 8: The tripartite alliance's symbiotic and synergetic coherence during the 1990's



In terms of the ANC's internal, organisational-factional relationships, the 50th National Conference in Mafikeng, December 1997, was to some extent, a turning point for it symbolised a shift in relative power relations within the party and, represents a key moment in the organisational consolidation of the party (see also figure 9 below).⁴⁰⁷ The early and mid-1990's, the heyday of (euphoria about) the democratic transition and dismantling of apartheid, the party's organisational structure witnessed a predominance of the 'old guard', the morally authoritative 'Robben-Islanders', centred around Mandela, and the more populist among MDM activists like the Women's League president, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, and an approach to party-decision-making that was participatory and highly consultative. The Mafikeng Conference brought the exile wing around Mbeki and the less populist of the MDM activists to the fore, inaugurating a new leadership style that left little room for debate about the election of candidates and discussion of policies (Christianson 1998).⁴⁰⁸ The outcome of

⁴⁰⁷ The National Conference is the party's supreme ruling and controlling body and consists mainly of elected delegates representing branches in proportion to paid-up membership. It elects the party leadership (the six highest offices) and the NEC, the highest organ between conferences. The NEC itself elects the National Working Committee (NWC), the body responsible for party matters meeting on a more regular basis. The NEC appoints the Policy Department and a series of sub-committees all dealing with the drafting of policy proposals and the evaluation of existing policies; it may also convene a National General Council (NGC) to review the party's policies and programmes. The Women's League and the Youth League are autonomous bodies within the overall ANC structure and represented in all main party bodies through ex-officio membership. The structure applying to the national level is more or less reproduced at the provincial and branch level; a province is divided into several regions for the sake of administrative efficiency.

⁴⁰⁸ However, while the elections of the party's executive at the Mafikeng conference was a rather 'engineered' affair, the rank and file also proved to have a taste for independence and dissent by choosing candidates that did not belong to Mbeki's inner circle, but were more popular among the delegates, such as, Patrick Lekota for the office of National Chairman (*Saturday Star*, December 20, 1997).

the exiles⁴⁰⁹ ascendancy within the ANC structure was an increasing centralisation of authority⁴¹⁰, neglect of the alliance's consultative mechanisms, growing tensions between the party's governmental and organisational wing and an increasingly technocratic approach to policy-making superseding the more participatory policy-determination practices of the pre-1994 period (Lodge 1999a). A case in point is the launching and adoption of GEAR that took place in the run-up to the Mafikeng Conference. Whereas the formulation and adoption of the RDP programme was largely a consultative process, the drafting of GEAR took place in government departments (most notably, the Ministry of Finance) and the NEC sub-committee on economic transformation, thus bypassing the NEC and NWC as the ANC's most representative bodies (the NEC did not see the programme until after its adoption by the government) and reinforcing executive dominance over the party's policy-determination processes (Lodge 1999a: 24). The alliance partners were also involved only at a very late stage⁴¹¹ and the National Conference delegates finally ratified the programme without substantial debate after the neo-liberal posture of the document had been buttressed with harsh socialist rhetoric, especially apparent in Mandela's aggressive presidential address, and a "(...) language in the summit and commission report [that] gave plenty of room for manoeuvre in the future" (ibid. 29). Although the shift of *locus* in policy formation from party organisation to government departments, as evident in the genesis of GEAR, may accord with the requirements of policy decisions in a highly complex industrialising society (and may also accord with Michel's inevitable 'iron law of oligarchy')⁴¹², the top-down leadership style and the emphasis on discipline that is accompanying this shift is also an indication that the party is trying to speed-up the process of transforming a movement into a governing party. However, the extent of hierarchical control within the ANC has to be carefully balanced with the scope

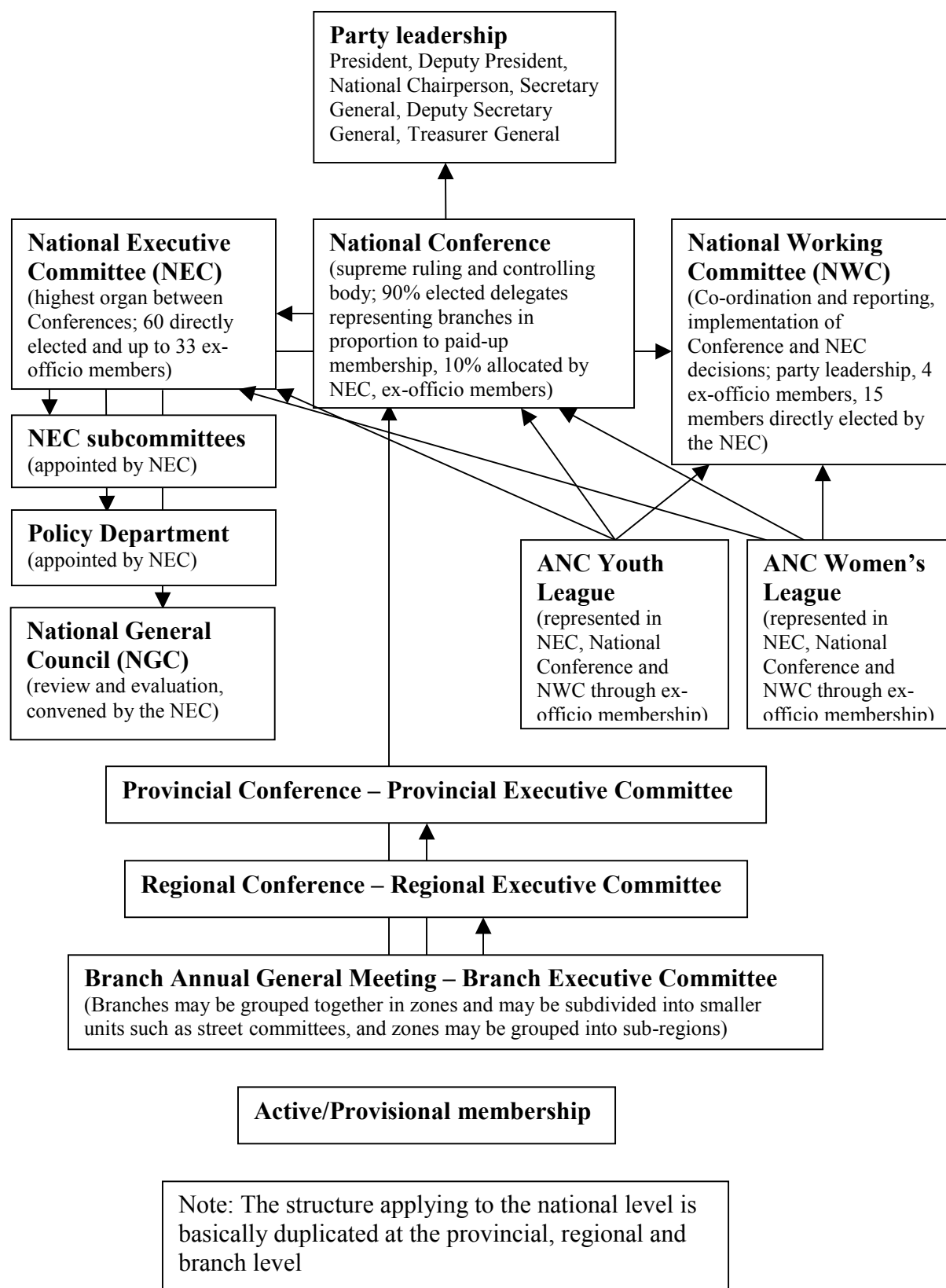
⁴⁰⁹ The term 'exiles' is used here (referring to political discourse in South Africa) as a label to describe those more pragmatic cadres loyal to Mbeki ('progressive nationalists') as opposed to the (socialist) ideologues ('internationalists') of the ANC's and SACP's leadership circles. Not all of the so-called 'exiles' have an exile background.

⁴¹⁰ As most overtly manifest in the imposition of party discipline and choice on leadership vacancies at the provincial level as well as in reducing the degree of power-sharing with the provinces.

⁴¹¹ The neglect of alliance consultative arrangements is illustrated by the following quote from a COSATU programmatic statement: "Since the elections (...) Government positions on privatisation and GEAR have been presented to the Alliance as a *fait accompli*. This was a clear case of policy driven by panic. No one from the movement, except some in Government, was involved in its formulation (...) the locus of decision-making on key political issues has not been in the Alliance structures but in individual ministries. The Alliance engages only with the product" (COSATU 1997: 22).

⁴¹² Indeed, the party's policy-determination arrangements are rather complex and the sheer size of the party's main representative bodies obviates an effective involvement in policy-making.

Figure 9: Basic organisational structure of the ANC



Source: Constitution of the African National Congress as amended by and adopted at the 50th National Conference, December 1997

of dissent and participatory aspirations prevalent within its rank and file and alliance partners, especially since Mandela has given up his post as president and his charisma and capacity as reconciliator are no longer available to the party leadership. So far, the balance still holds, but grows increasingly fragile. To some extent, the 2002 National Conference in Stellenbosch was proof of the party leadership's awareness of the growing distance between it and the party's activist support base. Among the resolutions was a reference to the need for 'building internal democracy and discipline' that read as follows:

"All structures of the movement must therefore be democratic, accountable and transparent. Open debate and discussion must be encouraged within our structures and members of the ANC must experience our democratic traditions through being active participants in all deliberations, decisions and activities. Therefore, all members will recognize that the culture of democracy within the movement provides no room for members or leaders to engage in criticism outside of ANC structures" (ANC 2003: 3).⁴¹³

One can deduce from the foregoing that, against conventional academic wisdom and party system theory, the role that party agentive factors play in the genesis and structuring of the two party systems under examination is clearly a crucial explanatory factor when it comes to the question of how a distinct party system is shaped and is much more valuable than any kind of structural or institutional determinism. In the two cases it was or is basically, the dominant parties' initiative, in terms of political actors and party leaders acting as 'inventors' of a historical project, as determinant agents of institutional arrangements and as interventionists and accommodationists with regard to the party organisation, that accounts for a great deal of the formation of a system of one-party-dominance. Neither social cleavage theory, nor institutional determinism allow enough room for manoeuvre for party elites and political actors, or, in other words, they do not give strictly political factors and party agency the explanatory power they deserve within party system theory, at least in the context of changing

⁴¹³ Among other reasons, such as a general trend towards disillusionment with politics observable in similar contexts as well, a consequence of this 'neglect from above' regarding the party's mass/activist base was the fact that "[a]ctive membership declined by more than half overall between 1994 and 1999, from 1.000.000 to 400.589" (Lodge 2001: 5) and that "[by] the end of 1997, the ANC's own officials were willing to concede that half the organisation's 1.000 so branches might be "dysfunctional"" (ibid. 5-6). The latest membership figures are 416.846 paid-up members, and (considerably) more signed-up members according to the ANC's Secretary-General Kgalema Motlanthe (*Cape Argus*, December 17, 2002).

societies.⁴¹⁴ This is one or, in fact, the most prominent reason why these two paradigmatic explanatory approaches (paradigmatic within party and party system theory) have failed in accounting for the emergence of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa.

⁴¹⁴ In a similar vein, Chhibber and Nooruddin (forthcoming 2004) recently concluded with regard to inter- and intra-state variance of number of parties in the Indian States, “We do not believe that this [social divisions create party systems, C.S.] is the case. The relationship between social divisions and the number of parties is not axiomatic. Evidence for the tenuous links between social cleavages and party systems also comes from the intra-state variance in the number of parties. Social cleavages do not change from election to election or even over a decade. But (...) the effective number of parties competing in the state assembly elections does vary quite substantially. This variation exists even if we examine the effective number of parties based on seat holdings in the assembly as opposed to election returns (...) This inter- and intra-state variance should also give pause to explanations that tie party systems simply to electoral laws, or to the interaction of electoral laws and social cleavages (...) as neither can adequately account for changes in the number of parties within a state over time given the stability of electoral laws and social cleavage structure during that same period.”

Chapter 4: Maintenance of One-Party-Dominance in India and South Africa: Mechanisms of Control and Competition

“(...) long-term dominance by a single party involves clever tactics of electoral mobilization, ideological positioning, and governance. When blended skilfully, these are mutually reinforcing and suggest that one-party dominance is an art far more than it is an inevitability.” (Pempel 1990a: 32)

“The twenty-year supremacy of the Congress Party, lasting up to the elections of 1967 (...), is a massive fact of Indian politics not likely to be speedily erased in all its effects and needing to be understood. Now any bare and simple form of ‘legacy’ explanation will only go part of the way. That Congress was already there in command could perhaps tell us why it dominated when the new state began its life. But more seems required if we are to explain its scarcely diminished stature as much as twenty years later.” (Morris-Jones 1987: 170-171)

“(...) despite its manifest advantages, the assumption that dominant party status will accrue to the ANC regardless of how it responds to the challenge of internal diversity and effective governance may be deeply flawed. It may well have much to do before it is assured of dominant party status. But, precisely because the ANC has governed for so brief a period, none of this means that the prospect of ANC dominance is remote. Indeed, given its “natural” advantages, little may be required of it beyond tolerably effective governance and an ability to refrain from silencing internal dissent. While it will inevitably face crises, it may weather them.” (Friedman 1999c: 109)

The preceding chapter may account for the emergence or founding of one-party-dominance in the respective regional contexts but it does not explain continued dominance and gives only a slight indication of the mechanisms of control and competition at work in a system of one-party-dominance. How and why is the dominant party able to maintain dominance, under such changed circumstances, following its initial ascent to political power when it comes under the pressure of processes of social mobilisation and increased political participation? How is it able to contain (or adapt to) countervailing forces, be it opposition politics or other societal dynamics? Equally important, how is it able to countervail the inherent dynamics of one-party-dominance once described by Duverger (1954: 312) as follows: “Domination takes the

zest from political life, simultaneously bringing stability. The dominant party wears itself out in office, it loses its vigour, its arteries harden. It would be possible to show that every domination bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction.”⁴¹⁵

Hence, the core question of this chapter: What role did/does party agency play in the maintenance of dominant party rule in India and South Africa and what are/were the main characteristics and mechanisms of dominant party control and party competition inherent in the two regional contexts’ party systems?

There are basically four processes of constant fine-tuning and adaptation to changing social conditions and to party competition whereby dominant parties attempt to ensure continued dominance and to determine the further development of the party system. The specific interaction between the dominant party and opposition parties determines their continuing exiguity electorally and ensures their loyalty to the polity’s ordering framework. The process of selective mobilisation of the electorate and the dominant party’s ‘entrepreneurship’ on the electoral market demands carefully and pragmatically crafted mobilisational strategies. A balance must be continually upheld between the dominant party’s indispensable internal pluralism (factionalism) and party discipline (coherence). Finally, the line between the dominant party and the state/government is blurred as well as patronage bestowed on the dominant party’s clientele.

The following thereby hints at the qualitative criteria or systemic constituents of a system of one-party-dominance that should be part of any classification or typology of one-party-dominance in the context of changing societies.⁴¹⁶

With the decision to separate the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa I am following DiPalma’s suggestion that “(...) party strategies for dominance may change not only from democracy to democracy but also over time within the same democracy and for the same parties. More precisely, staying dominant after the transition [to democracy, C.S.] may be predicated on reshuffling party strategies. I suggest in particular that the range of strategies available to a party in the first period of democratic

⁴¹⁵ As noted in chapter 1, a contradictory point of view is given by Pempel (1990a: 16) who argues that one-party-dominance is characterised by the reinforcing processes (of the interrelationship) between its causes and consequences, creating a “virtuous cycle of dominance” where office achieved through a dominant position is used to ensure further dominance.

⁴¹⁶ In the Indian case, there is already a prominent interpretative model at hand to account for the internal dynamics of the party system in the two decades following independence. The concept of the ‘Congress system’ as pioneered by Kothari (1964) and Morris-Jones neatly grasps the logic of two (4.1. and 4.3.) of the four processes of maintaining dominance elaborated below. Consequently, these sections are largely following the arguments put forward by Kothari and, to a lesser extent, Morris-Jones (1966).

transition, when it has yet to consolidate power and state resources, is ideally different from the range after consolidation” (DiPalma 1991: 163).⁴¹⁷

In addition, this benefits the comparison as well for the study deals with on the one hand, a system of one-party-dominance that is terminated, and on the other, one which just having initiated and consolidated dominant party rule is now in the midst of the process of maintaining such rule. Therefore, it is possible to hint at the differences between the two regional contexts’ party systems and the strategies that their dominant parties employ (as summarised in chapter 6), allowing one to determine the (real and putative) effects and functions of the respective dominant party’s rule, their compatibility with the process of democratic development, and offering insights into the possible development of one-party-dominance in South Africa.

In accordance with this study’s integrated state-society approach and focus on the transactional dimension of the political and party system, the following examination of the dominant party’s ‘mechanisms of control’ and the party system’s patterns of interaction and competition can be divided into the three spheres making up a party system’s basic dimensions – society-oriented party agency (4.2.), state-oriented party agency (4.4.) and the party system’s inner-space (4.1. and 4.3).

4.1. Interaction with opposition

The first of these four processes, whereupon the maintenance of one-party-dominance is based, is the specific interaction with opposition parties taking place in a system of one-party-dominance. It is essential for the dominant party, as the party of a national democratic consensus, that opposition parties ‘find a place’ within a country’s party system so that the dominant party is able to “(...) preside[s] over a state which commands broad public loyalty” (Friedman 1999c: 104), and a, more or less, ‘liberal accommodation of political dissent’ can take place.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁷ Friedman (1999c: 103), following Arian and Barnes (1974) and Levite and Tarrow (1983), stresses the dominant party’s need to retain its “flexibility of manoeuvre” if it wants to remain dominant: “(...) the conditions which ensure dominance never endure indefinitely. Even the most stable dominant parties face the threat of “generational” change, in which the next generation of voters does not recall with the same enthusiasm the heroic deeds which ensured the party its dominance. This is particularly so in cases (...), in which a dominant party owes its status to its role in the founding of the state (...) Even before generational factors come into play, however, dominant parties are sure to face “moments of crisis” in which new circumstances threaten their dominance. They are only likely to continue if they have the strategic flexibility to adapt (...) More specifically, the fact that dominant party systems are democracies means that they remain vulnerable to inevitable changes within society and politics (...)”.

⁴¹⁸ Since one of the bases of a party’s long-lasting dominance is its image as a ‘repository of the legitimacy of the state’ in the voters’ perception (see chapter 3, introductory section and 3.1.), not the least grounded on its

Opposition parties can either be co-opted (or tolerated within certain limits) or delegitimised (Levite and Tarrow 1983). Often, both strategies are employed simultaneously, but all of them serve as strategic devices that reinforce dominance and perpetuate vertical party interaction, characterised by patterns of (moral) domination rather than (outright) competition.

Co-optation is a strategic device closely linked to the status of dominance already achieved, the institutional boundaries that determine the arenas of party competition and executive office and the degree of (often historically induced) ideological polarisation between the dominant party and a given opposition party. From a position of relatively unchallenged dominance, a party can easily determine the extent of 'rewards' (offices, resources) that its opponent's supporters may derive from the political system and can thus 'co-opt' or tolerate the opposition to a certain degree, especially if the polity's institutional arrangement allows for a dispersion of political arenas. If its ideological dominance is, to some extent, inherently/historically, if not exclusively, based on the delegitimised status of the opposition or parts of it, this is less easily achieved.

As such, the preponderance of either a strategy of co-optation or one of delegitimation depends as much on the strategic skills of the dominant party's elite as on the historic-political opportunity structure. Delegitimation is a process that refers largely to the realm of political rhetoric and symbols.

However, the role of opposition in a system of one-party-dominance is not confined to one of "(...) carping and sniping rather than that of developing immediate alternatives" (Arian and Barnes 1974: 599), as one would commonly assume. The following shall also hint at the crucial function that opposition parties fulfil as guarantor of the competitiveness of the party system and as a necessary 'ingredient' (either as a corrective or contrasting element) for the effective partisan manoeuvring of the dominant party. Paradoxically, in a system of one-party-dominance the opposition's presence eventually works in favour of the dominant party and strengthens its position once party dominance has been consolidated.

democratic commitment and its skilfully constructed "(...) authority that defines the boundaries between the permissible and the unacceptable" (Arian and Barnes 1974: 597), it cannot 'close' the channels of party political dissent and competition without letting its image of legitimacy erode. As Levite and Tarrow (1983: 297) note: "(...) legitimacy is not a natural or a permanent property of political objects but a *construction* of periods of crisis or transformation or both. Depending on their social bases and political power, on the monopoly they exercise over cultural understandings, and on how national and international events and alignments impinge on domestic politics, dominant elites have a greater or a lesser degree of control over that construction. The mutability of these factors makes the possession of political hegemony a tenuous thing, although the perception of its long-lasting quality frequently leaves the dominant party convinced of its inherent right to govern."

In India, the basic pattern of interaction with opposition during the heyday of one-party-dominance was, following Kothari's powerful interpretation, toleration within certain limits or, following his exact words (1964: 1162 f.), opposition parties were allowed to act as "parties of pressure" on the INC as the "party of consensus" thus exerting a "latent threat" on the dominant party and, at the same time, alerting it to waning popular support. Opposition parties thereby lobbied factions within the dominant party in order to articulate specific interests.⁴¹⁹ Whenever an INC faction or opposition party came too close to openly opposing the mainstream INC position, their success or failure served as a barometer for the INC implying that it was bending too much in a certain direction or that factional infighting could go off the rails.⁴²⁰

Both these mechanisms, the system's 'latency factor' and the indirect impact of opposition parties' 'lobbying', therefore guaranteed the dominant party's responsiveness to oppositional and public interest articulation as well as a capacity to absorb the interests thus articulated. Equally important, this kind of "positive communication" (Morris-Jones 1978: 220) between INC factions and opposition parties functioned as a "thermostat" (Kothari 1964: 1165), providing the INC with the indispensable sensitivity to the possible and putative consequences of the process of political participation.⁴²¹

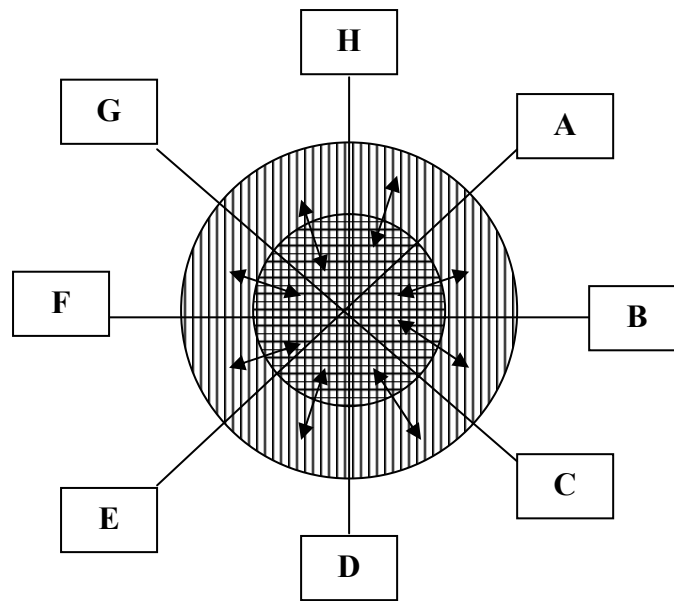
Morris-Jones (1978: 219) depicted the working of this rather specific configuration, a competitive party system without alternation in office, in the following diagrammatic representation.

⁴¹⁹ See Kothari (1994: 305): „One [of the characteristics of the INC as a full-fledged party system] has been the peculiar communication system of Indian politics by which the position of each of the major opposition parties has been reflected in one or another of the factions within the Congress Party: the socialist faction, the *Swatantra* faction, the *Jan Sangh* faction, and so on.”

⁴²⁰ Thus, individual factions, whose demands were not met by the party leadership, could threaten to join with an opposition party (or actually joining or forming an opposition party) thus causing the party leadership to give in to their demands in the interest of party cohesion (or, after they had – successfully or unsuccessfully – waged their battle from outside the INC, to accommodate them within the party again). For a case study of this mechanism at the regional level, see Ahmed (1967). The continuum, whereby to judge the nature of the country's party competition and/or the 'distance' between the parties, can thereby be based on differing ideology-based policy orientations or on the 'level of trust/distrust' among the parties based on an assessment of the various parties' willingness to co-operate and collaborate.

⁴²¹ Because of this integrative function of the INC as described by Morris-Jones and Kothari, Huntington (1968: 84) saw the INC as one of the rare political institutions in developing societies "(...) able to contain its 'crisis of participation.'"

Figure 10: The Congress System's pattern of interaction between the dominant party and opposition parties



Source: Morris-Jones (1978: 219)

The centre of the circle represents the INC leadership; the diverse factions within the INC are grouped around the centre in the circle shaded with both horizontal and vertical lines. The opposition parties occupy the zone of horizontal shading. The distance between each of the opposition parties and adjacent INC factions is therefore less than between themselves thus explaining their unwillingness or incapacity to join in a broad anti-INC coalition. The lines HD, AE, GC... represent cleavages or the various ways in which political opinion was divided (Left-Right, communalist-secular, national regional...). The INC incorporated all of these cleavages, whereas opposition parties were occupying only single segments of public discourse. "What is important (...) is that in anyone sector of opinion, say HOA, in which right-wing, constitutional, modernist views are held, there are to be found Congressmen and others" (ibid. 220).

As Pantham (1976: 197) concludes from a survey of party activists of the seven main parties contesting the Gujarat *Vidhan Sabha* elections in 1972 in the State's capital Baroda: "We found that the Congress which had the best record of cross-cutting [of social divisions and cleavages, C.S.] showed the best evidence of tolerance of political oppositions. Compared to the other parties, the Congress had a smaller proportion of activists expressing alarmism about, or hostility towards, other parties (...). When asked to mention their party of second choice, 38 respondents said that next to their own party they liked the Congress best. No other party received so many references. Unlike all the other parties, the Congress had some would-be supporter in *each* of the opposition parties (...) This, along with the findings regarding

cross-cutting and partisan hostility, presents the Congress as the party of consensus and accommodation *par excellence*". In a similar vein, Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 269), drawing on data for INC party activists from the CSDS 1967 national survey, come to the conclusion that within "(...) Congress there is considerable disaffection as well as internal factionalism. Perhaps a third of Congress activists are highly critical of Congress leadership, while approximately 40 percent are relatively conservative on the issue of governmental intervention in the economy. Further, a majority of Congress activists on certain ideological divisions seem to join with the Left parties against the Right." These findings complement nicely Nehru's statement, communicated to me in an interview with Sadiq Ali, that due to a lack of serious opposition in the two decades after independence 'Congress shall provide its own opposition'.

The depiction above with its emphasis on the distance between opposition parties being greater than between individual opposition parties and the dominant party, or a faction thereof, and the centrist position of the INC is of course reminiscent of Riker's (1982) conceptualisation of the INC as a 'Condorcet' winner, that is a party including the ideological median of voters in the context of an SMSP electoral system thus bringing forward candidates "(...) who can beat any other candidate in a pairwise contest, i.e., one-to-one contests between single contestants" (Sridharan 1997: fn. 3).⁴²² However, in contrast to Riker's model, the 'Congress system' model rightly assumes a multiplicity of cleavages or, for that matter, issue dimensions/positions, prevalent in the party system and the dominant party thus making it even harder for opposition parties (or their supporters) to combine their strengths and to coordinate "(...) an ends-against the center coalition (...)" (Cox: 1997: 239). On each issue dimension they were able to find a like-minded (ideological) counterpart in the INC's subcoalitional structure⁴²³ (making INC the second choice of many voters on both its 'right' and 'left', see Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 107) for empirical evidence) and their potential (ideological) linkage with another opposition party cross-cut by another issue dimension.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Following Riker (1982: 761), "[I]n the Indian example, Congress has probably been a Condorcet winner: that is, it probably would have been able to defeat rightist in a pairwise contest because leftist would vote for Congress rather than rightist, and similarly it would have been able to defeat leftists in a pairwise contest because rightist would vote for Congress rather than leftist."

⁴²³ For most of the period of one-party-dominance in India for example, the Jana Sangh has followed the 'mixed-economy' policy line of the INC while being sharply antagonised by the dominant party's secular line (BJS 1973). The other 'right' opposition party of national relevance in that period, the Swatantra party, while inclined to a modern, secular approach to politics was the most severely conservative critic of the INC's economic policy. The Socialists' Gandhian inspiration for social radicalism was likewise incompatible with the Marxist thinking of the Communists.

⁴²⁴ Even in the 1952 elections, in several States, an electoral alliance or merger of (truly) 'like-minded' parties would have seriously threatened the INC's electoral dominance. For example, a merger of the Hindu communalist parties, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajiya Parishad, would have given them 28,8% of the vote in Madhya Pradesh compared to the INC's 47,3%, a margin between the INC and the second

Additionally, the INC was a 'median' in a more 'real sense' as well, insofar as the INC did not only represent most of the relevant ideological positions, but also incorporated most of the country's social and interest group representatives⁴²⁵, upon whose sectional appeal the opposition parties' strength was grounded. Apart from the 'watchdog' role (Mitra 1978: 5) described by Kothari, the Congress system did not deem subordinate parties to be superfluous for yet another reason. As Burger (1969: 284) notes on the basis of her study of important opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh:

"The most important function that opposition parties play is as 'feeder' organisations to the dominant party. A dominant party is not necessarily an 'open accordion'. It may be that the dominant party can open its ranks to new groups only when they have become politically significant – which means previous to entry. Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh could be perennial minority parties, serving to socialise, politicise, recruit, organise, integrate and articulate the interests of groups only to see them incorporated into the dominant party."

Since most of the opposition parties' pre- (or even post-) independence organisational antecedents had at one time been under the INC fold, the dominant party's boundaries were permissive and movement in and out was facilitated by factional linkages. Kothari (1964: 1164-1165) sums up the effect of the INC's 'open' nature: "(...) it [INC, C.S.] is prepared to absorb groups and movements from outside the party and thus prevent other parties from gaining in strength."

This 'openness' of the INC, both in terms of interaction between opposition parties and like-minded sections within the dominant party and in terms of an actual movement in and out of the party (not hindered by an anti-defection regulation), was also in some sense a 'substitute' for co-optation, for it offered opposition parties some leverage (or a perception of it at least)

largest party much smaller than the usual 30-40%. In this vein, however, the fact that there was a multiplicity of opposition parties even during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India and that the INC was never, even before 1967, a 'large' party in terms of its vote-share (the combined electoral strength of non-Congress candidates at the national level regularly exceeded the 50% margin; in 1952 non-Congress candidates polled 58% of the votes; in 1957 52%; and in 1962 55%), may give some credence to Riker's (1962: 32-46) 'law' of minimum winning coalitions insofar as it prevented the party from becoming a 'coalition in a zero-sum game and evoking a split into groupings, which have the potential to govern in their own right' (Sridaharan 1997) thus eroding the potential for a one-party-dominant system – as would have been the case with the 1969 split were it not for the skilful manoeuvring and mobilisation tactics of Indira Gandhi.

⁴²⁵ On the basis of this interpretation, Lijphart (1996) – following Kothari – makes the point that India accords to his grand coalition model of consociationalism or power-sharing insofar as the INC is itself internally a 'grand coalition'. For a discussion and evidence of the INC's socially representative character in terms of its support base, see the next section (4.2.). Nicholson (1975) provides empirical evidence for the 'symbolic representation' of all relevant societal groups in the INC cabinets during the period 1952-1969.

over policy determination and access to state resources. In the wording of a consociationalist, INC dominance was based on a profound 'power-sharing ethos'.⁴²⁶

However, the INC's centrist position⁴²⁷ and catch-all inclusive nature that made this openness and kind of 'internalised opposition' possible (leaving enough room for a positive integration of opposition parties and ideas through factions within the INC without loosening the grip over the party's cohesion) was essentially dependent on the commitment of party elites to the necessity of opposition and its continued fragmentation⁴²⁸ as well as its often only thinly disguised regional character, partly a consequence of the INC's accommodationist stance towards the opposition.

The INC did strategically nurture its 'reconciliatory' stance towards the opposition by means of public commitment, informal consultative mechanisms, and institutionalised mechanisms like the establishment of 'Consultative Committees', informal conferences on different subjects with parliamentarians of opposition parties.

This was done with hindsight, for only accepting opposition parties as a legitimate part of the parliamentary system could guarantee their continued recognition of the democratic institutional arrangement, thus projecting the INC as a democratically legitimised party. On the other hand, the fact that none of the opposition parties could challenge the INC on a nation-wide scale⁴²⁹ and their all-India character resembling more an agglomeration of regional strongholds (Krishna 1967: 78, table 8)⁴³⁰, favoured the projection of the INC as the

⁴²⁶ For a different view, see Dua (1987) and Wilkinson (2000).

⁴²⁷ Still in 1967, close to 50% of respondents (48.8% of the sample) held a view of the INC as a middle-road party. One can imagine that the centrist image of the INC before the critical election of 1967 was much more pronounced among an even bigger share of the electorate (Kothari 1975: 103).

⁴²⁸ On more than one occasion fragmentation of the opposition was aggravated by the question of what stance should be taken towards the ruling party. This was primarily responsible for the Communists' split in 1964. Even more prominent was the leadership debate within the socialist spectrum. It comprised rejection of party competition at all (Jayaprakash Narayanan following the Gandhian tradition that saw the country's political culture as incompatible with party competition), acceptance of the opposition's role as a corrective due to the task of nation-building and development (Ashoka Mehta), and attempts to revise opposition strategies in order to unite in a broad front against the INC (Ram Manohar Lohia); see Kothari (1994: 160).

⁴²⁹ The number of candidates contesting for the main parties at the 1967 Lok Sabha (520 seats) elections were as follows: INC (516), Jana Sangh (250), Swatantra Party (179), SSP (122), PSP (109), CPI (109), CPI (M) (59); see Hardgrave and Kochanek (1993: 319). Until 1967 there were no serious electoral alliances among the opposition parties even at the regional level (Hartmann 1968 and 1971: 195 f., Davey 1972).

⁴³⁰ Chhibber and Petrocik (1990) convincingly demonstrated on the basis of electoral and survey data from 1971 that the INC is not a socially heterogeneous national 'party of consensus' and that it reflects particular social (caste, class, religious, community) constituencies at the State level according to the social feature regionally dominant. They argue that "[e]ach state has peculiar social cleavages that provide the basis of political support for the Congress and its opponents. Since these ascriptive cleavages do not translate across states, the opposition parties do not have a consistent social basis for support across states; they are from constituencies that are limited by regional boundaries." However, even if one is to accept this proposition (especially for the period before 1967 wherein the INC electoral strategy did most often not recognise the different situations in various States), it does not explain how and why the INC was able to transcend this dependence on regional cleavages (which most often had been brought into existence by the INC and/or opposition parties) and does not contradict the actions involved in projecting the INC as being catch-all and representative at the national level (which it

only “truly national party” (ibid. 24), close contests in some of the States even before 1967 notwithstanding. As long as the dominant party was able to preserve its inclusive character at the national level and, at the same time, maintain a fair degree of cohesion, the opposition parties were unable to transcend their sectional and regional appeal and to break-up the electoral limitations of a regionally confined mobilisation. While at the regional level, the INC was competing with various opposition parties and was often aligned with distinctive social groups,⁴³¹ the “segmented factional alliances within states” (Thakur 1995: 226) were translated into electoral dominance at the national level. The opposition parties, unwilling and incapable of forming alliances in the face of an overarching but nevertheless ‘open’ ruling party, therefore had to follow an electoral strategy focused on making their presence felt more strongly ‘from below’, via their regional strongholds⁴³², and resort to finding “(...) satisfaction from debating and censuring opportunities that parliamentary politics provided” (Kothari 1994: 310), the latter being reinforced by the mechanisms of the ‘open’ Congress system described above.

When this form of ‘internalised opposition’ was not on offer, for reasons of ideological distance or electoral success of opposition in the States, the INC also fell back on direct intervention in terms of exclusion from decision-making and/or imposing president’s rule on opposition governments whenever necessary⁴³³ (apart from what Hardgrave (1980: 150) has described - in a sharp reversal of the more positive assessment of the INC’s interaction with opposition described above - as “(...) undermining the opposition, taking over their programs, conceding basic issues, and co-opting their leadership” (see section 4.2.)).

However, even though the INC did undertake and justify its attempts at delegitimation by projecting itself as the embodiment of an all-inclusive nationalism and the only political force capable of bringing about ‘transformation’, it could not use delegitimation of opposition to the extent that the ANC does with the DP and, until recently, the NNP as most of the opposition

definitely was as the authors prove in the same article; ibid. 108 f.). Chibber and Petrocik’s reference to the legacy of the independence movement and the country’s federal set-up (ibid. 120-121) remains a bit fuzzy.

⁴³¹ As already mentioned (3.2.), the country’s federal set-up did allow for the emergence of varying patterns of party competition. From a systemic viewpoint, electoral successes of opposition parties at the regional level are a necessary part of the operational framework of the Congress system as developed by Kothari. “Threats from Opposition parties as well as actual displacement of the ruling party by them wherever the ruling party ‘strays away too far from the balance of effective public opinion’, are crucial to the ‘sensitivity of the entire system’” (Kothari 1974: 1041).

⁴³² Due to this strategy of ‘concentrated efforts’ the Jana Sangh’s electoral mobilisation and success was largely confined to the main ‘Hindi-belt’ States (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh), the Communists’ to Kerala, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, the socialist parties to Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and the Swatantra Party to the middle class/castes of Gujarat and Rajasthan; see Fernandes and Sirsakar (1975: 185 f.).

⁴³³ In fact, no non-Congress chief minister lasted his full term of office in the Nehru era and “(...) Congress chief ministers heading minority governments were to be encouraged to ‘congressize’ (convert to Congress) their non-Congress partners” (Dua 1994: 28). For an elaborate discussion of the practice of imposing president’s rule during the Nehru era, see (ibid. 22-28).

once belonged to the fold of the independence movement. Nor would this have been in the party's interest. On the contrary, denying legitimacy to the opposition would have been detrimental to the dominant party's very success, undermining its rationale of a national democratic consensus.⁴³⁴

The ANC's strategic interaction with opposition parties is far more intricate and multi-faceted than the INC's. This does not come as a surprise given the different 'historical soil', from which opposition parties were to emerge and the fact that ideological divisions play a much more prominent role. Opposition parties in South Africa are no 'offspring' of a once united independence movement.⁴³⁵ Likewise, they carry the ideological and cultural baggage of a historical antagonism that has been overcome formally but has left the formerly diametrically opposed population groups (and parties) within one single nation.

In fact, after the withdrawal of the NP from the GNU and the practical end to the institutionalised power-sharing arrangement, necessitated by the negotiated transition, the ANC applied the whole range of possibilities for strategic interaction with opposition parties available to a (ruling) dominant party.⁴³⁶ From co-optation to delegitimation, they were implemented to a varying degree and directed against the different opposition parties selectively (and often subsequently).

The mix of strategies available to the ANC as the dominant party were facilitated by several factors closely tied to historical-political, institutional and more contingent reasons for the opposition's fragmentation. As in India (but for different reasons), the overarching feature of opposition parties in South Africa is one of acute fragmentation. This may be partly explained by the interplay of structural and institutional factors such as the list-PR electoral system without threshold, which, together with the demographic distribution and regional

⁴³⁴ A slightly different and, in the end, much more critical view, which, however, grasps the rationale of the dominant party's embarking on a 'historical project' and its democratic commitment (3.1.), is given by Das (2001: 19-20): „[T]he most plausible clue to the strength of the Nehruvian Congress probably lay in its management skills: its ability to co-opt discontented social groups through the apparent maintenance of democratic rites and display of concern for minorities and backward communities. In reality Nehru accepted opposition so long as it remained diffused and articulated within the orbit of the Congress system. Each non-Congress provincial regime thus fell victim to the hegemony drive of the Nehruvian Congress party. Between 1952 and 1964 Nehru imposed President's Rule (...) on federal unity at least five times either to dislodge non-congress Chief Ministers (PEPSU 1953, Kerala 1959) or to offset the collapse of merger moves between the Congress and non-Congress groups (Andhra Pradesh 1954, Kerala 1956, Orissa 1961). In fact, Nehru's 1953 election slogan of 'The Congress is the country and the country is Congress' was sought to be imparted as the national spirit.“

⁴³⁵ Except perhaps for the UDM, which was formed by Roelf Meyer, an NP outcast, Bantu Holomisa, who involuntarily departed from the ANC, and Sifiso Nkabinde, another ANC expellee.

⁴³⁶ Whereas co-optation and delegitimation are the core strategies of a dominant party's interaction with the opposition, there are various nuances between these two ends of the dominant party-opposition parties interactive spectrum, from simply ignoring opposition parties, subverting parliamentary and party political authority by means of corporatist deal-making, symbolic representation of the opposition parties' core constituencies in the upper echelons of the dominant party or executive office, to allowing (more radical) opposition parties into the political mainstream but denying them access to state resources.

concentration of various parties' core support bases (IFP-KwaZulu-Natal, NNP-Western and Northern Cape, UDM-Eastern Cape), lessens the incentive to form cross-cutting (cross-racial, cross-ethnic, cross-class) alliances and to bundle electoral strength.⁴³⁷

However, the opposition's fragmentation and initial unwillingness to co-operate through an electoral alliance is also the result of three other, more context-specific and party agentic factors (*Sowetan*, March 5, 1998). These include, a) the country's historical *problématique*, most decisive in the case of the NP and DP, which had to redefine their image in the light of their eroding "claim to moral legitimacy" (Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer 2001: 40)⁴³⁸ as co-initiator of the negotiated settlement, reinforced by the revelations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), plus a lasting suspicion against liberal-elitist politics or deal-making, respectively, and the need to overcome cleavages within the white community (Afrikaner vs. English), b) outright co-optation as in the case of the IFP, torn between special interest representation of its Zulu support base at the provincial level and the prospect of enjoying continued government participation through cohabitation with a rather receptive ANC at the national level, and c) a tendency of opposition parties, likewise reflected in corresponding voter perceptions, to represent only vested interests or minority fears, most notable in the case of smaller parties like Constandt Viljoen's white-right, Afrikaner-based FF, or former Bophuthatswana homeland leader, Lucas Mangope's UCDP.

These conditions, together with its overwhelming electoral majority, gave the ANC enough latitude to display a reconciliatory and inclusive attitude towards the opposition, but at the same time to pursue delegitimation whenever necessary⁴³⁹, enabling it to work actively at the further fragmentation of the opposition.⁴⁴⁰ Similar to the Indian case, it is up to the dominant

⁴³⁷ Since the threshold for political representation is so low (in fact there is no institutionalised threshold at all; the effective one for a seat in the National Assembly had been around 0.25% of the total vote in the two elections of 1994 and 1999) and the list-PR system guarantees an almost one-to-one translation of votes into seats, a party may rather opt to stand for elections alone, for its representation is relatively secure even though it may garner only a comparatively low number of votes. At the same time, since most of South African opposition parties rely more on their respective regional strongholds and not on a support base evenly spread across the country, it may appear more advantageous to appeal mainly to their key constituency and not to water down their image in the perception of its core supporters by trying to expand its support base into other societal strata.

⁴³⁸ Apart from organisational weakness, this factor may also account for the poor electoral performance and electoral alliance-wise 'incompatibility' of the PAC, which still has not abandoned its ambivalent attitude towards the political settlement assuming "(...) that short of nationalist revolution, (...) matters [of equal opportunity and development, crime, unemployment, access to education welfare and health, C.S.] would not be solved" (Maseko 1999: 128).

⁴³⁹ Thus, the ANC was much more accommodative towards the right- and left-wing opposition parties with a limited potential for capturing more votes – spurning the NP in favour of the FF's Constand Viljoen, offering the PAC to join the GNU in 1997, despite the fact that the PAC did not have the required 5% representation in parliament - than towards the more moderate parties (NNP, DP/DA, UDM) – except for the recent rapprochement between the ANC and the NNP for overt strategic reasons.

⁴⁴⁰ Whereas in the 1994 national assembly 6 opposition parties shared 37 % of the vote, in the 1999 national assembly 12 opposition parties shared 34 % of the vote (after the floor-crossing window period at the national level had taken place, five new parties were registered adding up to 17 parties in the national assembly).

party to set the boundaries to the manifestation of oppositional activity and “(...) dissension on strategic positioning vis-à-vis the ANC, remains a major stumbling block preventing opposition party realignment” (Booyesen 1999: 255) and – one might add – opposition coherence (as in the case of the NP). The threefold distinction of opposition strategies following Schrire (2001) made in 2.2.5. therefore may be equally applied to the ANC’s (strategic) interaction with the opposition. Thus, the dominant party engages in ‘robust’ interaction with opposition parties, i.e. delegitimation, in the case of the NP and the DP; it draws on co-optation, as in the case of the IFP; and it engineers co-operation for its own partisan advantage, as in the case of the NNP most recently. To some extent, the ANC, like the INC, has internalised ‘opposition’ by forging its potential left contenders, the SACP and COSATU, into an increasingly fragile yet coherent alliance. Thus the most serious contenders for mass support, given the NNP’s and to some extent also the DP’s limitation to go beyond their demographically confined constituencies, have been ‘co-opted’. Despite the alliance partners’ long-standing partnership this move has also been highly strategic, not only in terms of broadening its electoral appeal and co-opting its potentially most challenging opponents⁴⁴¹, but also in terms of accommodating the countervailing imperatives of the two most important cleavages of South African society, race and class (Maylam 2001).⁴⁴²

Rhetorical delegitimation of opposition is of course far more prominent in South African party politics than in India.⁴⁴³ The fact that the NP (and to a lesser extent the DP as well) is still conceived by many to be a relic of the ancien régime, despite its role as the cofounder of the new system, and its unwillingness to stick to the power-sharing arrangement of the GNU made it especially vulnerable to attacks from the ruling party. Thus, the NP as the second largest party, having secured nonetheless one fifth of the vote, has been the main target of delegitimation between 1996 and 1999. However, with the rise of the DP to the status of ‘official opposition’ after the 1999 elections, the DP became the preferred victim of ANC

Increasing opposition fragmentation between 1994 and 1999 had its impact on the provincial level as well. In 1999, the ANC became the strongest party in all of the provinces except *KwaZulu-Natal*, where it could narrow the gap between it and the IFP to a close 2.5%, outperforming the NNP in the Western Cape by a margin of nearly 4% and in the Northern Cape by even 40%.

⁴⁴¹ For example, a survey of the HSRC conducted in July 2001 comes up with a figure of 17% of respondents as a potential support base for the SACP – as well as 17% for the DA (Rule 2002: 32). No comparable data was available for COSATU.

⁴⁴² Moreover, the extent of the ANC’s 1999 elections gains in the province of Gauteng, where the country’s metropolitan African working-class communities are concentrated and the ANC increased its vote share by 9% (the third biggest increase only topped by the Northern Cape and the Western Cape after the disintegration of the NP, which had been strongest in these two provinces), is an indicator that this strategy paid off and that the ANC’s dominance in these communities “(...) will remain secure for a long time to come” (Lodge 1999c: 85).

⁴⁴³ Although the INC’s continued reference to its historical role in the country’s struggle for independence, reiterated in every election manifesto to date, fulfils a similar function of projecting a superior status of legitimacy on the dominant party as the ANC’s reference to the struggle against apartheid.

attempts at delegitimation.⁴⁴⁴ Of course the deligitimation of opposition is largely played out in more ephemeral cultural and ideological terms and is not necessarily an indispensable feature of one-party-dominance, but one should not underestimate the power (available largely for historical reasons) inherent in the potential for deligitimation. As Friedman (1999c: 109) notes: “Not all dominant party systems depend on delegitimation of the opposition [this is especially so in the Indian context, C.S.], but the ability to achieve this is a potent weapon in the hands of an aspirant dominant party.”

The ANC’s stand towards the opposition has become increasingly one of denying them the credibility to criticise the governing alliance. However, as Friedman (1999c: 111) points out, “Harsh rhetoric is not necessarily delegitimation: to fulfil the latter criterion, ruling party denunciations must question the opposition’s loyalty to the democratic order.” There have been attacks of this sort on the NP⁴⁴⁵ and DP⁴⁴⁶ (DA), and even on the IFP before 1994 but they were more often than not opposed by the party leadership, which invoked a more moderate tone.⁴⁴⁷

The continued attempts at deligitimation, perfectly reasonable behaviour from a point of view of partisan rationality⁴⁴⁸, thereby also reflect the dominant party’s ambivalence towards (some of the) opposition parties and “the idea of opposition in general” (Schrire 2001: 30), the latter

⁴⁴⁴ And the recent *toenadering* [rapprochement] between the ANC and the NNP is an indication that past attacks on the NP’s legitimacy and legitimate criticism of the ruling party were less inspired by a deep moral concern than by more pragmatic reasons, i.e. partisan manoeuvring. In fact, already before this recent rapprochement, the NNP (after all the party, whose antecedent (NP) was responsible for the initiation and implementation of apartheid) was probably closer to the ANC than to any of the opposition parties. Booysen (1999: 252), having interviewed then NNP leader Van Schalkwyk in November 1997, states, that “(...) in the 1997-98 period, under Van Schalkwyk’s leadership, the NNP envisioned its future with the ‘Mbeki faction of the ANC’. Van Schalkwyk saw this ‘faction’ as ideologically and intellectually ‘closer to the NNP than the SACP’.”

⁴⁴⁵ For reasons stated above, attacks on the legitimacy of the NP as the party, which introduced and implemented apartheid, come of course close to a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’.

⁴⁴⁶ Even though it is difficult to draw a line between outright deligitimation (denying an opposition party the right to wage criticism on the ground of its lacking moral legitimacy) and justified claims to the opposition party’s vested interests or past enmeshments, attempts at demonising all criticism raised by non-Africans as racist as done by some representatives of the dominant party are clear-cut manifestations of deligitimation (DP 1999a).

⁴⁴⁷ For examples of the kind of more extreme and, most often, race-based attempts at deligitimation of the opposition – in this case the DP – “(...) in terms that disallow it any role in effective parliamentary opposition, and even existence within the political terrain”, see Maré (2001: 185-186). However, a lot of these attacks took place in reaction to the DP’s aggressive 1999 ‘Fight Back’ election campaign (DP 1999b), which, as Friedman (1999b: 6) concludes, was “(...) interpreted by whites (including supporters of the bellicose white right) and other racial minorities dissatisfied with the new dispensation in South Africa, as well as by black Africans deeply committed to it, not as criticism of a governing party by a loyal opposition, but as an assault on post-apartheid South Africa.” Consequently, in the 1999 elections, the DP was largely profiting from NNP disintegration, gaining in strength by winning over 55% of the ‘white vote’ compared to 10% in 1994 (the NNP could only garner 20% of the ‘white vote’ compared to 65% in 1994); see Reynolds (1999a: 182, 185).

⁴⁴⁸ And, in some sense, at least with regard to the NP, also normatively justified for it is quite understandable for a party having suffered from more than 40 years of racial segregation and domination to make reference to its opponent’s history of oppression.

attitude being reminiscent of the ANC's days as a liberation movement.⁴⁴⁹ This is clearly expressed in Mandela's 1997 farewell speech as ANC president quoted in the *Sunday Times* (1997: 4), wherein he denounced white opposition parties and the media as "counterrevolutionary forces": "[the opposition parties, C.S.] have chosen to propagate a reactionary, dangerous and opportunistic position which argues that [because] a normal and stable democracy has been achieved (...) their legitimate responsibility is to oppose us as the majority party (...) [the implication, therefore is that they have] no responsibility both for our past and present; and consequently that they have a democratic obligation merely to discredit the ruling party so that they may gain power after the next elections."

Delegitimation takes places in another, yet related field of political discourse, one that was of no importance during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India: Since 1997 the ANC government and its supporters are increasingly making the claim that media coverage of the government and party, particularly of Mbeki, is still based on racial stereotypes. The essence of this claim, summarised in a newspaper announcement by prominent ANC supporters, reads as follows:

There is a very perceptible and increasingly strident campaign against Black people in powerful positions whether in government, business or in the labour movement. There are constant efforts in the media to portray the country and its leaders in the most negative manner possible. But the media does not act alone. It seems to us it provides a platform for a coalition of right-wing forces made up of white so-called liberal politicians, mostly leftovers from the apartheid era, certain so-called independent or research organisations run by whites and a few members of the white business community. Separately from them, there are a few Black commentators who unwittingly contribute to this campaign. (Sunday Times, May 6, 2001)

⁴⁴⁹ An issue of the party-published quarterly, *Umrabolo*, entitled 'Accelerating the pace of change: Assessing the balance of forces in 1999', makes it very clear that the ANC "(...) remains the most important moral voice on almost any question facing the country" (ANC 1999c: 10).

The effect of such claims on the exercise of press freedom could be devastating.⁴⁵⁰

Co-optation of opposition parties takes place as well, most visible of course in the case of the IFP – the overwhelmingly *Zulu*-based party and part of a coalition with ANC at the national level.⁴⁵¹ Since there is no real danger of the IFP emerging as a contender for power at the national level due to the party's demographically confined constituency though the IFP may well entrench its core support base at the provincial level, co-optation seems to be the most rational strategy for the dominant party for several reasons. On the one hand, with regards to disputed policies and decisions, the ANC leadership can appease the more radical forces within the alliance by referring to concessions it has had to make to the (conservative) coalition partner. On the other hand, binding the IFP to a ruling coalition minimises the potential for a new outbreak of often violent struggle for support at the provincial level. Furthermore, the rapprochement between the ANC and IFP or, more precisely, the blurred boundaries between the two parties, may possibly lead to an IFP support base being far more receptive to the idea of supporting the ANC following the departure of the party's charismatic leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi.⁴⁵²

Up to now, the ANC was unable to “steal the party's [IFP] constituency” (Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer 2001: 40) despite continuing efforts on behalf of the ANC leadership to merge the two parties in the long run (*Sunday Independent*, November 1, 1998). Clearly, the ANC would benefit from such a merger, whereas the IFP would just be making one more step towards its ongoing absorption by the ANC.⁴⁵³ The status quo however, may well serve the dominant party in no smaller respect. As one commentator concludes: “(...) the ANC has quietly and cunningly outmanoeuvred the opposition parties and managed to get IFP leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi closer to the ANC and away from the grasp of others desperate for an election pact with the IFP. Although the IFP might not necessarily sign a pact with the

⁴⁵⁰ Thus, in 2000, many dominant party critics have interpreted an enquiry by the Human Rights Commission into racism in the media as “(...) an ANC-aligned, Africanist assault upon press freedom” (Southall 2001: 21). On the other hand, as Jacobs (1999) has pointed out, South African media, especially newspapers, have a historical record of partisanship, which is only gradually diminishing, and that with regard to election coverage “(...) mainstream media are simply not representative or reflective of the voter preferences of the majority” (ibid. 157). The latter is not least due to the fact that most of them were hitherto overwhelmingly focussed on a white audience and traditionally endorsed one of the ‘white’ (opposition) parties. However, post-1994 changes in ownership and control patterns (especially in the SABC, see also 4.4., footnote 133) have brought in ANC-backed boards and management and the situation rapidly changed.

⁴⁵¹ Co-optation has also taken place with regard to the Indian support-based MF, which gave its single party vote to the ANC only shortly after the 1999 elections.

⁴⁵² Additionally, constitutional amendments, which need a two-thirds majority, are surely more easily brought about and more saleable to the public when backed by both the ANC and IFP.

⁴⁵³ As Maré (2001: 184) notes: “(...) the problem for the IFP (as well as the Pan-Africanist Congress – PAC) is that the ANC has long absorbed whatever they have had to offer as distinguishing features: African nationalism and race politics; seeing the development of a black (read African) bourgeoisie as a central brick in the wall of liberation; foreign investment as the solution to growth and to the unemployment crisis; acceptance of Zulu nationhood under a king, to mention just a few.”

ANC, the party might at least not join a campaign to build a united opposition to the ANC” (*The Star*, September 15, 1998).

Finally, the dominant party is engaged in ‘co-operative’ interaction with the opposition. Seldom is this strategy a corollary of a ruling party’s altruistic principles (except, perhaps, if a national crisis is looming). Most of the time, it is the dominant party that benefits from a more co-operative opposition, whereas opposition parties have to be in constant fear of losing their identity in the long run, short-term gains in terms of access to office and state resources notwithstanding.

The most prominent example of co-operation with the opposition (to the dominant party’s advantage) is of course the recent coalitional arrangement between the ANC and the NNP that ended the NNP-DP alliance and brought the ANC to power in the Western Cape (and almost in KwaZulu-Natal as well).⁴⁵⁴ However, apart from the shift in provincial power configuration, the ANC-NNP coalition is also an indication of how the ANC played off minor opposition parties (in terms of vote share) against the ‘official opposition’ by means of offering co-operation selectively. Thus, during the first legislative period of 1994-1999, the ANC offered the DP, which had secured a meagre 1.73% of the vote and 7 national assembly seats, a pro rata share of chairs of several parliamentary portfolio committees, while at the same time making strong criticisms of the NP (especially its then leader de Klerk). This ‘generous’ attitude reversed as soon as the electoral fortunes of the DP and NNP reversed and the DP/DA became the official opposition with a vote share of nearly 10 % and 38 parliamentary seats. Henceforth, the ANC denied the chairing of portfolio committees to the DP/DA, engineering instead the aforementioned alliance with its formerly most serious contender, which in the 1999 election had been reduced to fourth-largest party rank with a vote share of 6.87% and 28 seats compared to 82 in 1994.

In sum, whereas the ANC had to pursue strategic interaction with the opposition much more deliberately than the INC, largely for historical reasons, i.e. the fact that a more ‘consensual’ model such as the open Congress system was not available, it did employ tactics of interaction with the opposition similar to that of the INC (co-optation, co-operation, delegitimation, internalisation of opposition), although with a different emphasis. That a ‘latent threat’ exists is visible from the dominant party’s intricate and often changing strategic interaction with the opposition. This mix of strategies, evidence of the dominant party’s adaptive capacity,

⁴⁵⁴ Additionally, the ANC was also able to steal the small radical parties’ thunder and to reduce their disruptive potential by means of co-operative tactics. It secured, for example, cooperation of the FF by promising ongoing constitutional debate about cultural autonomy and protection for minority communities and the right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage (such as the Afrikaners).

allowed the ANC to prevent opposition alliances on a large scale and to succeed in bringing down the only serious opposition alignment to date. It may be questioned whether a preponderance of one of these strategies, such as delegitimation or strategic co-operation and a concomitant move to control all avenues of decision-making (for example, by securing power in all provinces via the floor crossing legislation) will not turn out to be detrimental to the dominant party. For, as we have seen from the Indian case, the existence of subfederal governmental arenas where the opposition may stand a chance of legitimately challenging the dominant party, and the potential for opposition parties to have at least some leverage over policy determination (or the perception thereof) is a crucial element for the dominant party's legitimate claim to governance (based on its commitment to transformation and nation-building) and its (indispensable) sensitivity to shifts in public opinion and changes in the socio-economic, socio-cultural strata. However, a fair amount of delegitimation may also be necessary to create the kind of imaginary enemies necessary to uphold the increasingly fragile unity of its own ruling alliance (see 4.3.).

4.2. Selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market

The second process of ensuring continued control over the electorate is selective mobilisation. Selective (and differential) mobilisation as described by Arian and Barnes (1974: 598) leads the dominant party to focus its mobilisational efforts on those segments of society that "(...) will make fewer demands than others or that will give a maximum political payoff for minimum effort" (ibid.). Selective mobilisation involves basically two processes: purchasing support by positive discrimination of or granting resources to certain societal groups, and by aggregating a large range of interests in society whilst giving voice only to certain spokesmen of these interests. Selective mobilisation is important for, once in power, the dominant party can no longer, though it may pretend to do so, "(...) promise everything to everyone" (ibid.).⁴⁵⁵

Moreover, since the dominant party claims to represent the nation and therefore must recruit or appear to recruit support from all segments of society, selective mobilisation is most often coupled with the dominant party's increasingly indispensable entrepreneurship on the electoral market. This is especially relevant for the fixed identities that once held the party

⁴⁵⁵ In other words and hinting at the crucial importance of the political opportunity structure wherein the dominant party operates (and consequently the need for selective mobilisation), although "[t]he dominant party ensures to its continued success by effectively spreading out among many social strata rather than concentrating on only one; it mobilises support from all sectors of society (...)" (Arian and Barnes 1974: 603), "(...) some sectors remain beyond the reach of even dominant parties (...)" (Friedman (1999c: 103).

together as a quasi-mass-party (solidarity in the face of a common goal, independence and the end of apartheid respectively) are no longer available after the common goal has been reached (these identities have been anyway less binding than, for example, class-based solidarity), though the need to retain the catch-all image remains. Therefore, party leaders and activists of the dominant party must be engaged as entrepreneurs on the electoral market, meaning they must actively seek support in the most pragmatic fashion available. This involves both, the positioning of the image of the party in such a way that it radiates the greatest electoral appeal, and attracts the recruitment of leaders with strong local or regional followings. This is especially important, for the countervailing forces to a party's dominance do not only (and most prominently) emerge from the activities and mobilisational efforts of opposition parties, but from changes and shifts within society.⁴⁵⁶

Both selective mobilisation and, to a lesser extent, entrepreneurship on the electoral market necessarily have to involve a time dimension. Since the symbolic capital that a dominant party amasses from its historical role is soon exhausted, the process additionally facilitated by generational change, it has to take a long-term view and shape or accommodate voter preferences accordingly.⁴⁵⁷

(Active) selective mobilisation in India was to a great extent, though not solely, played out in the area of preferential policies or the 'politics of positive discrimination' (Mitra 1990c). The rationale of this strategy has clearly been based on hindsight, that the vast mass of India's socially disadvantaged groups would sooner rather than later become aware of the "plasticity of the social world" brought about by universal suffrage (Kaviraj 1996: 127). Thus, the display of concern for minorities and backward communities was as much a programmatic imperative of a catch-all party propagating social transformation and modernisation as it was due to the dominant party's electoral arithmetic.

Consequently, the constitutionally enshrined right of the post-independence INC government to demographically derived⁴⁵⁸ quotas for the traditionally oppressed social minorities of the

⁴⁵⁶ On a more fundamental level selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market are also manifestations of a one-party-dominant system's competitiveness. As Sartori (1976: 219) notes: "(...) in the arena of politics, the essential protective benefits of a competitive structure stem, primarily, from the principle of 'anticipated reactions', from the anticipation that the consumer will or might react." However, the mobilisational and entrepreneurial aspect of party agency, although many a time referred to, has remained largely unexplored to date. Therefore, Robertson's statement (1976: 191), following the market analogy employed by Sartori, that "[m]any (...) aspects of the interaction between the party and the voter are cloaked in appalling ignorance (...)" and that "[w]e know very little about the extent to which political parties are able, or even forced, to change public opinion itself, to create a market for their goods" still holds true.

⁴⁵⁷ See also Dunleavy (1991, especially chapter 5), particularly his elaboration of 'preference accommodation', 'partisan social engineering', 'adjusting social relativities' and 'context management' as preference-shaping strategies available to the governing (dominant) party.

⁴⁵⁸ The constitution leaves it up to the central and State governments to determine the shape and extent of quotas for the SC's and ST's, the only social groups subject to reservation policies in the period under examination (up

SC's and ST's in jobs in the rapidly expanding public sector, for legislative seats and enrolment in institutes of higher education, especially medical and engineering colleges, developed into a prime instrument of partisan manipulation.

In terms of selective mobilisation this was especially rewarding during the heyday of one-party-dominance in the Nehru era. In reality, there was little advancement as regards the effective implementation of SC and ST quotas⁴⁵⁹ however, the 'pay-off' of reservation policies was immense insofar as the INC could claim to hold on to its image as the champion of social transformation and minority concern, securing long-term support from the substrata of Indian society thus affected (see also table 23 below).⁴⁶⁰

As regards other minorities, the quasi-consociational provisions prevailing in the pre-independence era, such as separate electorates, reserved legislative seats and reservation of government jobs for religious and linguistic minorities (and backward castes apart from the SC's and ST's), were no longer reconcilable with the secularist and nationalist outlook of a party representing and promoting an all-inclusive nationalism and were consequently abandoned.⁴⁶¹ Given the country's social complexities and the necessary openness that characterised the dominant party's interaction with opposition parties and (upwardly mobile) social forces, the INC had to anyway pursue a strategy appealing to almost all societal groups over and beyond religious, social or linguistic identities. It therefore had to follow a mobilisational effort characterised by an outspoken commitment to 'being the voice of the masses' and, simultaneously, it had to accommodate Indian society's diverse interests - with all the concomitant (and potentially dangerous) membership drives such a strategy entails. In

to 1967). In general, these quotas have followed the respective share of these groups in the population, which was set at 15% and 7.5% respectively, according to the Census of 1961.

⁴⁵⁹ In 1963, for example, the combined SC and ST share of Class I positions in government employment was only 1.54% (Class II: 2.99%, Class III: 8.9%, Class IV: 20.69%) despite their combined 25% quota for central government positions (Wilkinson 2000: 777, GoI 1962/63).

⁴⁶⁰ Reservation policies became even more of a partisan instrument of electoral mobilisation from the mid-1970's onwards when SC and ST leaders became politically more assertive demanding a more effective enforcement of reservations, especially job reservations, and ever new groups (under the broad category of Other Backward Castes (OBC)) were 'demarcated' as eligible for affirmative action. As Wilkinson (2000: 782) notes: "In the mid-1970s, Congress politicians began to worry that they were losing the support of the SC and ST vote banks, as SC and ST leaders expressed increasing unhappiness with the few tangible rewards they had received from Congress rule." This process of partisan instrumentalisation of affirmative action culminated in the controversy about the Mandal Commission Report, which advocated quotas for an expanded array of backward castes/classes in government jobs and educational institutions and whose adoption by the V.P. Singh government in 1990 proved to be responsible for the restructuring of the party system in Uttar Pradesh along caste lines – further evidence for the salience of a top-down approach to party systems formation whereby party elites do shape and alter party systems (in this case contributing to the transformation of the UP party system, "(...) from catchall to cleavage based") (Chhibber 1999: 136; for a detailed elaboration of how this process took shape see especially chapter 6 of Chhibber's book).

⁴⁶¹ The southern Indian States continued to provide reservations for these minorities, which had a much longer tradition of political assertion and interest articulation than their counterparts in other Indian states and therefore had to be accommodated for the sake of electoral considerations (Wilkinson 2000: 776).

addition, it had to be careful not to appear to be overdoing preferential treatment of minorities in the interest of preserving the INC's core Hindu support base in the States of the Hindi-belt/Hindi-heartland.⁴⁶²

This task was made easier by the fact that, due to India's immediate post-colonial context with its relatively low level of political awareness and its largely illiterate peasant society, partisan mobilisation took on a rather different shape compared to what one normally takes as a given within the liberal conceptualisation of representative politics. Consequently, parties and the party system in India after independence were in the first place acting as 'communicators' rather than (interest) aggregators. "They bridge distance, since the territorial area of nations and electoral districts is so wide that the electors must be brought into communion with each other" (Finer 1961: 280). Where loyalties and interest-generating identities towards propagated '-isms' have to be formed from scrap, aggregation is subordinated to communication and programmatic alternatives are subordinated to the appeal of distributory politics. As a result, the INC chose a mobilisational strategy of 'minimum resistance' geared at winning office by means of incorporating and co-opting those (dominant) segments of Indian society (landed gentry, dominant caste leaders, businessmen) that could serve as intermediaries or 'link men' to the vast masses of rural India.⁴⁶³

At the same time, through its rapidly expanding and extended programmes of planned development, the party created a complex and thorough patronage network, which enabled it to provide these link men with (informal) preferential treatment in terms of economic and social benefits for the respective link man's group/village/caste/State in return for votes and political support.

⁴⁶² In this regard, the national leadership's (especially Nehru's) initial reluctance to continue reservation policies (in fact, apart from the SC and ST quotas, which Nehru wanted to abolish as well (CAD, XI, 1949: 331), the Constituent Assembly had released a general 'ban' on preferential treatment) and to give in to minority demands for example, the demand to re-demarcate State boundaries along linguistic lines, has to be understood in the context of the party's early nationalist, modernist and secularist creed and its need to be considerate towards the Hindu majority. However, this perspective soon gave way to a more realistic assessment of electoral politics in a divided society and an understanding of a necessarily more accommodative stance towards societal interests on the grounds of political exigency (including, for example, the eventual concession of a linguistic reorganisation of the States and the retention of separate personal laws). Thus, Nehru, when reviewing the 1957 elections, eventually took notice of the fact that "(...) if the forces released by democracy and adult franchise were not mastered, they would march on leaving the Congress aside" (Congress Socialist Forum 1957: 9). Regarding social transformation (and a necessary concomitant direct attack on Indian society's vested interests and socio-structural traditions) he was likewise mistaken in his (too idealistic) view, summarised by Sharma (1999: 34), "(...) that India's democratic government, constantly pressured by the formidable political resource of the masses with their numerical strength manifest through the ballot box, would willy-nilly compel the governing political elites to promote public policies that directly or indirectly benefit the poor and the underprivileged."

⁴⁶³ This dual process of incorporation of primordial societal orientations and identities and of aspiring, upwardly mobile social groups or, for that matter, the "(...) agglomeration of diverse social groups through bargaining and coalition-making at various levels within the dominant party" (Kothari 1975: 97), rather than interest aggregation, does therefore not come as a surprise.

The ability of the INC to secure ‘vote-banks’ of local or regional groups bound by caste-based, communal or regional loyalties to the dominant leadership of upper castes or other social elites and were voting according to their direction, is well-known.⁴⁶⁴ Clientelist linkages pervaded the local and regional party structure and a process of ‘vertical mobilisation’ (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967: 24, see 4.3. for a discussion) gained momentum.⁴⁶⁵

Thus, with regards to the local and regional INC mobilisation and recruitment pattern, at the district and State level of the party-electorate encounter, socio-demographic considerations were far more prominent with candidate selection increasingly based solely on the candidate’s ability to ‘get the vote’.⁴⁶⁶

This highly strategic but at the same time flexible recruitment pattern of the party was aptly grasped by Wood:

“The original Congress recruitment norm, then, may be characterized as one in which the predominant party pursued a “catch-all” policy designed to attract votes from all strata and groups in Indian society with the ultimate purpose of winning legislative majorities. A two-way process was involved in which Congress election committees sought electable candidates and would-be candidates mobilized whatever resources they had to press their case for nomination. A Congress candidate was expected to have a record of social and party service and to subscribe to a vague set of Gandhian-Nehruvian values. There was a sense of merit being more important than ascription, but

⁴⁶⁴ For the most sophisticated examination of how the “(...) Congress [adapted] itself to the local power structures (...) [recruited] from among those of who have local power and influence (...) [trained] its cadres to perform political roles similar to those performed in the traditional society before there was party politics (...) [manipulated] factional, caste, and linguistic disputes, and [used] its influence within administration to win and maintain electoral and financial support (...) [utilized] traditional methods of dispute settlement to maintain cohesion within the party”, see Weiner (1967, *ibid.* 15).

⁴⁶⁵ The significance of vote-banks, while of tremendous importance for electoral mobilisation and patronage distribution alike, is probably a little bit overstated. Even in the immediate post-independence era, mobilisation via vote-banks was paralleled by an ever growing feeling of confidence in the meaningfulness of the voting act and peoples’ capacity to participate effectively in the Indian polity. See Sheth (1975a) and Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978) for an assessment of the Indian electorate’s early voting behaviour, levels of political involvement and rising political awareness.

⁴⁶⁶ As Roy (1966-67, I-IV), who, along with Morris-Jones (1969), gives the most elaborate account of INC political recruitment and candidate selection up to 1967, notes, it was “(...) natural for the local [INC] activists to take into consideration the caste and communal composition of a particular constituency (...)” (Roy 1966-67, II: 22); “(...) the dominance of the upper castes in the Congress is a reflection of their dominance in society (...)” (Roy 1966-67, IV: 376). However, he continues to argue that in the context of Bihar (and also in general), “(...) the virtual monopoly of the upper castes over political resources has ended, and the operation of democratic politics has endowed the underprivileged lower castes with two attributes of political influence: numbers and organization. The recruitment pattern in the Congress Party, therefore, can be taken to indicate a shift in the distribution of power, notwithstanding the fact that the political scene in Bihar is still dominated by the upper castes” (Roy 1973: 241).

party factional alignments, ordinarily based on social cleavages, frequently determined who got the Congress “ticket”. Up to the 1960s, higher castes tended to dominate the party and to be disproportionately recruited. Minorities and women were given at least token representation and the participation of scheduled castes and tribes was cultivated in order to ensure maximum Congress gain in the seats reserved for these groups. Such disadvantaged groups and other lower castes tended to play subordinate and dependent roles in the party, as they did in the society. However (...) Congress recruitment was flexible enough to allow for gradual restratification, so that middle-peasant and lower castes, depending on their numbers and organizing capability, might aspire to increasing recruitment and control of party machine.” (Wood 1984: 200)⁴⁶⁷

Thus, the INC largely embraced an approach of spreading mobilisational and entrepreneurial efforts to the ‘top’ and the ‘bottom’ of Indian society, a tactic, which reflected a peculiar dialectic. Locally and regionally, the party was heavily dependent on elite castes and the wealthy to get the vote during election times, at the same time, projecting nationwide an image of itself as a party of the poor and the landless. In that regard, the national leadership’s modernist, anti-caste programmatic orientation was more than once circumvented with regard to party activity at the local and regional level. For example, in its effort to topple the Communist government of Kerala in 1957 (licensed by Nehru) the INC “(...) mobilized a combination of the worst communal and casteist forces, and used them in an unprecedented way to manipulate the secular institutions of Indian politics” (Alam 2002: 314). The INC’s record of manipulating caste constellations at the regional level, though part of the conventional narrative of post-independent INC dominance, was brought to my attention by Harish Khare in a personal interview (see references).

In a similar vein, Swamy (2003) has explained the INC’s successful domination of electoral politics after independence as being due to the employment of ‘vertical sandwich tactics’, whereby upwardly mobile interests of the middle strata of society are ‘outflanked’ by a coalition of the ‘top’ (elite) and ‘bottom layer’ of society that is sustained rhetorically by a (populist) commitment to the ‘truly needy’ in order to counter demands of “(...) middle-level actors for a broad reorientation of social or economic power (...)” (ibid. 3) and in terms of

⁴⁶⁷ ‘Flexibility’, and a concomitant ‘openness’ in recruitment procedures, also determined which institution had to play the ultimate arbiter with regards to the selection procedure, with the party’s CEC, PEC and DCC influence varying from election to election depending on the relative strength and importance of the respective party unit.

policy by means of making partial concessions through benefit targeting (e.g. affirmative action) and policy substitution (e.g. food policy instead of agricultural policies).⁴⁶⁸

However, during the heyday of one-party-dominance it was less (an active pursuit of) sandwich tactics by the dominant party that prevailed with regard to electoral mobilisation, and more the dominant party's accommodative politics and policies of expanding its social base by incorporating newly politicised groups, mediating and bargaining between them (and between these groups and already entrenched interests). Sandwich tactics were more relevant from the 1970's onwards as the interest articulation of new intermediate strata could no longer be reconciled through these kind of accommodative catch-all politics, a strategic device to uphold dominance.

The specific advantage of the INC as the dominant ruling party thereby reduced the post-independent party's need to mobilise actively for it could allow opposition parties or societal interest groups to gain in strength only to incorporate them later into its fold when they became a real challenge to INC dominance, i.e. after elections.⁴⁶⁹

Mobilisation by the INC was thus less a matter of compartmentalised control over public opinion. Instead of displaying open preference to any group's policy positions or social identity and reinforcing a group's political significance through (formal) preferential treatment and resource allocation, it was rather characterised by a dispersion of and varying accommodation to rising expectations to compensate for a loss of electoral appeal in any social stratum (e.g. through affirmative action/positive discrimination of the backward castes and classes) by a gain in electoral appeal in another stratum. Thus, the INC reacted and adapted itself to the changes and vagaries brought about by the interrelation of electoral politics and social change. As Rudolph and Rudolph (1987: 131) conclude, "[u]ntil the 1970s, the Congress party concerted and led the mediated mobilization of voters and the representation of interests. It was in tension with rather than in control of or subordinate to public opinion and organized social groups, classes, interests, and local notabilities. In the

⁴⁶⁸ Thus, Swamy comes to the conclusion that the main source of INC hegemony to ca. 1967 was a coalition of the dominant (caste and money) elites and the recently enfranchised middle peasantry as the new "bottom layer" of the electorate public, whereas - following the INC split in 1969 and the ascendancy of Indira Gandhi - a new sandwich coalition (of 'U'-shaped electoral support) between (caste) elites and the minorities (SC, ST, OBC, Muslims) guaranteed electoral dominance against politically aspiring new social groups and gradually replaced the middle peasantry as INC support base, which had increasingly gone to opposition parties.

⁴⁶⁹ For an elaboration of this process in Uttar Pradesh, see Burger (1969), who has caught the nature of the dominant INC approach to mobilisation using the metaphor of the INC being an "open accordion" (ibid. 284) drawing into its fold what opposition had mobilised.

context of policy choice and resource allocation, it led by creating political formulas that conciliated social groups and made bargains possible.”⁴⁷⁰

However, there were also groups that were targeted via more direct mobilisational efforts and long-time partisan preference engineering. Apart from the positive discrimination of the socially disadvantaged and (secularist) ideological appeal to the minorities (also as part of the dominant party’s initiation of a historical project (3.1.) already mentioned) and the co-optation of dominant elites by means of accommodation, the INC initially also concentrated mobilisational efforts on establishing some sort of a(n) (organised) ‘labour aristocracy’ based on its policy of planned and state-induced (as well as state-dominated) industrialisation and advancement of the urban sector (concomitant with its anti-agrarian emphasis that contributed to a gradual alienation of the middle peasantry and lower middle class). Support of the organised economy was purchased through expanding public sector employment and introducing labour-friendly legislation. Additionally, the INC successfully secured support from and became affiliated with one of the, then two dominating national umbrella organisations of Indian unions, the Indian Trade Union Congress (INTUC). The party’s special relationship with INTUC, although lop-sided since the state-dominated nature of industrial relations in post-independent India forced INTUC to allow “(...) itself to be co-opted, [to] reliably [comply] with government’s directives, and [to derive] many gains from its semiofficial standing” (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 269), and made it harder for other unions to access policy formulation and decision-making, thus reducing the autonomy of the trade union movement.⁴⁷¹

Although the electoral dividend of this strategy was not overwhelming due to a rather incremental industrialisation, it nevertheless prevented a unified and nationally relevant workers’ party from gaining momentum and heavily contributed to the marginality of class politics in India’s party system.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ This assessment of the INC comes close to what Sartori (1976: 252-266), following Apter, has termed a ‘representational party’ as opposed to a ‘party of solidarity’. The latter is characterised by promoting itself as the sole representation of society and claiming to responsibility for every societal interest. However, even though the Congress party was far from underpinning its dominance ideologically, its nationalist legacy raises parallels to Gramsci’s concept of a ‘party’ as “(...) posing all the questions around which the struggle (for hegemony) subsequently rages” (Gramsci 1971: 181-182).

⁴⁷¹ As a consequence, most Indian unions have chosen to affiliate with a political party rather than seeking to pursue a more corporatist strategy. Similarly, peasant associations such as the INC affiliated *Bharat Sevak Samaj* (Indian Service Association) have been tied and remained close to political parties

⁴⁷² Another strategic device of the INC/state’s control over union demands was described by Rudolph and Rudolph (1987: 259 f.) as “involutional pluralism” whereby a state-induced multiplication of rival trade unions, basically by means of permissive labour-legislation such as the right to form a union on the basis of an extremely low membership, makes it easier for the state “to manipulate an increasing number of weaker units” (ibid. 257).

At the same time and equally importantly, INC tactics comprised the depoliticisation of potential cleavages through anticipative policies/accommodation like the abolition of the *zamindari* system or the aforementioned States reorganisation, and the widest possible variation and pragmatism in terms of its ideological orientation dependent on just a swing of the pendulum in public opinion. This depoliticisation of cleavages and ideological eclecticism - as such, a clear indication of party agency - was a major entrepreneurial tool of the dominant party. It allowed the INC to display and pursue a centrist position/policies indispensable to its broad-based electoral appeal, and, even more importantly, opposition parties were prevented from turning their sectional appeal into a national political cleavage by means of capitalising on one of the many social divides prevalent (or emerging) in Indian society. By making a non-issue out of most of the potentially glaring sources of social conflict (e.g. religion) and in pragmatically (almost opportunistically) avoiding the taking of a too firm stand on whatever policy position on the agenda, the INC was able to obfuscate class, communal and caste conflict thereby hampering the emergence and structuring of a cleavage-based party system.⁴⁷³

Thus, changing issue positions allowed the INC to occupy the middle-ground of the ideological spectrum and to react selectively to the rise of oppositional forces. To give an example, the party's AICC *Avadi* resolution of 1955 oriented towards a 'socialistic pattern of society' took away from the socialist parties a good deal of their rationale.⁴⁷⁴ When the *Swatantra* party, and to a lesser extent the BJS (Graham 1997: 281 f.), tried to mobilise peasants against the INC government's agricultural strategy of providing state-induced incentives to form co-operative associations for small cultivators to better their precarious economic situation, as declared and envisaged at the Nagpur AICC meeting in 1959, it easily modified its policy of co-operative farming to defuse the protest. Henceforth, co-operative farming was "(...) characterised as a voluntary arrangement, dependent on consent" (ibid. 284).⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ In that regard, the INC as ruling party made extensive use of what Bachrach and Baratz (1977) have termed the power of "non-decision-making", the masking of potentially conflictive issues from the political arena. As Krishna (1967: 27), rather optimistically, notes, "[i]n its pursuit of stability and consensus the Congress consciously endeavoured to depoliticise the more explosive issues and simultaneously took steps to minimize conflicts and reduce social tensions by introducing agrarian reforms, however tardily implemented, by measures to secure industrial peace, by legislation and social reforms designed to promote welfare and moderate inequality, and by a thoroughgoing re-organization of the States on a linguistic basis. It directed its efforts towards creating a new consensus on national goals based on the ideas of planning, welfare and democracy and also consciously endeavoured to remove the most potent causes of cleavage and dissension."

⁴⁷⁴ Two years later at the Indore AICC session, the word 'Socialistic' was dropped again in favour of 'Socialist'.

⁴⁷⁵ Implementation of the INC governments agricultural policies was anyway largely in the hands of the State governments, most of which showed little enthusiasm for Nehru's more progressive stance towards the idea of co-operative associations.

Consequently, the economic ideology of the INC was eclectic to the point that, apart from the more radical extremes, i.e. communism and Manchester-type capitalism, every ideological shade could find a home. As Johri (1981: 833) notes: “The leaders of this party [INC, C.S.] boldly declare that it is committed to the principles of democratic socialism – a type of socialism meaning anything to any man from according recognition to free enterprise subject to canons of mixed economy of the nationalisation of private property by the authority of law in the public interest without power of the courts to question the constitutional validity of such an act passed by the legislature if placed into IX schedule of the constitution.”⁴⁷⁶

One of the essentials of continued electoral dominance through selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market is a “progressive expansion” (Mitra 1996: 706) of the dominant party’s social base – at least as long as hitherto unmobilised groups were entering party competition. In a predominantly agrarian society this requires a concentrated effort at constantly mobilising and appealing to middle peasants, the rural poor and dominant agrarian castes/big landowners. The latter were largely co-opted by the INC’s “politics of accommodation” whereby the party “(...) continued to recruit from among leading members of the dominant landowning castes – notables who had power and influence in local factional groupings – and to organize popular participation in the wider electoral process through a complex pyramiding of vertical factional alliances” (Frankel 1978: 25). These notables in turn organised the support of the rural poor for the INC. At the same time, the poor were being more directly pandered to, through the national party leadership’s two-pronged approach of promoting a secular, socialist and rational pro-poor stance evoking “(...) new feelings of class consciousness among the peasantry” and launching institutional opportunities for the poor to exercise effective (democratically sustained) pressure from below (ibid. 25-26).

Furthermore, the INC initially secured support of those ‘middle peasants’ or emerging “bullock capitalists” (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 340 f.) who had profited from the abolition of the feudal *zamindari* land tenure system and attendant agricultural policies. However, although the INC was able to represent agrarian interests (middle peasants), apparent from the fact that the share of MPs with a rural background rose from 15% in 1947 to 40% in 1962

⁴⁷⁶ Hence, the (rather laxly handled) socialist programmatic positioning of the INC government’s economic thinking and its concomitant policies of protective import substitution were greatly benefiting Indian companies, industrialists and great land owners thus ensuring support from private domestic capital and making the INC by far the most advantaged recipient of business contributions to the respective parties’ funds (Krishna 1967: 42). In fact, private expenditure exceeded public expenditure during the first Five-Year Plan (283 crores of rupees in current prices as against 55 crores) and was still ranging high during the second Five-Year Plan (850 crores (private) as against 938 crores (public), see Chaudhuri 1975: 160). As Tulsidas Kilachand, spokesman of the Indian business community said in 1962, “[t]he business community is in complete agreement with the socialist objectives of the government and there are no two opinions on that score. There is no fundamental or ideological difference between the business community and the government” (quoted in ibid. 173).

(Rosen 1967: 73), its subsequent agricultural policies were not far reaching enough to appease the emerging ‘middle peasantry’ and were not adequately followed by means of selective mobilisation comprising more extensive land reform, social programmes for small cultivators and other rural strata and development of the agrarian sector (Varshney 1998a: 191 f.).⁴⁷⁷ The middle peasantry was consequently the first social group that was, by 1971, “(...) largely in the opposition” (Swamy 2003: 30).

As a result of all these mobilisational and entrepreneurial activities of the INC, the dominant party was constantly expanding its already vast support base to the point that the overall picture we get of the party’s social base in terms of major social categories (caste, religion), compared to the main opposition parties in 1967, is one of a broad social coalition largely representative of Indian society.

Table 23: Social base of INC and main opposition parties according to major social categories/communities, 1967⁴⁷⁸

	INC	BJS	SWA	Socialist	Communist	Others	N
Hindu upper	48	15	7	8	5	17	543
Hindu OBC	47	7	7	5	9	25	630
Dalit /SC	57	5	4	8	8	18	275
Muslim	45	2	12	13	3	25	168
Other	59	4	5	2	1	29	195
All	50	8	7	7	6	22	1841

Notes: Entries are for the percentage of respondents belonging to different communities who reported voting for various parties in the relevant survey. ‘N’ is the total number of respondents of that community/class that form the basis of the percentage calculation. Socialist = PSP and SSP, Communist = CPI and CPI(M). The ST’s have been omitted for the total number of *adivasi* respondents was a meagre N=30.

Source: adapted from Yadav and Heath (2001: 118); based on data from the male sample (n = 1.971) of the 1967 CSDS National Election Survey.

⁴⁷⁷ In this regard, Varshney (1998a) explores the paradox that whereas India’s rural sector has acquired substantial power and political representation since independence, the political prominence of the countryside is far from being directly translated into real economic power.

⁴⁷⁸ The relatively low percentage of Muslims supporting the INC is somewhat exceptional. It is however an aberration of the general trend and can probably be traced back to errors regarding the conduct of the survey, the first national survey ever conducted in India. In the CSDS survey of 1971, Muslim endorsement of the INC (74%) was by far the highest of all social categories (Chhibber and Petrocik 1989).

If we look at data on the social base of Indian parties based on party identification ('those respondents who reported to feel close to a party') from the same survey, the result is even more convincing of the broadly inclusive, representative character of the INC.

Table 24: Select social categories and party support, India, 1967⁴⁷⁹

	INC	SWA	BJS	Communist	Socialist	Regional Parties	Sample Norm
<u>Place of Residence</u>							
Rural	78.2	93.0	65.2	78.8	85.3	65.4	77.7
Urban	21.8	7.0	34.8	21.2	14.7	34.6	22.3
<u>Occupation</u>							
Cultivators	47.3	64.0	44.9	35.0	41.0	35.5	46.0
Skilled Factory	3.0	3.0	2.2	10.0	1.0	9.7	3.8
<u>Education</u>							
Illiterate	49.6	50.0	39.1	47.5	49.5	28.2	46.4
Highly educated	4.4	7.0	14.5	15.0	7.4	2.4	6.2
<u>Landholding</u>							
No land	30.8	18.0	33.3	36.3	28.4	43.5	31.4
10 acres and more (highest category)	15.5	30.0	18.8	11.2	7.4	8.9	15.4
<u>Income</u>							
Lowest income group	34.5	40.0	23.2	36.3	37.9	28.2	33.6
High income	7.7	14.0	16.7	16.3	7.4	8.1	9.6
<u>Age</u>							
21-25	16.0	20.0	18.8	25.0	15.8	21.8	16.7
26-35	27.6	28.0	35.5	35.0	43.2	36.3	30.7
36-45	22.6	21.0	23.9	20.0	16.8	21.0	21.9
46-55	16.7	18.0	11.6	8.8	8.4	10.5	15.5
55+	17.0	12.0	8.0	11.2	15.8	10.5	15.0

Notes: N = 1377; percentages based on male respondents who said they felt close to a particular party; Socialist = PSP and SSP, Communist = CPI and CPI(M); for specification of categories see *ibid*.

Source: adapted from Sheth (1975c: 143 f.), data drawn from 1967 CSDS National Election Survey.

INC support by each social category is largely reflective of the sample norm of each category, whereas for almost all of the opposition parties there are clearly identifiable strongholds or social categories beyond their reach. Thus, for example, the relatively proportionally

⁴⁷⁹ Of course, the regional variation of INC support would probably show more variation as the analysis of the 1971 survey (and later surveys) clearly indicates; see Chhibber (1999: 63).

sustained support for the Communists in terms of the urban-rural divide was qualified by the skilled factory worker bias of the Communist parties' support base.

In sum, the overall picture we get is that whereas selective mobilisation was a strategy primarily employed by the national party leadership or, for that matter, by the apex of the party organisation and the 'Congress in government', the entrepreneurial aspect of party agency, a reflection of socio-demographic constellations and accommodative rather than mobilisational, largely prevailed at the local and regional level, or, in other words, at the bottom of the party organisation (the field organisation), the level of the 'Congress in the electorate'. As a result, only the INC could claim to be (and in reality was) largely representative (catch-all) and reflective of the country's heterogeneous social structure.

Selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market takes a rather different shape in South Africa. This does not come as a surprise given the differing political opportunity structure at the end of the millennium (especially, the completely changed role of the state in international discourse and perception) and differences in the socio-structural context, historical predispositions, the level of political awareness and institutional arrangements.

In terms of selective mobilisation, for example, corporatism as a strategic device to bind workers to the dominant party and not to intimidate business interests, is much more prominent in the South African context given the size of organised labour in the country (one third of formal sector workers), the crucial mobilisational power of the union movement (as well as its possible role as a highly politicised veto player against the dominant party's embarking on a historical project and staffed with considerable blackmail potential) and the critical dependence on a still, largely white-dominated business sector to accomplish any kind of social transformation.⁴⁸⁰ The corporatist arrangement, later on institutionalised in the form of the National Economic and Development and Labour Advisory Council (NEDLAC), gives the ANC the opportunity to actively pursue selective mobilisation (however, as one of my interview partners, Steven Friedman, said, what is taking place is 'concertation' rather than 'corporatism' or an institutional regime, in which the parties involved reach broad understandings through less formal and binding interchange than in the classic 'corporatist' setting, see references and fn. 481 below).⁴⁸¹ Union-friendly labour legislation or quasi

⁴⁸⁰ The ANC's strategy of 'taming' (and dividing) the labour force via corporatist arrangements thus accords with "(...) the exclusionary tactics of incorporating the most organised segments of labor that predominate in most developing societies" (Heller 1996: 1058).

⁴⁸¹ With its four chambers (labour market, trade and industry, public finance and monetary policy and development) NEDLAC negotiates, prepares and oversees legislation pertaining to such crucial aspects of the country's economic and development trajectory as "(...) support measures for industry; the budget framework

monopolies for large white-controlled corporations initially ensured the support of the economically satisfied and bore the complexion of a legitimately reached consensus. With COSATU as part of the ruling alliance, union demands stay within limits, a possible left contender is appeased or, even, neutralised by the narrowing of the ideological range for party politics, and the dominant party is endued with the additional and indispensable mobilisational power of COSATU.⁴⁸² At the same time, a growing African middle-class is advanced through affirmative action in the civil service and business sector and through state contracts (Giliomee and Simkins 1999b: 345). The 'Black Economic Empowerment' (BEE) initiative is another case in point. Officially launched to alter the racial profile of South Africa's formal business sector, it proved to be less successful in a numerical sense with the share of Africans in formal industry/business management at a meagre 7% in 1999 according to the final report of the BEE Commission (BEE 1999: 16). Yet, BEE contributes to the expansion of a tiny African capitalist class as a key social group in South Africa thereby ensuring support for the ANC-led government and its policies from an increasingly powerful social actor. However, since privatisation is seen by the government as a means to release BEE, a controversy about the role of the state in bringing about BEE (especially in the small and medium size economy) has set in between ANC leadership and COSATU thus reinforcing the contradiction inherent in special interest group accommodation enhancing support for the state and dominant party on the one hand, but, at the same time, reducing the scope for state autonomy. For a critical assessment of BEE see IDASA (2002). I am thankful to Ebrahim Fakir for providing that information in a personal interview (see references). Indeed, corporatist arrangements coupled with positive discrimination elsewhere⁴⁸³ proved to be a strong means of increasing party control over the electorate and social and economic interactions. However, the success of this strategy is highly dependent on the extent to which the state is able to disperse patronage and deliver resources effectively to its support base. The South

and a revised taxation system, a new Employment Act and urban-rural development" (then NEDLAC Executive Director Jayendra Naidoo, *Business Day*, January 29, 1996). However, as Friedman (2000: 14-15) interprets the South African corporatism, there was never such thing as an 'elite cartel' of government-business-labour deal-making due to the adversarial nature of corporatist bargaining and the low level of institutionalisation of the bargaining partners (there is, for example, no strong national employer association). Additionally, he remarks, following Baskin (2000), that tripartite bargaining in South Africa should rather be conceptualised as 'concertation', not as corporatism, for "[s]tructured, binding, bargaining between the three social partners (...) has never taken root" and tripartism in South Africa consists more or less of an "(...) exchange between government, business and labour in which each party takes the other into account, (even if they do not conclude formal, binding agreements)" (ibid. 14).

⁴⁸² Similar to INC-INTUC relations in India, the ANC privileges COSATU as one of the country's two major union federations (the other being the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU)).

⁴⁸³ Reference is made here to the one-party-dominant regime of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) in Mexico up to the end of the 1990s when market liberalisation narrowed the (patronage and corporatist) room to manoeuvre for the dominant party to satisfy its labour support base (Ferdinand 1994).

African state's "infrastructural power"⁴⁸⁴ is very limited in this regard. The failure of the state to convince supporters to pay for municipal services in order to speed-up the delivery of services⁴⁸⁵ and the growing trade union and NGO critiques of government policies despite "(...) fairly straightforward exercises(s) in co-option" (Friedman 1999c: 123) are only two illustrations of the limitations on party strategy. Neoliberal adjustment, especially fiscal austerity prescriptions, will constrain the room to manoeuvre (social spending, patronage) for the dominant party even further.

However, the ANC is less dependent on a 'progressive expansion' of its support base than the INC, since it already commands over two-thirds of the electorate (as compared to an average 44.6% of the INC in the 1952-1967 elections) and does not have to court the (demographically concentrated) minority vote for the sake of creating (State/province-wise) winning formulae under an FPTP/SMSP electoral regime. The bigger problem for the ANC is to protect its constituency from fractionalisation and to prevent the rise of intra-African (ethnic, religious, class-based) politicisation.

Since African class-based interests have been largely co-opted⁴⁸⁶ and the emerging African middle class subject to preferential treatment policies, the Achilles Heel of the ANC's 'protection' of its social base, is the rural poor and unemployed or those not part of the organised workforce. It is these social strata that are most prone to becoming a receptive social base for ethnic or local/regional entrepreneurs, once the appreciation of benefits brought about by the first wave of (relatively easily accomplished) government programmes addressing basic needs (providing piped water, housing and electrification, expanding primary health services) fades from these population groups' collective perception and a growing awareness of relative deprivation⁴⁸⁷ (with regards to future outcomes and other African social

⁴⁸⁴ Infrastructural power is a concept referred to by Jayal (1999) following Mann (1988) and "(...) refers to the state's capacity to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout its territory", whereas "despotic power of the state élite consists in the range of actions that it has the power to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with groups in civil society" (ibid. 18). Jayal goes on to argue that by "these criteria, capitalist democracies are despotically weak and infrastructurally strong, as the state has the power to penetrate and coordinate activities in civil society, but the state élite does not possess power over civil society" (ibid.).

⁴⁸⁵ As part of the *Masakhane* (Xhosa word for 'let us build together') campaign launched by Nelson Mandela in February 1995.

⁴⁸⁶ Despite growing COSATU and SACP criticism of the ANC leadership's policy orientation, both alliance partners have been appeased by the dominant party's repetitive and strategic commitment to its 'historical project "(...) designed to ensure an acceptable degree of ideological and organisational continuity with the ANC leadership running the country, so as to maintain a 'National Democratic Alliance' that is seen as the only viable political/organisational vehicle to meet the needs of the majority (i.e., the workers and poor)" (McKinley 2001: 77).

⁴⁸⁷ 'Relative deprivation' is a concept most prominently elaborated by Gurr (1970) that concentrates on people's comparisons of themselves, their (economic) situation at different points in time (people compare their current situation with either their past situation or their expected future situation; objectively, a group may be in a disadvantaged situation, but compared to the past its members may feel that the situation has improved – or

strata) gains momentum. Whether the ANC will be able to prevent the rise of an intra-African cleavage (which it tries to do by counting all Africans as part of the ‘majority’) will thus to a great extent depend on the status of ‘delivery’.⁴⁸⁸

With regard to the dominant party’s ideological positioning and catch-all electoral appeal (as reflected in a preponderance of accommodative and centrist policy positions), the ANC’s policy orientation is different from the INC’s pursuit of ideological eclecticism. This hardly comes as a surprise given the rather dissimilar international and domestic economic context and the respective dominant party’s differently structured (core) constituencies (see below). Surprisingly enough, the current ideological thrust of the ANC-led government (after the shift from the RDP to GEAR), although ‘centrist’ in a broad sense insofar as it reflects the mainstream economic thinking of an international consensus on capitalist development in a democratic setting and despite being accompanied by a still quasi-socialist rhetoric of the party’s leadership, violates the interests of its core constituency of politically assertive (unionised) workers and is bound to alienate the dominant party’s alliance partners, COSATU and the SACP. The most obvious reason for the ANC’s seemingly unexpected (but rational) embrace of a neoliberal package of macro-economic policy lies in the changed political opportunity structure for capitalist democracies at the turn of the millennium and the resultant dwindle of resources available to the dominant (ruling) party.

In the South African context, and herein lies one of the fundamental differences to the (post-colonial) Indian perspective, the ideological climate was clearly decisive (and very different) at a time when the ANC had to rethink and design its economic views and (strategic) policies (once unbanned and approaching political power), a fact, which is neatly grasped by Webster’s (2001: 84) phrase that “[i]f (...) Mandela had entered prison at a time when nationalisation was an article of faith, he was released into a world where monetarism and its obsession with inflation and the reduction in state expenditure had become the new orthodoxy.”

Moreover, a growing awareness on the part of the ANC-led government that the state’s assets and capacities in a time of increasing international competition and larger mobility of goods and production would not suffice to induce social transformation effectively, may have

otherwise) and relates political protest to people’s growing concern that experienced improvements will not continue; the relational self-evaluation may also refer to (social) improvements within adjacent social strata.

⁴⁸⁸ In that regard, as Adam (1999: 267-277) points out, “(...) the NP exit from formal power-sharing [within the GNU, C.S.] has weakened the government. Not only has the ANC to bear responsibility for failure of delivery alone, it now has to reinforce the impression that it pursues “responsible” policies. Faced with a generalized distrust by a sceptical global audience, the ANC with exclusive power has to be doubly cautious to stay within approved parameters. While no longer settled with the burden of a conservative coalition-partner, the government has been burdened to appear conservative on its own.”

contributed to the shift in macro-economic policy from RDP to GEAR and a greater reliance on corporatist arrangements as well. Therefore, to revitalise the much-needed investment, a path was chosen that “(...) would extend liberal democratic rights to all people in the political sphere while relying on market-determined outcomes in the economic sphere” (Heintz 2002: 15)⁴⁸⁹ stabilising the economic climate and hoping that distributive conflicts and redistributive pressures triggered by the democratic process remain contained.⁴⁹⁰

At the same time however, market-friendly policies (especially privatisation) and some dirigiste concessions to powerful vested interests (protective labour legislation and affirmative action), the latter being a clear reflection of the state’s policy choices and the dominant party’s agency, pressures of globalisation notwithstanding⁴⁹¹, are directly benefiting the emerging African professional middle class, unionised workers and business groups, which, due to their organisational power and blackmail potential, exert a great influence on the ANC’s strategic thinking. It is basically this part of the ANC’s constituency that is benefiting from the shift in macro-economic policy (see figure 3 in 2.2.3., fn. 222). A shift based on the calculation that the grace period of support from the ANC’s rural constituency may be longer than that of other parts of its support base⁴⁹², although it is only a matter of time when the rural poor and, primarily, the unemployed, who constitute South Africa’s major socio-economic problem, will raise their voices against the current economic trajectory of the country.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ See also Bezuidenhout (2000: 10).

⁴⁹⁰ In this regard, Heintz (2002: 15) argues that, for example, “(...) [b]y liberalizing labor markets and maintaining a high degree of “flexibility,” wage demands and efforts to improve standards could be kept in check by the specter of growing unemployment. Likewise, by drastically reducing restrictions on trade and capital flows, redistributive policies would be more difficult to pursue without compromising the country’s competitiveness or risking capital flight.”

⁴⁹¹ Globalisation surely limits the scope of redistributive policies, welfare spending and investment in ‘human capital’ infrastructure, but it does not render the state completely powerless. To view the South African state as being restricted to solely balance market imperfections and as not being able to bring about growth with redistribution by means of social regulation (instead of market regulation) might conceal the strategic thinking of the dominant party. However, at present, it seems that apart from addressing basic needs (and half-hearted efforts at land reform as well as union-friendly labour legislation), affirmative action has remained the only hardcore redistributive measure of the government’s transformative vision. Yet, the transformation of the bureaucracy through affirmative action, though originally conceptualised as a means toward a broader democratic end, namely service to and empowerment of ordinary people, has become more and more the end in itself, the goal of transition.

⁴⁹² Indeed, opinion polls of early 1999 suggest that public perception (especially in the rural areas) of the status of delivery and the conviction that ‘life has improved’ are still very positive in general, see Mattes, Taylor and Africa (1999a: 37-64); see also Klandermans et al. (2001a: 47-91) and Lodge (1999d: 61-62). However, whereas policy substitution (meeting basic needs instead of profound social restructuring) did suffice to appease these social groups, growing awareness of the ‘plasticity of the social world’ among them may soon threaten the dominant party’s electoral fortunes.

⁴⁹³ However, the rising government claims for a gradual ‘flexibilisation’ of the labour market indicate that even the unions, although being part and parcel of the ruling coalition, cannot be sure that their preferential treatment will not fall prey to the ANC-led government’s strategic economic thinking.

As such, the uneasy mix of neoliberal policies and some strategic redistributive measures is a clear indication that the ANC can no longer follow the path of other dominant parties by pursuing politics of outright protectionism, patronage and clear populist mobilisation now that the paradigm of *dirigisme* has vanished altogether and the role of the state has changed completely and irreversibly.⁴⁹⁴

As regards entrepreneurship on the electoral market, the situation in South Africa is different too from that of the INC in post-independent India. Whereas in India the successful strategy of the INC involved the depoliticisation or ‘muting’ of potential cleavages in order to preserve its image as the catch-all ‘party of consensus’, a strategy of encouraging the racial consolidation of the vote must be seen as the best (and most rational) option that was and is on offer for the ANC to perpetuate its electoral dominance. Despite multiple potential cleavages other than race (see 2.2.3.) and a growing African middle-class, there is still an overwhelming coincidence of race and class that underpins a common perception of a ‘Black-White’, ‘Rich-Poor’ divide. The ANC profits from this divide/dichotomy that papers over the genuine cleavages of the South African society by delineating the country’s inequalities in ‘race’ terms and evoking emotive support for the ‘continuing struggle’ against the legacies of apartheid. This strategy is made easier by the fact that the NNP and DP are basically pandering to their non-African constituencies and, the IFP, not able to get a majority of the vote (even) amongst its most evident support base, the Zulu community, has joined Mbeki in declaring that the ‘race’ divide is also the ‘inequality’ divide for the sake of sharing power within an ANC-led government.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁴ Considering the political-economic nexus (of one-party-dominance in a capitalist democracy in the face of globalisation), Giliomee and Simkins – following Jesudason (1996: 128-160) - in their comparison of one-party-dominance in semi-developed countries, have characterised the South African state, caught between a number of imperatives, as a ‘syncretic state’: “This is a state with a remarkable ability to combine a mix of ideological approaches, allowing the leadership to blur the lines between state and society. As a result, South Africa has seen a bewildering mix of clashing commitments: colour-blind merit and affirmative action rules of ethnic preferment, non-racialism and Africanisation, free market acceptance and tight regulation of the labour market, state patronage for African contractors and near-monopolies for largely white-controlled corporations and so on” (Giliomee and Simkins 1999b: 345).

⁴⁹⁵ The fact that almost all opposition parties in South Africa ‘joined’ the ANC in orienting their campaign strategies towards an African-minority cleavage (instead of trying to break into the ANC’s African support base, e.g. by means of ethnic or regional mobilisation) is not least the result of the institutional incentive structure brought about by the interplay of social cleavages (displaying a race/minority-class overlap and a regional concentration of racial/ethnic minorities), the closed list PR electoral system (working against local and regional autonomy of party units and the emergence of local power bases) and the (weak) federal system heavily biased towards the national government in terms of policy-making. This incentive structure makes national political representation more attractive than representation at the local or regional level and consequently shapes and structures opposition strategies. This contrasts with the Indian experience of co-operative federalism wherein segmented factional alliances within states (based on socio-demographic considerations) are aggregated to national party dominance despite a similarly unitarian bias of the country’s federal set-up.

The most famous reference to the dominant party's rhetorical propagation of a 'two-nations thesis' is surely current President, Mbeki's speech at the opening of the parliamentary debate on national reconciliation on May 29, 1998, wherein he stated that:

„One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographic dispersal. It has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure. This enables it to argue that, except for the persistence of gender discrimination against women, all members of this nation have the possibility to exercise their right to equal opportunity, the development opportunities to which the Constitution of '93 committed our country. The second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor, with the worst affected being women in the rural areas, the black rural population in general and the disabled. This nation lives under conditions of a grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure. It has virtually no possibility to exercise what in reality amounts to a theoretical right to equal opportunity, with that right being equal within this black nation only to the extent that it is equally incapable of realisation. This reality of two nations, underwritten by the perpetuation of the racial, gender and spatial disparities born of a very long period of colonial and apartheid white minority domination, constitutes the material base which reinforces the notion that, indeed, we are not one nation, but two nations.” (ANC/Thabo Mbeki 1998).⁴⁹⁶

This account of the country's society is obviously quite different from the earlier praise and promotion of a 'rainbow nation'. There is of course a decisive race-class alignment prevalent in South African society (see 2.2.3.) that makes mobilisation along the two-nations-thesis electorally rewarding and allows the making of implicit reference to race-based sentiments and interests via (non-racial) class appeals. Hence, race-based political mobilisation comes disguised as class-based mobilisation. Thus, the dominant party's highlighting of one overarching cleavage complies with the political opportunity structure of the country.

In this regard, the realiter cross-cutting nature of South Africa's cleavages bears resemblance to India's socio-cultural configuration, although it produced very different results as regards the party system's mobilisation patterns in the two regional settings. Whereas in India the structure of (cross-cutting) cleavages created an atmosphere of social and cultural differentiation, making electoral success at the national level dependent on the promotion of a

⁴⁹⁶ The speech is available at the ANC's website (documentation section) at the following address: www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/1998/sp980529.html.

multiple appeal (the extreme pluralist setting naturally favoured the INC as the sole party with a catch-all character and a cross-sectional appeal), in South Africa, the promotion of one, historically induced cleavage (race) makes it possible to fuse multiple identities into one common concern, although a fragile (and fragmented) one since multiple identities and cross-cutting allegiances are maintained within this 'common context'.⁴⁹⁷

With regard to the dominant party's political entrepreneurship in terms of recruiting local elites and leaders with a strong following, the ANC of course does not operate in a clientelist space similar to that accessible to the INC immediately after independence. The availability of vote banks there (most often based on caste lines) to a great extent determined electoral mobilisation and success.⁴⁹⁸ Similar kinds of vote banks are of course not available in the South African context, except perhaps for those (remote) rural areas where the role of the *amakhosi* (traditional chiefs/leaders) is still determining public life and influencing voting behaviour.⁴⁹⁹

The ANC is of course cautious not to antagonise the traditional leaders for they still perform a crucial role in (traditional) society.⁵⁰⁰ However, due to its more progressive alliance partners and its democratic, modernist appeal, the ANC's stance towards the traditional leaders and their interest organisation, CONTRALESA, is becoming increasingly ambivalent compared to its earlier 'courting' of traditional leaders. Before the elections of 1994 the ANC conceived of traditional leaders as a strong, 'vote-getting' societal force and granted them constitutional recognition and legislative representation (advisory function) at all three governmental levels.⁵⁰¹ Additionally, traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal are also strongly affiliated with

⁴⁹⁷ Due to the fact that unlike India, where partition initially reduced the potential for partisan manoeuvring to draw on the religious cleavage, history gave the ANC a ready-made electoral tool at hand: apartheid and its legacies. It could thus be argued that the ANC tries to turn many cross-cutting cleavages into one overarching, cumulative cleavage (an attempt similar to what the ruling Hindu-Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - or, for that matter the *Sangh Parivar* since the BJP has moderated its (Hindu)-Nationalist creed upon coming to power - tries to engineer in India nowadays, namely to obfuscate the many (cross-cutting) cleavages prevalent in Indian society by means of fusing all strands of (Hindu) religious and ethnic identity into one common cultural context (of *Hindutva*) pitted against minority interests).

⁴⁹⁸ In a more conceptual sense, the African majority constitutes one huge 'vote-bank', the 'natural' support base of the ANC, with such charismatic leaders like Mandela figuring as the equivalent to the influential local leaders or power-brokers in the Indian context.

⁴⁹⁹ However, one should not overestimate the role of traditional leaders in rural areas with regard to the actual voting decision. For example, whereas in 1996 almost 70% of the African population group regarded traditional leaders as important role players in community affairs (with 60% saying that traditional leaders should serve in local governments) (*Business Day*, May 13, 1996), only 5% of the rural respondents in the Opinion'99 survey, quoted in Lodge (1999d: 71), appeared to rely on community elders and traditional chiefs for political information.

⁵⁰⁰ Traditional leadership structures prevail in all provinces except for the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng.

⁵⁰¹ For a manifestation of the ANC's strategically engineered balancing act of defending the democratic rationale of the party and its governance on the one hand (especially with regard to the newly created local government structures in areas historically administered by traditional authorities; the role of traditional leaders with regard to local government structures is consequently the most serious bone of contention in the debate about the future

the IFP, formally the ANC's coalition partner, but also a potential contender for power and office.

However, as indicated in 2.2.3., there are other avenues for a dominant party willing to co-opt local elites and opinion-makers. The kind of 'vote banks' that traditional chiefs or community elders may have engineered (and to some extent still engineer), have more than once been replaced in specific areas by the 'convincing power' of other, in a sense, more 'modern' local power-brokers such as warlords or youth leaders. The statement of Hindson and Morris (1992: 163-164) describing the role of local strongmen in 1992 and their interplay with party units and state agencies still held true for the party-society encounter in many of the country's regions (especially Natal, the former homelands and most of the former townships) at the end of the decade/turn of the millenium: "The ANC, Inkatha and, increasingly the agencies of the central state, are forced to operate through the local warlord or youth power centres to gain political power locally. Equally, local power groups turn for support to regional and national organisations: Inkatha and the homeland or national government on the one hand and the ANC national structure on the other."⁵⁰² The comparison between the Indian and the South African context as concerns this (party) entrepreneurial aspect of political mobilisation is thus, not that farfetched, as it would seem at first sight.⁵⁰³

The ANC also tries to co-opt local elites by giving them promising positions on the party's candidate lists.⁵⁰⁴ This was most evident in the Western Cape province before the 1999

role of traditional leaders in South Africa; it is at the local level, where their influence is most strongly felt and it is the local level of government, which is the least institutionalised unit of governance in the country, see also 2.2.3.), and conceding a (constitutional) role to the traditional authorities, see, for example, Northern Province premier, Ngoako Ramatlodi's statement on 'Traditional leaders 'have role'' wherein he advocates a symbiotic relationship between systems of traditional leadership and democracy (*Sowetan*, December 10, 1997).

⁵⁰² An example of how such interplay of mutual benefit (i.e. co-optation) between the ANC and 'local strongmen' took place in the former township of Crossroads bordering Cape Town can be found in du Toit and Gagliano (1993); see also du Toit (1995: 372 f.) for an assessment of (weak) state-(strong) society interaction in this regard.

⁵⁰³ I came to this conclusion in reaction to the discussion (especially the critical comments by Dean E. McHenry) about a preliminary outline of this study at the International Political Science Association's (IPSA) 19th World Congress held in Durban, June 29 – July 4, 2003. A similar concern about the comparability of the two contexts in this regard was raised by Roger Jeffery in the presentation and discussion of the first draft of the study in the seminar programme of the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, May 15, 2002.

⁵⁰⁴ In some provinces there is a clear indication for the dominant party's strategic decision to 'localise' campaigning for the otherwise primarily 'nationally' contested elections. This is the case in particular in the Western Cape, in KwaZulu-Natal and in the Eastern Cape (to a lesser extent in Gauteng as well). 'Localising' campaigning is reflected in the emphasis on specific issue of local relevance (such as environmental issues in the 1999 Western Cape campaign or issues related to the Indian community in KwaZulu-Natal) and the positioning of locally/regionally prominent or less controversial personalities on the party's candidate list (such as Rasool in the Western Cape – where, additionally, candidates with an Africanist record were placed on insuspicious list places (Lodge 1999d: 141 f.) – or prominent members of the Indian community in Kwa-Zulu-Natal/Durban. The 'national' character of most electoral campaigning, for reasons elaborated in footnote 495 above and due to the fact that like in India up to 1971 (during the heyday of one-party-dominance) South Africa holds concurrent (provincial/national) elections, otherwise 'minimises' the dominant party's need to focus mobilisational efforts at co-opting local or regional elites.

elections as the ANC attempted to broaden its support base by appealing to the province's Coloured community, which constitutes more than half (57%) of the electorate in that province. Shortly before the elections, the ANC successfully enticed several populist coloured politicians from the NNP, most notably Patrick McKenzie, and contested the elections with an explicitly local focus and a new candidate for provincial premier, Ebrahim Rasool, who belonged to the coloured community as well (Lodge 1999d: 141 f.).⁵⁰⁵

In sum, as a consequence of these mobilisational efforts (mobilisation of selective African class interests including labour, the emerging middle class, business elites and public servants via co-optation, affirmative action and preferential treatment) and entrepreneurial tactics (capitalising on a cumulative race-class cleavage and co-optation of local elites) of the dominant party, the social base of the ANC, while clearly biased towards the African population group (see table 25 below), an overwhelmingly poor and rural group, is largely representative of the various social and societal shades (class, ethnicity, religion) within this population group.

The main opposition parties, on the other hand, focus their mobilisational efforts on the ethnic minority groups that coincide with distinctive social and class characteristics largely representative of the respective parties' historical origins and popular image, and, consequently, compete for an ever limited pool of supporters of demographically confined population groups and social strata.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ The partisan rationale of this strategy coupled with a decline of the provincial party's (traditionally left) ideological underpinnings is revealed in the following quote from Lodge (1999d: 143): "As Rasool put it, in response to a question about the ideological complications which might have arisen from the presence within the party of NNP defectors such as Patrick McKenzie with records of bellicose antipathy to the ANC: 'we are reaching a state of maturity about these issues in the ANC. There is hunger for victory in the ANC and the organisation will accept those that can help it achieve that victory'".

⁵⁰⁶ Survey data for the period 1994-97 (Mattes, Africa and Jacobs 1998, surveys conducted in 1994, 1995 and 1997) while confirming the African bias of the ANC (over 90%), comes to the conclusion that the IFP's African support base is either slightly above or slightly below the 90% and that "[f]or the NP, an increasingly large proportion of its support base is made up of African, coloured and Indian voters (although this is probably because of the sharp decline in white support, rather than attracting any new black support) (...) African voters constitute an increasing share of the DP's support base (...) [s]upport for the [UDM] is totally African" (ibid. 10). With regard to the then newly created UDM, its African support is geographically concentrated in the Eastern Cape and the IFP's support base is largely rural Zulu. Only the DP may thus be able to attract more substantial African support away from the ANC's constituency.

Table 25: Party support for major South African parties by ethno-linguistic grouping, November 1999 (% of a sample totalling 2678 respondents in all nine provinces)

Party	Black Zulu	Black other	White Afrikaans	White other %	Coloured	Indian	Total
ANC	46.9	79.8	0.8	4.6	30.7	8.0	56.1
DP		0.5	29.5	46.8	6.6	26.4	6.4
IFP	11.6	0.3	2.3		0.5	0.8	2.8
NNP		0.7	15.8	4.7	19.2	21.3	4.4
UDM	0.1	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.5	0.2	1.5
ACDP	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.2	4.0	1.2
Total (of ethno- linguistic grouping's % of sample)	20.6	53.7	7.8	4.9	9.7	0.7	

Notes: data based on a public opinion survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) during November 1999 just after the second general election. Rows do not add up to 100%, for the table lists only major parties and does not take into account entries for the categories of 'Won't vote', 'Don't know', 'Uncertain' and 'Refused'. The omission of these latter categories explains the variance regarding actual election results.

Source: Rule (2001: 326).

As one can see from table 25 above, party support for the country's major parties clearly still follows racial or ethnic lines, even though most surveys indicate that voting preferences are no longer overtly related to racial or ethnic identity (see, for example, Mattes and Thiel (1998), Rule (2001), Mattes and Piombo (2001))⁵⁰⁷. ANC support is very solid among Africans, including Zulus, the IFP is largely a Zulu party, the DP aggregates mainly white and Indian support, the NNP's support base consists primarily of white Afrikaners, Coloureds and Indians. The UDM and ACDP's support base are the most evenly spread among the population groups, but the latter parties' combined electoral strength added up to only 4.85% of the national vote share in the 1999 elections. Although there is potential for voter

⁵⁰⁷ In a recent scholarly assessment of voting behaviour in South Africa based on data produced by the abovementioned 'Opinion '99' survey, Mattes and Piombo (2001: 101) come to the conclusion that instead of voting behaviour in South Africa being subject to 'a general desire (on behalf of the voters) to express communal solidarity with political parties that are seen to represent their racial or ethnic community' or to specific 'cultural norms or predispositions hostile to political pluralism', (presumably racially or ethnically induced) partisan choice is rather a matter of "(...) factors related to racial divisions shap[ing] and filter[ing] how voters perceive political performance, and to some extent lead different voters to emphasize different performance criteria."

realignments⁵⁰⁸, the direction of the ‘floating vote’ is clearly not to be located between the ANC and the main opposition parties (IFP, NNP, DP/DA) mainly because of real or presumed racial and/or ethnic barriers. Even between the three major opposition parties, the only major shift anticipated by various surveys and which actually took place, is the one of Afrikaner support moving away from the NNP to the DP.⁵⁰⁹

Based on data drawn from the Opinion Poll '99 (# 2, conducted October-November 1998) survey (see 2.2.3, fn. 298), Lodge (1999d: 72-73) gives the following characterisation of the respective major parties’ social base including other relevant social characteristics⁵¹⁰:

“About three-quarters of ANC partisans earned below R[and] 2 500 a month. Just over half the ANC’s supporters lived in rural vicinities and a quarter in metropolitan cities. Eighty-four per cent of the ANC’s following had attended high school and 3.5 per cent had tertiary education, a proportion representing more than a quarter of the country’s college graduates (...) Sixty per cent of [the DP’s] votes in the mock ballot came from people earning more than R 2 500 a month, including more than a third of the R 12 000+ group. Three-quarters of its support base was metropolitan and one-third had received higher education. Forty-three per cent were Afrikaans speaking (...) National party voters tended to be less affluent than Democrats – 51 per cent earned more than R 2 5000 a month – and less likely to live in big cities (48%), and less educated (8% with tertiary qualifications). Fifty –six per cent were Afrikaans speaking. The other major claimant to a socially diverse constituency was the United Democratic Movement (...) One third of UDM mock votes were from Xhosa-speakers and more than a third earned more than R 2 500. Support for the Inkatha Freedom Party was 92 per cent black and 91 per cent Zulu (though less than a quarter of Zulus backed Inkatha), and seven per cent white – 2,4 per cent of all whites. Seventy-seven per cent of its backing was rural, 53 per cent of those earning less than R 1 200.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ The categories of ‘Won’t vote’, ‘Don’t know’, ‘Uncertain’ and ‘Refused’ in the HSRC survey of November 1999 add up to 26.1 % of the total sample.

⁵⁰⁹ Indeed, as Kotzé (2001: 118) reveals on the basis of a February 2000 survey conducted by the South African market research company Markdata (sample of 2666 respondents), only a small number of ANC voters named one of the three major opposition parties as their second (voting) choice (IFP: 2.8%, DP: 6.7%, NNP: 4.3%) compared to 12.2% of IFP voters, 12.5% of DP voters and 12.9% of NNP voters that named the ANC as their second choice. The figures indicating voters’ willingness to vote for another party as a second choice are the highest for NNP voters, 37.3% of whom would vote for the DP as second choice, and for DP voters, 30.3% of whom would vote for the DP as second choice.

⁵¹⁰ Data has been pulled out from responses to a mock ballot at the end of the interviews.

⁵¹¹ This assessment/description of the nature of ANC’s social base together with the examination of the beneficiaries of the party’s selective mobilisation complies with the ‘target groups’ of political mobilisation as identified by the party leadership. As the party’s ‘Strategy and Tactics’ document (ANC 1994: 7.2.) determines: “The main motive forces of the democratic transformation are primarily represented by African workers and the

4.3. Factionalism and party coherence

Selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market is not sufficient enough to ensure the dominant party's aspiration and rationale to "(...) make its support structure coterminous with the entire politically relevant public" (Singh 1981: 27). Nor can this be achieved without an adequate institutional 'container' that absorbs the diverse societal interests and groups (as well as detects shifts in public opinion and the socio-economic, socio-cultural structure) that have to be accommodated. For that purpose the organisational set-up of the dominant party must allow internal pluralism or factionalism to ensure the representation of societal interests as diverse as the bigger part of the social make-up of the country, but, at the same time, the level of party coherence should not drop below a certain limit. In other words, there have to be adequate mechanisms to guarantee the smooth functioning of the dominant party as a 'conflict system' (Eldersveld 1964).⁵¹²

The idea of factionalism being a consequence of a given party system's missing integrative capacity for a long time determined common party and party system research that was traditionally inclined to the (Westminster-based) ideal of a two-party system with two highly disciplined parties based on ideological conformity (v. Beyme 1984: 285).⁵¹³ However, from very early on, the analyses of one-party-dominance identified with factionalism something more than only a prevalence and preponderance of intra-party articulation of opportunistic and particularist interests and conflicts (Key 1949: 299). From a systemic perspective factionalism also guarantees the competitiveness of the system and compensates for a lack of alternation in government. Where inter-party competition is weak, there is a need for functional equivalents that countervail the rise of authoritarian decision-making. Factionalism in a system of one-party-dominance is therefore less of a distinct strategy, and more of an indispensable structural trait of the dominant party as a result of its catch-all, inclusive rationale.⁵¹⁴

African rural poor. These forces are also represented by black workers in general and the black middle strata. These are the forces which possess the best political and ideological potential to lead and defend the process of transformation."

⁵¹² In this vein, following Leiserson (1958: 65), factionalism as a structural trait of the dominant party's organisation can be seen as fulfilling the function of "manipulation" of the structural relationship between the social system, on the one hand, and the political party, on the other.

⁵¹³ This was, for example, the rationale behind the US-based 'Responsible-Party' debate in the 1950's, triggered by a special report of the American Political Science Association's Research Committee on Political Parties chaired by Schattschneider (APSA RC on Political Parties 1950), that put a strong emphasis on party discipline for making parties more accountable.

⁵¹⁴ In contrast to section 3.3., this section is more concerned with the functions factionalism/internal pluralism performs for the maintenance of one-party-dominance (ongoing processes), whereas the section on political actors as interventionists and accommodationists was concerned with the organisational manifestation of factionalism (and measures against it) as well as with the foundational role of party agency in shaping the

Factionalism within the INC was an art far more than it was an inevitability. As a quasi-surrogate for a lack of inter-party competition, it was basically factions within the INC that constituted the country's decision-making process and provided for the accommodation of the diverse societal spheres of interest - via the (intra-party) contest for political office and state resources. Factionalism took place at all levels of political decision-making and comprised the whole range of political motivation and assertion from clientelist networks of individual office-holders at the local and regional level to programmatic disagreement and legitimisation at the national level. The latter, however, was often only a thin disguise for personal ambitions as well.⁵¹⁵

The most prominent manifestation of factionalism within the INC was the aforementioned rivalry between the party's parliamentary (or governmental) and its organisational wing. On the one hand, disagreement and competition over the nomination of candidates for public office and intra-party elections stimulated elite-turnover and contributed to an element of alternation with regard to government formation, whereby different factions were fighting for power and influence on the basis of their respective capacity to mobilise support. As Kothari (1994: 305) notes: "Although the law does not provide for any system of primaries, the Congress Party has adopted a highly institutionalized internal system of candidate selection, extending the opportunities for political participation and improvising competition through "internal democracy" even where the competitive situation outside was fairly one-sided".

The party organisation was the political counterweight of the ministerial wing fulfilling the function of an intra-party opposition (one with a great appetite for political power). Based on their strength as co-ordinators of the INC's electoral machine, a lot of party functionaries were thus able to challenge (and often topple) elected office-holders.⁵¹⁶

dominant party organisationally in a manner that it allows for the smooth functioning of factionalism (and its containment).

⁵¹⁵ This is why the study, without denying the existence of genuine 'programmatic' factions as evident from the South African context, is closer to Nicholson's (1972: 179) definition of factionalism, which puts emphasis on the instrumental character of factionalism (and goes beyond a mere partisan definition): "Factionalism is a political system (or subsystem) characterized by the informal competition of a plurality of amorphous segments (factions) operating within a cultural context which places a high value on diffuse and unrestrained personal power and led by an elite whose orientations are self-centred and instrumental." Indeed, factions in the Indian context were seldom *Weltanschauungsgruppen* (except, perhaps, for those groups inspired by Gandhian ideas of 'constructive work', for example, those around Jayaprakash Narayanan, or those inclined to a distinct ideology, e.g. the Congress socialists). For the sake of comparison however, the more minimalist understanding of Sartori (1976: 75), which sees factionalism simply as the penetration of political parties by specific power groups (most often of a clientelist nature), constituted on the basis of an additional, distinct identity other than that of the party, is more appropriate. The difference is important as the examination of the South African context below will show. See also Huntington (1968: 412-415) and, more specific with regard to the Indian context, Brass (1965).

⁵¹⁶ For a detailed examination of how the relationship between the organisational and governmental wing of the INC developed in the two decades after independence and how the factional tussles between the two actually took place, see Franda (1962) and Kochanek (1968). Factional infighting between party organisation and government were especially relevant with regard to succession struggles over the highest offices of either the

The (relative) autonomy of the party organisation thus furthered some kind of ‘informal doubling’ of the polity’s institutional arrangement whereby factional conflicts within the dominant party more than once ‘modified’ the actual electoral outcome, thereby acting as a remedy against oligarchic tendencies and the danger of the party becoming ossified.⁵¹⁷

Table 26 on ministerial turnovers illustrates the degree of elite rotation during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India.

Table 26: Ministerial turnover under INC dominance, 1952-1966

States	Changes in incumbents*		
	Chief ministers	Cabinet ministers	Other ministers
Andhra Pradesh	3	26	1
Assam	1	9	10
Bihar	2	15	21
Gujarat	5	19	26
Jammu & Kashmir	3	16	12
Kerala**	4	26	***
Madhya Pradesh	3	17	22
Madras	2	12	***
Maharashtra	3	29	30
Mysore	2	30	8
Orissa	4	20	5
Punjab	2	18	24
Rajasthan	1	18	18
Uttar Pradesh	3	15	33
West Bengal	1	16	34

Notes: *A chief minister or minister who was returned to the same position after being replaced for some time is not counted as change.

**The turnover in Kerala includes other parties as well as the INC.

***No such position in these States.

Source: Kothari (1994: 179 [Times of India Yearbooks, 1952-1966])

On the other hand, factionalism allowed the INC to absorb, accommodate and react to diverging societal interests. As an umbrella party the INC was in need of a factional substructure that reflected the multipolarity of Indian society. Factionalism thereby provided a

organisation (president) or the polity (prime minister). See, in general, Brecher (1966). For a discussion of the organisational vs. governmental wing infighting over the succession of Nehru (and later on Shastri), see Morris-Jones (1978: 147 f.).

⁵¹⁷ The most prominent example of this kind of informal elite-rotation was of course the aforementioned (3.3.) Kamaraj plan of 1963.

system of communication between the political and the social system. Factions within the INC were responsible for the integration and absorption of traditional identities and those identities triggered by the process of modernisation into the party structure. In doing so, the increased significance of so far peripheral groups, thanks to the introduction of universal suffrage forced factional leaders to forge broad-based alliances (Thakur 1995: 226). In this way, local spheres of interest were incorporated into the bargaining mechanisms of the party machine.

Whereas factional formation at the local level was, in the first place, the result of ties of loyalty to individual (local) leaders based on resource distribution (Nicholson 1978: 175 f.), the integration of these local factions into the hierarchically, structured organisational 'pyramid' of the INC reinforced their politicisation as intermediary centres within the bargaining process of factional coalitions at the next-upper level.⁵¹⁸ Thus, political linkages were created that drew upon and furthered social and economic dominance. This "vertical mobilisation" (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967) of potent factional leaders, carried on at the regional level, opened up channels of communication between the local unit and the national party elite, facilitated the recruitment of so far unpoliticised social strata and broke up the focus on single cleavages (the need to form more broad-based coalitions multiplied in the course of modernisation), contributing to the dispersion of arenas of political and social conflict (Somjee 1980). In consequence, as Brass (1965: 180) notes on the basis of his analysis of factionalism in Uttar Pradesh: "The most important function which factions perform for the Congress party in Uttar Pradesh is to channel conflict and hostility within the party without endangering its stability."

The existence of vertical "faction chains" (Kothari: 1964: 1163), based on the interdependence of governmental and intra-party decision-making, thereby enhanced the INC's capacity to manage and co-ordinate conflicts. Factional struggles at a lower level of governmental or intra-party decision-making were solved through authority and patronage from the next-upper level whilst factional struggles in the upper echelons of government or party were solved by building coalitions through deal-making at a lower level.⁵¹⁹ This management of factional conflicts was facilitated by the agency of intermediary "party observers" (Kothari 1964: 1164) within the party, mainly personalities of a high standing in

⁵¹⁸ For a case study examining the caste-based formation and consolidation of a factional coalition at the local level, see Kothari and Shah (1967).

⁵¹⁹ At a more general level, Weiner (1967: 479) therefore concludes: "To generalize from the Indian case one might say that the internal viability of a party organization is not a function of the amount, kind or intensity of internal conflicts, but of whether or not there is a socially accepted mechanism for the resolution of conflict."

public opinion or party functionaries, who intervened whenever factional infighting threatened to get out of line.⁵²⁰

Each unit of the party organisation, from the Mandal Committee to the Working Committee (the respective ends of the party organisation's pyramidal continuum) and, consequently, also most of the legislative units dependent on the process of candidate selection within the party (from the village panchayat to the Lok Sabha) were therefore dependent on the power configuration of the factional networks surrounding them.

Factionalism thus prevented the monopolisation of channels of communication within the dominant party by the party elite, working against Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy' (Michels 1959: 377-393) and coming close to what Eldersveld (1964: 9) has termed "stratarchy", a "(...) hierarchical pattern of stratified devolution of responsibility for the settlement of conflict."⁵²¹

Party leadership always had to be aware of the potential dangers inherent in factionalism and had to intervene whenever factional tendencies threatened to get out of control and 'pork and barrel politics' did not suffice to manage factional conflicts. This was a crucial element in the party's factional balance. Whereas the factional structure at the local and regional level was necessary to overcome the mobilisational challenges of India's pluralist setting and increasingly competitive electoral politics, the authority of the national party elite had to be relatively independent from the factional infighting at lower levels to be perceived as the catch-all party of national consensus and to guarantee efficiency in terms of policy

⁵²⁰ On the working and role of these party 'trouble shooters', see Fernandes and Sirsikar (1984: 252), Weiner (1967: 477) and Roy (1967: 112).

⁵²¹ The concept of 'stratarchy' is described by Eldersveld (1964: 10) as some sort of 'hierarchy from below': "The general characteristics of stratarchy are the proliferation of the ruling group and the diffusion of power prerogatives and power exercise. Rather than centralized 'unity of command' or a general dilution of power throughout the structure, 'strata commands' exist which operate with a varying but considerable degree of independence." Roy (1967: 896) came to the conclusion that Michel's 'oligarchic' and Eldersveld's 'stratarchic' model were equally represented by the Congress party making a distinction between the oligarchic party statutes and the actual process of intra-party decision-making. Nevertheless, it is factionalism, more than any other of the dominant party's strategies or assets that defies the logic of Michel's 'iron law of oligarchy'. The constant need to accommodate (and represent) the diverse interests within society rewards only those (dominant) parties, which are able to contain an indispensable degree of factionalism. Oligarchic tendencies (as well as too abundant factionalism), while part and parcel of any (liberation) movement turned political party, will eventually destroy the dominant party's capacity to dominate effectively. As compared to post-war European party history, which - more or less - implies that one-party-dominance increasingly limits the impact of the party organisation on intra-party procedures and policy determination (Wheaton 1979: 49) insofar as the party leadership, depending on electoral success, is less and less dependent on the mobilisational assets of the party machine, it is this very capacity of the dominant party in changing societies to take its rank and file into account, guaranteeing the indispensable flexibility to accommodate and to react selectively (as well as successfully) to social change. The awareness of the party leadership to allow a fair amount of factionalism (as a mechanism to bind party leadership to the activist community) and opportunities for the party machine to exert at least some influence on intra-party decision-making and policy determination is therefore an essential systemic characteristic of successful dominant parties and long-term systems of one-party-dominance.

decisions.⁵²² Only a careful balancing between the realm of factionalism, mobilisation and distributive politics at the local and regional level and the realm of (party) coherence, integration and investment politics at the national level could secure a synthesis of the nation-building and modernisation agenda of the national elite and the traditional, clientelist society.⁵²³ Varshney (1998a: 30) concluded with regard to (the political rationale of) the ‘unevenness’ and hesitant nature of agricultural policy under Nehru: “The state [party] bosses had independent political bases in their states, knew the local political configurations, and were organizational stalwarts. Nehru, therefore, had to accommodate this faction in the power map in Delhi. Typically, the state bosses would obtain ministries that had routine dealings with the states. Agriculture mostly went to them: Planning, Industry, and Finance did not. However, in and of themselves, the state bosses could not win national elections. They in turn, required Nehru’s national stature and supreme popularity.” The famous clashes of the INC’s governing elite and the ‘Syndicate’ of regional party bosses from the mid-1960’s onwards and the conflict over the succession of prime minister Shastri were the first signs of a gradual decline in the intricate factional balance prevalent during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India.

In sum, what is evident from the INC’s early experience of factionalism is the functional necessity of factional substructures for the dominant party to be responsive to societal change and to remain broadly representative or, for that matter, catch-all. The INC thus accords with Arian and Barnes (1974: 602) view on factionalism as a necessary feature of the dominant party’s ‘success’ in the Italian and Israeli context:

“The dominant party lacks the tight organizational structures of mobilization parties; it has ties, often formal ones, with many diverse groups and interests that it must somehow reconcile, pacify, and reward.”⁵²⁴ Party leaders are usually identified organizationally or programmatically, or both, with these groups and interests and, in

⁵²² Nicholson (1978: 176-181, 1972, 1975) examines the mechanisms (varying patterns of recruitment, isolation of core areas of decision-making, ideological labeling of factional positions), whereby the national elite under Nehru succeeded in maintaining a distance from the factional conflicts at the local and regional level.

⁵²³ For the distinction between distributive politics (politics primarily based on the distribution of resources) and investment politics (interventionist politics geared towards structural transformation and generating resources), see Lowi (1972).

⁵²⁴ Seven years earlier Weiner (1967: 15) wrote on the INC: “(...) Congress party leaders, in order to succeed politically, are concerned, first and foremost, with doing whatever is necessary to adapt the party to its environment. This proposition is deceptively simple, but it immediately calls attention to the difference between the Congress party and many other political parties in the developing world. Elsewhere, many governing parties are concerned with either mobilizing or controlling the population. In contrast, Congress is primarily concerned with recruiting members and winning support. It does not mobilize; it aggregates. It does not seek to innovate; it seeks to adapt.”

turn, represent such groups and interests in the inner councils of the party. These independent sources of support for the leadership make it difficult to maintain party cohesion by means of strict party discipline. Rather, cohesion emerges from the mutual desire to share the fruits of power, a desire sufficiently strong to hold extreme demands in check and to moderate potentially disintegrative tendencies.”

This assessment displays a striking similarity with a *Statesmen* observation of a short episode in the history of the post-independence INC in Uttar Pradesh. Analysing the defeat of then UP INC stalwart, organiser and State Minister for Planning, Health and Civil Supplies, Chandhra Bhanu Gupta, in a *Vidhan Sabha* constituency by-election in 1957, *The Statesmen* (1958: 7) wrote:

“What will be the political consequences of Mr Gupta’s defeat? One need not be an astrologer to predict that Mr Gupta’s group, now rudderless, will drift for a while: Groups or factions in the Congress camp here have no ideological roots. A faction is like a cluster of bees round a queen bee. If the queen is damaged they quickly find another to cluster around.

It might be laid down as a law that groups are held together by the cementing force of ‘power’ and he is the most successful leader of them all who can share the fruits of office with the largest number of party men. A group disperses when circumstances dislodge a leader.

According to Congress dialectics, when a group fades away, it does not necessarily follow that groupism decays. It is in the nature of a group to find a new leader. One may emerge from among its members or they may join the existing rival groups. It works out quite smoothly in the end.”

As the Indian experience shows, three aspects of factionalism are crucial to the dominant party’s capacity to maintain dominance. These are: inclusiveness (the dominant party has to ensure that it is largely representative of society’s diverse interests and social characteristics), coherence (the dominant party’s capacity to mediate intra-party (factional) disputes and divisions) and responsiveness (the dominant party’s factional substructure guarantees that the social distance between its governing cadres and mass base does not widen to the extent that its (legitimate) status of dominance is endangered, preventing the dominant party from

reacting flexibly to processes of social change). All of these three aspects form part of the contested discourse on one-party-dominance in South Africa.⁵²⁵

‘Factionalism’ as a qualitative criterion or systemic constituent of one-party-dominance (and as an indicator of party agency) can hardly be operationalised in a numerical sense. Furthermore, given that from the respective actors’ point of view factionalism is very much a matter of perceived and potential division within a party, and, since aspects and processes of factionalism (and the reaction to it) are most clearly revealed by statements of the relevant actors in the intra-party/alliance debate, this section contains several quotes by key actors of the ruling alliance’s cadre.

While the ANC itself is permeated by various factions (see 2.2.1., 3.3. and fn. 530 below), factionalism in South Africa is to some extent ‘institutionalised’ in the form of the tripartite alliance between the ANC, COSATU and SACP. Although a formal coalition with each component representing a distinct ideological outlook, core support base and socio-economic position, the alliance is also an ‘offspring’ of the liberation movement with a common ‘history of struggle’⁵²⁶ and with the concomitant repercussions of intangibles such as (a common) identity and loyalty.

The ANC therefore shares with the INC the binding legacy of a historic compromise, with all the implications in terms of political and organisational ‘restlessness’ that will come once the ‘struggle is won’, albeit in a more popular based and less elite-induced form than in the Indian post-independence context. Additionally, the close linkage between the ANC and (a politically more assertive) civil society, stemming from the shared experience of the anti-apartheid struggle, reinforces the tradition of the movement’s often loud diversity.⁵²⁷

In contrast to the INC, the different factions within the ruling alliance or, for that matter, the different components of the alliance are much more of an ideological nature.⁵²⁸ On the one

⁵²⁵ In a sense, therefore, the dominant party/ANC has to ‘nurture’ factionalism and to “(...) stress inclusiveness – at least in its natural support base” (Friedman 1999c: 103), because “(...) [diversity] has been a sign not only of an ability to cohere, but also of potential dominance, since it indicates an ability to accommodate an array of interests and values. Were that to change, however – if the ANC leadership was indeed to insist on imposing discipline on its divergent interests – fissiparous tendencies might well emerge” (ibid. 107). Consequently, as Friedman notes elsewhere (Friedman 2000: 15), “[a]n implicit debate within the alliance hinges on whether its goals are best achieved by seeing its internal diversity as a strength – part of the glue which hold it together – or as a distraction which dissipates energies.”

⁵²⁶ The (implicit) rationale of the tripartite alliance was to expand opposition against apartheid and to guarantee a workers’ bias in the upcoming government’s programme and policies.

⁵²⁷ However, as described in 3.3., the dominant party-civil society relationship can best be depicted as ambivalent, not least due to the party’s need and ambition to seek (relative) autonomy from societal forces in order to govern effectively, while, at the same time, not losing sight of its (self-proclaimed) image as the ‘parliament of the people’.

⁵²⁸ This is not to deny that there were clear ideological factions within the INC as well such as the Congress socialists or the Democratic Front (however, both of them have been expelled from the INC fold before the first general elections). The greater significance of ideology, while also an expression of a different (ideological)

hand, this guarantees that not every personal ambition is translated into a faction. On the other hand, if there are major policy shifts, such as the one from the RDP to GEAR, factional conflicts can go off the rails more easily. The recent strains within the alliance over the adoption of GEAR and adherence to a neoliberal policy package bear witness to this fact.

In this regard, two statements reflecting the more recent (and current) tensions between COSATU and the ANC leadership over state autonomy and the country's economic trajectory are worth quoting. The first one is from a pamphlet distributed at the 7th COSATU Congress and addresses the sluggish progression of social transformation as well as the implications of the ANC government's (biased) selective mobilisation. The second quote is from the current Deputy President of the ANC, Jacob Zuma. He refers to union demands for extended redistributive policies and relates them to the (failed) macro-economic strategy of Zimbabwe:

"In 1999, the ANC won an overwhelming victory. It got a clear mandate to continue social transformation. The opposition parties are in disarray. But big companies based in mining and finance still control the economy. They aim to invest overseas, rather than building the South African economy. At the same time, they continually lobby government leaders to block transformation. A critical force for the NDR [National Democratic Revolution, C.S.] remains state power. The state often appears as a neutral force, above society; but ultimately it is an instrument of the ruling class. In transitional periods, the political rulers may use government power to reshape economic power, for instance through state investment or land reform. In turn, the economic ruling class tries to influence the new political leaders to stop progressive measures. In these circumstances, a bureaucratic bourgeoisie may emerge. This is a fraction of capital that uses its control of the State to maintain its own power and privilege, and not for transformation. To prevent this requires more accountability for political leadership, and measures to stop people from using the state to enrich themselves. Above all, it needs a strong progressive movement, both inside and outside of government. The public-sector unions, in particular, have a key role in ensuring the transformation of the state. Internationally, the hegemony of capital under the leadership of the US means South Africa faces continual international pressure to limit progressive policies. But we

tradition, is of course a reflection of the country's social complexities and the changed nature of societal differentiation at the end of the millennium and thus conforms to Parsons' concept of 'generalisation'. If a social system gets more complex, argues Parsons, "(...) its value pattern must be couched at a higher level of generality in order to legitimize the wider variety of goals and functions of its sub-units" (Parsons 1966: 23).

cannot let concerns about international reactions, which are sometimes exaggerated, prevent transformation.” (COSATU 2000).

“Zuma [current ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma] gave a brief lecture on Zimbabwean political economics: President Robert Mugabe’s government embarked on a huge social spending spree without analysing social needs, which caused inflation to spiral. “We do not want to follow the same route,” said Zuma. “We have a responsibility to more than just the sectarian needs of the union movement. We have to serve the broader population as a whole” (Sunday Times, (Johannesburg), November 11, 2001).

The COSATU pamphlet focuses on the erosion of the state’s transformative capacity by the ‘ruling classes’ and emerging ‘bureaucratic bourgeoisie’. Deputy President of the ANC, Jacob Zuma’s tit-for-tat response denies the union movement’s interest in the common welfare and criticises the demanding clamour of its ‘sectarian needs’.

These two quotes are a good illustration of the increased tension within South Africa’s ruling tripartite alliance and the fragile nature of the country’s class compromise. Trade union critiques of the government’s unconcealed shift to neoliberal policies have hardened and the gap between the labour movement and civil society, on the one hand, and the state and domestic and international capital, on the other hand, has widened.⁵²⁹

The ANC is still a conglomerate of diverse and disparate interests and is largely inclusive of all strands of civil society and all societal shades of the African majority, which promote

⁵²⁹ Thus, in October 2002 a two-day general strike launched by COSATU against the privatisation of telecommunication services (the formerly state-owned Telkom corporation) and of power authorities (Escom) and against a planned reshuffling of the public services as well as for higher social spending has to be seen as an attempt to add new muscles to that component of the alliance revealing a potential hyphenation point in the alliance’s factional balance. The most recent (cautious) rapprochement between the ANC leadership and the party’s mass base, as expressed in Mbeki’s presidential address at the December 2002 Stellenbosch conference (see 3.3.), has to be seen against this backdrop and other events displaying trade union disapproval of the ANC-led government’s macro-economic policy. However, additional evidence for the ANC leadership’s attempt to diminish union influence comes from the government’s increasingly tough attitude towards the unions (following the party’s massive electoral victory of 1999) with regard to public sector wage talks and the implementation of a neoliberal plan (privatisation of state assets and operations) for the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (the Igoli 2002 plan) (McKinley (2001: 75-76). Consequently, as a two-phase, nation-wide survey among COSATU members (a total of 643 in 1994 and 646 in 1998) reveals (Ginsburg et al. 1995, as reported in Webster 2001: 86-88), there is a strong discrepancy between respondents’ expectations in 1994 and their assessment of delivery in 1998 (ibid. 88). Nonetheless, the survey also indicates that support for the alliance in 1994 and 1998 among the COSATU respondents is strikingly similar (74% of respondents in 1998 as compared to 75% in 1994). See also the comment by Vuyo Mvoko (*Business Day*, July 18, 2000): “Willie Madisha [the president of COSATU, C.S.] alleged ANC leaders were refusing to talk to the alliance partners who helped put them into power.”

themselves via various factions within the catch-all coalition movement.⁵³⁰ At the same time however, the dominant party's leadership increasingly attempts to dominate the alliance⁵³¹ and to discipline the party's factional substructure. With the exile wing within the ANC gradually gaining power, personalised by the ascendancy of Thabo Mbeki, emphasis on party discipline in the tradition of an exile movement has gained momentum⁵³², to the point that much will depend on reducing centralist tendencies to ensure that the tacit agreement on 'unity' within the alliance will endure for the foreseeable future.

The latest evidence suggests however, that the party leadership remains conscious of the fact that encouraging a fair degree of factionalism or, for that matter, internal pluralism, while no guarantee that the party will be responsive to societal forces and social changes, is at least a starting point that the distance between the cadres and the mass base is not widening thus leaving the party increasingly insensitive to waning popular support. This 'back to the people' ethos (or, better, discretion) is reflected in the new preface to the party's main policy paper with regard to its future vision, the 'Strategy and Tactics' document, which announced that there is a need to revitalise the party's organisation and links with its mass base: "The 50th

⁵³⁰ Factional substructures within the ANC do not only or not most prominently reflect an intra-party 'conflict system' of the upper echelons of the party or of other political elites or, for that matter, of charismatic and/or status-wise prominent leaders and their respective followings as was predominantly the case in the Indian context. These kinds of factions do exist as well, for example, in the form of the already mentioned divisions between the exile-wing, the Robben Islanders, the (former) UDF component or the 'black business' lobby personalised in Mbeki's most popular and most astute political rival, former ANC general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa, now key leader in a black business corporation. They are also more popular based and emanating from below, for example, factions grouped around activists of the MDM and other civil-society linked groupings, which have, at least to an extent, defied co-optation and co-ordination (Friedman 1999c: 118 f.). The ANC is, however, less representative of factions corresponding to communal or ethnic constituencies as, for example, the INC was (despite the fact that members of ethnic/racial (white, Coloured, Indian) minorities are overrepresented). In that regard, the party's ideological commitment to non-racialism makes it less inclusive of the racial and ethnic cleavage or, for that matter, makes it less consociational than the INC during the heyday of one-party-dominance in India, even though the INC's commitment to secularism did similarly limit a 'true' consociational quality of the dominant party.

⁵³¹ The eventual establishment of a 'political monitoring structure' or alliance 'political centre' at the end of 1999, headed by Mbeki and aimed at managing inter-alliance relations and deliberations on policy, hailed by some as a return to a more democratic and participatory approach to policy formulation (*Business Day*, December 13, 1999), damned by others as a mere paper tiger and playing field for Mbeki to draw potential troublemakers and key leadership figures into his camp (Friedman 2001: 15), indicates at least that the ANC leadership takes the alliance partner's worries into account and is careful not to antagonise the alliance partners.

⁵³² Growing intra-party centralisation (preceded and paralleled by a growing centralisation of the state machinery – the rationale being that a decentralisation of government would eventually lead to a federalised or regionalised party system, ultimately threatening ANC coherence) has to be considered as also reflecting a change in leadership style from Mandela's more public, 'presidential' approach to governing and intra-party procedures, to Mbeki's administrative and managerial approach (Butler 2000). The emphasis on party discipline and centralisation after Mbeki's taking over of the party's presidency partially also reflects a return to the (Leninist) principle of 'democratic centralism', once part and parcel of the movement's exile wing's organisational charter, that accords with the understanding that while the party's rank and file have a voice in policy determination and intra-party elections, "(...) once a decision has been taken, after due debate, agreeing or disagreeing, the respective members are expected to abide by the decisions, defend and carry them out" (ANC 2003c). Only the party (leadership) can determine the real interests and need of the people. A point that is often referred to by Mbeki's critics and opposition party's as proof for the ANC's lack of democratic credentials.

Conference signalled the challenges of the post-1994 epoch, which include: how the motive forces wield state power without glorifying its significance at the expense of mass organisation; the dangers of social distance that may develop between the cadres operating in government and the mass of the people who should continue to be the drivers of change; as well as the opportunities and challenges of an emergent array of class forces within the ranks of the motive forces” (ANC 2002).⁵³³

Yet, this statement contrasts with the party’s more recent embrace of a distinct cadre policy. This cadre policy is laid down in several intra-party discussion papers and documents (see *Mail and Guardian*, November 5-11, 1999) and its manifestations and implications were brought to my attention in a personal interview with the DP researcher James Myburgh. It comprises the narrowing of the space for intra-party debate and opposition by imposing various ‘codes of conduct’ on party representatives, especially parliamentarians⁵³⁴, the co-optation and ‘redeployment’ of potential critics (into less conflictual or more rewarding positions), top-down provincial premier appointment by the NEC and a general subordination of the organisational wing under the governmental wing. These are all processes that eventually contribute to the alienation of the party’s activist base.⁵³⁵

Thus, while rhetorically at least there is a firm commitment to the party’s democratic practices and intra-party traditions and procedures, in practice, disciplining from above more often than not eventually supersedes the party leadership’s ‘honest’ commitment to intra-party democracy. As Lodge (1999b: 71) recalls in an incident, which is revealing with regard to the

⁵³³ Another indication for the party leadership’s increased or, rather, renewed attention to its activist community, at least in the more ephemeral realm of rhetoric and symbolic gestures, is the acknowledgement of its participatory tradition and the ‘foot soldiers’ of the former UDF; see, for example, one of the latest issues of the party’s organ *Umrabulo*, which is a special release dedicated to the UDF and its contribution to the ANC’s historic struggle (ANC 2003d).

⁵³⁴ As early as 1994, a code of conduct for ANC MP’s was enacted stipulating that “[a]ll elected members shall be under the constitutional authority of the highest decision-making bodies of the ANC, and decisions and policies of the highest ANC organs shall take precedence over all other structures, including ANC structures in Parliament and government” (Mathisen 2000: 156). The most recent amendment of the ANC constitution in December 2002 (as adopted at the Stellenbosch conference) goes even further stating that “‘all members and public representatives of the ANC, without exception’ are subject to party discipline, and must abide by the decisions and policies of the party” (Myburgh 2003: 36); it also “(...) mandates the establishment of ‘disciplinary committees’ at all levels of the organisation, and empowers the National Executive Committee to establish ‘an appropriate investigative capacity’ within the party, to probe complaints against members.” (ibid.).

⁵³⁵ Furthermore, in contrast to the INC’s organisational base, societal penetration and handling of factionalism, characterised predominantly by localised or regional factional substructures and a concomitant autonomy of the national party elite from factional infighting at lower levels (as well as a relative autonomy of local/regional factional substructures to resolve conflicts on their own), (factional) power sites in South Africa are concentrated at (or aggregate to) the national level. No wonder the party leadership is much more worried about a potentially dangerous form of factionalism than it is about losing touch with society and becoming less representative/accommodative. Additionally, due to the fact that the party’s branch structure is in organisational disarray (largely because of neglect ‘from above’, *The Star*, July 28, 2000; see also Bernstein 1999) the ANC does not have the kind of ‘vertical faction chains’, which functioned as a crucial ‘detector’ or thermostat for changing interests within Indian society, at its disposal.

party's 'hidden' top-down style of decision-making and 'redeployment', "A speech by the labour minister, Tito Mboweni, suggested that the ANC would invest considerable effort in developing a policy apparatus which would attempt to incorporate a broader range of people in the organisation and its allies in the discussion and planning of policy. Barely six months later [July 4, 1998, C.S.] Tito Mboweni was transferred to the Reserve Bank and resigned all his policy positions, including his directorship of the ANC policy unit."⁵³⁶

At the same time however, the party leadership is aware that too much emphasis on party discipline, a less accommodative stance and too much concentration of power with regard to policy determination is detrimental to the party's basic catch-all (of the African majority) consensus and likely to make (ideologically underpinned) internal divisions more real and pronounced. As Barell (*Mail and Guardian*, June 2-7, 2000: 4, quoted in Maylam 2001: 176) notes: "To the extent that Mbeki has engaged with his party, it has been to tinker, manage, balance its various factions and, occasionally, to harangue (...) One result of this (...) is that the party continues to be most things to most people: capitalist to some, socialist-inclined to others; Africanist to some, a paragon of non-racial virtue to others." This statement, hinting at the watering down of the ANC's historical commitment to 'hard-line' socialist principles and policies and suggesting a growing ideological eclecticism, sounds strikingly similar to any scholarly assessment of the INC between 1947 and 1967.

Additionally, despite the unconcealed trend towards centralisation and a (much) more top-down approach to intra-party decision-making (especially with regard to (economic) policy determination and the nomination of candidates for the party's highest executive organ, the NEC), it is hard for the party "to exert discipline throughout its widely-ramified structures" (Johnston 1997: 16). This is reflected by the durable career of the ANC's most prominent 'troublemaker', Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, reelected to the party's NEC by the rank and file in the 2002 Stellenbosch National Conference.⁵³⁷ Similarly, continued expressions of disapproval regarding the government's policy orientation by COSATU, SACP and ANC-

⁵³⁶ For a detailed analysis of how 'top-down', technocratic forms of decision making and executive predominance within the ANC and the tripartite alliance have gradually replaced activist contributions to intra-party debate and more participatory democratic policy determination practices after 1994, see Lodge (1999a) and McKinley (2001).

⁵³⁷ The election of popular (with the rank and file) but inconvenient (with the leadership) candidates to the party's NEC is a common means by which the activist base expresses its disapproval with the leadership's top-down style of candidate selection for the NEC (the latter being paralleled even more unilaterally as concerns the imposition of the leadership's candidates on provincial and national electoral lists and provincial congresses). At the same time, this (political) assertion of the rank and file is also a guarantee of intra-party elite rotation. However, a lot of 'troublemakers' have also been subject to straightforward co-option, drawing them into government positions where they soon lost their popular credentials. Additionally, the interval between National Conferences has been extended from 3 to 5 years, thus limiting the opportunities for the activist base to elect high-ranking party officials and candidates even further.

affiliated civil society organisations alike, are ample proof that the factional substructures of the alliance still use the political and organisational space available to them within the dominant party/alliance and contribute to the liveliness of intra-party debate and opposition or, in fact, competitiveness.⁵³⁸

In a sense, therefore, the growing centralisation of the party, while endangering its catch-all rationale and appeal, also reflects the (increasingly unbalanced) perception and fear of the leadership that the management of party cohesion is just as (or even more) important for the maintenance of one-party-dominance as is the key survival principle of interest accommodation (and accommodation of identities) by means of an extensive factional structure and by avoiding strict party discipline.

That the ANC was perfectly aware of the opposition's strategic objectives and the dominant party's (factional) 'fault lines', which were/are, at the same time, the *sine qua non* of its electoral success, is visible in the following lengthy but crucial quote from an internal party document prepared by Thabo Mbeki for the ANC's 49th National Conference in 1994 and entitled 'From Resistance to Reconstruction: Tasks of the ANC in the New Epoch of the Democratic Transformation – Unmandated Reflections' (McKinley 2001: 67 f.):

"Some of the objectives that these forces [of the opposition, C.S.] will pursue will be: To destroy the ANC from within [and] to create contradictions and conflict between the ANC and other formations in the democratic movement. The offensive against the ANC will concentrate on a number of issues, among others: Splitting the organization and fomenting an internal struggle on the basis that the ANC is made up of three component parts (in government, in parliament and at the grassroots) – the ANC in government will be portrayed as having betrayed the interests of the masses, the ANC in parliament which will present itself as the 'revolutionary watchdog' over the treacherous ANC in the executive, and the ANC outside government which will be projected as the true representative of the soul of the movement with a historic task to be the "revolution watchdogs"; Splitting the ANC around the issue of leadership, with various comrades within the movement being set up against one another on the basis that they represent

⁵³⁸ McKinley (2001: 77) gives a rather different interpretation of COSATU and SACP autonomy and political self-determination/-assertion (in the interest of their constituency): "The reality (...) is that while bringing some very moderate relief to that majority [of the workers and the poor, C.S.], the most tangible result has been to preserve and advance the personal careers and political futures of leaders across the alliance spectrum. While making radical sounding statements on worker-related and political economy issues, combined with limited mass action designed to extract concessions and remind capital of mass power, the leadership of Cosatu and the SACP have been unwilling to make the connection between the neoliberal democracy pursued by the ANC elites and the parallel organisational class lessons in relation to the alliance."

different competing tendencies within the movement (...)” (ANC (Mbeki) 1994c, quoted in McKinley (2001: 67-68))

Mbeki is even more specific about the alliance’s inherent weakness and fragile nature when he sums up the means by which the opposition may attempt to break the tripartite ‘coalition of commitment’ – thereby also hinting at the potential danger of degenerating into a ‘coalition of convenience’ (see 2.2.4.):

“Encouraging the SACP to publicly project itself as the “left conscious” which would fight for the loyalty of the ANC in the cause of the working people, against an ANC leadership which is inclined to over-compromise with the forces of bourgeois reformism; Inciting the SACP to use its independent structures as a Party to carry out such a campaign while also encouraging the members of the SACP within the ANC to form themselves into an organised faction to pursue the same objective (...) Encouraging Cosatu and its affiliates to project the pursuit of political and socio-economic objectives different from those that the ANC has set itself as a governing party; Encouraging Cosatu to exploit the fact of the democratic transition and the place of the ANC in government to interpret this to mean that the ANC has an obligation to “its electorate”, namely the African working class, to support it in all its demands or face denunciation as a traitor; On these bases, to encourage the launching of a major and sustained mass campaign, which, while addressing various legitimate worker demands would, at the same time, pose the spectre of ungovernability; And otherwise, encouraging the unions to be suspicious of the intentions of the “ANC in government” on the basis that the latter is likely to act in a manner intended to appease the domestic and international business world and multilateral financial institutions” (ibid. 68).

These statements bear witness to the dominant party’s strategic thinking right from the beginning of its ascendancy to power. It also reveals explicitly, how factionalism is conceived of by the party leadership as a potential danger to one-party-dominance and, implicitly, how factionalism is interpreted as a crucial aspect of party agency geared towards the maintenance of one-party-dominance. However, as this section has shown, the explicit message gets far more attention in the party leadership’s mind than the implicit one with the effect that too

much stress is laid on party discipline.⁵³⁹ While the INC under Nehru more than once felt the heavy hand of enforced unity and top-down intervention⁵⁴⁰ (as well as partial subordination of the organisational to the governmental wing of the party), adherence to strict party discipline never went so far as to limit the smooth functioning of internal pluralism and factional dispute. On the contrary, the INC leadership's approach to intra-party processes was much more characterised by a laissez-faire attitude towards factionalism.

The ANC's 2002 Stellenbosch national conference may have indicated a cautious return to a more participatory approach or a realisation at least that neglect of the party's activist, grass-root base could be costly. Continued centralisation however, and a tightening grip of the leadership over its members (closing down residual space for dissent) is a clear way to endanger the party's capacity to channel intra-party conflict (via factionalism) and to compromise its ability to integrate or, for that matter, promote communication between the country's political and the social system.

4.4. State-party collusion and patronage

*I'll vote for the opposition when they are in power*⁵⁴¹

The last and often most prominent of these four processes is the gradual attempt of the dominant party to blur the line between it and the state, i.e. the diverse government agencies pervading political, social and economic life and the more abstract notion of the state as representing the 'nation'. This is done for two reasons: On the one hand, in a more practical or material sense, it facilitates the bestowal of patronage on the dominant party's clientele. On the other hand, in the realm of perception and identities, identification with the state to some extent becomes synonymous with identification with the dominant party. Additionally, a close identification of the dominant party with the state facilitates the dominant party's capacity to determine where the legitimate (ideological) centre of society is.

⁵³⁹ As the ANC's Secretary-General reminded party members at a meeting in 2000, "(...) the principles of democratic centralism still guided party structures", new members must promise to combat "(...) any tendency toward disruption or factionalism" (cited in *Mail and Guardian*, August 10-16, 2001: 17).

⁵⁴⁰ One of the most prominent examples is the conflict between Nehru as prime minister and then INC president Tandon (and his faction) over the dissolution of the Democratic Front (later on leading to the formation of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party) and over the relationship between the office of prime minister and party president, which eventually led to Tandon's resignation under pressure from Nehru and to the pre-eminence of the prime minister (governmental wing of the party) over the party president (organisational wing). However, even with regard to this incidence, Nehru's intervention was initially in reaction to the enforcement of unity on the party (Kochanek 1968: 35 ff.).

⁵⁴¹ Anonymous serb peasant cited by Timothy Garton Ash. Quoted in Gilomee and Simkins (1999: 337). This statement reflects of course the essentialised logic that the anticipation of patronage prospects (brought about by the equation of party and state) has to be considered as one of the most important determinants of voting behaviour in changing societies for the dominant party to take into account.

State-party collusion and patronage politics permeate all other processes and mechanisms of control described above. Continuous reference has been made to these two aspects of one-party-dominance in the preceding sections (as well as in chapter 3) and, since they are to some extent the premise or prerequisite for all other party agentive factors and mechanisms elaborated up to this point (and are largely self-referential analytically), only brief reference to their rationale and to the facilitating and constraining features of the regional contexts will be made here.

In India patronage politics were favoured by what has been termed as “state-dominated pluralism” (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 255), whereby “(...) the political arena is populated by relatively autonomous interest groups, but they are overshadowed by an omnipresent state” (ibid.). Part of the colonial legacy and induced by the adoption of a mixed-economy approach to development and modernisation as well as a strong commitment to economic and political nationalism, the pervasive bureaucratic structure, state control of the policy agenda and a growing obfuscation of the private and public sector all contributed to the occupation of organisational and representational ‘space’ by state agencies in the economic and political arena (less so in the social arena of communal, cultural, ethnic or linguistic identities).⁵⁴² The omnipresence of the state and the effect of the close liaison between the INC and government agencies on partisan attachment are illustrated by Morris-Jones (1978: 222) as follows:

(...) every group that seeks new advantages and amelioration of its position must above all try to ensure that its voice is heard in the counsels of government. The level of government that is most relevant varies according to the kind of benefit that is sought: for a private commercial licence, it is the Center; for educational concessions for a caste bloc, it will be the State, for this or that development benefit for a cultivator, it will be, increasingly, the new indirectly elected local bodies such as the Panchayati Samiti. For these operations one must have friends who can influence people. Congress is such a body of organised friends.

A second factor that facilitated the build-up of a patronage structure for the INC was the existence of traditional clientelist institutions like the *jajmani* system of reciprocal bonds between status bearers and clientele. Often, these were the base for the dominant party’s organisation of political machines corresponding to Arian and Barnes’ (1974: 601) view that “(...) these [hierarchical] lines of communication, extended and humanized by networks of

⁵⁴² See the discussion about the executive, office-seeking, orientation of the INC in 3.2., resulting from executive office being the ‘highest price at stake’ in a context of state-dominated pluralism.

personal ties, are the true instruments of control in the societies, and they are largely co-opted by the dominant party.”⁵⁴³

In the less material sense of state-party identification, the INC was also able to blur the line between dominant party and the state. This was done in a number of ways: by drawing on its capacity to mediate diverse interests for the sake of state-building and unity as well as the ‘doubling’ of state and party structures and finally, by benefiting from traditional attitudinal patterns of the electorate. As Rothermund (1965: 219-220) concludes [translation by C.S.]:

*“(…) [T]he strange double role of the Congress as a “parallel government” and parliamentary party and the resultant conflict between the organisational and ministerial wing had brought about the case that all contradictions could be settled within the Congress with the Congress high command as the universal arbiter (…) [At the same time,] [t]he fusion of state-based and intra-party mediation functions allowed for a durable coalition of diverse interest groups and for an amalgamation of party and state. In the vernacular this regime is called Congress Sarkar, a term literally meaning ‘Congress government’, but connotative of the broader concept of Sarkar (government, state, authority), thus also being reminiscent of this fusion of party and state.”*⁵⁴⁴

As a consequence of this fuzzy differentiation between dominant party and state in the mind of the (potential) voter/supporter, a result of the party’s “(…) ability to make identification with the political system and support for the party interchangeable” (Arian and Barnes 1974: 608), supporters of the government party normally evaluate government more favourably (or judge it less harshly) than supporters of other parties (ibid. 606). This was also the case in

⁵⁴³ The co-optation (and growing ‘secularisation’) of traditional (clientelist) social institutions of Indian society through the INC (and other parties) furthered the already high degree of factionalism and personalisation of Indian parties and the party system, a process counteractive to the emergence of party political cleavages and more programmatic linkage mechanisms (see 2.1.3.).

⁵⁴⁴ In this context it may also be argued that the INC benefited to a great extent from traditional value and attitudinal patterns still prevalent in the Indian electorate. The principle of *sarkar* entails a belief in the functional effectiveness of the ruler/rulers as a source of his/their legitimacy (contrasting the conception of legitimacy as a manifestation of the free will of individuals). As de Mesquita and Park (1979: 38) note: “Traditionally, the people have been willing to support whoever ruled rather than the opposition, providing the ruler fulfilled his duties in the maintenance of order. It has been said of modern India that the Congress Party was able to hold its predominant strength in the country for so long, because among other reasons, it was considered to be the *sarkar*, which is to say the effective government.” Compare also to the deeply rooted belief in the principle of *svadharma* - described by the Indian medieval political philosopher *Kautilya* -, which correlates the generation of legitimacy with the ability and moral prerogative of the ruler to maintain the societal order (Varma 1986: 62).

India where popular conception of the government's performance was less critical among INC supporters than among non-Congress voters.⁵⁴⁵

This is also the case in South Africa, where survey evidence for the period 1995-2000 shows that the margin between supporters and non-supporters of the ANC in terms of evaluation of government is remarkable (Kotzé 2001: 159 ff.).

Blurring the line between the state and the dominant party is a standard device of ANC rhetoric. By equating the ANC's historic mission of societal 'transformation' with the South African state's rationale, ANC leaders and government spokesmen are prepared to view criticisms and even legal challenges to their authority as evidence of conspirational resistance to transformation (Lodge: 1999b: 73). Characterising opposition as 'unpatriotic' leaves little room to manoeuvre since every attack on the ANC comes close to an assault on the state.

A more tangible sense of the dominant party's attempt to blur the line between it and the state finds expression in the aforementioned party's embrace of a distinct cadre policy geared towards 'strategic deployment' of ANC loyalists in positions of power⁵⁴⁶ (see *Mail and Guardian*, November 5-11, 1999, which provides a detailed account of the ANC's formulation and implementation of its cadre policy; see also *Sunday Times*, May 2, 1999).⁵⁴⁷

This acts as a precondition for even more direct efforts to equate party and state by using the advantages of incumbency such as the promotion of a multi-million rand media campaign ('Realising our Hopes') to publicise the successes of the ANC government before the 1999 elections. The public funded campaign was released by the Government Communication and

⁵⁴⁵ Thus, in 1967, as Kothari (1978: 106) shows, the level of dissatisfaction with local government officials and dissatisfaction with officials at higher levels (as well as the level of discontent with government performance, although this item is less meaningful, because the questions involved did equate the INC with government!) is much lower among INC supporters than among non-Congress voters. However, the CSDS survey of 1967, from which data were drawn and which also differentiated between regular voters (Congress/non-Congress), defectors (to and from the INC) and new voters (Congress/non-Congress), indicates a change in perception after the critical elections of 1967 in the sense that "[Congress'] appeal to many of its former supporters had diminished and its performance in the art of governance was subjected to harsh judgement by supporters and opposition alike" (ibid. 107).

⁵⁴⁶ As Butler (2002: 104) notes, "Currently (...) the ANC represents a parallel political order, its external relations with the formal political system shaped by its need to accommodate its own internal conflict."

⁵⁴⁷ In this regard, the crucial positions in the state apparatus were/are most often occupied by members of the dominant party's highest executive organ, the Working Committee and the NEC in India and South Africa respectively. In one-party-dominant systems in general the offices of head of the executive or, for that matter, prime minister/president, and of party president almost always coincide even though the position of party president may be the result of intra-party elections. Thus, after initial infighting, Nehru, who was at first reluctant to become party president, took over both offices. Both, Mandela and Mbeki, were at the same time head of the executive and party president.

Information System (GCIS) headed by NEC member Joel Neshitenzhe⁵⁴⁸ and raised (fruitless) criticism by all the major opposition parties (*The Star*, March 9, 1999).⁵⁴⁹

At the same time, clear patronage politics, while part of the ANC's strategy to widen and protect its support base (as discussed in 4.2.), are constrained by the limited reach of the South African state and the ANC's embrace of a market economy (see also 5.4.). Given the limited opportunity of the ANC to rely on a strong interventionist state, the expansion of distributive politics are made more difficult and even more dangerous taking into account that, whereas a dominant party must distribute enough to its support base to retain its loyalty, it must also ensure "(...) that its opponent's supporters derive enough from public administration to ensure their continued loyalty to the democratic order" (Friedman 1999: 104). Extensive use of patronage politics similar to the INC's is clearly not on offer for the ANC or as my interview partner R.W. Johnson (see references) stated, 'the ANC can't deliver state resources to a constituency of two-thirds of the population'.

The various strategies described in this chapter are of course interwoven. They too display the need for the dominant party to react flexibly to party political and societal challenges and to use its strategic skills and the resources bestowed upon it by incumbency in an adaptable and purposeful way.

To give an example, the INC could be an umbrella party, thus making it difficult for opposition to compete against it and to overcome their sectoral appeal, only as long as it is able to depoliticise cleavages, retain coherence, use state resources etc.. One strategy can at times appear more prominent, but if any of these is not available or if the emphasis on one of these strategic assets outweighs the other avenues (e.g. a preponderance of centralist tendencies at the cost of factional sub-structures) and a threat occurs (e.g. an economic or mobilisational crisis) it becomes very difficult for the dominant party to up-hold its towering status (without doing away with democratic procedures and symbols).⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁸ Neshitenzhe was also the author of the first document that spelled out the ANC's cadre policy in 1996 ('The National Democratic Revolution (NDR: Is It Still on Track?') later on to be published in the party's newly released organ *Umrabolo* (ANC 1996).

⁵⁴⁹ Another prominent example of the dominant party's use of its incumbency advantage would be the (often not unjustified) accusations against the (near-monopolistic) South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) of "(...) unfairly favouring the ANC in its television and radio news and actuality coverage" (Jacobs 1999: 154) - the media had been identified by the party's cadre policy as one of the centres of power for the party to take control of (see also *Citizen*, May 31, 1999 for a report on the exclusion of smaller parties from a major pre-1999 elections SABC-TV debate).

⁵⁵⁰ Thus, the ANC, for example, eventually has to change its strategy of (indirectly) highlighting the racial cleavage, for survey results (Mattes and Piombo 2001) indicate that capitalising on the black/white, rich/poor dichotomy won't be suitable for long, since 'race' as a determinant of partisan choice is no longer that important as the African majority is differentiating itself more and more. Similarly, when the mechanisms for factional accommodation within the INC (see section on factionalism above and 3.3.), such as intra-party organisational elections, were no longer available after the elections of 1967 or had been superseded by Indira Gandhi's more

The dominant party's catch-all, accommodative, internally pluralist nature and relatively open collaborative or pragmatic dominant party-opposition relations marked more by consensus and compromise than by confrontation within and between parties are however essential characteristics and mechanisms of democratic dominant party rule.

That said, what should become clear from the preceding is the role party agency can and does play in the maintenance of one-party dominance, and that there are also clear differences in the way and manner that the dominant party applies its strategic skills or, in other words, that there are differences in the mechanisms of control employed by the respective dominant party depending on the (structural and institutional) context, in which the party is ensconced. These differences will be taken up again in chapter 6.

interventionist style of factional conflict resolution and top-down decision-making respectively, the expansion of cabinet size in order to "(...) minimize dissent by incorporating as many groups as possible" (Chhibber 1999: 118) became the most important avenue of cementing interest coalitions in the states (within the INC or between the INC and other parties). Thus, cabinet size in the states averaged 21.5 in the pre-1967 period (from 1957 onwards) and increased to 42 in the post-1967 period up to 1994 (data for state cabinets adapted from Chhibber, 1999: 119). At the national level the cabinet size averaged 15.4 before 1967 (from 1952 onwards) and only slightly increased to an average of 16.4 for the period from 1967 to 1996 (own calculation based on data drawn from Woldendorp, Keman and Budge (2000: 278-289); in the case of ministers occupying more than one portfolio, ministers have been counted only once; figures thus do not reflect portfolios but actual ministers). The fact that cabinet expansion is not so obvious at the national level is not least due to the concentration of personal power under Indira and Rajiv (most often occupying the important portfolios) and is to some extent compensated by the fact that the minor portfolios (social works, public affairs) were enlarged. In general, cabinet size expansion correlates with greater party system fragmentation and indicates a declining capacity of the dominant party for factional accommodation and the maintenance of party coherence without referring to strict party discipline (Chhibber 1999: 118).

Chapter 5: Effects and Functions of One-Party-Dominance in India and South Africa

“It is ultimately leaders who get the party to submit to at least some democratic procedures while pursuing a national project that they believe will entrench party domination, that push their political system in a more democratic direction.”
(Giliomee/Simkins 1999a: 45)

“(...) the best potential underpinning for a developmentally effective democratic polity is a one-party dominant system, which to varying degrees, may combine the best of both developmental and democratic worlds. In these societies, the dominant party is subject to regular democratic approval at the ballot box and constantly subject to the pressures of an active civil society, while at the same time maintaining the coherence, authority, and capacity for long-term decision-making” (White 1998: 38).

The final and, given the tradition of party research on changing societies, probably most important of the core questions regarding the party system research dimensions examined in this study⁵⁵¹, is dealt with in this chapter. The question ‘has one-party-dominance a positive or negative effect on the processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and socio-economic development, the most pressing challenges changing societies are facing?’, is difficult to answer satisfactorily, at least with regard to the South African context.

An attempt to answer this question, the aim of this chapter, involves a change of analytical perspective (as outlined in the introduction and chapter 1) from looking at the party system as dependent variable to a perspective on the party system as independent variable influencing the course or ‘success/failure’ of these processes, which are understood as dependent variable(s).

Just as the institutional set-up, the socio-structural and socio-cultural traits of the electorate, the nature of the dominant party and opposition parties, as single components of the party system (described in chapter 2), all have an impact on political actors’ strategic (inter)action, the shape of a party system, its party agentive characteristics and the nature of competition taking place in a party, in sum, the ‘party system as a whole’, have to be considered as acting

⁵⁵¹ As Hartmann (1979: 126) noted in 1979 on the (fundamental) difference between party and party system research on advanced industrial democracies and research approaches to parties and party systems in developing societies [translation by C. S.]: “Party research on developing societies asks about the functions of parties and one-party or multi-party systems respectively for the stability of the political system and for the stabilisation or rather the advancement of the existing societal and economic conditions”.

on political actors' or, for that matter, party elites' strategic behaviour as well.⁵⁵² As such, party system characteristics, although primarily the product of intentional action responding to the political opportunity structure, have a 'feedback' effect on their original creators.

What seems clear at first sight is that one-party-dominance contributed to India's political stability and integrative capacity in the first two decades following independence. Additionally, even sceptics of the potential benefits of one-party-dominance for nascent democracies like Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: 3) concede that the ANC's dominance was a much better stabilising mechanism than "(...) a fragmented party system with a huge price at stake [where] competition might well have been so fierce as to derail the democratisation process." When we turn to the contribution of the Congress system to India's democratic resilience and socio-economic development, we are on more speculative ground. On the one hand, some of the mechanisms of control described in the preceding chapters (for example, the imposition of president's rule on non-Congress governments in the States on partisan grounds) sail close to the winds of a full-fledged liberal democracy, and India's record of economic growth and redistribution is far from impressive. On the other hand, given the context of changing societies that demands capacities from the political and party system that go far beyond the 'classic' functions ascribed to parties and the party system in western democracies, India's democratic career and incremental growth is remarkable. Seemingly 'undemocratic' features of the representational system, like clientelist linkages or patronage politics, gain a new meaning considering this specific context.

For example, as Kitschelt concludes on the basis of an examination of various citizen-party linkage mechanisms in advanced industrial democracies and changing societies alike:

"An important argument (...) is the proposition that clientelist and programmatic linkage mechanisms should be treated as equivalents in one important respect, namely, that both, under specific circumstances, have the capacity to organize and institutionalize relations of democratic accountability and responsiveness. Political analysts and citizens in advanced industrial societies, as well as members of the educated middle class in many developing countries, may treat clientelist democracy as a normatively deficient polity that stifles political freedom and perpetuates profound inequalities in citizens' control of economic resources and capacities for political

⁵⁵² The point being that a party system can either be considered as a structural context and as such open to a survey of its structural aspects and/or their impact, or as the sum of various (political) actors – open to a process-related analysis. Here, the party system is taken as a structural context and is, as such, an additional institutional parameter for the 'room to manoeuvre' of party political elites.

participation. However, this should not lead us to ignore that, from a perspective of positive theory building, clientelist democracy has proved durable and has commanded sufficient support to institutionalize and entrench itself for long periods in a variety of polities” (Kitschelt 2000: 872, emphasis added)⁵⁵³

Any answer therefore to the aforementioned question must specify the perspective from which the party systems’ functions and their effects (in relation to these functions) are conceptualised and assessed and has to take into account the problem of what counts as a success (or a clear failure) with regard to the distinct context of changing societies. A context that has once been described as characterised by the dilemma of a “double transition” (Webster/Adler 1999: 348 ff.). The double transition thereby refers to “(...) states that are simultaneously consolidating democracy and reconstructing their economies” (ibid. 348), and is, as such, a process more and more constituents of the post-colonial, or developing world are going through.⁵⁵⁴

With regard to specifying the perspective, two aspects are crucial. On the one hand, states subject to a double transition and, more so, dominant party regimes, almost always embark upon and promote an emancipatory concept of democracy going far beyond ‘democracy’ in its minimalist Schumpeterian sense. Therefore, “(...) democratic processes are held to be an intimate component of a wide conception of social, economic *and* political development” (Leftwich 1996b: 281). Democracy and development are not viewed as two separate social phenomena but rather as synergistically intertwined. Development that is not democratically sustained is therefore flawed development (for it does not comprise political development, i.e. democratisation or democratic consolidation) and democracy necessarily comprises social justice as one of its main components (ibid. 281). Hence, the implication that any short-term

⁵⁵³ The point of view taken by this study would not subscribe to a conceptualisation of systems of one-party-dominance as clientelist democracies (clientelist linkages and patronage politics do prevail in these systems, but are only one of the characteristics of one-party-dominant or, for that matter, of the Indian and South African party systems respectively; the term ‘clientelist democracy’ is connotative of a regime, which is principally based on and thoroughly permeated by clientelist structures, whereas the party systems of the two regional settings dealt with in this study, as well as one-party-dominant systems in general, do feature clientelist, programmatic and charismatic linkage mechanisms alike). Nor would it adhere to the rather ‘altruistic’ perspective on political elites as imbued with and bound by the ideals and objectives of political liberalism (they are seen here, first of all, as office-seekers, vote-maximisers and primarily guided by self-interest). Kitschelt however, hints at the crucial fact that a normatively biased view built on the idealisation of programmatic linkages as the “(...) essence of democratic responsiveness and accountability” (Kitschelt 2000: 846) is of no (analytical) use when dealing with party systems in changing societies.

⁵⁵⁴ One could argue that the double transition actually entails a fourfold transition for ‘reconstructing the economy’ comprises both, ‘bringing about sustainable growth’ and ‘facilitating redistribution’, and ‘consolidating democracy’ implies ‘acquiring legitimacy’ as well as ‘guaranteeing political stability’. In the two regional contexts dealt with in this study (one post-colonial, one post-apartheid) the double transition’ has to be complemented by the crucial process of national integration or nation-building.

curtailment of democratic processes for the sake of economic restructuring (read: development) is out of the question. On the other hand, the double transition, or, for that matter, democratic development, is supposed to be essentially contradictory. Democratic consolidation usually requires a lot of inter-elite bargaining, consensus-building and compromising; policy options are most of the time incrementalist and accommodationist. Economic restructuring involves/necessitates radical structural changes “(...) in the use and distribution of resources” thereby triggering “(...) new political interests and challenging established ones” (Leftwich 1998: 56). So, a balance has to be found between the somehow ‘conservative’ nature of democratic politics and the turmoil produced by economic restructuring and social transformation.⁵⁵⁵

These two aspects coupled with Kitschelt’s considerations about equivalents to the functions conventionally associated with parties and the party system naturally have serious implications for the way one conceives the role, party systems play as an independent variable insofar as the spectrum of functions ascribed to or assumed to be performed by parties and the party system is concerned. This spectrum has to be widened to incorporate those functions to be additionally performed by party systems in changing societies (national integration has to be taken into account as a further crucial parameter for determining the role of party systems in changing societies). There are also implications for the analytical scope of the catalogue of functions to be applied insofar as there has to be a clear differentiation between empirically deduced and normatively grounded functions⁵⁵⁶ – the latter are almost always derived from the canon of values of liberal-pluralistic democracies. There are implications in terms of the consideration of the multi-dimensionality of a party system in relation to its functions and effects insofar as the two aspects mentioned above clearly demand a breaking-up of the confinement to single dimensions of the party system prevalent in the existing literature. As such, any consideration of the party system as independent variable has to reflect on the respective party system’s governmental, societal and intra-party system dimension. Finally,

⁵⁵⁵ Additionally, once the choice has been made for the double transition, democratic consolidation and economic restructuring are at the mercy of each other. Bad economic performance and poor redistributive records may ultimately undermine democratic consolidation whereas inadequate democratisation and lack of political stability in all probability will undermine the state-society consensus necessary to pursue and implement economic restructuring and will likely lead to an increasing rift between the economy and society. To put it more bluntly: ‘no delivery, no legitimacy; no legitimacy, no delivery’.

⁵⁵⁶ Likewise, some of the functions conventionally ascribed to parties take on a different meaning when related to the party system. Thus, the crucial aspect of a party’s functional ability to integrate, a functional dimension, which permeates the bigger part of the relevant scholarly literature, above all follows the understanding of a party’s ability to forge (organisational) links with the citizenry. On the other hand, the integrative capacity of the party system as a whole delineates its ability to bring extra-party or extra-parliamentary (anti-system) societal groups and forces into the political mainstream represented by the party system and its capacity to bind the citizenry to the existing political order and value patterns (Helms 1995: 643).

and probably most importantly, there are also implications for the question of what counts as a 'success' and what as a 'failure' with regard to the performance and functional ability of party systems in changing societies or party systems subject to a double transition.

With regard to the latter Das Gupta (1989) has made a useful distinction between the state of 'democratic being' vs. the (historically) more complex state of 'democratic becoming'. This suggests that a mere reliance on degrees of contestation and economic aggregate data does not make much sense when judging the democratic and/or economic record of changing societies or the democratic and developmental impact of a given party system's configuration and performance. According to Das Gupta, "[a] better way would be to focus on the gradual process of active cultivation of ideas and institutions contributing to the installation and strengthening of a democratic system, through a simultaneous development of social, economic and political resources" (ibid. 93). The state of 'democratic becoming',⁵⁵⁷ in a context of a changing society, applicable to both of the regional/temporal contexts examined in this study, demands a focus on a) the dominant party's necessary adherence to a pace of (economic) development consistent with but not overriding the polity's rationale and objectives of democratic consolidation, national integration and of plural as well as social justice (ibid. 92), and to the fact that b) the party system must ensure the accommodation of both the economic and social power of the ruling leaders and entrenched elites and the aspirations of newly enfranchised and (potentially) upwardly mobile social and societal forces in order to minimise both groups' potential for violating the fragile arrangement of rules and institutions of representative democracy and to generate the indispensable legitimacy for upholding political order and stability.

This complements Leftwich's assessment of the constraints on party elites in the context of a double transition. As already indicated in 4.1. and 4.4., for a one-party-dominant system to remain democratic (and not to turn into a hegemonic party system) and, eventually, to conform to a process of democratic consolidation, it is essential for the ruling party elites not to conceive of democracy as a zero-sum-game or, in the words of Leftwich (1996: 59):

⁵⁵⁷ The notion of 'democratic becoming' while more illustrative of the dimension of 'agency' involved in the process of democratisation than the concept of democratic consolidation, suffers, like the latter, from the incoherence tied to any assessment of the question, when can the process of 'democratic becoming' be considered as completed? - given the fact that 'institutionalised uncertainty' is thought of to be a fundamental of any conceptualisation of democracy. For a discussion of this intricate relationship between the categories of democratic transition, democratic consolidation and 'democratic being', see Schedler (2001).

“(...) while losers must accept the outcome of the electoral process, winners must accept that there are significant limits to what they can do with their newly acquired power and, indeed, that they may have to share some of that power with the losers. That is to say, democratic consolidation is most likely where the elected governments do not pursue highly contentious or controversial policies too far or too fast, especially where such policies might seriously threaten or undermine other interests or those on the losing side”

Thus, any assessment of the contribution that a given party system makes to the processes of democratic consolidation, socio-economic development and national integration has to take into account the (often) contradictory nature of these processes when occurring simultaneously.⁵⁵⁸ The same applies to any evaluation of a party system's performance with regard to conventional/common and/or additional functions conducive to these processes and to the smooth functioning of representative government. In addition, the actor-oriented perspective of this study demands a different approach to the evaluation of the effects and functions of systems of one-party-dominance. The (potential) benign (or malign) function of one-party-dominance is seen here as essentially a 'side-effect' of party elites acting as rational actors based on the general assumption of this study that party agency is first and foremost based on personal and party-based (office and power-seeking) motivations. As such, this perspective does not equate the 'goal' of changing societies (such as democratisation, democratic consolidation, development etc.) with the principle motivation of the party elites and political actors, inspired by the desire to retain or seek office and to maintain or topple party dominance. One-party-dominance offers the appropriate 'institutional container' for

⁵⁵⁸ The implications of the “Dilemmas of Democratic Development” (Kaviraj 1996) described above (and their partial reconciliation through the Congress system examined in the following sections) may be also considered as responsible for the puzzling phenomenon, with which India's democratic resilience despite mass poverty, extreme socio-cultural heterogeneity and complexity of developmental problems has bewildered the scholarly community. The shift in academic judgement and wisdom caused by the “The Puzzle of India's Democracy” (Lijphart 1996) or “The Indian Paradox” (Weiner 1989) is, for example, reflected in the works of Moore and Kohli both of whom have taken a 'fresh' view on the probability of India's democratic 'success' after realising that the country's empirical reality persistently defied their theoretical assumptions. See Moore (1966, chapter on India) and Kohli (1990) for the earlier pessimistic assessment of Indian democracy's capacity to survive and Moore (1987: 123) and Kohli (2001) for their later view where India comes out in a much more optimistic light. In a similar vein, as Butler (2003: 97-98) states, referring to Mattes (2002: 1), “South African scholars have on occasion used systematic cross-national analysis to identify broad sets of factors – economic growth, stable political institutions and an appropriate political culture – that have elsewhere and in the past been associated with measures of democratic persistence. Yet each of these sets of factors in South Africa (...) presents a 'paradox' rather than any clear basis for judgement. Macro-economic stability sits uneasily alongside low investment and extreme unemployment; state-of-the-art mechanisms of accountability are vitiated by one-party dominance; and a diverse civil society accompanies uneven commitment to democracy and participation. Domestic authors more commonly treat 'consolidation' as little more than a semantic issue, believing that the key formal attributes of liberal polyarchy are entrenched for the next decade or more, while ANC electoral domination precludes any transfer of power.”

ruling elites to adhere to democratic norms and procedures as long as there is no immediate threat to their rule. Since they therefore can afford to take a more long-term view regarding developmental advancement and nation-building, without losing sight of the polity's democratic underpinnings, the prospect of a process of "democratic habituation" (Rustow 1970) gaining momentum is considered here to be much better.⁵⁵⁹

This aspect is thereby reminiscent of what Huntington (1965: 391) once had to say with regard to the analytical refinement of the concept of political development: the latter's conceptualisation had so far almost always been subject to "(...) the tendency to ascribe to a political system [read 'party system' in the context of this study, C.S.] qualities which are assumed to be its ultimate goals rather than qualities which actually characterize its processes and functions."⁵⁶⁰

However, any explanatory reference to the crucial role of strictly political factors and party agency must recognise the respective structural and institutional context, both in terms of socio-structural/socio-economic parameters and the polity's institutional arrangement and in terms of the relevant party system characteristics, in order to determine the cluster of incentives and constraints wherein any set of political actors is embedded, and to avoid the danger of an explanation that is too voluntaristic. As stated before, this study does not deny the crucial impact of (historical) contextual factors bearing upon actors' behaviour and decisions (either as incentives or as constraints), but points to the anticipatory potential of political actors in reaction to these parameters.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ Both on the part of political elites, in which case the continued dominance of one party evokes some kind of reasoning among the minority elite factions about the necessity or advantage of coalitioning and seeking bargained solutions, thus furthering the successive emergence of centripetal party competition as a base for a stable, consolidated democracy (Burton et al. 1992: 24), and in terms of a "democratic mass culture" (Diamond 1993: 104), whose generation comes close to the (simple) 'trick' of democracy "(...) to survive long enough – and function well enough – for this process [of becoming habituated to (democracy's) norms and values, gradually internalizing them] to occur" (ibid.).

⁵⁶⁰ Huntington illustrates this fallacy with reference to an article by Esman (1966) on the 'Politics of Development Administration': "Esman bases his analysis on the assumption that the political leaders of modernizing societies are motivated by the goals of nation-building and social-economic progress and not by desire for personal power, wealth, status, or the territorial expansion of their countries. This assumption has about the same degree of truth and usefulness in explaining politics in the contemporary "developing" areas as the assumption that Stalin's policies were devoted to building communism has to the explanation of Soviet politics in the 1930's" (ibid. fn. 14).

⁵⁶¹ Since parties and party systems represent to some extent the interface of input and output functions of the political system and, moreover, since their manoeuvring reflects the vagaries and uncertainties of democratisation and development and is bound by structural, institutional and environmental determinants, they are the prime object of investigation for a complementary consideration of functionalist and genetic approaches to democratic consolidation and socio-economic development. As Pridham and Lewis (1996: 4) state: "(...) it is here [in multicausal explanations of regime change, C.S.] that the importance of focusing on party systems and political parties becomes evident. Indeed, they are pertinent to both the genetic and functionalist theories: on the first count they invariably provide the most powerful political actors and are usually seen as strategic vehicles; and, on the second, parties obviously present an important linkage with and channel for the impact of socio-economic determinants on political change."

Additionally, the examination of the two party systems' effects and functions has to acknowledge the (potential) perils of one-party-dominance. These are, in the first place, the emergence of oligarchic and authoritarian tendencies, the entrenchment of corruption and rent-seeking and a concomitant economic ineffectiveness, a too far-reaching collusion between the state and the dominant party, and, above all, the danger of "(...) the connection between electoral cycles and distribution of state resources [coming] too close" (Kaviraj 1996: 134) when popular support for the dominant party is waning. Whether the two systems of one-party-dominance dealt with in this study should be considered as "(...) benign bridges between society and the state, able to pave the way for consolidated liberal democracies" (du Toit: 1999: 195) at all, or, whether they should rather be conceived as "(...) bridgeheads [back] to single party hegemony" (ibid.) and authoritarianism, this crucial question needs to be addressed in the context of this (and the next) chapter as well.

All these considerations suggest that

a) the 'classic' functions ascribed to parties and the party system in established (western) democracies have to be reduced or, better 'streamlined', according to the distinct performance specifications for (dominant) parties and the party system in changing societies⁵⁶², putting different weighting on the fulfilment of these functions; These include i) more society/electorate-oriented functions like representation (interest aggregation) and integration (binding the citizenry to the principle of representative government and drawing potential anti-system forces into the political 'mainstream') ii) more state/system-oriented functions like legitimation (consolidating constitutional mechanisms and providing effective policy-making/performance) and recruitment (government formation) and iii) intra-party system functions like the provision of competitiveness or organisation of opposition – to name some of the principal functions part of almost any scholarly catalogue,⁵⁶³

that b) the additional functions necessitated by the specifics of the two regional contexts and the general context of post-colonial/post-apartheid democratic consolidation and

⁵⁶² Thus, as Randall and Svåsand (2002a: 3-4) rightly argue, these 'classic' functions "(...) might themselves reflect an ideal that no longer fully corresponds, if it ever did, to what parties actually do in established democracies", and, in a Third World context "(...) some of the identified functions [those identified by research on established democracies, C.S.] may be either irrelevant for democracy or actually inimical".

⁵⁶³ Of course, these functions are not mutually exclusive but are to a great extent overlapping. Additionally, most of the functions mentioned here as belonging to one of the three party system dimensions (state, society/electorate, party system's inner space), may also be categorised as belonging to one of the other dimensions. Thus 'government formation' depends as well on the interaction and cooperation within and between parties.

socio-economic development have to be addressed. In particular, one needs to look at the further crucial functions of organising (channelling and controlling) “[t]he vacuum of power and authority” (Huntington 1968: 461) characteristic of changing societies⁵⁶⁴, of the management of (ethnic, religious or class-based) conflict, a latent threat in any divided society⁵⁶⁵, of providing incentives for political involvement thereby acting “(..) as a stimulant to the development of a vibrant civil society” (Pridham and Lewis 1996: 6) and of the ability to provide (policy) innovation in terms of initiating social change and of continuously adapting and reacting to the processes (and results) of social change, basically via policy formulation;

and that c) a proper assessment is needed with regard to the more empirically derived effects of the two party systems’ characteristics and configuration on the likeliness of relevant political actors (elites and other potential veto actors) adhering to the democratic process, thus contributing to democratic consolidation. In this regard a distinction is made between the notion of ‘institutionalised uncertainty’, conceptualised to be the ‘essence’ of democratic governance by liberal theories of democracy, and the concept of ‘democratic resilience’ and ‘habituation’ as representing the (fundamental) logic of the process of ‘democratic becoming’;

and that, finally, d) an assessment of the two party systems’ record and potential regarding the process of democratic development has to be made - taking into account the actors’ perception of looking at democracy and development as two synergistically intertwined social phenomena, and incorporating the contradictions inherent in the process of democratic development mentioned above.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁴ In this regard, what Di Palma states for one-party-dominance in advanced industrial societies holds true for the two regional contexts under examination in this study as well: “(...) the path of dominance is initially entered in response to a compelling problem of democratic legitimation or identity” (Di Palma 1991: 175).

⁵⁶⁵ This is of course a more system-level function, but the party system as a (potential) platform for the articulation of societal conflicts and as an arena for their (peaceful) resolution is, apart from constitutional provisions, the most important ‘authority’ on coping with conflicts and most often supersedes constitutional provisions with regard to the structuring of the potential for conflict in a given society. Thus, constitutional provisions or institutional arrangements do not necessarily (nor mechanistically) determine the capacity of a political system to react adequately to situations of potential political, social or cultural conflict. Especially in divided societies where the horizontal integration of communal groups is of special relevance, conflict-management is first of all dependent on the willingness of the political/national elite to ‘share power’, to agree upon the understanding that there is an imperative to find a balance for the existing cultural and social pluralism.

⁵⁶⁶ In a sense, whereas sections 5.1. and 5.2. deal primarily with the functions identified as appropriate for parties and the party system in a context of changing societies, sections 5.3. and 5.4. deal more with the actual effects of the two, one-party-dominant regimes on processes of democratic consolidation and socio-economic development in post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa.

This chapter therefore aims at assessing and analysing the effects and functions of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts. It starts by looking at the functions commonly ascribed to party systems in the literature which, for the sake of analytical clarity and the reasons stated above, are reduced to the two basic functions of providing governmental stability and to ensure societal inclusion (see the discussion in 5.1. below).⁵⁶⁷ The analysis then tries to take into account the additional functions a party system has to perform in the context of changing societies (conflict-management and ‘modernisation’, see 5.2.).

To arrive at a statement regarding the two party system’s (real and potential) contribution to the respective country’s democratic consolidation and socio-economic development, section 5.3. looks at the crucial actors’ perception of the party system and the consequences thereof for the question of how the party system has benefited (or has been detrimental to) the process of democratic consolidation. Section 5.4. examines the impact of the party systems’ characteristics and configuration on the two countries’ developmental trajectory. Particular reference is made to the path of democratic development chosen by the two countries’ ruling elites against the backdrop of two central concepts, ‘combined development’ and the ‘developmental state’ - identified by the scholarly community as two potential strategies for the reconciliation of democracy and development.

This chapter therefore deviates from the common catalogue of functions insofar as it concentrates on those functions that are of special relevance to the context of changing societies and to the contribution of the party system to the processes of democratic consolidation, socio-economic development and national integration.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁷ This view complies with Brass’ early formulation of the critical role of parties and the party system in changing societies. Writing on the emerging post-independence party system in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, he alerts the reader right from the beginning that,

“[I]n the adaptation of modern institutions of representative government to traditional societies [read ‘changing societies’ instead of the then popular term ‘traditional societies’, C.S.], political parties play the decisive role. In every modern polity, and in every polity which aspires to modernity, political parties are an indispensable link between the society and the institutions of government. In traditional societies undergoing modernization and political development, political parties have the double task of providing stable government and of bringing new groups of people into the political process while orienting them towards the political and economic goals of the modern state. The ability of former colonial countries to make a successful transition from foreign bureaucratic rule to democratic self-government depends very much upon the capacity of the political parties to perform these tasks. The capacity of the ruling party in a new state to perform these tasks in turn depends upon how successful it is in the years after independence” (Brass 1965: 1).

⁵⁶⁸ This conforms to Lowi’s (1963: 571) view that one should not agree upon a definite “(...) inventory of “the functions of party” as though these were as regularly a part of the political process as stages in the passage of a bill.”

5.1. The basic functions: governmental stability and societal inclusion

Of the many functions conventionally ascribed to parties and party systems⁵⁶⁹, two stand out as being (more) critically important with regard to changing societies, for they represent the key elements against the backdrop of a double transition additionally burdened by the challenge of state- and nation-building. Furthermore, most of the other functions could eventually be subsumed under the broad headings of these two fundamental functions. In fact, almost any scholarly catalogue of the classic *idealiter* functions attributed to parties and the party system could be reduced to these two basic functions in the context of changing societies: governmental stability and societal inclusion.⁵⁷⁰

The provision of political order has to be considered as a *sine qua non* for the party system's mediating agency between state and society to function properly, for the party system's and party government's capacity to provide coherent and effective policy formulation, for the creation of legitimate political institutions and so on. Political order thereby needs an authoritative political centre (for an extended period) emerging from the effective working of the representational structures as 'organised' by the party system and party competition, and from the party system's ability to facilitate government formation and the structuration of the legislative process. Similarly, in a competitive, democratic set-up the party system's ability to fulfil its representational tasks (interest articulation and aggregation) and to work towards the further entrenchment of regime legitimacy rests on a necessary consensus regarding the role of parties in a system of democratic governance and arising out of the party system's performance in terms of the crucial dimensions of societal inclusion and responsiveness.

Of crucial importance in the context of changing societies is the fact that both functions are of course intertwined. The party system's capacity to open 'room to manoeuvre' for relevant

⁵⁶⁹ For a survey of the literature and a proposition for a four-fold 'catalogue' see v. Beyme (1994) and Helms (1995) with the latter suggesting a five-fold catalogue; for a critical assessment on whether these functions are still predominantly performed by parties see Schmitter (1999); for one of the most recent attempts to rethink the 'classic' functions with regard to a Third World context, see Randall and Svåsand (2002a). Eventually, most of the functions ascribed to parties and the party system identified by scholars have a lineage that can be traced back to Gabriel Almond's path-breaking structural-functionalist theory of the political system and the role of parties therein (Almond et al. 1993).

⁵⁷⁰ Schmitter (1999: 477-478) has summarised these critical functions more recently as the parties' "governing function" ("Political parties, once they have competed in the electoral process, should be capable of forming a government and of providing a internal structure to the legislative process") and their function of "symbolic integration" ("Political parties should provide most citizens with a stable and distinctive set of ideas and goals (symbols) which anchor their expectations about democracy, orient them in a general way toward policy options and make them feel part of the process of collective choice"). He lists these two functions as part of a four-fold category comprising additionally the function of "electoral structuration" and the "aggregative function" (ibid.). As stated above, the governing function and the function of symbolic integration are seen as the most crucial in a context of changing societies.

social and political groups⁵⁷¹ and to link government performance to a ‘social consensus’ provides the emerging political order with sufficient legitimation and stability.⁵⁷² At the same time the provision of stable government is itself a precondition for a party system’s integrative capacity to effectively evolve and positively affects all other functions to be performed by parties and the party system. That is also why the potential danger of a ‘malign’ function of the party system and systems of one-party-dominance in changing societies (a danger, which is especially inherent to systems of one-party-dominance, but also to any other party system) revolves particularly around the possibility of the ‘gap’ between the rootedness of the party system in society and the ‘partyness’ of governmental decision-making (the extent to which governmental decision-making is determined or, for that matter, ‘monopolised’, by parties/a party) growing too wide. As a consequence of this “overpartitization” (Agh 1993) (the quasi-monopolistic control of governmental decision-making through parties/a party) coupled with weak social roots of the party system, an “intermediary vacuum” [intermediäres Vakuum, C.S.] (Plasser and Ulram 1992: 399) develops with potentially devastating implications for the consolidation of (democratic) regime stability (Croissant 1997: 325).

With these conceptual clarifications in mind, it will be argued here, that one-party-dominance potentially acts as a referential framework for the (successful) reconciliation (or ‘synchronisation’) of government stability and societal inclusion. But what are the crucial incentives that a configuration of one-party-dominance has to offer for the (simultaneous) entrenchment of governmental stability and the inclusion of newly enfranchised social groups into the body politic? More specifically, how did the Congress system work towards finding a balanced equilibrium of governmental stability and societal inclusion for India’s political system after independence and what are the implications thereof for the South African context?

The statement that one-party-dominance encourages government stability may sound trite. Clear majorities naturally facilitate the formation of governments and the positive correlation between a low level of party system fragmentation and governmental stability is commonplace in scholarly accounts about the party system’s role in the stabilisation of

⁵⁷¹ As Huntington (1968: 397) states: “The achievement of political community in a modernizing society [thereby] involves both the “horizontal” integration of communal groups and the “vertical” assimilation of social and economic classes.”

⁵⁷² Following Kothari (1994: 159): “(...) the real contribution of the party system to political development lies in its role of being a catalyst of governmental performance at various levels; parties do not simply compete and represent but also [and I would argue, most importantly, C.S.] turn competitive arenas and representational processes into resources for and against government”

democratic regimes.⁵⁷³ Indeed, several studies have shown that the erosion of one-party-dominance in India from 1967 onwards is clearly related to a concomitant decline in government stability. For example, Chhibber (1999: 120) demonstrates empirically that there was a sharp increase in cabinet instability at the State level after 1967, a fact he relates to the declining ability of the INC to accommodate factional conflicts and to the cessation of intra-party elections from 1972 onwards, which brought the traditional divide and aggregation of factional substructures into the two broad categories of ‘ministerial’ and ‘organisational wing’ into disarray and contributed to the proliferation of a multiplicity of factions (ibid. 124). Brass (1985: 19-63) comes up with a similar conclusion on the basis of data for the Indian states between 1952 and 1974⁵⁷⁴. The correlation is even more significant when one contrasts the post-independence levels of government/cabinet instability with the current period (especially from 1996 onwards) of extreme coalition politics and frequent collapse of governments at the national level.⁵⁷⁵

With regard to South Africa, an assessment of cabinet stability in quantitative terms would not reveal much about the overall state of government stability as a result of one-party-dominance, since the time period of representative government is simply too short (nearly two legislative periods). The only serious reshuffling of the cabinet in 1996 was due to a very specific reason, the departure of the NP from the constitutionally anchored GNU (and there is no valuable point of comparison as in the Indian context). However, it is obvious that the ANC’s clear majorities provided for cabinet stability and favoured the working of and the habituation to constitutional mechanisms, which, in the aftermath of the negotiated transition, could be reached with relative ease. The benign effect of ANC (electoral) dominance with respect to government stability is especially visible from the fact that the NP’s withdrawal from the GNU did not cause much trouble regarding continuity of governmental decision-making. Additionally, ANC dominance also facilitated the far-reaching revamping of the

⁵⁷³ See Herman and Taylor (1971) for one of the most sophisticated and early accounts of this correlation.

⁵⁷⁴ As Chhibber (1999: 120) notes: “In the period up to 1967, 21 chief ministers resigned or saw their ministries fall, 50 ministers resigned from cabinets, 23 cabinets were reshuffled, and 101 ministers were added after the announcement of the initial cabinet. In the period of increased instability (post-1967), 195 chief ministers resigned or saw their ministries fall, there were 627 resignations by ministers from state cabinets, 135 cabinets were reshuffled, and 2,406 ministers were added after the announcement of initial cabinets.” A similar picture holds true for the national level; see also Nicholson (1972). Mitra (1978), using a much more sophisticated and detailed index for the measurement of government/cabinet instability in select Indian States that takes into account different weightings for the different reasons as to why cabinets are reshuffled as well as specifics of the Indian system of government, comes to a similar conclusion as concerns the increase of cabinet instability after 1967 (ibid. 77).

⁵⁷⁵ Thus, at the national level, the average government duration (as measured by the tenure of the chief executive, the prime minister) up to 1967 was 1192 days, whereas from 1967 up to now it has declined to an average of 723 days (own calculations; excluding the emergency period, the two 13-days and 14-days interim tenures of Gulzari Lal Nanda and the current government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee).

whole national executive structure (especially the establishment of the Co-ordination and Implementation Unit (CIU) within the presidential office), initiated by Mbeki after the Presidential Review Commission (PRC) had given a staggering ‘state of the art’ report on the South African public service including the office of the president.⁵⁷⁶ Continuity also prevails in the composition of the core ministries (especially the highly controversial office of finance minister which is occupied since 1996 by Trevor Manuel and which is normally the first one to fall victim to popular perception of a government performing badly, see 5.4.)) and the top positions of the party’s parliamentary candidate list. This is not least due to the ANC’s dominance and its concomitant ability to muster enough control of the party machine for the sake of staying in power and governing effectively (see *Business Day*, November 28, 2003, for the latest indication that this continuity will hold into the future).⁵⁷⁷

However, given the close connection between a party system’s function of facilitating government stability and its function of providing societal inclusion (as mentioned above), governmental stability should not be measured by simple reference to aggregate data on cabinet instability alone. A better indicator of the two party systems’ contribution to government stability would be the degree of legitimacy that the party and political system have acquired (democratic government stability essentially rests on a consent of who governs, generating a wide, socially inclusive, acceptance of the rules of the game)⁵⁷⁸ and the extent to

⁵⁷⁶ The power-sharing arrangement of the GNU would probably not have been possible without the ANC’s overwhelming electoral dominance given the turmoil and the real, as well as, potential danger of an outbreak of (partisan) violence in the run-up to the elections of 1994. The same holds true for the reorganisation of the national executive. The latter could be done only after the NP had left the government and the ANC was freed from coalitional bargaining. As Calland (1999a: 7) reports the statement of Jakes Gerwel, Director-General in the office of the president, that “(...) governing became easier (...)” after the NP’s departure. “It was easier for the President to assign functions to Mbeki and for Mbeki to play certain co-ordinating roles”.

⁵⁷⁷ To assess the effect of South Africa’s system of one-party-dominance with regard to governmental stability, it may be worthwhile to think in terms of a counterfactual: What would have been the case, if the ANC would have not yielded a clear electoral majority in 1994 and 1999, or if it would have been dependent on forming a fragile coalition (the GNU is another case, the ANC-IFP coalition is based on voluntary agreement)? The political violence in the provinces of Kwa-Zulu Natal and PWV surrounding the 1994 elections, the breakdown of order in Bophutatswana, the ‘one settler-one bullet’ propaganda of the PAC and the open war-mongering of the right-wing extremists point in the direction of what might have been the trajectory of the country were it not for the (electorally) dominant ANC to provide an authoritative political centre. In another respect, the dominant party’s proclivity to manipulate the institutional arrangement to its favour when in power, thus endangering the legitimate status of representative government, would in all probability be much greater. The bargaining for coalition partners would have been much fiercer, if there had been no party with a clear mandate from the electorate. Similarly, one could imagine what would have happened, if there had been no authoritative political centre in the form of the INC (gaining 202 of the 295 elected seats for the Constituent Assembly, which acted as parliament for India after partition and the departure of the Muslim League) – given the turmoil and violence in the aftermath of the partition.

⁵⁷⁸ As Susanne Rudolph stated in a conference on legitimacy and conflict in South Asia at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg, February 10-11, 1995: “The weak state rests on repression, the strong one on legitimacy” (quoted in Rothermund 1997: 250). The same holds true for the party system as well. Additionally, in the consolidation phase of democratic systems, the party system is confronted with the double task of promoting legitimacy for the political system as such and for parties’ role as dominant actors within that system.

which a smooth (party-based) functioning of the process of political recruitment is guaranteed.

(Regime) Legitimacy in democratising changing societies is above all generated by accommodating already entrenched social elites or those elites identified with the ancien régime/traditional order and by providing opportunities for political participation by new (upwardly mobile) social groups and aspirants (Lipset 1959: 87-88). In sum, legitimacy is generated through societal inclusion.⁵⁷⁹ In both respects, the party system is the place (and this study would contend the only place) where this kind of legitimacy can be generated.

At the same time, under circumstances where generating legitimacy *qua* elections or, for that matter *qua* ‘institutionalised uncertainty’ (of election outcomes), still needs to be routinised, where loyalty towards the nation-state and its institutions is not secure and where legacies of charismatic leadership still co-determine the public’s ability to exert control and to express dissent, the functional effectiveness of the party system, particularly in terms of its ability to produce stable and effective governing formulas (especially in relation to other political actors like the military or the bureaucracy),⁵⁸⁰ is of the same significance for the creation of affirmative and affective attitudinal patterns towards the mechanisms of the democratic process than the representation of societal interests or identities.⁵⁸¹

A system of one-party-dominance along the lines outlined in the preceding chapters now offers the chance to promote societal inclusion (of the ‘traditional elites’ and the newly enfranchised or hitherto oppressed social strata) without endangering government stability. The dominant party’s need to build up and retain its catch-all image enables, or better,

⁵⁷⁹ The crucial aspect of a party system’s (legitimacy generating) developmental and democratic performance is dealt with in 5.3. and 5.4.

⁵⁸⁰ Especially in a post-colonial context where newly established democratic regimes most often come off badly in public memory in comparison to the provision of ‘stability’ and effective law and order management of their colonial predecessors. As LaPalombara and Weiner (1966b: 409) stated: “The shift in public attitudes (...) typically lags behind the shift in the nature of the political system. Legitimacy is thus impeded because, in becoming more visible, representative government appears to be a step backward from the image of government associated with colonialism.”

⁵⁸¹ Put the other way round, the legitimacy that a political system/party system has acquired is the outcome of its providing government stability. An outcome, which rests again on the party system’s provision of societal inclusion. As Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 135) have explained this intricate connection between (static) stability and (dynamic) inclusion: “In the modernization process parties are playing a major role, “a catalytic role,” in the restructuring of public attitudes and affects toward the political system and the institutions in that system. Thus, as citizens become “psychologically involved,” as they take on *party* identifications and allegiances, as one type of such involvement, allegiances which are critical for party system *stability*, they are also taking on new orientations and attitudes which represent *change*, an integration of the modern with the traditional past. These orientations are functional to system support. “Identification,” therefore, is the product of *change*; it leads to or is associated with more *change* (in system-supportive attitudes and behavior), which then leads to *stability* (or, indeed to more change!).”

necessitates, the active pursuit of (selective) mobilisation without the immediate prospect of this mobilisation destabilising government stability.⁵⁸²

A dominant party thereby has to please many different constituencies. It can do so simply because it shapes party competition and determines governmental action for an extended and uninterrupted period of time, but also because it commands state resources (to be distributed) and it has a factional substructure which facilitates mobilisation and the dominant party's mediating agency between the state and society, while providing a mechanism to manage intra-party conflicts. Since it represents the political mainstream and (ideological) consensus of society, it may even allow some groups to remain outside the political mainstream without much damage being done to the overall legitimacy of the political and party system.⁵⁸³

With regard to this intricate connection between governmental stability and societal inclusion in the context of changing societies the argument put forward here is as follows: where electoral success(es) of a party enable(s) the party to dominate party competition without curtailing the (legal) existence and manoeuvring of its challengers, and where this dominance is accompanied by efforts to turn the dominant party's challengers into a crucial part of a – more or less consensual – process of decision-making and policy formulation (via factions, co-optation, co-operation or alliances, as a result of a general, national consensus on the respective party's dominance), the significance of the voting act and party identification, i.e. the legitimacy of the party and political system increase when political participation is associated simultaneously with a general perception of societal inclusion, governmental stability (as represented by the dominant party) and with the possibility of denying approval to the dominant party.⁵⁸⁴

As Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978: 75) have argued with regard to the 'participatory' or 'politicising' effect of the Congress system on the basis of empirical evidence from the 1967 CSDS survey: "Congress party dominance, plus rapid politicization, and the development of a

⁵⁸² The 'organisation' of institutionalised channels for aspiring social elites is a necessary mechanism for the dominant party to 'survive' in power (electorally and in terms of its indispensable flexibility or responsiveness to social change); the provision of avenues to the political process for 'traditional elites' or, for that matter, dominant classes, and the protection of their interests is likewise essential for the dominant party to keep these political actors from turning away from the party and political system and from pursuing authoritarian alternatives.

⁵⁸³ Following the theoretical reasoning of this study it does thereby not matter whether a potential benign function of a system of one-party-dominance arises out of the strategic thinking of the dominant party elites.

⁵⁸⁴ This complies with Weiner's (1957: 21) early speculation about the benign role of one-party-dominance in India's post-colonial context: "Perhaps, the process of getting non-Westerners to participate in a democratic framework could make most progress under the leadership of a single party which is capable of maintaining popular support even while allowing the opposition to operate." In the Indian context, this argument (as well as empirical evidence) stands against the conventional scholarly reasoning that the electoral dominance of a party lessens the motivational basis for political participation due to the plurality system's effects and a concomitant 'deserted' electoral landscape outside (oppositional) regional strongholds (see v. Beyme 1984: 328 f.).

truly competitive party system whose leaders have been public-oriented after Independence, have converged to generate party identifications which already are providing stability to the society”. Butler (2003: 112) comes to a similar assessment with regard to ‘South Africa’s political futures’: “It is an inescapable conclusion, unwelcome to those who fear protracted one-party dominance, that a cohesive tripartite alliance, enjoying sustained and cooperative relations with opposition parties, offers South Africa the best hope of entrenching its highly imperfect democracy. The movement’s popular reach and legitimacy help to render the majority’s dire circumstances politically supportable, and its institutions ameliorate and contain the society’s diverse conflicts.”

The following therefore addresses the question ‘how have the two systems of one-party-dominance in India and South Africa performed with regard to the enhancement of political participation and societal inclusion?’

The steady (and rapid) increase in voter turnout in India from 45.7% in 1952 to 61.3% in 1967 (given a literacy rate of 16.6% in 1951 and 28.3% in 1961⁵⁸⁵ and infrastructural and communications deficits of the time) and the (expectedly) high turnout of 87% (of estimated voting population) in the 1994 South African elections and between 68% to 72% (of estimated voting population) or 89.3% (of registered voters)⁵⁸⁶ in the 1999 elections, give a rough indication of the two party systems’ mobilisational performance.⁵⁸⁷

The party identification figures (discussed in 2.1.3. and 2.2.3.) and the relatively low volatility rates of 14.8 (average for India for the period 1952- 1967) and 17.65 (South Africa) respectively (see notes to table 1 for calculations), as compared to (according to Mainwaring (1998: 71)), a mean country volatility of 9.7 for advanced industrial democracies, 20.5 for the older Latin American democracies, 15.7 for the three Southern European democracies of Greece Portugal and Spain, 30.0 for the newer Latin American democracies and 35.5 for the four post-Soviet democracies of the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia and Slovakia,⁵⁸⁸ are ample proof of a gradual institutionalisation of the party system (in terms of the stabilisation

⁵⁸⁵ Figures based on the census data available at Census of India’s website at: www.censusindia.net, see also 2.1.3.

⁵⁸⁶ See 2.2.3., fn. 299 for an explication of the different turnout figures.

⁵⁸⁷ Interestingly enough, overall voter turnout in Indian national elections declined or stagnated after 1967 and – with some exceptions like Bihar and Orissa – State-wise as well. In addition, as Chhibber (1999: 111-113) demonstrates on the basis of mobilisation aggregates by the INC and opposition parties, there is a general decline of the entry of new voters after 1967, a fact, which leads him to formulate an ‘exit thesis’ and to conclude that “(...) it is safe to say that any change in the electoral balance between the opposition and the Congress Party after 1967 cannot be attributed to the entry of hitherto unmobilized groups into either the Congress or the opposition. The data suggest that the fluctuation in the Congress’s vote (...) is the return to the party of those who abandoned it at other times” (ibid. 112).

⁵⁸⁸ “Volatility ranged from an average of 4.0 in the United States to 58.5 in Peru” (ibid. 71).

or structuration of patterns of party competition) under one-party-dominance, ‘providing stability to the society’.⁵⁸⁹

However, a cautious note must be raised in terms of the South African context.⁵⁹⁰ Recent surveys indicate that (as of mid-2002) the level of party identification is declining further and that participation and political involvement has reached an ‘all-time-low’ since 1995 – and a relative ‘low’ in comparison with the other Southern African states (Mattes 2002: 32-33). This contrasts as well with the levels of party identification and political involvement reached in India in 1966 (Field 1980, survey conducted in the four States of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh) and in 1967 (Eldersveld and Ahmed 1978, CSDS nationwide survey), then an overwhelmingly illiterate society with only minimal education available to most of the people (if at all).⁵⁹¹

It may be true that the integrative role performed by the INC after independence was due to (and facilitated by) the fact that the major strain on (and pre-eminent task of) the post-independent Indian party system was national integration and not performance. In South Africa on the other hand, the significance of the party system’s integrative function soon gave way to greater emphasis on its capacity to ‘deliver’, i.e. a greater emphasis on the party system’s performance.⁵⁹² It may also be true that the ANC’s much more dominant position in electoral terms has a more thorough (and more negative) influence on popular perception than the INC’s less overwhelming vote share. However, even more likely and more importantly, the ‘less successful’ performance of South Africa’s system of one-party-dominance, with regard to societal inclusion and mobilisation, may indicate that crucial features of one-party-dominance, as outlined in the two preceding chapters, may be missing or, that too much emphasis is put on certain aspects of party agency directed towards the entrenchment of party

⁵⁸⁹ Again, as an interesting parallel to the post-1967 development of voter turnout in India, there was a sharp increase in the volatility rate after 1967 (except for the 1990s when national elections took place at much more frequent intervals). Thus, the average volatility for the period 1952-1967 of 14.8 went up to an average of 26.43 for the period 1967-1989 and then declined again to 10.1 for the period 1989-1999 (national elections took place in 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999).

⁵⁹⁰ Since the South African party system is barely a decade old, any assessment of its performance in that regard is of course extremely time-bound; the next elections in 2004 will therefore be telling - not with regard to ANC electoral dominance, but especially with regard to the development of volatility and voter turnout.

⁵⁹¹ For another ascertainment of a general trend of disengagement towards (party) politics in South Africa, see also the conclusions drawn by Klandermans et al. (2001b) on the basis of survey evidence for the period 1994-2000. Now, one could argue, as Lodge (1999b: 72) does, that this decline in political participation is part of the process of ‘normalisation’ (‘politics gets boring’) after the founding elections of a new democracy have taken place or that “(...) the electorate has returned to normal patterns after several decades of high levels of politicisation” (Klandermans et al. 2001b: 240), but the relevant surveys (Klandermans et al. 2001a and Mattes 2002: 33) show that there is no likewise decline with regard to other forms of participation such as, for example, protest action.

⁵⁹² As Kothari (1974: 1050) has diagnosed: “The issue of performance was not central so long as the system [the Congress system, C.S.] delivered the goods at a reasonable pace (as under Nehru). But it was also not central because the principal focus of the operating system was to integrate the diversity of Indian social reality into a national polity.”

dominance at the expense of other crucial aspects of party agency. Examples include, a strong focus on already entrenched social groups (elites) at the expense of an enforced mobilisation in rural areas⁵⁹³, too much emphasis on the manipulation of the polity's institutional arrangement without considering the effects such action may have on public opinion⁵⁹⁴, a preponderance of delegitimative attitudes towards opposition parties while neglecting a possible co-operation with the opposition and a concomitant 'openness' for oppositional forces, or too much emphasis put on party discipline and coherence at the expense of a fair degree of factionalism or internal pluralism.⁵⁹⁵

As mentioned before, factionalism within the dominant party or, for that matter, internal pluralism provided another incentive for the increased participation and inclusion of newly enfranchised groups as well as for the 'appeasement' of vested interests (without endangering government stability). To understand the crucial function that factionalism provides, not only for the maintenance of one-party-dominance (as discussed in 4.4.), but also for the party system's enhancement of societal inclusion and governmental stability, it may be useful here to reflect again briefly on the arguments about one-party-dominance in advanced industrialised democracies put forward in the literature.

Conventional (scholarly) wisdom has it that the potentially benign function of one-party-dominance in advanced industrial economies is a result of party dominance arising out of social coalitions or, for that matter, a national consensus (which is also true of the two cases under examination). This allows for the forging of a strong linkage between the state and society (Rimanelli 1999, Pempel 1990). In this account one-party-dominance is implicitly considered to be a transitional agency in the process towards a more competitive party system, for it is assumed that a more cleavage-based party system will (again) emerge once the social coalition can no longer be sustained or the mobilisation crisis tied to the emergence of such a social coalition has been superseded. The comparative study on one-party-dominance within the advanced industrial democracies edited by Pempel (1990) however, came to the

⁵⁹³ Of course, as stated before, the ANC is more geared towards 'protecting' the African majority from self-differentiation as a device to entrench and maintain its dominance, and not to bring the whole of South African society into its fold. Even with regard to its core constituency figures for participation and political involvement are declining.

⁵⁹⁴ Recent survey data, for example, suggests that the floor crossing legislation engineered by the ANC and NNP has alienated voters to a great extent (IDASA 2002, Schlemmer 2002). Similarly, one could argue that the emergency proclaimed by Indira Gandhi was too much of an institutional manipulation in the public mind and perception and was penalised accordingly.

⁵⁹⁵ Again, what would have been the case if a truly multi-party system without one towering party had been prevailing in the immediate post-independent or post-apartheid period? Without the perception of government stability the likelihood that, in the case of a mobilisation crisis, an 'infant' electorate would resort to other actors (e.g. the military) than those designated for organising political competition and exercising governmental authority in the context of a representative democracy, would be much stronger.

conclusion that “(...) Duverger is only partly correct in his judgement that the dominant party contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Those seeds indeed are there, but the party also has within itself the potential to recreate the society it governs in ways that reinvigorate itself” (Pempel 1990b: 352).⁵⁹⁶

However, this implicit assessment, while rightly assuming that one-party-dominance almost always arises out of a social coalition (in changing societies as well), overlooks the fact that in a system of one-party-dominance, as outlined in the preceding chapters, the dominant party itself is a competitive undertaking, in other words, the dominant party displays most of the features commonly ascribed to a party system as such.⁵⁹⁷ Additionally, factionalism (in its clientelist or ideological manifestation) provides a strong mechanism for the forging of state-society linkages and increased mobilisation either via vertical faction chains or via the articulation of (programmatically defined) societal interests through (separate) components of a ruling alliance. Herein lies the strength of a one-party-dominant system in the context of changing societies. The combination of dominance and competitiveness, when proven durable, is based on an accommodative approach to political mobilisation which is crucial under circumstances where political participation is accompanied by the perils of populist authoritarianism or unchecked party pluralism and where the integrity of democratic bargaining patterns has yet to take root.⁵⁹⁸

With regard to the Indian context, the competitive impetus of intra-party factional conflicts (and the less than overwhelming vote share of the INC) almost dictated a strategy of progressive expansion and accommodation of its social base. In a more general sense, but with reference to the Indian experience, Roy (1967: 899) therefore concluded that “(...) the

⁵⁹⁶ In a sense, Chhibber (1999) is following this line of argument when he writes about the change in the nature of the Indian party system, especially the party system of Uttar Pradesh, undergoing a transformation “from a catch-all to a cleavage based party system” (ibid. 135), although he ascribes to the Indian party system or, for that matter, to the INC a cleavage-based nature at the State level right from its post-independent beginning. Randall and Svåsand (2002b: 37) are following a similar logic for the African context as well when they state that: “One-party dominance is (...) not by itself contradictory to democratic governance. But it is nevertheless a structural feature of a party system that is not conducive to democratic consolidation – particularly where alternative channels of participation are absent or where attitudes favourable to democracy are weakly institutionalised.”

⁵⁹⁷ This fact is seldom realised in most accounts of one-party-dominance, which anyway tend to lump together all kinds of different party systems such as hegemonic party systems, one-party systems and systems of one-party-dominance within the same category.

⁵⁹⁸ That is why increased emphasis on party discipline can be so detrimental to the dominant party’s position, as well as affecting the mobilisational features and to the consensual legitimacy of the party system. Moreover, factionalism also allows the fighting out of disputes at a lower level without endangering the stability of the central government, thus contributing further to governmental stability. As La Palombara and Weiner (1966: 421) have noted: “In India for example, the presence of a decentralized broad-based Congress party functioning in a federal system has meant that disputes could be fought out at the local and state level without endangering the stability of the central government.” Heightened emphasis on party discipline and the suppression of factional interest articulation within the ANC/tripartite alliance may therefore add to the already visible trend of factional disputes aggregating to the national level and endangering the alliance’s coherence; see also 5.2.

tendency towards proliferation of factions which characterizes dominant parties (...) drives the leaders to build their own autonomous bases of support.”⁵⁹⁹

What one witnesses in the South African context (e.g. in the stifling of dissent from alliance partners or factional substructures by the ANC leadership and the constriction of autonomy at lower levels of government and the party organisation) is a dominant party whose ‘super-majority’ and electorally secure position tend to encourage the upper echelons of the party to work towards a more disciplined party by closing its ranks to (internal) pluralism even though (party) boundaries remain only vaguely defined.⁶⁰⁰

Despite the centralising tendencies within the ANC, it is argued here, that the ‘politics of entry’ could have been and still can be stimulated. More importantly, they can be reconciled with governmental stability by emphasising the factional and accommodative underpinnings as a basis for the dominant party’s (electoral) success.

A special case of ‘the politics of entry’, one which is (even) more directly linked to the question of government stability, is the dominant party’s/party system’s interaction with anti-system parties or forces. In all classic accounts of government stability the presence and strength of anti-system parties plays a major role as a sort of ‘critical mass’ endangering government stability and political order.⁶⁰¹ Here again, it is the integrative capacity of the party system, which is responsible for a successful ‘handling’ of anti-system forces.

Acting as a catalyst the dominant party’s role with regards to the ‘politics of entry’ (of newly enfranchised groups and social strata) is also relevant in the incorporating of anti-system forces or parties into the political mainstream. One-party-dominance thereby reduces the incentive for these forces to gain momentum, for they are restrained by the dominant party’s democratic commitment and a concomitant ‘openness’ or latitude of the party system for either the co-optation of these forces or for simply ignoring them. If enough ‘space’ is available in a given polity, for example through a federal set-up, providing the dominant party enough leeway to allow these forces to have their share in political decision-making without representing a fundamental threat to its overall governance, the dominant party may also create room to manoeuvre for these forces, eventually ‘taming’ these forces, i.e. incorporating them into mainstream parliamentary politics.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ This argument is also taken up by Zariski (1965) in his analysis of the dominance of Italy’s *Democrazia Christiana*.

⁶⁰⁰ Albeit carried out for different reasons, the ANC’s increasingly centralist handling of its factional underpinnings is an interesting parallel to the centralisation and personalisation taking place in the INC under Indira Gandhi, and which proved to be highly detrimental to the party’s consensual authority and dominance.

⁶⁰¹ See, for example, Powell (1981).

⁶⁰² A crucial feature of dominant party agency in both systems is the specific interaction between the dominant party and the opposition parties, an interaction, which does not deem opposition parties superfluous, but gives

In this vein, the two regional contexts' party systems again have a reasonably good record despite the fact that at the time of their transition to democracy, there was a real and potential danger of either right-wing (communalist) and/or communist parties and forces using their 'chaos power' to derail the process of democratic consolidation and the advancement of the party system's institutionalisation.

Thus, the communist movement in India was a serious challenge to the young polity's cohesion, in all its manifold *avatars* ranging from the 'original' (undivided) CPI, which adopted a largely parliamentary approach in the mid-1950's only a couple of years after it had been inspired by the armed peasant uprising in *Telengana* when it had still thought a revolutionary spirit could take hold of rural India, to the CPI (M), formed by CPI dissidents who, among other reasons (see 2.1.5.), were dissatisfied with the CPI's parliamentary approach and were initially also sympathetic to the radical and militant *Naxalite* movement of the mid-1960's.⁶⁰³ Likewise, the diverse communalist groups all had, at times, the potential to radicalise the party and political system, most prominent amongst these being the RSS and its family of affiliates (the *Sangh Parivar*) whose parliamentary or party arm, the (B)JS (now BJP), was catapulted into (national) power in 1998. Erstwhile radical regional, religious or ethnic movements added a further destabilising element to the country's fragile democratic consensus.

The Congress system's openness and its willingness to concede some electoral gains to these political forces (as a result of its dominant status and its factional interaction with segments to its 'right' and 'left' and only as long as they did not threaten the overall stability of the political order) proved to be important for the entrenchment of governmental stability and the gradual development of a socially integrative pattern of centripetal party competition. As a consequence of these party system features, parties with the potential to become (or remain) anti-system forces were integrated into the political mainstream and deprived of their destabilising capacity once they realised there was room to manoeuvre within the party and parliamentary system.

Hence the CPI, after an initial quarrel over the decision of whether to continue along the revolutionary path or to adopt a course of 'constitutional communism', opted for the latter and was rewarded with substantial regional (electoral) gains in West Bengal, Kerala and parts of

them the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process, or, if there is no willingness on the part of these forces for such participation, to remain in their self-determined exile.

⁶⁰³ The *Naxalbari* uprising gave birth to yet another communist movement, the underground revolutionary Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI (ML)); for an overview of the post-independent course of the communist movement in India, see Alam (2002); for a discussion of the 'special case' of the CPI (M) in West Bengal, see Basu (2002).

Andhra Pradesh ('parliamentary communism' lasts until today with the CPI (M) as the ruling party in West Bengal and in Kerala until recently). The communalist forces also became gradually aware of the benefits that an electoral strategy had to offer (Jaffrelot 2002). Only the socialist parties, who, (or because of), never having been an anti-system force, were treated somewhat harder by the dominant party probably because they were too close to the INC in terms of programme and clientele and were also the most serious contenders in terms of candidates put forward for the first two *Lok Sabha* elections.

In South Africa, a similar (centripetal) development has set in albeit one that is unfolding in a different manner due to the ANC's 'mixed' strategy of interacting with the opposition to it combined with the distinct composition of the dominant party/alliance that comprises a communist party, a former liberation movement, which had been identified as being suffused with a communist ideology for most of its existence and a left-leaning trade union organisation.⁶⁰⁴ Here as well, the 'interregnum' from apartheid to democracy (roughly 1990-1994) made it very clear that there was enough destabilising potential prevalent in South African society to derail the fragile democratisation process. Political violence was rampant and both extremes of the party political spectrum, right-wing extremism and left-wing Africanism, were quite vociferous in their anti-system propaganda fuelled with racial hatred, to say nothing of the 'communist spectre' then still largely associated with the ANC-SACP alliance. The latter has mostly been overcome by the alliance's (democratically sustained) accommodating attitude towards the 'traditional (white) elites' or, for that matter, historically privileged and even more so by its embrace of a neoliberal macro-economic policy framework.⁶⁰⁵

With regard to the clear-cut anti-system forces, the dominant party's reaction was two-fold. On the one hand it successfully launched attempts to appease extremists' views, for example by granting concessions to the right-wing forces (the promised establishment of the constitutionally anchored *volkstaat* council and of the Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities). These then gave in to moderating their position and decided to participate in the electoral and parliamentary process (in form of the FF led by Viljoen), or by Mbeki's more recent "(...) strategy of absorbing the Africanist

⁶⁰⁴ This centripetal development of the South African party system refers to the role and status of anti-system parties, not to the dominant party-opposition parties relationship in general.

⁶⁰⁵ In a sense, ANC dominance also contributes to the coherence, moderation and stability of the alliance, for the incentive, of either the SACP and, to a lesser extent, COSATU, to abandon their centre position in South African party politics is bound by the alliance's electoral success and dominant status. In that regard, the listing of the communist parties as anti-system parties in many accounts of either South Africa's or India's party system respectively overlooks the fact that these parties have been transformed into, more or less, mainstream reformist ruling parties.

and BC [Black Consciousness] intelligentsia (...)” (Friedman 1999b: 11) that deprived the PAC and AZAPO of a good deal of their rationale.

On the other hand, it implied a certain stance of political ignorance and ‘hardline attitude’ towards the inveterate anti-system forces, the right-wing extremists like Terreblanche’s AWB or the (former) hardline Africanist parties like the PAC or AZAPO, all of them suffering from their indecisiveness in dealing with their respective military wings (the AWB’s *Ystergarde* (Iron Guard), the PAC’s Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA) and the BC armed wing Azanian Liberation Army, AZANLA). As a result, the electoral performance of these (actual and former) anti-system forces is today of negligible importance. Their combined electoral strength, if one includes the now ostensibly more moderate FF and the post-AWB electoral platform of the *Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging* (AEB) on the right and the PAC and AZAPO on the left, has dropped from an already negligible 3.59 % of the vote in 1994 to an even more meagre 1.93 % in the 1999 elections. In all probability, they are unlikely to play a role anymore in the 2004 national elections.⁶⁰⁶

The two final aspects of an examination of one-party-dominance as an independent variable, with regard to governmental stability and societal inclusion, that have to be mentioned in this section are, the relations of the two party systems with the already entrenched (traditional) or aspiring social elites and the two party systems’ impact on the functioning of the process of political recruitment.

With regard to the first aspect, the ‘omnibus’ character (as Rothermund, 1993: 34, has termed the principal organisational feature of the INC) and catch-all image of the dominant party necessitates an accommodative approach to political mobilisation (often despite the national leadership’s ‘historical project’ rhetoric), which includes a conciliatory political outlook towards the hitherto privileged. State-party collusion and the close identification of the dominant party with the state machinery thereby enable the dominant party to command state resources and facilitate the politics of distribution, making the accommodative approach to political mobilisation altogether possible. A dominant party therefore can ‘afford’ to appease the ‘vested interests’ of the old order and the emerging bourgeoisie, the latter being part of the dominant party’s agenda of selective mobilisation anyway.

As Bardhan (1984) has so lucidly demonstrated for the Indian context, the combination of democratic processes and INC machine politics has served the entrenched coalition of dominant elites (the ‘ménage a trois’ of bureaucracy, industry and rich farmers) very well. A (material) loss for one of these groups was either compensated for immediately (e.g. as

⁶⁰⁶ See van Rooyen (1994) for the ‘white right’s’ historical development and 1994 electoral experience and Cooper (1994) and Maseko (1999) for the PAC’s and AZAPO’s electoral trajectory.

concerns remuneration for those affected by land reform measures) or compensation was relegated to future (material) gains (e.g. in the form of price incentives for rich farmers).⁶⁰⁷ This process was facilitated by the democratic bargaining mechanisms of the INC's politics of patronage. Additionally, the INC had been willing, or better, it was dependent on a strategy that let itself being 'corrupted' by local, sectional and regional elites (mainly those elites representing the traditional social order and being able to 'purchase votes' in exchange for material gains) and by regional aspirations (which it tried to co-opt by means of a co-operative federalism).⁶⁰⁸

Das Gupta (1989: 92-93) has brilliantly summarised the benign effect of the Congress system's accommodative attitude towards all strands of Indian society with regard to democratic governmental stability:

"(...) Indian leaders benefited from an early process of converting nationalist support into electoral support. Continued electoral support allowed them to dominate the developing civil society through state control over economy, education, communication, coercion, and extensive systems of patronage and subsidy. The dominant economic classes in industry and agriculture generally found the system profitable and conducive to a stable set of expectations in a national market of vast potential. If occasionally, as in the staggered sequence of modest reforms of land tenure and private enterprise control, some threats were posed to the highest propertied classes, compensatory avenues of gains were maintained for them through formal or informal channels. Moreover, new entrants to privileged formations were encouraged through the use of public sector financing, licensing, and tax policies in industries, and by promoting relatively affluent peasant entrepreneurs. At the same time, the promise of expansion of privilege offered a mobility incentive to a wider number in rural and urban areas who developed a sense of stake in the system more on the basis of aspiration than accomplishment. The successful incorporation of regional aspirations in a federalized polity created another important constituent of support for this legitimated democratic system (...) Besides, the gains of abiding by the rules were also appreciated by the opposition leaders when they realized – as in Kerala, West Bengal, and other states –

⁶⁰⁷ Thus, the rationale of the INC's accommodative stance towards the landed elites is neatly grasped by Nehru's statement that "(...) we have land legislation in a way so as not to throw the landlords to the wolves. That is we try to fit them into our future structure" (Nehru 1954: 13).

⁶⁰⁸ The (integrative) effect of this kind of 'corruption' was summarised by Morris-Jones (1989: 175) as follows: "Thus a dominant party is a unifying agent not merely in the obvious 'horizontal' sense in which it holds together a range of opinions and interests but also in the important 'vertical' sense that it brings into contact and interpenetration all levels of politics from the most sophisticated to the most simple and traditional."

that access to power, and its prolonged use in cooperation with other parties ruling in the center, would not be denied. When leaders of capitalist and communist persuasion develop and sustain a democratic system of rules with equal eagerness there must be something more to it than a mere veneer on class rule or a chance gift of colonial history.”

The ANC's interaction with the 'vested interests' of the dominant classes is much more modernist and is characterised less by politics of patronage and subsidy. However, like in the Indian post-independent context, ANC dominance has (so far) not endangered the configuration of social privilege prevalent in South African society.

At the same time, the ANC's leadership shows less willingness to let the party be 'corrupted' by the country's societal diversity and the "little loyalties of the 'little community'" (Morris-Jones 1978: 212), as represented by local and regional elites, and displays a much more centralised approach to political mobilisation than the INC did. Since the ANC is not as thoroughly permeated by members of the dominant classes or local and regional elites as was the INC after independence and since the primary partisan task of the ANC is to protect the African majority from cleavage-based differentiation, this more centralised approach, also a result of the country's nationalised power structure (national executive dominance in policy-making and implementation, no constituency-based electoral system, top-down determination of electoral lists, a 'weak' federalism with strong unitary features), does not come as a surprise. As a consequence, societal penetration or, for that matter, elite-mass integration is less far-reaching and the societal inclusion of the dominant classes takes on a rather different shape.⁶⁰⁹

However, there is another aspect of one-party-dominance in South Africa, which may act as a crucial link between state and society at least in terms of the societal inclusion of the dominant minority interests of the thus far privileged. Corporatism as a specific strategic device of the dominant party to pursue selective mobilisation has the potential to bring about interest mediation and to somehow protect the propertied classes.

So far, corporatism is far from being a truly 'benign' feature of the country's party system (and it is surely not the sort of 'minority veto' as some analysts have claimed (Adam

⁶⁰⁹ As Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: 43-44) note: "Compared to, say, the dominant party in India during the first two decades after independence, the ANC as a party does not have nearly the same political substance and penetration to bring about elite-mass integration, and, over the longer run, probably not other forms of political and territorial integration either."

1999)).⁶¹⁰ It can nevertheless serve as a crucial mechanism of interest mediation for the (minority) interests of the dominant classes in the sense that they can become real stakeholders of political decision-making and, hence, corporatism can guarantee the societal inclusion of these classes.

In that sense, the South African party system or rather the ANC as the dominant party may “(...) set the historical boundaries on the political workings of interest groups and their interactions with the state” (Golden 1986: 298) and act “(...) as active participant[s] in the process of building bridges of cooperation, however fragile, between interest associations and state actors” (ibid.).

The second and final aspect to be dealt with in this section is the relation of the one-party-dominant system to the dimension of political recruitment. Here again, the state-party collusion of a system of one-party dominance (if it is not too extreme) establishes the centrality of parties as gatekeepers to political power. Since the dominant party is so closely identified with the state and its agencies, it is via the party that aspiring elites will seek power and office. Additionally, the factional substructure of the dominant party and its ‘openness’ towards previous oppositional elites (what Burger (1969: 284) has termed the INC’s “open accordion” character in the Indian context, see 4.2., fn. 469) facilitates the recruitment of political personnel through party channels.⁶¹¹

In India, political recruitment (mainly by and through the dominant party) took place largely in a ‘bottom up’-manner up till 1967.⁶¹² The gradual interspersment of the dominant party with agrarian interests (see 4.2.) is an indication that the intra-party mechanisms for (political) elite formation were working quite well. However, even more indicative of the Congress system’s success in instilling a remarkably high degree of ‘partyness’ of political competition into the process of political representation in India is the fact that the aggregate vote share of independents in *Lok Sabha* elections was going down from 15.9 % in 1952 to 6.3 % in 1996 and that, concomitantly, the percentage of candidates who forfeited their deposits was going up from 39.8 % in 1952 to 90.9 % in 1996.⁶¹³

⁶¹⁰ In that sense, it may be useful to describe the kind of corporatism prevalent in South Africa as a party-based corporatism, since there was no real social accord involved in establishing corporatist bodies, but it was more due to the initiative of the dominant party for the sake of its attempts at selective mobilisation. Similarly, it may be useful in that regard to count organised labour as part of the dominant classes, not in material terms but in terms of lobbying power, government participation and blackmail potential.

⁶¹¹ However, only as long as a fair degree of internal pluralism and intra-party democracy is upheld by the dominant party.

⁶¹² In contrast to the top-down approach introduced by Indira Gandhi.

⁶¹³ Measurements of a party system’s institutionalisation sometimes include context-specific components if they allow for a more detailed or complementary empirical account. In an effort to determine the institutionalisation of select Indian State’s party systems, Brass (1969), for example, refers to an ‘index of institutionalisation’ originally developed by Weiner (1968: 41), which includes a measurement of the percentage of candidates who

The case is different with regard to South Africa. Here, the electoral system puts much more emphasis on parties as determinants of the electoral process anyway. Except for elections at the local level where, to a limited extent, independent candidatures are possible, political parties are given a position of primacy to the extent that no independents are allowed to take part in electoral competition at the national and provincial level, as is the case in almost all list systems. The party rationale and label are therefore much more prominent with regard to political recruitment than even in most established democracies of western provenance.⁶¹⁴

This centrality of parties as gatekeepers of the electoral process is also reflected in public perception. According to a 2002 national survey conducted by the HSRC, “[m]ore than two-thirds (70%) [of respondents] sa[id] they prefer to vote for a party candidate rather than an individual” (Southall and Mattes 2002: 18).

However, political recruitment takes place in a top-down manner with relatively little or no opportunity at all for the rank and file to have a say in the recruitment to the upper echelons of political power and office. This may not be conducive to the advancement of state-society linkages, but has other advantages, which will be discussed in the next section. The final point to be made here is the fact that, as in India (where Nehru’s attempt to draw a line between the office of prime minister and that of party president was shattered at a very early stage by the need to mediate factional conflict within the dominant party; although Nehru stepped down from the party presidentship in 1954, all succeeding incumbents were at least loyal of the prime minister), the chief executive is also the party president of the dominant party (or a loyal of the chief executive).⁶¹⁵ This being another indication of the close liaison between (dominant) party and government office, i.e. the ‘party-ness of government’.

In sum, one-party-dominance in India and South Africa has provided and (still) is providing the indispensable degree of governmental stability that is necessary for the party system to fulfil its task of societal inclusion or, following the metaphors of Bagehot, of acting as a

forfeited their security deposits in the *Lok Sabha* or State Assembly elections (a security deposit is a small amount of money which the candidate has to bring forth for his nomination and which is lost if he fails to win one-sixth of the total vote). The reason behind it is, according to Brass, that “(...) [a] large number of forfeited deposits in a state (...) is likely to reflect ‘the number of individuals, unable to judge their capacity to translate personal influence into electoral votes’”. More broadly, the index is likely to reflect the extent to which the electoral process is or is not dominated by organized parties, which have stable bases of support” (ibid. 41). The percentage of candidates who forfeited their deposits has steadily grown in India. For *Lok Sabha* elections, for example, it rose from 39.8% in 1952 to 50.8% in 1967 and to 90.9% in 1996 (Butler, Lahiri and Roy 1995; Independent Election Commission of India, www.eci.gov.in.)

⁶¹⁴ This dominant role of parties became also visible in the political discourse in the preliminaries and in the aftermath of the floor crossing legislation when the slogan ‘it is parties that get elected, not individuals’ was propagandised to justify the distortion of proportional representation brought about by the ‘engineered’ incidents of bulk defection.

⁶¹⁵ It may be argued that in systems of one-party dominance there is always a strong need for the party leadership to be coupled with the authority of the chief executive in order to mediate factional conflicts within the dominant party effectively and to bring the dominant party ever closer to the state.

crucial ‘transmission belt’ between state and society. At the same time, the strategic party agentive features of one-party-dominance with its emphasis on the need for progressive expansion/selective mobilisation, factionalism and openness (or specific interaction with opposition), in sum societal inclusion, has imbued the party and political system with enough of a national consensus to guarantee (legitimate) governmental stability.

Thus, the features of this kind of party system and their effects with regard to the crucial dimensions of government stability and societal inclusion, as described above, do suggest that one-party-dominance is a favourable ‘institutional container’ in the specific context of changing societies. The benign functions of these features led Das Gupta (1989: 95) to conclude that in India “[d]emocratic political development has apparently not been constrained by the slow development of the so-called social and economic requisites of democratic being”. In fact, as this study maintains, democratic development in India has been facilitated by the early emergence of a system of one-party-dominance and a similar development, although less likely, may gather momentum in South Africa as well. To what extent one-party-dominance has instilled into the political elite and electorate an overall sense of ‘habituation’ to democratic processes and a general perception of the legitimacy of party-based representational structures will be discussed in 5.3. The study now turns to the crucial functions of conflict-management and innovation or, for that matter, ‘modernisation’, and tries to assess how the two regional contexts have fared in this regard given the backdrop of their party systems.

5.2. The additional functions: conflict-management and ‘modernisation’

The provision of law and order is a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation, national integration and, given the costs involved in up-holding an often precarious law and order situation, also for socio-economic development. It gains specific importance in divided (changing) societies, in a context of cultural pluralism and socio-structural heterogeneity where distributive conflicts additionally contribute to the likelihood of serious confrontations, where partisan loyalty tends to be ascriptively shaped along socio-culturally defined lines, and “(...) adversaries tend to coalesce in relatively stable communities” (Kotzé 2000: 79). High levels of governance may be more easily accomplished with a dose of authoritarian rule by the central government or even (military) repression of rising social, ethnic, religious, regional or linguistic demands and inter-communal clashes. In a democratic, competitive environment,

effective law and order management or, to put it the other way round, conflict management⁶¹⁶ is in the long run, or has to be, subject to mechanisms of political settlement within the framework of a representative democracy.

Whether the kind of public perception can be generated that sees constitutional provisions not as conditions of political competition to be modified at any time, and that takes the party system as the referential framework for the settlement of (political) conflicts, depends above all on the performance of the party system.

Here again, a one-party-dominant configuration of the party system may provide the necessary incentives to process the kind of conflicts that are likely to emerge in deeply divided changing societies. Apart from the indispensable (legitimate) authority of the dominant party arising out of electoral dominance (and societal inclusion)⁶¹⁷, dominant parties by their nature are almost always pragmatic parties and not ideological ones, since ideological rigidification would lessen the dominant party's capacity for progressive expansion and accommodation.⁶¹⁸ The pragmatic attitude of the dominant party towards political mobilisation, incorporation of societal groups and interests and, if necessary, coalition-building and co-optation, thereby has a depolarising effect on a given society's cleavage structure and potential for conflicts. Dominant parties in divided changing societies therefore tend to be less cleavage-based than parties in a more balanced multi-party system because they emerge from a cross-cutting social coalition, which they try to hold together, and continuously attempt to be largely reflective of society as a whole (the apparently deviating case of the ANC will be discussed below).⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁶ Since the emergence of conflicts in a deeply divided society is a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, conflict-management is the better term to be employed.

⁶¹⁷ This authority by its own is supportive of a political system's capacity to mediate conflict. As Diamond et al. (1989 : 23) comment on the integrative capacity of the INC : "No doubt, one reason why the Congress party has generally been willing and able to accommodate ethnic demands is that its political dominance nationally has been relatively secure, and through most of its life it has not faced a serious challenger in the Hindi heartland that might force it to fall back upon ethnic chauvinism and intransigence."

⁶¹⁸ Again, it should be emphasised that reference is made here to true (liberal) systems of one-party-dominance, where the dominant party is almost always an electorally oriented and adaptive party in contrast to hegemonic party systems where the ruling party often makes use of non-democratic means to maintain its dominance and where the ruling party may be (and often is) built on strong ideological foundations.

⁶¹⁹ Conflict-management is much more difficult when a party system is based on social cleavages (as represented by ideological parties) and when there is no pragmatic, catch-all dominant party available. As LaPalombara and Weiner (1966b: 418) rightly state: "Societal cleavages (...) may be so basic and intense as to make open and peaceful conflict by political parties difficult. Since this is particularly the case where cleavages are ideological and translated into competing parties that are fundamentally anti-system, it is reasonable to suggest that ideological parties are less able than pragmatic or "brokerage" parties to handle conflict effectively." They go on to argue that "[t]here is some evidence to suggest (...) that in practice the electorally oriented adaptive party actually plays an important role in affecting attitudinal and behavioral changes, and is often more effective in doing so than so-called mobilist parties. In its effort to win electoral support from conflicting ethnic and class groups the adaptive party may have greater success in achieving national integration than a party which relies more heavily on coercion and exhortation" (ibid. 426).

Its electoral status thereby enables the dominant party to pursue an accommodative approach to interest aggregation and mobilisation and even to give in to power-sharing arrangements, thus potentially fostering the evolution of consensual-accommodative patterns of conflict resolution.⁶²⁰ Moreover, the factional substructure of the dominant party and its internal pluralism necessitate a constant preoccupation with intra-party coalition-building and factional bargaining, which, as Weiner (1989: 34) has stated for the Indian context, “(...) often transcends programs, ideologies, and class and ethnic differences.” Similarly, the broad-church and decentralised nature of the dominant party (and often a concomitant ‘openness’ to opposition parties and oppositional forces as in the case of the Congress system and, to a lesser extent, the South African party system as well) is reflective of its mobilisational strategy and catch-all rationale. Its need to contain factional in-fighting by means of devolving autonomy and competence at the party’s lower strata and, most often, its participatory tradition emanating from its past as a liberation/nationalist movement, may contribute to the defusing of a divided society’s diverse conflicts and enhances the chances that a bulk of these conflicts can be settled at lower levels of the polity without aggregating to the national level.⁶²¹

Of course, conflict-management is most often a post-hoc affair, which additionally, grows increasingly difficult if there are no effective mechanisms available to deal with changing circumstances and new challenges, especially in the context of changing societies. To survive, a political system must fulfil a crucial (homeostatic) function by developing the capacity to adapt to these changes and challenges or, for that matter, a capacity for innovation. In the political realm, this capacity manifests itself in the ability of the party system, the ultimate pivot between state and society and breeding ground for political elites, to initiate reforms, to

⁶²⁰ Thus, even though there is no guarantee that a dominant party may act in such a benign manner, it is at least in a position to share power and (even) to take care of minorities and minority interests/demands without endangering its electoral position. Who else but a dominant, electorally secure ANC would have been able to concede a fair degree of minority rights and protection thus taking off at least some of the (existential) fear from the country’s white minority? The same applies to the INC-Muslims relation especially after the traumatic experience of partition.

⁶²¹ While these dominant party characteristic can also sharpen existing conflicts (reflected within the dominant party) depending on the effectiveness of intra-party mechanisms for conflict settlement, it nevertheless reduces the likelihood of political actors to think of (party) political bargaining as a zero-sum game, for open, decentralised party structures can turn yesterday’s (factional) losers into (factional) winners of tomorrow with relative ease. As LaPalombara and Weiner (1966b: 420) have concluded: “Broad-based parties which openly recruit are often most likely to be torn by internal conflict, for the more open the party is the more it mirrors the cleavages within the society at large. On the other hand, by penetrating to regional and local levels and by admitting ethnic minorities and dissident elites, the governing party opens the possibility of providing satisfactions to divergent groups and providing opportunities for the settlement of disputes at lower levels within the system. Insofar as disputes are settled at the level of local government or within the local unit of the party, the loads on the national party and national government for the settlement of disputes are thereby reduced.”

anticipate challenges brought about by social change and to engineer policy changes whenever necessary.

In the specific context of this study, innovation is essentially a matter of initiating the processes of economic restructuring, national integration and political socialisation, which prepare society for (or facilitate the ‘cushioning’ of) the inevitable impact of social change, nation-building and democratisation or, in Brass’ formulation (Brass 1965: 1), of “(...) orienting [new groups of people, C.S.] towards the political and economic goals of the modern state.” Since all these processes are associated with stages in the (political) development history of ‘modern’ industrial democracies, the function of innovation may be best grasped by the concept of ‘modernisation’. It has been termed that (‘politically incorrect’) way in order to underline the distinction between advanced industrial democracies and changing societies. The latter are subject to much greater upheavals in terms of innovation taking place at a much more rapid pace, and the party system is consequently burdened with rather different demands on its performance than its counterpart in an established, nationally integrated, industrial democracy.

Again, it is argued here that a (functioning) system of one-party-dominance, basically along the lines of the Indian Congress system, may enhance a changing society’s capacity to initiate a process of modernisation. Scholarly accounts of one-party-dominance in advanced industrial democracies most often ascribe to this kind of a party system, characteristics unfavourable to innovation on the grounds that it favours an ossification of the political process and basically preserves the *status quo*. The point made here however, is that it is the nature of the dominant party, its interaction with opposition parties and society at large and the strategic devices employed by the elite of the dominant party to entrench and maintain their party’s dominance that can prove to be beneficial for a process of modernisation.

The dominant party’s movement characteristics, the latent threat of opposition parties as well as the dominant party’s specific interaction with them, together with its extensive factional structure, promote mechanisms of change and elite turnover, sensitising it to processes of social change. Its ‘open’ character and accommodative approach to mobilisation and recruitment likewise allow for the emergence of new social strata, promoting new ideas, within the body politic.⁶²² The catch-all rationale and broad-based nature of the dominant

⁶²² And thereby also contributes to political socialisation or, as Kothari (1994: 176) notes for the INC: “[the Congress party is] a socializing agency and norm-setter for all other factions and parties rather than just a dominant party in any mechanistic sense as found in the analysis of Maurice Duverger and others.” In this regard, the ANC as dominant party may be considered as less of a ‘socialising agency, since the country’s party system is a product of transition (with the main opposition parties already being there) and not a party system where most of the opposition parties are somehow an ‘offspring’ of the dominant party/liberation movement.

party combine to encourage processes of national integration and a concomitant public good orientation. Finally, its initiation of a (transformative) historical project and intent to shape and reconstruct the major economic outlines of a nation's society to its 'liking', by means of selective mobilisation, provide incentives for economic restructuring. This does not however, rule out the possibility that in the public perception (and in reality) the dominant party, torn between the need for progressive expansion and social transformation and the 'politics of patronage and accommodation', may, after a while, be identified (as well as behave) as the party of the *status quo*.⁶²³

This section thereby deals basically with the question of whether the (adaptive) capacity of the two party systems is able to initiate the aforementioned processes of modernisation, and not so much with the processes as such.

The (most) 'benign' performance of the Congress system with regard to conflict-management was essentially to establish, within the formal design of a majoritarian democracy, an informal arrangement of consociational democracy (Lijphart 1996). Not a perfect one, but given India's institutional underpinnings as a majoritarian democracy (power concentration in the executive, one party governments based on clear majorities and an electoral system undermining proportional representation), the fact that "[t]he combination of the Congress Party's inclusive nature and political dominance has generated [consociational] grand coalition cabinets with ministers belonging to all the main religious, linguistic, and religious groups" (ibid. 260) is quite remarkable. As Nicholson (1975) and Pai Panandiker and Mehra (1996) have demonstrated, INC cabinets were always largely representative of all socio-cultural groups in society - if not sometimes to the extent that some minority groups were even overrepresented (such as the Muslim community).⁶²⁴

⁶²³ Now one could argue that a two- or multi-party system would bring even more incentives for innovation or modernisation, since greater inter-party competition makes for a greater variation of policy platforms and a greater likelihood of policy alternation and political change. This view overlooks the fact that fierce inter-party competition at an early stage of modernisation in a divided society may contribute to the (non-dominant) ruling party focusing on 'its' voting bloc and using the scarce state resources to reward its core constituency accordingly, thus enhancing the likelihood of the emergence of a perception of politics as a zero-sum game. A two- or multi-party system in this context additionally carries the danger of (too) frequent and (too) abrupt policy changes (and is anyway based on the fallacy that assumes parties care always about 'policy and programme').

⁶²⁴ Nicholson assigns to the INC cabinets in the period from 1952 to 1969 a rather 'symbolic representation' (it is difficult to determine the 'representativeness' of group representatives within the party anyway), in contrast to the electorally strategic representation of marginal groups and minorities through leaders belonging to these groups at the local and regional level (for the sake of mobilisation). Even this kind of representation is of integrative significance and, moreover, is necessary to minimise individual's capacity to mobilise his community at the national level in order to distance the national elite from factional disputes at lower levels of the party and state. A similar 'reflectiveness' of Indian society has held increasingly true for the Lok Sabha members; see Kochanek (1968) for the social, cultural and occupational background of INC MP's in the first, second and third Lok Sabha and Dutta (1969) for the distribution of MP's by party and various social categories in the fourth Lok Sabha.

Although there had been no institutionally anchored agreement to incorporate society's plurality into government and on power-sharing arrangements (as, for example, in Malaysia), the maintenance of a party's dominance with a composite character in a competitive environment, virtually necessitated this kind of accommodation (and consent) of all relevant societal groups and cannot be merely reduced to the goodwill and democratic commitment of "(...) prudent and constructive leadership" (Lijphart 1996: 262).

Additionally, the reservations and quotas for minorities, linguistic federalism, separate personal laws, cultural autonomy in educational matters, consideration of the vernaculars and selective distribution of development programmes, all these measures were necessary to uphold the dominant party's catch-all image, ensuring both, the societal anchoring of the INC and a fair degree of power-sharing, necessary for the reconciliation of majority rule with the aspirations of social and cultural (minority) groups.⁶²⁵

At the same time however, as was discussed in 4.2., the party's national leadership was working towards muting or depolarising cleavages by means of anticipatory policy-making and ideological eclecticism. This was geared towards the entrenchment of its centrist position for the sake of consolidating its image as the party of consensus (which it could only do because of its dominant electoral status and by granting relative autonomy to the lower levels of the party and state).⁶²⁶ As a result, India's first party system was less cleavage-based, at the national level at least⁶²⁷, than one would have expected given the country's socio-cultural heterogeneity and multiplicity of divisions.⁶²⁸

Similarly, but on the grounds of a different rationale, the working of the Congress system at the local and regional level and the open, decentralised nature of the dominant party favoured conflict mediation or, a low salience of conflicts, as well. Here, cleavages did matter and were part and parcel of the process of political mobilisation.⁶²⁹ They were however, mitigated by

⁶²⁵ As stated in 2.2.2., Lijphart (1996) lists four essential characteristics of a consociational democracy, which he sees as broadly realised during the first two decades of one-party-dominance in India: grand (government) coalitions on a socio-culturally representative basis, cultural autonomy for religious and linguistic groups, proportional representation and a minority veto. According to his account, the regional concentration of minorities in India's electoral geography and the composite character of the INC compensated for the country's electoral system, while the minority veto was based on an informal understanding not to reduce the minorities' autonomy (basically in cultural matters).

⁶²⁶ The most prominent aspect of the INC leadership's attempts at depolarising potential sources of conflict is of course its holding onto a secular basis of national politics and outlook.

⁶²⁷ For empirical evidence for the low cleavage alignment of India's national party system, see Chhibber and Petrocik (1989).

⁶²⁸ On the other hand, as Weiner (1989: 35) has argued, the extreme pluralist setting of Indian society and the cross-cutting nature of the country's cleavage structure made electoral success dependent on a party's multiple, cross-sectional appeal and is also responsible for the fact "(...) that a majority of the Indian electorate has voted for parties that have chosen not to make exclusive appeals either to particular ethnic groups or classes" (ibid.).

⁶²⁹ Again, for empirical evidence of the INC's cleavage-based nature at the State level, see Chhibber and Petrocik (1989).

the factional nature of the dominant party and a concomitant preponderance of rather pragmatic (intra-party as well as inter-party) coalition politics and alliance-building (comprising a mutual give-and-take between opposition parties and factions within the dominant party), giving the transactional dimension of politics, in its essence of ‘who gets what and how’, a heightened significance.⁶³⁰ The relative autonomy of intermediate elites thereby ensured that (mainly transactional) conflicts revolving around the politics of patronage could be fought out at lower levels and, by granting local and regional elites enough room to manoeuvre, made them the “(...) linchpin of the modern state and traditional society” (Thakur 1995: 349). Almost every social group was therefore somehow a stakeholder in political decision-making and indeed, as the discussion of the social base of the INC (in section 4.2.) has shown, the dominant party, at all levels of its organisation, increasingly reflected almost all social categories of Indian society (see also Kothari (1983: 38-39)).⁶³¹ This pragmatic opportunism of the Congress system at the local and regional level, which included strategic interaction with opposition parties, proved to be an adequate integrative mechanism against the backdrop of electoral patterns and party competition varying from State to State and from constituency to constituency. The distinctive working of the system at the national and lower levels thereby additionally “(...) imparted political coherence by accommodating and linking ‘peripheral elites’ and interests with an authoritative centre” (Randall 1988a: 90).⁶³²

A rough, but good indicator of the integrative and conflict-mediating capacity of the ‘original’ Congress system, is the rise in the number of riots per million population after 1967. The figure below is a graphical account of the development of riots in post-independent India as reported in the government publication ‘Crime in India’. It includes an estimate made by Kohli (1990: 7) in the mid-1980’s showing that the number of riots had gone down from the mid-1980’s onwards. However, this may be a short-term aberration taking into account the more recent (mainly communal) wave of riots at the turn of the millenium (Godhra/Gujarat, Mumbai) for which no reliable data was available at the time of writing.⁶³³

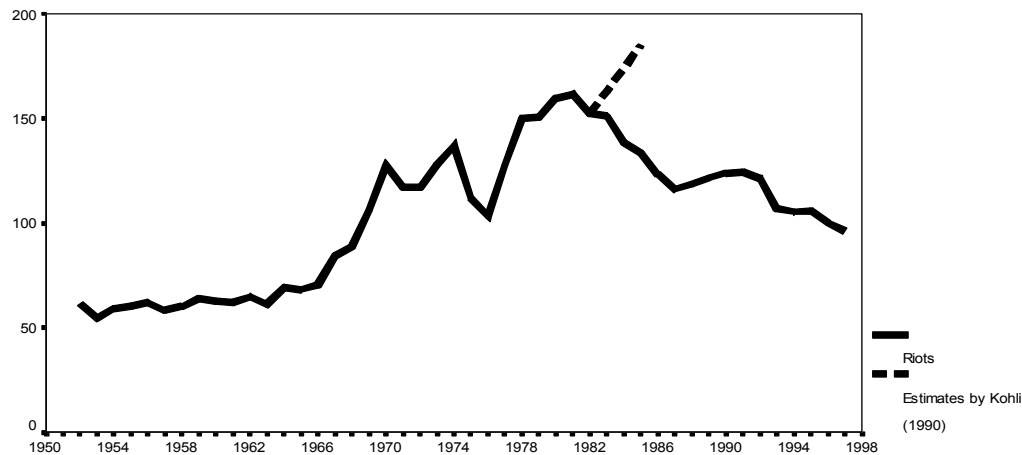
⁶³⁰ For a detailed account of how this mediating intra- and inter-party factional bargaining took place at the State-level, see Nayar (1968) and Singh (1993) for the Punjab, Sisson (1972) for Rajasthan and Brass (1965) for Uttar Pradesh.

⁶³¹ Varshney (1998b: 44) notes, “[i]t is not surprising that the years when the leaders of the post-Nehru Congress party were striving to centralize an essentially diverse and federal polity also saw the advent of such severe stresses as the insurgencies in Punjab and Kashmir.”

⁶³² As a side-effect, a melting pot image of the dominant party was generated, incorporating features of a programmatic, charismatic and clientelist party (Kitschelt 1995), thus making it possible for different political actors and aspirations to take part in the political process for different reasons and, at the same time, encouraging the formation of a tolerant pluralism as an ideal.

⁶³³ Rajgopal (1987) shows a similar development with regard to Hindu-Muslim violence for the period 1954-1985.

Figure 11: Number of riots per million population in India, 1952-1998

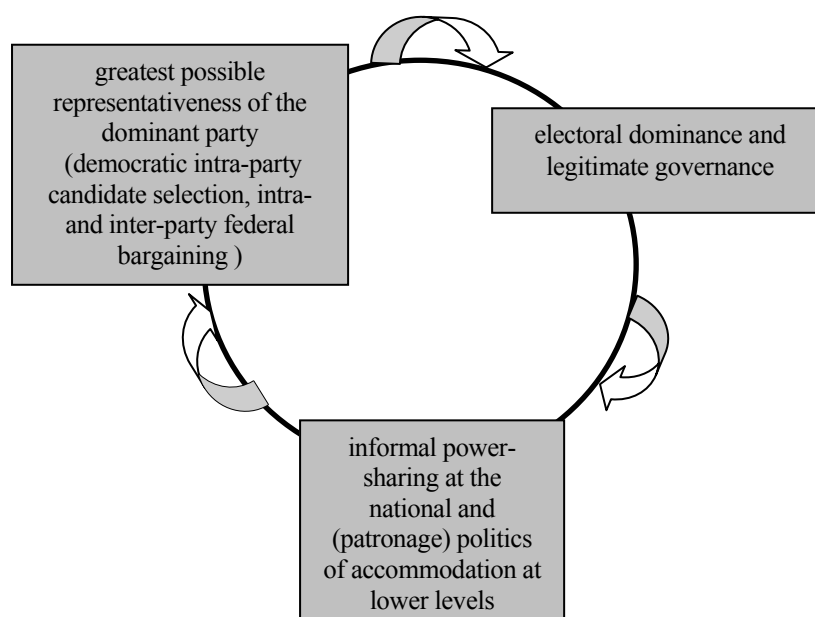


Source: Mitra (1999), based on data from GoI: Crime in India (various issues); Kohli (1990: 7)

In sum, the configuration of the Congress system, whose mode of operation is depicted in the (simplified) graphic below, proved to be essential for the peaceful adjustment of social conflicts arising out of the modernisation process and for a process of national integration to gain momentum.⁶³⁴

⁶³⁴ It is reasonable to suggest that this centrality of the party system for conflict-management is therefore also closely related to the ‘crisis of governability’ after the deinstitutionalisation of the INC (Kohli 1990) and/or the emergence of a more cleavage-based party system at the national and State level (Chibber 1999: 177 ff.). Interestingly enough, as Varshney (1998b: 49, fn. 8) reports, “(...) India has faced its strongest separatist challenges in areas *not* penetrated by the Congress party during the freedom movement [and beyond, C.S.!] – especially the north-east and Jammu and Kashmir.”

Figure 12: The circular mode of operation of the Congress system



The conflict-mediating function as performed by the South African system of one-party-dominance manifests itself in a different, and, though it may be too early for a proper assessment, a less benign way. At first sight, power-sharing should be considered to be even more prominent in the South African context given the initial, outright consociational, institutional arrangement of the GNU and the choice for a PR electoral system (as the two most prominent features of a consociational democracy). In fact, the ANC's electoral dominance, though it deprived consociationalism of a good deal of its rationale by minimising its intended effect of ethnic/racial moderation through coalition-building, and 'top-down' style of nomination and appointment,⁶³⁵ mentioned in the previous section, facilitated the setting up of multi-ethnic/racial candidate lists.⁶³⁶ However, due to the dominant party's less decentralised nature and also less accommodative approach to political mobilisation (partly also a result of the party embracing an official ideology of non-racialism)⁶³⁷, most of the

⁶³⁵ The closed list system of PR of course encourages this top-down style. There are (limited) intra-party electoral procedures for the 'provincial lists', but not for the 'National to National' list.

⁶³⁶ Thus, for example, 30 % of the ANC candidates elected for the first democratic national parliament came from the white, Indian and Coloured minorities, which made up only 6 % of the ANC's overall vote (Giliomee and Simkins 1999a: 17); it were almost 26 % of candidates elected belonging to these communities in 1999 (Lodge 1999d: 91). A similar inclusiveness or 'overrepresentation' of minority communities, although to a lesser extent, holds true for the national executive (and for the party's NEC) as well.

⁶³⁷ The ANC's non-racialism is thereby based on a different rationale than, for example, the INC's embrace of secularism. Whereas the former contradicts the legitimacy of communal presentation (within the party), the latter is characterised by equal distance towards all (religious) communities and does not negate communal representation. Thus, as Lodge (1999d: 80) reports, when Mbeki was campaigning before the 1999 elections in KwaZulu-Natal, the province where more than 90 % of the country's Indian community is concentrated, he told Indians 'to become part of the political mainstream'.

central party preferred candidates do not represent their respective (minority) groups (or may not be the preferred choice of their respective communities) and “(...) most of its white, coloured and Indian candidates would have great trouble winning a seat in their respective ethnic communities under the first-past-the-post plurality system” (Giliomee and Simkins 1999a: 15).

This contrasts with the Indian experience where INC candidates at the crucial local and regional levels of electoral competition and less so at the national level clearly represented their communities (see above) and most often emerged from community-based factional bargaining. In a sense, therefore, the South African party system or, for that matter, the ANC as the dominant party is even ‘less consociational’ than was the INC and the Congress system. Even more alarming, however, should be the fact that the country’s party system⁶³⁸ is clearly based on one overarching cleavage, though, as we have seen (2.2.3. and 4.2.), it is a somewhat ‘artificial’ cleavage, given the intra-population group differentiations. One could argue that this cleavage-based nature of the party system, a result of the dominant party’s polarising strategy with the ANC’s leadership profiting from the African-white/rich-poor divide/dichotomy, would lessen the party system’s performance with regard to conflict-management. On the other hand however, this strategic asset of (and incentive for) the dominant party managed to contain ethnic conflict in South Africa. Scholars expected from the interplay of a permissive PR electoral system and the country’s divided society that,

“[I]n all racial categories, there are divisions along lines of ethnicity and ideology. Some intergroup cleavages have considerable conflict-producing potential (...) to ignore them in planning for a future South Africa would be to repeat the same fallacy of assuming in the 1950s and 1960s that an inclusive ‘nationalism’ would be the universal solvent of differences in post-colonial Africa, a fallacy for which many people paid dearly” (Horowitz 1991: 85)⁶³⁹

However, contrary to what scholars predicted, a manifestation of intra-African cleavages simply did not materialise.

Apart from the IFP almost no exclusively African ethnic party has entered party competition, and even the IFP was moving away from an exclusively Zulu-based platform in the 1999

⁶³⁸ Due to the ‘national character’ of elections in South Africa (see 4.2.) a (cleavage-based) distinction between the national and regional party systems does not make much sense.

⁶³⁹ Also see Lijphart (1985).

elections, at the national level at least (Maré 1999).⁶⁴⁰ Thus, the dominant party's mobilisational strategy served to 'protect' its core constituency, but (so far) has also prevented the rise of (party-based) intra-African cleavages with potentially devastating consequences.⁶⁴¹ There is however yet another feature of South Africa's system of one-party-dominance, which has proved to be benign with regard to the containment of (ethnic) conflict. This is the ANC's rather pragmatic attitude towards some of the opposition parties or other potentially challenging forces, which, from a position of electoral dominance, allows it to co-opt potential contenders or to engage in co-operation with opposition parties. The most important manifestation of this pragmatism with regard to conflict-management (and arising out of the dominant party's electoral orientation) is of course the ANC-IFP coalition.⁶⁴²

Table 27 below shows how ANC-IFP collaboration 'managed' to bring down the number of politically related deaths at election time in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the province most sensitive to political violence, where (ethnic) conflict until the mid-1990's, according to most observers, showed signs of becoming endemic.⁶⁴³

Table 27: Politically related deaths in KwaZulu-Natal, 1994 and 1999

1994		1999	
January	172	January	35
February	180	February	16
March	311	March	14
April	338	April	17

Source: Lodge (1999d: 201).

⁶⁴⁰ This was of course also due to the rapprochement between the ANC and the IFP in the ruling coalition making the two parties increasingly indistinguishable.

⁶⁴¹ A potential consequence, or rather side-effect, of this mobilisational strategy of the dominant party, is the fact that – as a recent HSRC survey reveals (Klandermans et al. 2001c) – that there are no "(...) disproportionately high levels of ethnic identification among the larger black ethnic groups (Zulus, Xhosas and Tswanas). A further breakdown of the white populations revealed that it was predominantly the Afrikaner community that demonstrated high levels of ethnic identification" (ibid. 94).

⁶⁴² But the tripartite alliance itself is a case in point. In that regard the ANC's recent (partisan) 'co-operation' with the NNP, especially in the Western Cape, may lessen the incentive for (ethnic) conflicts in that province as well.

⁶⁴³ One should of course keep in mind the difficulties of categorising violence as political. It is, however, necessary to distinguish between political violence and (ordinary) crime, the latter's rate skyrocketing in the country in the 1990's at an incredible pace. Whereas political violence is clearly related to a party system's capacity to contribute to conflict-management, crime cannot be directly related to the party system's performance.

In sum, it is very difficult to assess the performance of South Africa's system of one-party-dominance on the basis of its somewhat ambiguous record in conflict-management. However, compared to India after independence, the less decentralised and less accommodative (or truly representative) nature of the dominant party in South Africa (and a potential, more confrontational sharpening of the racial cleavage) point towards a less benign performance of the party system.⁶⁴⁴

As stated above, the Congress system's capacity and performance with regard to the task of 'modernising' the country is inherently tied to the two indicators of the party system's 'success' in providing the indispensable flexibility to react to changing circumstances brought about by social change and to initiate policy changes, and providing enough impetus for a process of modernisation to gain momentum.

The flexibility of the party system in the post-independence, Indian context arose out of two of its systemic characteristics: a) a high degree of elite-turnover as a result of factional bargaining, open recruitment patterns (including movement between the dominant party and opposition parties, without endangering overall government stability and INC dominance) and of "(...) pressure of opinion and institutional power represented by the organizational wing upon the governmental wing of the Congress Party" (Kothari 1994: 177)⁶⁴⁵; and b) the evolution of a distinct bargaining culture (with bargaining taking place increasingly between the centre's and the States' Congress party and governments). Often termed the 'Congress culture' it has been grounded on a 'consensus style' of politics⁶⁴⁶ and the need to accommodate the dominant party's diverse stances of opinion (and ideology), and was based on a low allegiance intensity and ever shifting leadership coalitions nevertheless ensuring the

⁶⁴⁴ A potential malign effect of one-party-dominance in South Africa however, especially with regard to the still largely racially defined support structure of the party system, could set in when the dominant party is overdoing its 'polarising' mobilisational strategy and centralises party structures even further (or when the dominant party is experiencing waning popular support and is stepping down from its 'pragmatic', inclusive attitude towards part of the opposition). If this would be the case, the dominant party would, in all probability, no longer be able to contain intra-party conflict, and (primarily white) opposition parties could (begin or continue to) turn to entrench their sectional appeal and/or to deny co-operative opposition for the sake of a purely adversarial or 'robust' opposition. As Butler (2003: 99) notes: "Cooperative politics – as when the National Party helped stave off economic crisis by its participation in the 1994-96 government of national unity, or in the Inkatha Freedom Party's current alliance with the ANC, which contains violence in KwaZulu-Natal – is necessary to sustain democracy. Anti-ANC coalition building, moreover, undermines the benefits of cooperation and courts a dangerous ANC counter-reaction."

⁶⁴⁵ For ministerial turnover under INC dominance (1952-1966), mainly at the State level, see 4.3. But also at the legislative level, the parliamentary process saw a continuous recruitment of new social strata and leaders into political decision-making structures. For example, nearly one third of members of the fourth Lok Sabha (29.3%) had been without previous legislative experience, a quite high proportion as compared to the standards of established democracies (Dutta 1969); also see Rosen (1967). At the same time, however, the INC's dominance ensured continuity in leadership at the national level. Of the 15 major cabinet members selected by Nehru in 1952, seven still held office in 1962.

⁶⁴⁶ See Narain (1970) and Rudolph (1961).

proliferation of elite cohesion and implicit pressures for consensus (Headrick 1973), despite mounting demands on the party and political system.

This flexibility of the Congress system, supported as it was by the ‘vertical faction chains’, aggregating information about social change to the upper levels of the party and the state, greatly enhanced its capacity to initiate policy changes and to adapt itself to a rapidly changing social and economic structure. The resulting capability for innovation was demonstrated most clearly with regard to the country’s language and agrarian/food policies in the two decades after independence (the following draws on Headrick 1973: 576 f.).

Language was a bone of contention since the days of the Constituent Assembly with a pro-Hindi northerners vs. a (*Dravidian*–speaking) southerners faction, one keen on making Hindi the national language and the other not, advocating instead a continued usage of English. The compromise reached discarded the notion of a national language, accepted both Hindi and English as official languages with English usage to continue until 1965 (when its status would be decided again), instructed the central government to promote the spread and development of Hindi and recognised fourteen major languages spoken in the States that could be used as the respective State’s official language. In 1961 a ‘three-language-formula’ was adopted with both Hindi and English as ‘link languages’ to be taught in Indian schools indefinitely and with regional languages as the medium for education as well as local and State administration.⁶⁴⁷

With 1965 approaching, the Home ministry asked central ministries to indicate their plans for the promotion of Hindi and what they wanted to do after 1965, a step, which stirred up southern anxieties (of being discriminated by the sole use of Hindi as official language) and precipitated a crisis with riots erupting and violence breaking out in the South, especially in the newly created State of Tamil Nadu. Eventually, Nehru’s successor Shastri managed to work out a consensus in the INC and to bring together all party leaders in the Lok Sabha (including the opposition of the Hindi right) to discuss the language issue. As a result of several rounds of consultation, the Official Language Act was amended, “(...) giving each State the freedom to choose its own link language [either Hindi or English, C.S.] (...) mov[ing] toward slowing down the transition to Hindi (...) [and recognising] (...) the status quo and practicalities” (Headrick 1973: 581), and thus bringing to an end the riots and violence in the Indian South.

A similar process of bargaining (this time essentially between the centre and the States) and shifting policy served to resolve the food crisis and the agricultural production issue of the

⁶⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the States reorganisation had reshuffled the administrative structures of the country along linguistic lines.

late 1960's brought about by the emphasis on heavy industry from the second five year plan onwards (and a concomitant 'neglect' of the agricultural sector).⁶⁴⁸

In both cases the crisis was overcome by what Headrick (1973: 582) has termed a "coalition of the whole" arising out of the INC's distinct bargaining culture, volatile leadership arrangements and electoral dominance.⁶⁴⁹

The INC's strategy of progressive expansion, selective mobilisation and organisational penetration of the countryside thereby enabled the Congress system's potential to initiate processes of modernisation. It was thus not only the willingness to lead a largely traditional society to the 'greener pastures of modernity' on behalf of a (progressive) national elite, but also the need of a dominant party to uphold its claim to represent the nation and to pursue a historical project of transformation in order to retain its catch-all, transformative image, that encouraged policy-making geared towards modernisation. Additionally, the dominant party had to create the (state) resources it needed to 'feed' its patronage apparatus and to reward the newly mobilised social strata, a task, which inevitably involved some sort of economic restructuring.

Initiating processes of social and economic change (land legislation, preferential policies of positive discrimination, industrialisation etc.) eventually proved costly for the dominant party in terms of electoral success and a gradual fragmentation of the party system, for it was exactly these processes that triggered new social and societal interests⁶⁵⁰ and accelerated the emergence and electoral strengthening of opposition parties (Rösel and Jürgenmeyer 2001).⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁸ For a detailed account of how exactly the mechanisms of centre-States and intra- and inter-party bargaining proved to be responsible (and benign) for the innovation in the area of language and food/agricultural policy, see Headrick (1973).

⁶⁴⁹ Such a coalition and a concomitant capacity for policy innovation would in all probability not have been possible with fierce two-party competition (say, for example, between a pro-Hindi party of the North and a *Dravidian* party of the South). The result would have been some sort of a stalemate and an attendant paralysis of the policy-making process or a policy based on coercion.

⁶⁵⁰ And, in a sense, also proved to be responsible for the language and food crises mentioned above.

⁶⁵¹ And indeed, such indices as urbanisation, literacy and communications, associated by one influential school of thought (Lerner 1958, Deutsch 1961) with the process of modernisation were pointing in an upward direction in the 1950's and 1960's (Headrick 1973: 68-72). One should however be sceptical towards such a uni-dimensional conceptualisation of modernisation (economic growth rates, for example, have been only incremental or rather sluggish, a point to be discussed in 5.4.) Thus, another school based on Parsons (1951) theoretical considerations has conceived modernisation in terms of (the fulfilment of) select pattern variables as criteria. In that regard the Congress system (combining structures of dominance and dissent) proved to be a tried and tested framework for the reconciliation of the two essential pattern variables of 'goal-attainment' and 'pattern-maintenance'. Whereas pattern-maintenance in the Indian context required a transfer of the country's socio-cultural pluralism into the political sphere (essentially by means of political competition), goal-attainment necessitated central authority and a unitary shape of certain decision-making structures. This balancing was ensured by the mechanism of an adaptable, accommodative yet coherent political institution. Modernisation, as Huntington (1968) rightly argued, is thereby inherently a matter of sequence and compatibility and largely dependent on the right 'timing' of processes of social, political and economic development.

On the other hand, the dominant party's accommodative and adaptive approach to political mobilisation at the local and regional level contributed to a(n) (often lamented) lag in policy implementation and a concomitant delay in modernisation.⁶⁵²

However, the INC's accommodative approach to political mobilisation while catering to the most powerful groups, demands and concerns of the local party leadership still produced policies (however tardily implemented – if at all) that responded to the social developmental needs and the growing aspirations (and discontent) of disaffected rural and urban groups. Accommodation or, for that matter, entrepreneurial based mobilisation at the local and regional level was therefore an indispensable integrative device to pursue at least some centrally induced policies of modernisation and economic restructuring. Such was the paradox of one-party-dominance in India. In a sense, therefore, “(...) one of the most important contributions of the Congress party has been its ability to cushion some of the changes innovated or accelerated by the actions of its own government” (Weiner 1967: 495), and, as Khator (1999: 357) has highlighted, “(...) Congress supremacy helped the political system by providing it a safety valve and allowing it the time to build a national and state identity”

The South African context is, again, more difficult to gauge. On the one hand, ANC dominance clearly enhanced government flexibility to impose policies far from anything that could be labelled ‘populist’, especially in the macro-economic area (with the knowledge that there was and would be no effective opposition party in a position to take advantage from this situation).⁶⁵³ This is most noticeable in the shift from the RDP to GEAR.⁶⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the differentiated (and contrasting) ideological inclinations and policy ideas of the three alliance partners (especially the growing ideological rift between the ANC leadership and COSATU) at least provides the potential for programmatic policy differences and for alternative policy platforms to be weighed up⁶⁵⁵, even though mutual dependence of the alliance partners and the need for the dominant party/alliance to present to the public a fair degree of cohesion

⁶⁵² Even though the patronage-based politics of accommodation (comprising most often material incentives (road-building, electrification etc.) in exchange for voting and partisan support) contributed to the extension of infrastructure in the countryside.

⁶⁵³ One indicator for the ability of the party system to handle policy formulation and implementation in a ‘flexible’, innovative way and manner and to promote modernisation is also the capacity of the party system to resist the temptation of giving in to populist politics. Additionally, the adoption of a basically neoliberal framework in the form of GEAR proved to be successful in depriving the relevant opposition parties of potential points of (ideological) attack on the dominant party. This is of course not the case with regard to the power configuration within the ruling alliance.

⁶⁵⁴ But also in such minor policies as the reduction of business taxes shortly before the 1999 elections or the fact that so far there was no extra-ordinary salary increases for civil servants.

⁶⁵⁵ However, the components of the dominant ruling alliance are much more clear-cut (ideologically) and less numerous than was the case with regard to the Congress system, a fact that may lead to a much more confrontational intra-party bargaining, especially with regard to the ANC-COSATU relationship.

again minimises the potential for open debate over (and alternation of) policies.⁶⁵⁶ A stronger requirement for inter-party co-operation however, may also favour flexibility. Despite the greater electoral margin between the dominant party and the opposition parties, the fact that right from its inception as a democratic state, two South African provinces were not governed by the dominant party and the serious lack of, what has been termed above the INC's distinct bargaining culture (a result of its intricate factional balance and interaction with opposition and the continuity of pre-independence structures and traditions of party competition), encourages a more adversarial/less consensual, but also more flexible and innovative inter-party interaction in terms of policy-making.

On the other hand however, there is a marked difference (emerging) with regard to the dominant party's very nature. A difference between the accommodative and decentralised INC and the increasingly centralised and, in a sense, also oligarchic ANC, which seriously constrains the South African party system's flexibility in terms of its responsiveness to social change and its adaptation to societal realities.⁶⁵⁷ The more centralised and less adaptive nature of the ANC's dominance and the party's less accommodative approach to mobilisation may reduce its 'infrastructural power' (see 4.2., fn. 484) and, hence, its capacity for innovation. Or, for that matter, it may result in an illusion of flexibility based on increased central (government) authority at the expense of participation in policy formulation and decision-making by its support and activist base (or even society at large) and by the party organisation – the latter being relegated to a subsidiary role. As demonstrated by the formulation and imposition of GEAR, the party machinery (and the alliance partners) has (have) to some extent lost its (their) grip over policy formulation. Somehow, this is not surprising since the ANC's party organisation does not have the same 'blackmail' potential at its disposal by virtue of its command over the vagaries of policy implementation and electoral mobilisation at the regional and local level, as was the case in India.⁶⁵⁸ There is however, evidence (Lodge 1999a) to suggest that there is also a trend of the ANC moving from a catch-all to a cadre-

⁶⁵⁶ As Butler (2003: 106) notes: "The SACP, assigned key cabinet positions that put it into conflict with COSATU, has a membership that almost entirely overlaps with the ANC. Should opposition to the 'dual loyalties' of the communist leadership escalate, many might allow their SACP memberships to lapse."

⁶⁵⁷ Clearly, the ANC is still a broad-church, movement-based formation, but the centralist predispositions described in 4.3., especially with regard to policy determination, make it likely "(...) that the emerging oligarchic tendencies (...) will become ingrained trends in the future (Lodge 1999a: 30).

⁶⁵⁸ This is not to deny that (national) executive dominance predominated in the Nehru years of one-party-dominance in India as well, but this executive dominance was most often confined to (or played out in) specific areas of development planning and nation-building, whereas co-operative federalism as described in 3.2. prevailed with regard to policy implementation and electoral mobilisation.

party, less dependent on its activist base and mobilisation to gather electoral support, but consequently also less adaptive to social change and societal interests.⁶⁵⁹

As a consequence (and most observers critical of GEAR would subscribe to this assessment), there is a real danger of the ANC growing more and more ignorant of the reality that economic growth and development depends less on textbook remedies and more on the ability to achieve a degree of co-operation within society at large, especially amongst all the key interests able to frustrate or enhance growth/development prospects (Rodrik 1999).⁶⁶⁰

This characterisation of the ANC as the dominant party (and of the country's party system ANC dominance has given rise to) contrasts starkly with the following more 'participatory' conceptualisation of the Congress system as given by Kothari (1983: 39):

"Such a model of horizontal aggregation [of a very large number of social and political organisations at all levels, pressing the government and the dominant party for participation, resources, and recognition, as well as for specific policy changes and administrative actions, C.S.] was (...) based on a deliberate strategy of vertical disaggregation. By this is meant the role of intermediate elites in settling disputes and generally deciding most issues at lower levels, not permitting these to aggregate upwards and thus shielding the Centre from parochial pressures and social conflicts. This was the most important aspect of the evolution of a moderate centre in India. Through all of this the party system contained and modified the centralizing tendencies inherent in planned development and in the bureaucratic consequences of the Westminster model of government. The Congress made mobilization of the public in economic and nation-building tasks a function of political participation rather than of bureaucratic control and ideological rigour. With the passage of time this model opened up, brought new groups and parties into positions of power, led to a widening of the national consensus and a chastening of doctrinaire and volatile sections within all

⁶⁵⁹ Especially, because the ANC, endowed with a relatively stable cleavage-based core constituency, is less dependent on continued efforts at progressive expansion, entrepreneurship on the electoral market and selective mobilisation. In consequence, the latent threat exerted by opposition parties and forces is diminished and so is the 'thermostat' mechanism described in 4.1. In a similar vein, LaPalombara and Weiner (1966b: 426) have argued that "(...) while a mobilist party (particularly in a one-party state) may be more compatible with the establishment of the minimum central authority necessary for economic development, the adaptive party is often more effective in providing government with information essential for carrying out economic development programs." This view also complies with what Evans has termed the "embedded autonomy" of the state necessary to achieve democratic development, a concept that refers to a notion of autonomy that is "(...) embedded in a concrete set of social ties which bind the state to society and provide institutionalized channels for the continual negotiation and renegotiation of goals and policies" (Evans 1992: 162); see 5.4.

⁶⁶⁰ The neglect of the agricultural sector by the Nehru government's embrace of heavy industry biased, planned development may be considered as a similar reliance on 'textbook remedies', but, as mentioned above, the flexibility and bargaining culture inherent in the Congress system made it possible to initiate a fundamental policy change with regard to the agricultural sector.

parties, and made power the great moderator in politics. It is this system that operated in India, despite periodical strains, for two decades and more.”

The ANC’s approach to policy formulation and implementation is increasingly one of policy-making by *fiat* and is less and less informed by a ‘society- or people-driven process’ – the latter having been exactly the vision of the RDP.

The ANC’s impetus for modernisation is however, even more pressing and essential, since one-party-dominance in the current South African context is much more performance-based and dependent on the evocation of an underlying idea of ‘redemption’, as manifest in the dominant party’s historical project of social transformation, still largely informed by the social legacies of apartheid.

5.3. The actor’s perception of the democratic game: resilience versus uncertainty

“The problem [in development] is not to regenerate human nature (...) It is to surround [people] with inducements that make it personally advantageous for them to function in ways that build a modern social order – whether they are business tycoons, peasants, party politicians, or army officers.”⁶⁶¹

What Lockwood (1964: 353) notes with regard to development is essentially true or relevant for democracy or democratisation in changing societies as well. The logic underlying democratisation or democratic habituation is not, or rather, is not only and not in the first place, a process of entrenching the idea of democracy and a concomitant ‘institutionalised uncertainty’ as an intrinsic value in political actors’ perception and the public mind. Instead, offering a configuration of power relations and procedural incentives may eventually help to amass enough ‘democratic resilience’ (in terms of acceptability of democratic rules as a vehicle to further collective actors’ interests) to ingrain democracy as a favourable institutional arrangement in public and elite perception and, potentially, also as an intrinsic value.

This basic axiom holds true for political actors (party and state elites) and the mass electorate alike. At the elite level there are two parameters that can facilitate the development of

⁶⁶¹ This quote concludes Weiner’s (1967) study of the INC, the first systematic empirical investigation of the functioning of the INC in the mid-1960’s. He goes on to argue with regard to that quote that “[t]he Congress party has in effect applied this principle by permitting cadres to further their own ambitions and interests within the party in such a way that what they do at the same time facilitates the electoral triumph of the Congress and furthers the Congress government’s development programs” (ibid. 496).

democratic resilience. First, the availability and pursuit of an electoral strategy to contain and survive the distributive challenges brought about by universal suffrage. Without such a strategy it is very unlikely that any given set of elites, but especially elites in changing societies, will support a process of democratisation (Swamy 2003: 3-4). Secondly, the existence of a democratically sustained (party) power configuration that gives party elites enough incentive to hold on to and support the initial democratic bargain and enables them to protect or advance their interests (Angrist 2001).

At the mass level, democratic resilience is more likely to unfold if a general perception evolves, as a result of electoral competition, that the existing arrangement of democratic governance may be favourable to (or be the only guarantee for) stable government and public and/or personal advancement. At the same time, a feeling of not being excluded from political decision-making and a feeling, or at least illusion, of the “plasticity of the social world” (Kaviraj 1996: 127) must predominate.

The questions that arise are why the dominant party adheres to democratic processes and why its dominance should be tolerated for such a long and uninterrupted period of time in a competitive, democratic setting and amidst potentially destabilising processes of social change. More precisely, what are the features inherent in one-party-dominance that encourage the dominant party, other political actors and the electorate to be committed to democracy? The submission of these actors to democratic procedures is the basis for fulfilling all the other functions mentioned above and for the maintenance of a ‘true’ (liberal) system of one-party-dominance. The attempt therefore to give answers to these questions is a crucial component of an analytical perspective that looks at the party system as an independent variable. In order to do so, it is necessary to elaborate the points mentioned above at greater length and against the backdrop of a one-party dominant configuration in a changing society.

Introducing the argument that one-party-dominance has a (potentially) positive impact on democratisation in changing societies, reference is made again to Angrist’s (2001, see also 2004) considerations, put forward in chapter 1 (1.1.4.), about the pivotal role party system characteristics have played in the determination of regime outcomes in the Middle East. His line of reasoning is based upon a conception of democracy as an elite-struck bargain, of which the chances to survive depend essentially on the key actors’ assessment of whether they can tolerate the risk of open-ended governance outcomes. Relating this idea to an examination of the failed attempts to establish a stable competitive regime in Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Iran and the successful construction of such a regime in Turkey, he comes to the conclusion that one of the most important factors for an elite decision in favour of democratic rule, was

the structure and configuration of the party system in these countries. Only where the emerging party system was (gradually) moving in the direction of organisational and mobilisational symmetry and was sufficiently depolarised, so that conservative forces ('defenders of the status quo') did not think of their collective interests as facing substantial threat, the nascent democratic bargain had a chance to survive.⁶⁶² Except for Turkey, where such a development took place, in all the other cases the assessment of what rival parties brought to the competitive market ideologically, organisationally and mobilisationally, proved to be a decisive factor in the given party elite's calculation that democratic governance was not tolerable.

Borrowing from Angrist's considerations, but deviating from his conclusion in a certain respect, it is argued here that a system of one-party-dominance (at least) offers the chance that this calculation is made in favour of democratic governance in the context of changing societies. Angrist sees the emergence of a largely 'symmetrical' party system (in terms of the respective parties' organisational and mobilisational capacity) as a *sine qua non* for the consolidation of the nascent democratic bargain. This study takes another perspective insofar as it ascribes a potentially much more benign function to the configuration of one-party-dominance. The existence of a dominant open (umbrella) 'party of consensus', which mostly accommodates defenders and challengers of the status quo by virtue of its (electoral) need to retain its catch-all image, its dependence on being sensitive to real and putative contenders and to processes of social change, and its capacity to 'afford' such accommodation (or co-operation) from a position of overwhelming electoral dominance⁶⁶³, is seen here as a much more appropriate model of 'infant' party competition, leading to the institutionalisation of the party system and, eventually, a process of democratic habituation of key political actors in changing societies.⁶⁶⁴

The electoral dominance of such a party is largely based on a democratically sustained consensus, which includes aspects of dominance and dissent and allows (almost) all elite sections enough room to manoeuvre and the opportunity for factional bargaining (to pursue their interests). Its impact on elite calculations may therefore be more conducive to tolerating

⁶⁶² If that is not the case, these forces will in all probability 'defect' from the democratic bargain prompting the 'challengers of the status quo' to do so as well.

⁶⁶³ As stated before, one-party-dominance may lead minority elite factions towards an appreciation for the necessity or advantage of coalition-building and (seeking) bargained solutions (with the dominant party), thus providing incentive for the emergence of centripetal party competition as a base for a stable, consolidated democratically sustained party system.

⁶⁶⁴ In fact, Angrist (2001: 32) concedes that the successful establishment of competitive politics in Turkey was possible only after Atatürk's Republican People's Party (RPP) had banned and silenced opposition thus giving the political system enough "breathing room" during which the "(...) nascent democratic institutions had the potential to be salvaged." In a similar sense, one-party-dominance buys the political system enough latitude for the nascent democratic bargain to become entrenched, but in an essentially democratic way and manner.

the democratic game than would be under a 'symmetrical' two-party system with a high risk of party competition degenerating into a zero-sum game or under the circumstances of a fragile multi-party system with a high potential for political destabilisation and for resultant defection from the democratic bargain.⁶⁶⁵

Moreover, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, the dominant party in a system of one-party-dominance, by virtue of its incumbency, has a number of assets at its disposal, to either co-opt potential contenders or to raise or sustain barriers to party competition entry for the other minor parties – without legally enforcing its monopoly over political power. As a result (without doing away the rules of the democratic game (and thus contributing to 'democratic resilience'), the dominant party can delay the emergence of a potentially destabilising multi-party system and can further the existing elites' commitment to democratic procedures by reducing the institutionalised uncertainty inherent to democratic governance. The 'trick' is, again, to have a (democratic) party system survive long enough for democratic practices to take roots.

There is another, yet again, rather (elite) actor-oriented reason for the potentially positive effect of one-party-dominance on the process of democratic consolidation in the context of changing societies. Just as it is important to have a party system capable of integrating conservative forces and dominant classes, it is also indispensable to have a party system capable of containing the distributive conflicts and demands that will inevitably arise when universal suffrage is introduced in a poor and extremely inegalitarian, heterogeneous society.

With regard to the latter, nothing short of some perception of the (democratic) elites that they have the chance to contain and survive distributive struggles ('appeasing the have-nots to abide by political orders that tremendously advantage the haves') and that they can somehow anticipate how the poor will vote, can guarantee that they will support democratisation. Especially in a setting "(...) where long-term developmental goals take priority and there are multiple social fault lines" (Swamy 2003: 3) and profound and extensive redistribution cannot be achieved by 'democratic means' immediately (or by any means short of a revolution or authoritarian/totalitarian-type social engineering).

Again, a system of one-party-dominance is considered to be the appropriate model of party competition that can reconcile elite interests with the distributive demands of the (newly enfranchised) weaker and aspiring sections of society. One of the features of such a type of party system (as outlined in the previous chapters) is that the dominant party in its effort to remain dominant must pursue a two-track strategy. Promoting a historical project of social

⁶⁶⁵ With regard to Angrists's other consideration, a depolarised party system is of course always more conducive to democratic consolidation than a party system characterised by sharp ideological divisions.

transformation, rhetorically and policy-wise, in order to bring the weaker and aspiring sections of society (from where most of its votes come) into its fold it must, at the same time, count on entrepreneurial mechanisms of political mobilisation ('seeking electoral support in the most pragmatic fashion available') at the local and regional level of electoral competition (which helps it to play out its organisational advantage against the backdrop of a given society's socio-structural characteristics).⁶⁶⁶

This dual strategy is facilitated by the availability of an extensive factional substructure, kept going by means of patronage politics and clientelist linkage mechanisms (of course, it can employ this strategy only because of its dominant position - electorally, governmentally and temporally - which enables it to dispense state resources, grant some redistributive measures, but, in general, allows it to pursue a selective accommodation of social and socio-cultural strata thus eschewing decisive redistribution). Distributive demands thereby are dispersed, fed with hopes and/or are partially met.⁶⁶⁷

Finally, leaving behind the elite level, 'democratic resilience' at the level of the electorate or, for that matter, the emergence of a democratic mass culture may also be facilitated by a system of one-party-dominance. Here, the correlation is less intricate.

On the one hand, the availability of one broad centrist party that defines itself not through a sectional appeal, but on the basis of a legitimate national consensus and is able to provide stability of governance and the image at least of a consensually unified elite, has a structuring impact on electoral competition and impedes the 'balkanisation' of the political will. Since the dominant party is also, more or less, identified with the state, it is through the dominant party (and its politics of patronage) that personal, group and, eventually, public interests are articulated (and accommodated by the dominant party) thus linking the realms of traditional society to the representational structures of the nascent democracy. Moreover, the electoral dominance, retentive capacity, national outlook and catch-all rationale of the dominant party

⁶⁶⁶ The crucial balancing act of mediating between powerful and weaker groups within society that Kohli (2001: 2) ascribes to the Indian state is therefore essentially the outcome of the INC's or, for that matter, the dominant party's electoral strategy: "While the rhetoric of the Indian state has often been redistributive – socialism, abolition of traditional privileges, reform of the caste system, and populism – political practice has been considerably more conservative, eschewing any decisive redistribution. The Indian state has thus been criticized both for its excessive socialist commitments and for its failure at substantial redistribution. However, the political impact of these twin tendencies – radical in tone, conservative in practice – may well have been benign, strengthening democracy: the powerful in society feel well served by the system [the party system?] but weaker groups do not feel totally excluded or hopeless, at least not so far."

⁶⁶⁷ It is thus not only 'vertical sandwich tactics' (which did and do exist in the two party systems under examination; see the discussion in 4.2.), as Swamy (2003) has contended, but also a more intricate mesh of redistributive rhetoric and policies, factionalism, clientelist linkage mechanisms and patronage politics, which proved to be responsible for perpetuating the INC's dominance, for the containment of distributive struggles and for India's democratic resilience

“(...) avert[s] the total exclusion of any part of the national community from the channels of power” (Morris-Jones 1989: 238) without endangering governmental stability.

On the other hand, one-party-dominance is inherently based on competitive mobilisation and the need for progressive expansion of the dominant party's support base as well as for open recruitment patterns. This party system characteristic opens up points of entry into political decision-making for aspiring social strata and (often) opposition parties alike. Additionally, it may instil into public perception a feeling that the party system has the capacity to organise and institutionalise relations of democratic accountability and responsiveness, again, without endangering political order and stability. As long as there is a fair degree of accountability available within the dominant party, a system of one-party-dominance may thus help to induce attitudes and behaviour supportive of the democratic system and encourage participation in a more calm (but also more rapid) manner than would be the case, if a (rigid) two-, or a fragile multi-party system, prevailed. This would, in all probability, produce a lot more frustration and disaffection among the losing parties and those in the electorate who desperately want effective and responsive governance to materialise. As we have seen, there are avenues, other than alternation in government available to provide an in-built opposition (e.g. in the form of intra- and inter-party factional conflict and bargaining or as latent tension between government and (dominant) party organisation).

All of these features of one-party-dominance thus (potentially) contribute to the perception that representative democracy actually can and does work, and that it is worthwhile to participate in the mechanisms and system of political communication and interest articulation that representative democracy has to offer.

Of course there is a wealth of other factors that bear on democratic consolidation and political actors' perception thereof (e.g. external pressures, traditions of political culture, wealth levels, etc.), but the nature of the party system should be considered as one, if not the most important, pivotal factor in determining a changing society's regime outcome. Nevertheless, the theoretical considerations above, especially the claim that one-party-dominance has a benign effect on the process of democratic consolidation through strengthening democratic resilience at the temporary expense of institutional uncertainty, should be treated as probabilistic rather than deterministic.

Whether these theoretical considerations about a potential positive impact of one-party-dominance on the process of democratic consolidation are sustained by the two regional contexts dealt with in this study is what this section turns to now. Given the diachronic nature of the comparison, the central question is whether the contribution of the Indian Congress

system to the country's democratic resilience, a correlation hypothesised on the basis of the Congress system's fulfilling the crucial functions of providing governmental stability, societal inclusion, conflict-management and impetus for modernisation, is likely to occur, or, for that matter, is replicable in the South African context.

With regard to the elite level and elite perception there is no other way than to base the assessment on empirically informed derivations and consideration of counterfactuals and to judge from what has happened to the democratic foundational bargain. In other words, to gauge to what extent the democratic underpinnings of the polity have either been seriously compromised or strengthened by dominant party rule.

With regard to the mass level, one way of assessing the impact of the two systems of one-party-dominance is to look at the extent to which support for the system of representative democracy and the principle of party competition has been or is becoming entrenched in the public mind as is evident from the survey data available.

At first sight, the Congress system's contribution to the strengthening of India's democracy seems obvious. Post-independent India has not witnessed any serious attempts at overthrowing party-based democracy either from disaffected elites of the 'old (social) order' or from dominant classes in industry and agriculture, nor have there been distributive conflicts from below (at least not on a large scale), which had the potential to bring down the basic fabric of representative democracy. When there was an attack on dominant propertied classes (e.g. through *zamindari* abolition or private enterprise control), compensation through formal or informal channels was at hand - most often through the patronage network of the INC. For example, the landed elites could and did find new professional opportunities within the expanding apparatus of the state bureaucracy (Bardhan 1984), and were also rapidly integrated in the clientelist tit-for-tat arrangements ('vote banks') of the INC's electoral machinery, while both industrial capitalists and big landowners "(...) found the system profitable and conducive to a stable set of expectations [as guaranteed by INC dominance] in a national market of vast potential" (Das Gupta 1989: 93, see quote above).

At the same time, the INC's need to expand its support base (given its far from overwhelming electoral support in absolute numbers and the latent threat exerted by opposition parties) and its open recruitment patterns ensured the proliferation of incentives (e.g. through politics of positive discrimination) and opportunities (e.g. through local and regional factional networks) for new entrants to the political marketplace.

Dissent and challenges, in terms of distributive demands or attempts to maintain the status quo, were common, but were located in a decentralised, factionalised and porous Congress

system that made the dispersion of power sites possible, allowing every faction within the party (or even opposition parties via factional bargaining with the dominant party) to win at least some battles and to develop a sense of stake-holding in the country's representational structures.⁶⁶⁸

However, threats to the democratic underpinnings of the state and the party system did gain momentum, largely emanating from within the dominant party's leadership circles as the intricate mechanisms of intra-party factional bargaining and conflict-management no longer worked efficiently and "state party bossism" (Jalal 1995: 47) set in, triggering the populist and increasingly (authoritarian) centralist approach to political mobilisation and governance introduced by Indira Gandhi.⁶⁶⁹ The increased use of institutional manipulation (such as the imposition of president's rule on undisguised partisan grounds), culminating in the emergency of 1975, has to be considered as a serious aberration from the country's democratic trajectory. The prior two decades of one-party-dominance and competitive politics (in fact, the continuous extension of the scope of political competition) had given the political system enough democratically sustained 'breathing room' for a process, proliferating countervailing forces to the authoritarian tendencies inherent to (dominant) party rule in changing societies, to gain momentum and had already "(...) instilled into the Indian political system the habit of making a distinction between political power and the authority of the state" (Mitra 1990b: 88). 'Free and fair' general elections at five-year intervals, the means of political mobilisation (including factional bargaining and politics of patronage) and methods of challenging a potentially irresponsible use of power through the institutional mechanisms of representative democracy had become an established routine.

Democracy 'bounced back' and the *Janata* Party victory of 1977 formally ended the INC's electoral dominance, proving the latent strength of the Indian democracy's institutions as visible from "(...) the fact that the party system in India revealed a valuable reserve capacity

⁶⁶⁸ The emphasis the INC put on the state and executive office thereby had the effect that apart from the 'traditional' vote banks, "(...) the key to political success in a district and even a state came more and more to be lodged in the control over such local bodies as cooperative societies, educational institutions, development banks and panchayat boards" (Graves 1976: 871) thus providing even more power sites and points of entry.

⁶⁶⁹ As Das Gupta (1989: 71) outlines the different quality of pre-1967 INC dominance, „This time [after 1967, C.S.] the party was less a national institution of interest reconciliation than a central organization for mobilizing endorsement for the leadership and its hierarchical apparatus (...) This plebiscitarian transformation left little scope for sustained building of interest-based support or systematic incorporation of diverse interests within the party (...) In fact, the old system of the Congress party, which had encouraged regional and local leaders to build sustained social bases of support, was now perceived as a threat to the plebiscitarian organization (...) If the old structure could afford to reduce the intensity of disaffection by distributing its targets in a polycentric arrangement of institutions, the new system proceeded to concentrate the targets in a monocentric space (...) The prime minister's directorate now combined the official authority of the governing system with the public authority of the dominant party system.”

to mobilize the political resources to replace the dominant system by a more competitive one in a time of democratic crisis” (Das Gupta 1989: 74).

To what extent did the foundation of the support for the system and principle of representative democracy deepen during the Congress system? Apart from the relatively high degree of party identification discussed in 2.1.3., another indication that the party system was clearly conceived as the referential framework for (programmatic) political conflict, was the high correspondence between party identification and preference for the issue-position of the ‘own’ party, prevalent already in 1967. Thus, as the 1967 CSDS survey tells us, 67 % of those respondents strongly identifying with one of the then major parties (Communists, Swatantra, Jana Sangh, Socialists, INC) also showed preference for their own party’s position on the question of governmental control of the economy (Eldersveld and Ahmed 1978: 104, see 2.1.5.). At the same time, the survey yielded apparently contradictory results. For example, whereas 77 % of respondents felt that parties are necessary, only 48 % felt that more than one party is necessary (41 % preferred to have only one party and 71 % opposed party conflicts (ibid. 95). This finding may however, be indicative of the aforementioned consideration that the (democratically sustained) dominance of one party and a concomitant provision of stable and effective governance positively affects attitudinal and behavioural changes without necessarily being accompanied by a growing disillusionment with the state of party politics and accountability (in contrast, one-party-dominance may thus be more conducive to a positive assessment of the basic idea of a party system’s (systemic) role in public perception than fierce party conflict that has become endemic).⁶⁷⁰ For the same survey also revealed that there was a high percentage of respondents according legitimacy to parties and elections: 73.3 % of respondents answered the question of whether elections help in drawing government attention to the people, in the affirmative (answers involved either ‘a good deal’ or ‘somewhat’) and 65.5 % answered the same way with regard to the question of whether parties are necessary for making the government pay attention to the people - with even higher figures for party identifiers (Sheth 1975c: 125). The percentage of respondents saying yes to the question of whether the present system of democratic government was worth keeping even if it delays action was in general above the 60 % margin (Roy 1975: 59). In 1971, another CSDS national survey revealed a relatively high sense of political efficacy (in

⁶⁷⁰ In that regard, Field (1980: 288), on the basis of a cross-national survey (involving four major Indian States) conducted already in 1966, noted that there is a remarkable degree of tolerance of other party’s ideologies and partisans prevalent in the electorate and that the latter are seldom regarded as a threat to the political system. This finding prompted him to conclude that partisanship in India is “(...) not only associated with more [system] supportive attitudes, the attitudes themselves are richer and more basic to the viability of competitive institutions in India” (ibid. 292).

terms of whether people felt that their vote made a difference) and a high degree of trust in the institutions of democratic government (e.g. the election commission, judiciary, State government), but a concomitant lower degree of trust in the actors running these institutions such as elected representatives and parties (Mitra and Enskat 1999: 145-46). This is however a common phenomenon in most representative democracies and has to do with the difference that people make between the institutions of government and the actors actually responsible for running those institutions, a crucial distinction essential for the emergence of a democratic mass culture.

All these findings suggest that by 1967 there was a strong connection between the working of the Congress system and the public perception of the effectiveness of party-based democracy as well as the awareness of the value of political participation. In sum the foundations for a democratic mass culture had been laid.

In the case of the South African party system's capacity to integrate dominant classes and elites into the nascent democratic bargain, ANC dominance cuts both ways. On the one hand, it is reasonable to suggest that the anticipation of ANC dominance surely helped to work out the elite pact that facilitated and ensured the transition to democracy and the crafting of constitutional provisions to protect (white) minority interests. Apart from the socio-demographic changes in the country brought about by policies of affirmative action and the consequences of the 'white flight', the formation of social privilege has changed little or, for that matter, has not been altered drastically (Gibson 2001). Likewise, ANC dominance facilitated the South African state's embrace of a market-based macro-economic framework that protects the propertied classes.

On the other hand, and contrary to the situation in post-independent India, ANC dominance is more clearly based on a class-compromise between a labour-backed dominant formation and a (still largely white controlled) business sector.⁶⁷¹ Since class and race overlap and ANC dominance depends much less on the (electoral) support of the dominant, propertied classes, this means that there are two easily identifiable bargaining partners, political groupings and constituencies facing each other, which make the accommodation of elite interests and elite bargaining more transparent, more dependent on economic planning/performance and, therefore, also more difficult to sustain. One could just imagine what could happen, if the ANC leadership were to continue marginalising the ruling alliance's COSATU component.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ The emerging African business middle class, sponsored by 'Black Empowerment Programmes' adds another partner to the compromise, but one increasingly torn between its sectoral interests and loyalty to the dominant party.

⁶⁷² For example, the more recent confrontational approach to public service unions and to what the ANC leadership has termed 'ultra-leftist' critics and opponents (ANC 2002) as well as the reaction of "(...) many

Even more important is the fact that one-party-dominance in South Africa is less based on clientelist linkage mechanisms and factional bargaining, vertically as well as horizontally, partly as a result of institutional incentives (such as the closed list PR electoral system) and socio-structural givens, but also due to the ANC's limited organisational penetration of South African society and the party leadership's unwillingness to decentralise power structures and to devolve autonomy to lower levels of the party and the state. This means that, unlike in India where the dominant party's factional and clientelist underpinnings helped to defuse elite bargaining and to expand the scope for 'winning at least some battles (somewhere)', political competition in South Africa almost inevitably aggregates to the national level and has a greater potential for either dominant party elites or minority elite interests groups defecting from the nascent democratic bargain.⁶⁷³

This point gains heightened significance with regard to the party system's capacity to contain distributive struggles.⁶⁷⁴ So far ANC dominance has largely guaranteed the containment of populist pressures for redistribution basically through rhetoric devices and by means of benefit targeting/meeting basic needs (primarily in the areas of housing, electrification, access to water and primary health). If the dominant party goes on to centralise political decision-making, to narrow the base for participation and to interact primarily with the organised sectors of society (thus creating permanent losers), the pressure for redistribution will, in all probability, rise and the dominant party's ability to contain distributive struggles will diminish. In a sense therefore, it is in the potential eruption of distributive struggles that the capabilities of the ANC as dominant party will probably face its most serious challenges. Elite perception of the party system's capacity in this regard may lead to a lowering of elite commitment to the nascent democratic bargain or to an increase in capital flight and brain drain.⁶⁷⁵

COSATU unions to act as external interest groups using public campaigns and strikes to re-establish influence" (Butler 2003: 105) are visible signs of the vulnerability of that class-compromise.

⁶⁷³ The South African state's limited scope for the distribution of patronage, the country's much more open and competitive economy, the constraints put upon the dominant party by the pacted transition and the more ideological nature of factionalism in South Africa further adds to that 'concentrating effect' of political competition.

⁶⁷⁴ In this regard, the dominant party's reliance to corporatist bargaining mechanisms may thereby facilitate elite bargaining but, at the same time, neither contributes to the dispersion of power sites, nor links political decision-making and policy-making to society at large.

⁶⁷⁵ However, a two-party system or a fragile multi-party system would diminish the capacity to contain distributive struggles even more and would trigger far more redistributive demands much more rapidly, for the uncertainty of electoral outcomes would increase the parties willingness to give in to (racial or ethnic based) populist demands more easily. A possible way out of this dilemma for the ANC as dominant party (in face of a political opportunity structure that limits the scope for clientelist linkage mechanisms and extensive factionalism, but given the political sophistication of the weaker sections of society and the existence of a vibrant, politically assertive civil society), could be to give its activist base and the weaker sections of society more room to manoeuvre (in terms of participation). This would involve a widening of state-society relations to include not

South Africa's democratic record is ambiguous as well. The dominant party has largely adhered to the democratic procedures and constitutional constraints on the abuse of executive power laid down in the constitution, which is one of the world's most progressive constitutions in terms of (the amount of) democratic checks and balances that are enshrined. The generally 'free and fair' second general election, a vast improvement on the management of its predecessor, has defied pessimists who judged on the basis of the liberal (but more so administrative) flaws of the 1994 poll (Lodge 1999c)⁶⁷⁶. A peaceful leadership succession from Mandela to Mbeki has taken place (comparable to the one from Nehru to Shastri, but in stark contrast to the more conflictual succession process from Shastri to Indira Gandhi) and, although sometimes harsh towards opposition criticism, the ruling party has largely been receptive to the need for and legitimacy of competitive party politics.

However, there are signs of waning democratic commitment on behalf of the dominant party that are a cause for concern. These include the already discussed centralisation and growing stifling of dissent within the dominant party (which could be considered as an intra-party matter), but also more serious examples of a diminishing accountability of the dominant party towards the citizenry as well as constitutional oversight. For example, the executive-legislative relations have been seriously compromised by the ANC leadership invoking party loyalty to prevent parliamentary investigations into the (unauthorised) health ministry's expenditure of 14 million Rands for the AIDS education musical *Sarafina II* in 1996 and into the dubious circumstances, under which a 29.9 million Rand arms deal was struck in 1999 (Mattes 2002). Likewise, the president's initiative to stop further investigation into charges of corruption against ANC whip Tony Yengeni, or the security ministry's launching (and instrumentalisation) of a police investigation into a 'plot' against Mbeki allegedly conspired by the ANC's former general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa, former ANC Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale and former Mpumalanga premier Mathews Phosa, are warning signs of the potential danger to democratic consolidation that is inherent in one-party-dominance as well. These precarious tendencies have all been highlighted by the South African interview partners, especially R.W. Johnson, as an indication for the creeping authoritarianism endangering the country's democracy.⁶⁷⁷

only those linkages between the state and assertive (organised) societal interests such as labour and business, but also those between the state and the less vociferous social strata by means of cooperation (for example, through bargaining institutions), not domination.

⁶⁷⁶ The 'free and fair' character of the 1999 elections was not only confirmed by international observers, but also, and more importantly, by the voters themselves (Olivier and Rule 1999).

⁶⁷⁷ For the 'plot' history see also Laurence (2001). For additional evidence/incidents for/of the ANC's increasingly less 'tolerant' stance towards constitutional provisions and the institutions of governance see Mattes (2002: 26 f.).

What about the extent of popular habituation to democracy and the emergence of a democratic mass culture? Since the argument (as exemplified in the Indian context) was that one-party-dominance buys nascent democracies in changing societies enough 'breathing room' for a process of democratic consolidation to gain momentum, the perception of democracy and the party system in public opinion is of crucial relevance.⁶⁷⁸

As visible from the survey data discussed in 2.2.3. party identification has dropped significantly (except for one-offs at election times) since 1994. This corresponds to declining membership rates of political parties, decreasing from 20.6 % in 1994 to 10.5 % in 2000 according to annual HSRC surveys (Klandermans 2001d: 116). In terms of trust in institutions and actors running these institutions a somehow similar picture to that of India emerges. Political parties (and to a lesser extent elected representatives) score very low, whereas institutions like the electoral commission, the judiciary, but also the national government score much better, though they do not yield the same positive ratings as in India in 1971. For example, according to another HSRC survey of 2001 parties got only 26.7 % of 'strongly trust/trust' respondents as compared to 51.5 % for the national government in the same category (HSRC 2002: 21). However, in contrast to India there is a marked difference discernible between the more positive ratings of the ruling party and the more negative ratings of opposition parties with regard to the question of trust (and credibility) in (of) political parties, indicative of the greater support and legitimacy accorded to the dominant party (Mattes, Taylor and Africa 1999: 53-54, Afrobarometer 2002: 10).⁶⁷⁹

These results suggest that a trend towards disengagement from active politics is currently unfolding in South Africa. At the same time, however, there is a strong commitment to the efficacy and value of the voting act as such (only 4 % according to a HSRC survey of 2002 held indifferent or negative views toward voting, Southall and Mattes 2002: 15) and a remarkable sense of personal political efficacy (in 2000, 41 % of respondents in another HSRC survey agreed to the question of 'people like me can have an influence on governmental decisions', Klandermans et al. 2001b: 142).

⁶⁷⁸ Additionally, public opinion about the working and effectiveness of democracy and the party system is a much more convincing indicator of democratic resilience than any Freedom House ranking (Freedom House 1999). The latter ranks both post-independent India and post-apartheid South Africa as democracies most of the time according to their 7 points scale of political rights (8 criteria) and as democracies or semi-democracies according to the scale of civil liberties (13 criteria). These scales conceive all regimes that yield values of 1 or 2 (1.0 – 2.5) as democracies (values 3, 4, and 5 refer to semi-democracies and values 6 and 7 to non-democracies). Since the Freedom House ranking is considered here to be not that telling, because of its liberal bias and methodological problems, the detailed ranking of the two regional contexts is not followed up. For a discussion of the methodological problems inherent to the index see, for example, Gaber (2000).

⁶⁷⁹ Similar to India, but confined to African opinion, a special survey conducted in Gauteng in 1994 revealed that while there is a strong commitment to competitive democracy, there is also a strong opposition to party conflict (Schlemmer 1999: 286-287).

Whereas there is (growing) dissatisfaction with the way party politics and the party system is working, the commitment to the principle of representative democracy is clearly not at stake. This is also confirmed by survey evidence of South Africans' general commitment to democracy. Thus, opinion polls conducted by IDASA from 1995 onwards (Afrobarometer 2000, Mattes 2002, Mattes and Thiel 1998) show that in 1995, 47 % of respondents judged democracy as 'always best' even 'if things are not working', in 1997 it were 56.3 % and 55 % in mid-2000⁶⁸⁰ with relatively low levels of inter-group differences – although the latter were increasing from 1995 onwards. However, there is no strong evidence for an increased support for democracy since 1995. Moreover, in mid-2000 just 56 % of respondents disapproved of one-party rule (Mattes 2002: 30) and survey evidence from 1995 (Mattes and Thiel 1998: 127) and 2000 (Mattes 2002: 31) reveals that there is a predominant 'substantive', performance-based perception of democracy ("(...) socio-economic goods are "essential" for a country to be called democratic", *ibid.*) at the expense of a crucial 'procedural' understanding of democracy ('having regular elections, multi-party competition, civil liberties, individual/minority rights', see also 2.2.1.).

These findings suggest that a democratic mass culture is far from entrenched in South Africa. Though the current system of one-party-dominance may have a benign effect on the process of democratic consolidation, for the reasons stated above (and is surely preferable to a fragile multi-party system), the question remains whether the democratically sustained 'breathing room' will be long and profound enough for such a mass culture to unfold and to consolidate.

5.4. Democracy and development as two sides of the same coin: combined development versus developmental state

The last dimension of examining the party system as independent variable is the (potential) impact that its configuration and characteristics have on the economic and developmental trajectory of a given society. Since a proper assessment of both regional contexts' developmental and economic record would go beyond the scope of this study, the following is confined to the illustration of the more general mode of operation of one-party-dominance in the context of changing societies in this respect.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁸⁰ Similarly, in mid-2000, 60 % of South Africans said that the country was either 'completely democratic' (26 %) or 'democratic with some minor exceptions' (34 %), Mattes (2002: 31).

⁶⁸¹ Although policy-research has shown that there is a correlation between the nature of the ruling party and policy outcomes, its focus was on the impact of ruling parties' programmatic determination on policy outcomes and the correlation could never be 'freed' from the impact of intervening variables such as institutional constraints (Helms 1995: 656-657). Here, we are dealing with the (potential) impact of the party system's

India's democratic approach to development has often been blamed for the country's failure to achieve growth with distribution and alleviation of mass poverty (Myrdal 1973, Frankel 1969), leading instead to "peaceful stagnation" (Moore 1966) or developmental paralysis. Similarly, as Sparks (1999) notes, critical press and pessimist political analysis of South Africa's current trajectory almost always neglects the fact that the country is facing a 'three-in-one revolution': the political transformation from apartheid to democracy, a transformation from an isolationist siege economy facing international sanctions to an economy that must compete in the global marketplace and a transformation from a primary producing economy based on agriculture and mining to an export-driven economy based on manufactured goods' (ibid. 43-44).

The problem with most assessments of either India's developmental or democratic record (or assessments and projections of South Africa's developmental and democratic 'success') is that they view both aspects as analytically separable categories. This comes close to an attempt to force the observer's category (and ideal) on the actor's perception, which sees both categories as synergistically intertwined ('development that is not democratically sustained is flawed development, for it does not comprise political development, i.e. democratisation or democratic consolidation, and democracy necessarily comprises social justice as one of its main components').

Such a view is of course hardly surprising. It stems from a functionalist obsession with one-party-states and authoritarian regimes (inherent to modernisation theory) as the be-all and end-all pacemakers of developmental processes. Certainly, this view goes to the core of the matter in the context of changing societies, for democracy as an end in itself is hard to mediate given the mass poverty and social inequality (but the same rationale applies vice versa, a fact that most analysts neglect). Indeed, it seems logical that democracy in changing societies requires subtle mechanisms of restriction in order to channel social and distributive demands and to provide (political) effectiveness in terms of selectively momentous decision-making.⁶⁸² If the connection between electoral cycles and the distribution of state resources draws too close, the developmental capacity of a given state will suffer and the danger of plebiscitary authoritarianism will lurk in the background. If, however, developmental

configuration and characteristics on developmental policy-making. Additionally, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, just as it does not make sense to assess democracy in terms of degrees of contestation, simple reference to economic aggregate data cannot grasp the complex logic of democratic development.

⁶⁸² Naturally, this holds true for established democracies as well. But in these democracies majority rule as a mechanism of restriction is generally accepted, not the least because of a high degree of stabilisation of individual life styles due to market and social income. 'Subtle mechanisms of restriction' in that regard means coherence and continuity of decision-making structures as guaranteed by a dominant party without endangering political competition.

programmes are enforced at the expense of constitutional and public accountability, the democratic underpinnings and political legitimacy of the state will inevitably be eroded (above all, by conceding to elections only a status of ‘acclamation’). Therefore, if one is to conceive of democracy and development as two sides of the same coin, the right balance of dominance and competition, coherence and accommodation, turns out to be the deciding determinant of a successful democratic development.

Analysts that have taken this interdependence of development and democracy more seriously have come up with the concept of the developmental state as a means to achieve democratic development. The concept of the developmental state, first established by Johnson (1982) and illustrated by the success of the Japanese Ministry of Industry, Technology and Infrastructure (MITI)⁶⁸³, is based on the assumption that successful development needs an autonomous financial and technocratic elite, freed from the vagaries of the political arena, in close co-operation with the bureaucracy and international capital. Following Johnson, Leftwich (1996b: 284) has defined the developmental state as “(...) [this state] whose internal politics and external relations have served to concentrate sufficient power, authority, autonomy, competence and capacity at the centre to shape, pursue and encourage the achievement of explicit developmental objectives, whether by establishing and promoting the conditions of economic growth, or by organizing it directly, or a varying combination of both.”⁶⁸⁴

However, the question of how the establishment of a developmental state could be achieved by (wholly) democratic means was still largely neglected and additionally, the concept proved to be too confined analytically to the ‘success’ of East Asia’s export-oriented economies.

More recent considerations of how to establish a (truly) democratic developmental state see one-party-dominance as a potential device able to reconcile democracy and development. As Leftwich (1996b: 291-292) has argued (see also the quote by White at the beginning of the chapter), in countries where a ‘pure’ developmental state (one that entails some form of soft authoritarianism) is not feasible due to the requirements of a representative democracy,

“(...) dominant-party rule in a competitive pluralist political environment has both defined and facilitated the emergence of developmental democratic states (...) None of the common features of (...) developmental states (...) would have been possible in these

⁶⁸³ Johnson later on refined his concept and expanded its range to include Taiwan and South Korea. A similar concept of ‘governing the market’ was outlined by Wade (1990) and illustrated by Taiwan.

⁶⁸⁴ The need to ground the developmental state in society and to highlight the indispensable participatory nature of such states to react to social change and changes in the international economy effectively has led Evans to claim that the autonomy of such developmental states needs to be embedded in societal and social relations; see fn. 659.

democratic developmental states without this central condition of long-term, dominant-party rule. Without it, their developmental elites would have been divided or paralysed; relative state autonomy would have been impossible and the badgering demands of special interests would have come to predominate; bureaucratic continuity and capacity would have been compromised; and either local or foreign economic interests, or both, would soon have become entrenched in ways that would be unlikely to serve national developmental goals (...) dominant-party democratic developmental states (...) hold out some prospects for at least achieving respectable levels of growth and the distribution of its benefits that will make a real difference to the majority of the population under essentially democratic conditions”⁶⁸⁵

Thus, the (potential) capacity of a system of one-party-dominance to provide coherence and authority for long-term decision-making, a capacity based on a legitimate, democratically reached consensus (and subject to democratic (re)approval), is seen here as the *sine qua non* of achieving democratic development.

An additional argument for a likely beneficial effect of one-party-dominance on democratically sustained (socio-economic) development in changing societies comes from a recent article by Chhibber and Nooruddin (forthcoming, 2004). Trying to explain “(...) why there is variance in the delivery of public goods across the Indian states (...)”, they focus “(...) on the strategic considerations of political parties as they compete for power over state resources”. Using macro-economic data and post-election voter surveys, they come to the conclusion that “[i]n two-party systems, the need to win the majority of the vote forces political parties to build broad cross-cleavage coalitions. Parties do this by providing public goods that benefit a larger section of the citizenry. In multiparty systems, on the other hands, parties have an incentive to focus on their voting blocs since any loss of support from this group of ardent supporters could spell defeat. To ensure the support of this core group, parties provide state resources directly to these groups. This results in lower public goods provision in multi-party states.” In sum, the larger the ‘winning coalition’, the more thinly spread the private goods available to purchase public loyalty – hence, there is a bigger incentive to provide ‘public goods’.⁶⁸⁶ Clearly, the need for a dominant party in a system of one-party-

⁶⁸⁵ Interestingly, Leftwich discards the Nehruvian experience of one-party-dominance exactly on the grounds that the Congress system was based on the idea that democratic processes are “(...) an intimate component of a wide conception of social, economic *and* political development” (ibid. 281)!

⁶⁸⁶ And indeed, delivery of public goods, as Chhibber and Nooruddin (forthcoming, 2004) demonstrate, correlates with the level of fragmentation of the State party systems in India: it is lower in more fragmented party systems and gets higher in party systems where the effective number of parties goes down. Although this is not

dominance to build and maintain (and to accommodate) broad cross-cleavage coalitions is even greater than in a configuration of two-party competition as are the incentives to provide public goods delivery.

The impact of the Indian Congress system on the country's socio-economic development and developmental strategy has to be understood against the backdrop of this dilemma of a "competitive model of development" (Kothari 1994: 9).⁶⁸⁷ As a result of the need for a distinct electoral strategy and the ensuing distributive demands (given the dominant party's status as an aggregative party in a competitive environment), elite co-optation and interest accommodation at the local and regional levels predominated. At the same time however, the national dominance of the INC elite and the elite consensus on a basically, welfarist developmental strategy ensured continuity and (relative) autonomy of the development goals of central planning and mixed economy as outlined by the independent planning commission created in 1950. The resulting discrepancy between the formulation of developmental goals geared towards modernisation and the state's less than overwhelming capacity to implement these goals, because of its dependence on the politics of patronage, the need for the dominant party to refrain from radical economic restructuring in order to uphold its centrist position and the federal set-up of the country, consequently prevented the establishment of an effective developmental state.⁶⁸⁸

Thus, India, which was "(...) able to generate [state] power through the accommodation of diverse interests" (Mitra 1990b: 92), "(...) has belatedly come to terms with the necessity of taking painful decisions about [economic] restructuring and [accepting] the need for internal and international competition" (ibid.).

Given the political dominance of the INC and a gradual collusion of dominant party and state for the largest part of the country's democratic history, the Indian, or rather the INC's attempt to achieve democratic development was thereby once described as a strategy of "combined development" (Das Gupta 1989) geared towards the neutralisation of specific legitimacy

the place to come up with an empirical investigation of the correlation between India's national party system and the extent of public good delivery, it is also reasonable to suggest that public goods delivery has decreased in India with the increasingly partisan nature of (party) politics brought about by the transition from one-party-dominance to multi-party competition.

⁶⁸⁷ As Krishna (1967: 74) notes: "The contradiction facing the Indian parties is that while the political system imposes on them the roles of seeking power and influence through loosely constructed coalitions and of integrating the political community by drawing an increasing number of citizens into participation in political processes, the social conditions demand a purposeful, coherent and well-directed effort to harness the resources of the State and society to build stable institutions and achieve economic development and social improvement."

⁶⁸⁸ As Frankel (1978: 111) notes, "[i]t is against the background of these assumptions [of a need of class conciliation impeding radical economic restructuring thus preventing a frontal attack on social exploitation, C.S.] that Nehru's preoccupation with avoiding premature polarisation around sensitive issues of economic reform, and his determination to maintain the Congress Party as a unifying force at the national level, even at the cost of short-term concessions to the propertied classes, become most convincing."

losses through “a simultaneous treatment of multiple issues like national cohesion, economic development, social justice, citizen efficacy, and human development” (ibid. 95). As such, the rationale of such a strategy of combined development reflects the need for a selective accommodation of rising expectations in order to compensate for any loss of economic efficiency (for example, through affirmative action/positive discrimination of the backward castes and classes) by a gain in political efficiency (electoral support and social legitimacy). The same rationale applies vice versa (for example, a gain in economic efficiency through isolation of the Planning Commission at the cost of an increased neglect of federal demands/parliamentary accountability).

This strategy was appropriate to India’s diverse social universe and bode (relatively) well both in terms of an accelerated process of democratic consolidation and also for taming the forces of social fragmentation and disorder just as long as the “ordering mechanism” (Kothari 1994) of INC consensual politics was able to contain the rising salience and proliferation of social cleavages, to provide functioning state-society linkages and to guide the overall economic and welfarist trajectory of the country. Even though this strategy was of course not conducive to producing explosive growth rates, it nevertheless secured incremental growth coupled with a relatively low level of deprivation and a high level of participation of social groups in the process of economic development.⁶⁸⁹

The legitimacy generating anchoring of national development goals and programmes in the mesh of political, social and cultural interests was thereby additionally furthered by the latent threat exerted by opposition parties and the (varying) factional coalitions at the regional level. This mechanism impeded the emergence of a “dilemma between legitimisation and rent-seeking” (Elsenhans 1982: 196, translation by C.S.) in favour of a national, public good orientation, a dilemma, which is so typical of political elites in post-colonial societies.

The national dominance of the INC, a result of political competition and dependent on an electoral strategy of interest accommodation, thus made the coherence and continuity of the country’s developmental approach possible (an approach, whose shortcomings, from a present-day perspective, were not that clear in the mid-1950’s) without bringing with it a loss of legitimacy (of political competition and representative democracy), a loss normally

⁶⁸⁹ For a positive assessment of the far from spectacular but sustainable developmental performance of the Indian state with regard to agricultural production, meeting basic needs, industrialisation and improvement of human security, see Das Gupta (1989: 78-102). Kaviraj (1996: 132) depicts the ‘success’ of the Nehruvian model regarding its compatibility with the processes of development and democratisation and refers to the climate of ideologically substantiated development theories prevalent in the 1950’s, a factor that has to be taken into account when judging the putative failure of the Nehruvian development strategy. For the difficulties involved in implementing a growth with distribution approach under conditions of unstable multi-party rule in a capitalist economy, see Kohli (1987: 223-236).

identified with the uninterrupted and prolonged dominance of one party. As Diamond (1989: 43) has noted with regard to the Indian developmental context: “While poverty and inequality remain, despite the progress, humiliating in degree and haunting in scale, it is significant that the movements against these are primarily working through rather than challenging the legitimacy of the democratic system.”

As regards economic restructuring in a (radical) manner that is conducive to growth with redistribution, the very success of the country’s democratic resilience and deepening combined with the gradual decline of INC dominance eventually proved to be detrimental to the developmental achievements of the Nehruvian period.⁶⁹⁰ It reduced the Indian state’s capacity to handle the ‘demand overload’ triggered by the politics of accommodation and to bring about a coherent programme of economic policy-making inclusive of considerable redistributive measures.⁶⁹¹ The decline of the one-party-dominant Congress system went hand in hand with the emergence of parliamentary bodies that were apparently more pluralistic and representative (from a liberal point of view), with the formation of (formerly disadvantaged) social strata that had become much more assertive and politicised requiring a devolution and decentralisation of political power and resources. It has also led to political as well as social fragmentation and increased partisan distributive politics as a result of growing political antagonism and polarisation, thus rendering the state increasingly incapable of developing a coherent long-term developmental framework to achieve the longed for growth with redistribution.⁶⁹²

The South African context is again more complicated, for the country is additionally burdened by the pressures of globalisation and the prevailing one-party-dominant system is dependent on a (fragile) class-compromise and pacted elite agreement with less opportunity to rely on

⁶⁹⁰ This line of reasoning is also underpinned by Varshney (1998b: 44), stating that “[i]n effect, Nehru chose democracy over development (or at least the model of development that he was initially inclined to favor). Guided by the advice of the Congress cadres from the several states, he realized that one could not give suffrage to rural India and at the same time extract huge quantities of food from it at below-market prices [to fund state-led industrialisation, C.S.]. By not forcing the issue, the Congress party avoided putting democracy at risk. For the first 20 years of planning, resources for industrialization came not from agriculture, but from urban savings and foreign aid (including wheat from the United States).”

⁶⁹¹ Indeed, as Chhibber (1999: 107) has shown, the connection between electoral cycles and (politically motivated) subsidy disbursement from the central government to the States increased substantially after 1967.

⁶⁹² When liberalisation set in, in the mid-1980s and more thoroughly in 1991, there was no mechanism available to mediate the radical turn in the country’s economic trajectory effectively, no transformative consensus as how to balance neoliberal adjustment and redistribution. On the contrary, the preceding fragmentation of the party system and deinstitutionalisation of political institutions, resulting from too far-reaching accommodation in combination with economic liberalisation, gave rise to extreme partisan and particularistic interest-maximisation, sharpening income disparities, an accentuation of poverty and a concomitant increase in political and governmental instability, “(...) [e]ven though the economic liberalization measures have produced unprecedented rates of sustained aggregate economic growth” (Sharma 1999: 229).

clientelist linkage mechanisms and factional substructures to cushion the impact of slow growth rates, insufficient redistribution and/or economic restructuring.

Of course, the argument for a positive impact of one-party-dominance on democratic development put forward by Leftwich and White (see above) may hold true for the South African context as well. ANC dominance surely provides a greater public good orientation than would be the case if (ethnic, racial or class based) two- or multi-party competition were to prevail. This argument is also a 'hearty welcome' for party and government representatives in changing societies. Thus, two days before South Africa's second democratic general election took place, Firoz Cachalia, the then ANC leader of the house in the province of Gauteng legislature, authored an article in one of the country's leading newspapers stating that,

"Since coming to government, the ANC has pursued macroeconomic balance as a precondition for both growth and redistribution. It has emphasised fiscal and monetary restraint and liberalised trade and capital movements. What are the political preconditions for such policies? Are they sustainable in a transitional democracy like SA? (...) In a democracy all policy has to be refracted through the political process and be sustained through the preservation of electoral support. A dominant party with a multi-class character and secure electoral support can afford to take a long-term view (...) Conversely, there is considerable evidence from Latin America, for instance, that systems with unstable multiparty patterns are the most prone to populist policy cycles" (Business Day, May 31, 1999).⁶⁹³

However, while the overwhelming electoral support for the ANC is a guarantee, or a potential one at least, that a certain level of state autonomy can be obtained, the broad-church, class-compromise character of the Alliance and the pressures of globalisation seriously threaten the basis of the South African party system's configuration. On the one hand, to up-hold control over a diverse and highly politicised electorate, constant accommodation of various societal interests on the lines of the Indian model is needed, involving a fair degree of state interventionism. Yet, as was the case in India, accommodation, apart from being more difficult to accomplish in South Africa because of the national dimension that societal and distributive demands take on with relative ease and the limited reach of the South African state, has the potential to undermine coherence and capacity (while pressures for economic

⁶⁹³The article has been included to the article section of the ANC's official homepage available at <http://www.anc.org.za/election/articles/dominance.html>.

restructuring and redistribution are more urgent), whereas the imposition of strict party discipline (a trend, which cannot be ignored in the current South African context) could seriously threaten the dominant party's catch-all appeal and rationale. On the other hand, as Ferdinand (1994: 134) points out, growing market liberalisation limits the capacity of dominant parties to attract long-term support due to the reduced scope for patronage politics and protectionist policies, and the emergence of a politically more self-assertive middle-class "(...) which is more openly critical of the old-fashioned corruption of its political leaders".⁶⁹⁴

Whether the above is true or whether it is simply a lame excuse by party representatives to legitimise and corroborate party dominance, is difficult to establish.

The shift from RDP to GEAR is an apparent indication at least that one-party-dominance can generate enough autonomy to pursue a long-term development strategy and to impose rather unpopular policy decisions. What is clear is that the South African government's embrace of a business-friendly, market-based policy would not have been possible without the ANC's dominant position electorally. At the same time, the pursuit of orthodox economic policies since the mid-1990s is not without qualification. Concessions to those social groups with a strong lobbying power have been made, such as union-friendly labour legislation or huge spending on education (not the least due to the strength of the teaching union). A commitment to redistribution is also highly visible in the area of welfare spending and in the efforts made at meeting basic needs. The shift to GEAR and, more importantly, the continuation of policies of deficit reduction, fiscal discipline and western-style free-market principles is however, even more surprising if one considers that the growth/investment predictions and trickle-down ambitions of GEAR clearly have not lived up to expectations to say nothing of its limited redistributive benefits.

⁶⁹⁴ Of course, the latter point holds true only if the middle-class has become self-sustaining and is no longer subject to large-scale state/dominant party patronage.

Table 28: GEAR vs. Reality

	Predicted Results of GEAR			
	1996	1997	1998	1999
Real GDP growth	3.5	2.9	3.8	4.9
Real private investment growth	9.3	9.1	9.3	19.9
Employment (non-agricultural) growth	1.3	3.0	2.7	3.5
Inflation	8.4	10.9	9.6	7.7
Conventional Deficit/GDP	-5.1	-4.0	-3.5	-3.0
Real wage growth (private)	-0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Actual Performance				
Real GDP growth	4.2	2.5	0.6	1.2
Real private investment growth	6.1	4.7	-2.9	-4.4
Employment (non-agricultural) growth	-0.7	-1.7	-3.7	-3.2
Inflation	7.4	8.6	6.9	5.2
Conventional Deficit/GDP	-4.9	-4.6	-3.3	-2.6
Real wage growth (private)	1.7	2.3	8.6	3.0

Source: Natrass and Seekings (2000: 34); not all entries taken, data from South African Reserve Bank (SARB) Quarterly Bulletin, March 2000.

Table 28 clearly shows that, apart from the deficit target and the inflation rate, all other indicators were “(...) way below target during the 1990s” (Natrass and Seekings 2000: 34). Part of the explanation for the shift in South Africa’s macro-economic policy is surely grounded in the “changing locus of international influence” (Webster/Adler 1999: 369) after the end of the Cold War. The technical capacity of the ANC to formulate a coherent economic policy was still in the making whilst simultaneously, ANC policy makers and thinkers were being exposed to the think tanks and advisers of international capital (and local capital as well, *ibid.*).⁶⁹⁵ It is also reasonable to suggest that the dominant party is aware that it can no longer follow an accommodative strategy (of combined development) as was done by the INC in post-independent India. Given the South African state’s, or rather the ANC’s dependence on domestic and international capital to some extent a less accommodative and more orthodox approach to development is to be expected, but the unavailability of factional substructures and clientelist linkage mechanisms as in the case of the Congress system has also hindered the ability to disperse demands of its constituency and society at large. Nevertheless, to uphold dominance and to base its approach to democratic development on a democratic national consensus, the ANC is also dependent on the accommodation of the interests of its constituency, above all the organised interests of society that it represents, but increasingly

⁶⁹⁵ Interestingly enough, as Lipton (2000: 343) states, “(...) a number of ‘neo-liberal’ advisers, including the World Bank, have urged more state-led redistribution than the ANC has been willing to contemplate”. She refers to a World Bank report on ‘Options for land reform and rural restructuring in South Africa’ (World Bank 1993).

also the weaker sections of society from where it draws the bulk of its electoral support. The current circumstances thus come close to a Catch 22-situation.

So far, South Africa has more or less followed the accommodative path of India, albeit on a much smaller scale, having confined accommodation largely to the organised (and privileged) sections of society and having adopted the paradigm shift in development theory and strategy brought forth by globalisation. This accommodative strategy ensured the ANC's dominance, with opinion polls suggesting that the party still enjoys widespread support and popularity. Up to now, this strategy continues to bode well for democratic consolidation, for only the ANC can guarantee both stability and democracy. The ANC-led government's market approach to economic restructuring however, has not paid off. Economic growth is slow and redistribution not far-reaching enough. In order to successfully achieve democratic development, what is needed is a state that is able and willing to monitor a 'transformative compromise' (or a 'New Deal', as my interview partner R.W. Johnson (see references) termed it).⁶⁹⁶ A compromise that would provide the state with the much-needed bargained autonomy to take some painful decisions about economic reforms, without losing support (legitimacy) for these reforms⁶⁹⁷ and without endangering the (so far successful) containment of distributive conflicts. If that does indeed happen, moving towards the sharing of social costs involved in restructuring and gradually abandoning the reliance on neoliberal textbook remedies in favour of a more balanced and complementary state-market approach⁶⁹⁸, globalisation will not necessarily become the 'false dawn' as predicted by a popular former Thatcherite (Gray 1998). One-party-dominance offers least a chance to somehow tackle the dilemma that South Africa is facing, which has been formulated by Leftwich (1996b: 292) in 1996 as follows:

"(...) the ANC government in South Africa (...) has Herculean tasks before it, not only in terms of post-apartheid state-building, but also in basic developmental terms. For not only must it correct past inequalities but it must also promote the much-needed and sustained economic growth that will both help to fund this restructuring and raise the average level of human welfare, while also maintaining democratic rule. If it can be

⁶⁹⁶ Ideally, not based on a narrow concept of corporatism as, for example, in Mexico until the 1990s. There, corporatism was serving only the needs of the dominant party and well-mobilised groups leaving the unorganised poor and unemployed marginalised.

⁶⁹⁷ Such a compromise is based on the assumption that the long-term profits for all key interests involved in bargaining are bigger than any short-term material gains. Again, this assumption is based on the reality that economic growth depends less on textbook remedies than on the ability to achieve a degree of cooperation from all the key interests who possess the capacity to frustrate or enhance growth prospects, see Rodrik (1999).

⁶⁹⁸ A dose of regulatory protectionism as regards capital controls, could further the stabilisation of the overall economic environment. Similarly, instead of adhering to haphazard deficit targeting, public investment in human capital infrastructure could reinforce economic activity and social peace rendering rising investment rates more likely.

regularly re-elected with substantial majorities in open competition over the next 25 years at least, it will be able to establish the kind of democratic developmental state which alone stands a fair chance of achieving these goals. If not, endemic instability and insecurity will engulf the country, and both democracy and development will be overwhelmed."

What becomes clear from the preceding is that one-party-dominance has a potentially benign 'bridge-building' effect with regard to the advancement of democratisation, national integration (or the containment of conflicts and redistributive struggles) and democratic development. The Indian Congress system with its distinct qualities (the dominant party's catch-all, decentralised, socially inclusive and internally pluralist nature, its participatory and accommodative approach to mobilisation and decision-making, the clientelist, patronage-based linkage mechanisms and means of elite-mass integration, and the open collaborative dominant party-opposition relations marked by dominance as well as by consensus and compromise within and between parties thus providing government stability and a positive elite assessment of the democratic process) clearly performed such a benign function .

The South African system of one-party-dominance may exert a similar benign function on these processes but the differences in the shape, nature and quality of the country's party system, partly due to a different political opportunity structure (dependence on domestic and international capital, dictates of macro-economic policy obviating state interventionism, the dominant party's alliance character and clearly defined core constituencies, unavailability of a similar pre-existing clientelist culture and networks), but also due to differences in party agency (a less consensual and participatory approach to decision-making, less decentralised and accommodative mobilisation, accommodation confined to specific organised sections of society, a less benevolent attitude to internal pluralism/factionalism, the highlighting of the racial cleavage and appeals to racial solidarity, less open collaborative dominant party-opposition relations), point in the direction of a different trajectory. However, even in South Africa, a system of one-party-dominance at least opens up an opportunity for an extended period of political stability, for the longer-term entrenchment of democracy and institutional legitimacy and for providing a precondition to tackle the political and developmental challenges the country is facing in the dire circumstances of extreme inequality, (mass) poverty and a divided society, an opportunity that, in all probability, would not have been on offer in the context of an early emergence of a fragile, fragmented and volatile multi-party system or fierce two-party competition.

Chapter 6: Comparison and Conclusion: ‘Lessons’ and Prospects

“(…) the ANC is a strongly multi-racial and multi-ethnic party; in particular, its members of parliament and its cabinet ministers have been broadly representative of all of the major racial and ethnic groups in South Africa (...) it is quite possible that its rule will be similar to that of the Indian National Congress, which has been so inclusive of all religious, linguistic, and regional groups in India that it has embodied the essence of a grand coalition within the party and within the long succession of Congress cabinets” (Lijphart 1998: 148).

Lijphart’s speculation regarding the ANC’s future development and (strategic) behaviour as dominant party in post-apartheid South Africa and the possibility of it following a path similar to that of the INC during the two decades after independence is founded upon perceived party agentive similarities between the two regional party system configurations. Though a welcome statement, it is nevertheless a ‘flawed’ one. As the discussions in the various sections of the preceding three chapters (especially 4.2. and 5.2.) have shown, INC dominance or, for that matter, the Congress system, had a much more inclusive, accommodative, participatory and decentralised basis as well as foundations that were less cleavage-based than the evolving system of one-party-dominance in South Africa. The alleged representativeness of the ANC is, more often than not, a reflection of strategic ‘top-down’ decisions such as party list nominations ‘from above’, rather than indicating representation emerging from community-based factional bargaining. Furthermore, party agency in South Africa involves the highlighting of a somewhat artificial cleavage rather than the ‘muting’ or containment of cleavages in order to corroborate the dominant party’s catch-all rationale as was the case in post-independent India. Consequently, and surprisingly, the Congress system could rely on more profound consociational underpinnings than the ANC’s unfolding dominant party rule, the initial institutional power-sharing arrangements of the South African context notwithstanding.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the ‘grand coalition’ thesis referred to by Lijphart implicitly hints at the crucial relevance of political and agentive factors, for strategic or other reasons, in the management of representative dominant party rule. Lijphart’s reasoning about post-independent India’s party system dynamics and characteristics, which is largely based on the theoretical considerations of Kothari, thus conforms to Kothari’s ‘political’ approach to the analysis of the Congress system and Indian (party) politics and their role in the country’s move towards national integration: “(…) a country as vast and pluralistic as India can be effectively united only through a participant and accommodative model of politics (...). A concomitant of such a model is the autonomous and creative role of politics, and its penetration all the way down to the social infrastructure (...). At any rate it is in terms of the performance of such a “political model” of development that, instead of any reductionist view of politics as found in both the “social origins” [the reference is made to Moore (1966), C.S.] and the “prerequisites” [the

This is one of the main differences to have emerged in the course of the preceding examination of the two regional party systems. This study has emphasised similarities in the historical outcome and in the dimensions of party agency and party system impact of the two regional and temporal contexts. These include a competitive party system structured around the electoral, governmental and ideological dominance of one party that is seen as the primary embodiment or repository of the respective nascent polity's legitimacy and rationale, the similarity in the party agentive processes of achieving one-party-dominance, in the mechanisms of control and competition inherent in the working of the two respective party systems and in the mode and nature of impact of the two party systems considered to be relevant for the processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development to gain momentum. There are of course marked differences in the very nature of the system of one-party-dominance as it prevailed in India after independence and as it has emerged in post-apartheid South Africa, which are not least due to the differences in intervening contextual variables that have a crucial impact on the strategy of the dominant party and the working of the system. This does not mean to deny the crucial importance and autonomy of party agency in the shaping of the two respective party systems and the similarity in the general patterns of party agency as elaborated in the preceding chapters. As stated in chapter 1, party agency and strategy represent the crucial elements that make institutions, cleavage structure and individuals interact. Hence, the concrete way and manner whereby party agency and strategy unveils itself is naturally dependent upon the given political opportunity structure.

Some of these differences in processes and features of party agency and in the mechanisms of control and competition are not surprising given the variance in the institutional and structural context demanding flexibility with regard to the party elites' reaction and adaptation to different contextual parameters. However, the underlying rationale of apparently different features and processes of party agency often reveals a basic similarity anyway. Others are more critical and point at a difference in the political opportunity structure and elite perception thereof. These may not be reconcilable with the maintenance of one-party-dominance (by democratic means) and thus may be responsible for the different trajectory that post-apartheid South Africa's party system may take compared to India's Congress and post-Congress party system, as a result potentially impacting democratic consolidation, development and national integration in a different way from that of post-independent India's first party system.

reference is made to Lipset (1960), C.S.] models, that we have approached the subject (...)” (Kothari 1994: 338-339).

The aim of this chapter is to look at the differences and similarities of party agency and strategy in the two regional contexts' party systems. Discussing some of the factors and contextual parameters responsible for the differences encountered⁷⁰⁰, the chapter will delve into the question of whether the Indian experience of one-party-dominance and the developments of post-one-party-dominance have some 'lessons' to offer⁷⁰¹ for the South African context in terms of a potentially similar development of the country's party system. Of course, the variance in the political opportunity structure and party agency in the two contexts could also imply that South Africa's evolving system of one-party-dominance will follow a different path of development, adopting a distinct mode of action with its own particular set of implications.

This is done by taking a synoptic view and comparing the findings of the preceding chapters. These cover the dimensions of party agency responsible for the achievement of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts, the mechanisms of control and competition characterising the maintenance of the two systems of one-party-dominance and the spheres of impact that the two party systems have created in terms of their effects and functions regarding the crucial processes of democratic consolidation, national integration and development. At the end, a brief statement as to what extent the results of the comparison contribute to the theoretical advancement of party system research and theory, completes the study. The findings of the preceding chapters are summarised in three tables dealing in turn

⁷⁰⁰ Of course, since the main focus of this study is to deal with aspects of party agency and their relevance for the emergence and working of the two party systems as well as with the impact of (actor-related) party system characteristics on specific processes within the political systems of the two regional and temporal contexts, no more than a brief examination of intervening variables and contextual parameters can and will be accomplished within this study.

⁷⁰¹ The term 'lessons' does not denote a normative connotation in the sense that the Indian Congress system is taken as a 'model' of benign party and political system development that is replicable in any other changing society's context without qualifications. The party system is a political phenomenon that largely defies purposive engineering. Of course, as this study posits, party agency has to be understood as a strategic device used to affect and control party system emergence and development but party agency, according to this study, is essentially based on party elites' self-interest (of gaining or staying in power) and has to take into account the structural and institutional parameters of a given context (party elites do not operate in a vacuum and cannot shape the structure of the party system and patterns of party competition at their discretion). The latter is especially relevant with regard to the diachronic nature of the two regional contexts dealt with in this study. However, this is not to deny that underlying processes and modes of operation of the party system are indicative of (successful) similar strategies to be employed by party elites in other contexts. In that respect, the term is used in a similar way as the one outlined in the following quote by Field (1980: 346), that refers to the impact of post-independent Indian electoral politics on democratic consolidation but subscribes to a different conception of elite motivation than the one used in this study: "To what extent is the Indian approach to political development relevant to other low income countries? Is the "Indian model" merely descriptive (a different pattern), or is it in some sense prescriptive as well (an approach replicable elsewhere)? No doubt, the three pillars of India's strategy – the pluralistic, competitive framework; institutional penetration; and popular politicization – merit serious considerations by democratically inclined leaders in other developing countries. The formula is attractive, and there is no reason to believe that the operational hypotheses underlying it are inextricably bound to Indian conditions. To generalize outward from the Indian case, however, entails modest risk; for if other countries are to emulate India's example, in most instances they must develop comparable organizational strength and procedural consensus in the very course of democratization (...)."

with the respective features and processes outlined in the analytical framework (see introduction). For the sake of clarity and understanding each table delineating the processes and features, rationale, characteristics and manifestations involved in the dimensions of party agency and spheres of party system impact in the two regional contexts, is preceded by a table depicting each of these elements in general or ideal-type terms.

The differences that distinguish the South African context from the Indian pattern in ways considered to be crucial for a judgment of the two party systems' nature and quality and for an assessment of the lessons and prospects to be drawn from the diachronic comparison, are marked in bold. There are of course double entries in the various categories for sometimes the boundaries are fluid, and different (or the same) aspects of party agency or different (or the same) party system characteristics can and do have an effect on the same (or different) features of the party system, the state or society. Of all the aspects of party agency and of all the party system characteristics that are included in the tables below, only those differences in the South African context considered to be of relevance to the drawing of a conclusion on the basis of the diachronic comparison are taken up in the following discussion.

In terms of the INC and ANC 'achieving' dominance, largely similar strategies prevailed. First, in both cases the respective dominant party launched a 'historical project' of social transformation and national integration, underpinned by an explicit democratic commitment of the dominant party and geared towards the projection of an image of the party as the sole guarantor of an orderly and stable process of democratic transition, consolidation and social transformation. The rationale behind this 'historical project' was to secure for the dominant party a close identification with the emancipatory goal of decolonisation/transition to democracy and to ensure a deep emotional 'bonding' between the dominant party and the mass of the electorate ('to become identified with the epoch').

However, whereas the INC stuck to its all-embracing developmental ideology, in its rhetoric at least⁷⁰², the ANC-initiated shift of the country's macro-economic policy framework from

⁷⁰² At this stage, it does not matter that much whether the 'transformative rhetoric' was or is matched by actual policies (of course, the formulation and implementation of at least some policies that make the bulk of the electorate realise that the dominant party takes its 'historic mission' seriously is necessary) for the main rationale behind the initiation of a historical project is a display of willingness of the dominant party to complement political freedom with efforts to reach economic and social freedom and to promote a discourse that identifies the dominant party as the 'natural' party of government. In this vein, the Indian experience of the dominant party's invention of a historical project' largely resembles Corbridge and Hariss' (2000) depiction of 'Nehru's imagination' of four mythologies (following Barthes) that provided a template for 'modern India':

"Nehru and the modernizing wing of the Congress Party were able to imagine, and to a lesser extent invent, a new India in the period between 1946 and 1956, and this 'imagining' was informed, centrally, by (...) four mythologies of rule (...): democracy, federalism [an item that could be subsumed under the thread of 'nationalism' mentioned in 3.1., C.S.], socialism and secularism. We would further contend that these mythologies were given a measure of institutional form which lifted them, to some degree at least,

the RDP to GEAR, largely against the interests of its main alliance partner COSATU, and the increasingly 'Africanist' stance of its transformative agenda⁷⁰³ indicate that its 'project' is growing more and more blurred (Simkins 1999: 59).⁷⁰⁴ Redistribution remains high on the agenda again, rhetorically at least⁷⁰⁵, but in terms of (economic) policies priority is frankly and publicly given to a neoliberal, market-based "(...) reincarnation of the old "trickle-down" story" (Natrass and Seekings 2000: 47): significant redistribution and employment is relegated to second- or, more realistically, third-round effects (ibid.).⁷⁰⁶ In terms of the direction of redistribution, actual preference is increasingly being given to 'A Better Life for all Africans' or even predominantly to the emerging African middle-class.⁷⁰⁷

There are two crucial intervening variables or contextual parameters, which have to be considered as relevant in this regard and which result from the different political opportunity structure prevailing in contemporary South Africa. The specific nature, repercussions and mode of a 'pact-driven' transition that limited the options available to the dominant party to realise its historical project accordingly and raised the number of relevant stakeholders in (economic/developmental) decision-making is one key variable. The other refers to the

above the pious platitudes that surrounded their invention and propagation. Underpinning Nehru's design for a new India were the All-India Services (...), the Planning Commission, the Five Year Plans (particularly from 1956, with the Nehru-Mahalanobis model), regular elections, a Supreme Court, respect for a free press, an implicit agreement by major political parties to keep religion out of public politics, reserved jobs and constituencies for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, an apparent commitment to agrarian reform, and so on (...). We would also contend that the mythologies of governance associated with Nehru's India have struck deeper roots than some critics allow, and that they continue to inform public understandings of the rhetorics and responsibilities of government (...). Nevertheless, we also recognize, with Ambedkar, that the development project which Nehru (and the Constituent Assembly) proclaimed on behalf of India could never hope to be realized in the absence of political and economic reforms at the local and regional levels. And these reforms were never likely to be secured (...)" (ibid. 31).

⁷⁰³ For additional evidence see, for example, the National Liberation Movement's (NLM) discussion paper for the 1998 alliance summit (ANC 1998), which clearly reflects the party's increasingly Africanist bias.

⁷⁰⁴ At the same time, the shift has undercut much of the potential for opposition to the ANC upon ideological grounds.

⁷⁰⁵ Since the ANC is much more dependent on its commitment to correct past inequalities than was the INC (for rather obvious historical reasons), shedding its redistributive concerns would be largely self-destructive in electoral terms.

⁷⁰⁶ Note for example, a statement by a(n) (ANC) representative of the Development Bank of South Africa (Midrand), Wiseman Nkuhlu (1999: 15): "The impact of globalisation and resultant cost cutting by major corporations has accelerated job losses even further in recent years. The pressure to improve cost efficiency and to put more reliance on markets is also compelling to governments and parastatals to streamline operations. The result in the short term is increased retrenchments. The promise is high levels of growth and increased employment in the medium- to long-term." Evidently, India's post-independent developmental history of actual policy implementation did partially reflect a trickle-down rationale as well but its developmental efforts were based on a state interventionist ideology geared towards social transformation. The fact that more radical economic restructuring with a view to redistribution did not take place or, for that matter, took place only fractionally, was largely due to a lag in implementation and not due to (public) national development priorities.

⁷⁰⁷ At the same time, one could argue that the ANC's abandoning of its 'hardcore' socialist inclinations reflected the party leadership's understanding that it had to make a move from its original ideological creed to a more equally balanced catch-all commitment in order to entrench its electoral dominance.

particular economic situation characterised by dependence on the domestic business sector and the pressures of a globalised international political economy. However, this does not necessarily mean that the ANC is unaware of the need to promote a catch-all project of social transformation⁷⁰⁸ but simply that the party must be more pragmatic in view of its precarious intermediate position between international economic orthodoxy, the still largely white-controlled business sector and its labour constituency. It simply means that, in this respect, the ANC has much less room to manoeuvre than the INC had after independence and that it has to craft its historical project more deliberately. If it fails, the emergence of an ethnically partisan state and a less inclusive system of one-party-dominance, paying minimal attention to minority interests is very likely to occur.

Table 29: Party agency and the achievement of one-party-dominance in general

Dimensions of party agency	Processes/features involved	Rationale	Result
Political actors as ‘inventors’ of a historical project/national consensus (society oriented party agency)	Rhetoric of social transformation, initiation of ideologically sustained policies of social transformation and national integration	Identification of the dominant party with the epoch	Achievement of one-party-dominance
	(Rhetorical) projection of a national democratic consensus on the dominant party and ‘image-building’ with regard to its indispensable role as guarantor of an orderly and stable democratic transition.		
Political actors as determining agents of institutional arrangements (state-oriented party agency)	Constitutional engineering	To ensure that the institutional arrangement of the polity works in favour of the dominant party	
	Constitutional amendment; interpretation of institutional rules/constitutional provisions		
Political actors as interventionists and accommodationists (party system’s inner space)	Organisational ‘mainstreaming’	Becoming ‘electable’ and attracting support from a broad range of social strata	
	Engineering of a(n) initial (organisational) balance between the dominant party’s more open, participatory and its more centralised, characteristics.		

⁷⁰⁸ The 1994 and 1999 election manifestos’ catchy slogans of ‘A Better Life for All’ (ANC 1994a) and ‘Together Fighting for Change’ (ANC 1999b) are ample proof of the outwardly promotion of such a catch-all project of social transformation; see also the end of 4.3.

Secondly, both parties tried/try to ensure that the institutional arrangement did/does work in their favour whether by means of constitutional engineering in the transition period or by means of constitutional amendment and the (re)interpretation of institutional rules and constitutional provisions once the institutional boundaries of the polity have been set. Whereas the former is largely done against the backdrop of the dominant party's organisational advantage and predominant status of legitimacy, the latter springs from the dominant party's intention of playing off its electoral dominance and status of incumbency against opposition parties. The role of political actors or party elites as determining agents of the institutional arrangement in the two regional contexts was/is following similar strategic considerations albeit on the grounds of a different institutional rationale. Thus, the INC, acting as 'sole negotiator' in the Constituent Assembly and commanding over government authority at the centre and in all the States, could, quite convincingly, opt for a path of institutional continuity based on the Westminster style parliamentary fabric inherited from the British, whose division of powers/competences (executive bias) and electoral rules suited the party disproportionately.⁷⁰⁹ The INC could also negotiate and agree upon the interpretation and shape of constitutional provisions within the fold of its own organisation (either between the diverse organisational segments of the party organisation or between government and party organisation). The ANC, again, was constrained by the fact that (at least) two (decisive) partners were involved in negotiating the transition to democracy and constitution-making⁷¹⁰ and that there was a critical need to display a conciliatory stance toward constitutional engineering for the sake of integration and compromise. Therefore, it gave in to a(n) (initial) power-sharing arrangement apparently contradicting its partisan interests. The ANC was however, also cognisant of the following facts: that the actual party power configuration (especially the anticipation of ANC electoral dominance and the consequences thereof) would largely compensate for the power-sharing provisions; that the institutional fibre agreed upon only partially represented a departure from the Westminster parliamentary tradition (as most evident from the 'weak' federalism characterising the country's vertical separation of powers); and that, as incumbent party, it would profit from the party bias inherent in the specific PR system chosen. Additionally, the specific mode of transition and the strong presence of opposition parties in at least two provinces after 1994 are also responsible for the

⁷⁰⁹ Where (constitutional) concessions had been made to country-specific aspects such as in the case of the polity's federal set-up, safety valves (unitary shape of federalism, president's rule) were made available in case the electoral fortune turned against the dominant party.

⁷¹⁰ There were of course other parties (DP, and, at a later stage, the IFP and FF as well) involved in the negotiations and constitution-making but the ANC and NP have to be considered as the two principal negotiation partners, whose ideas and stipulations were decisive.

fact that the ANC has (had) to rely more on co-operation with opposition parties in order to determine the country's institutional arrangement, e.g. with regard to the floor crossing legislation. Despite the fact that the concrete manifestation of the two countries' constitutional and institutional arrangements is clearly different, the rationale underlying institutional manipulation and interpretation is largely the same. There is only one major difference with regard to this second dimension of party agency involved in the achievement of one-party-dominance that may indicate a different unfolding of party agency in South Africa and imply a less benign role for party agency in terms of the dominant party's adherence to (normative) constitutionalist principles. This is the overtly partisan quality of the ANC's attempt to overcome the constitutionally enshrined anti-defection regulations by means of constitutional amendment.⁷¹¹

Thirdly, in both cases, (dominant) party elites followed a similar pattern of intervention and accommodation with regard to the 'management' of the dominant party's intra-party organisational matters and the laying of organisational foundations for a lasting domination of the party system.⁷¹² The rationale behind this 'organisational renewal', 'organisational mainstreaming' and management is to engineer the dominant party's shift from movement to party thus rendering it 'electable' according to conventional parliamentary and democratic standards. However, not all of its movement characteristics are shed, some of which (e.g. the image of the party as the bearer of the historical struggle for political and social emancipation) are crucial for the party to retain its catch-all appeal; to 'side-line' the opposition in terms of organisational penetration of the electorate and organisational preponderance; and to co-ordinate (dominant) party-government relations in order to guarantee the success of the party's double role as effective governing institution and election machine. Overall, both the INC and the ANC made comparable efforts and pursued similar strategies to guarantee a smooth transition from movement to party and to achieve dominance once political power had been, or had nearly been attained. For example, getting rid of those elements of the 'movement' that were no longer reconcilable with the image and platform of a democratically credible parliamentary party either as a result of ideology (as was the case with the Hindu nationalists or Congress socialists in India) or simply in terms of democratic conventions (as was the case with the ANC's military wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe*).

⁷¹¹ At the same time however, one should not forget that the South African constitution is an outcome of a transitional compromise.

⁷¹² At this stage of party system formation, organisational management is largely an intra-party or intra-alliance affair of the dominant party.

Table 30: Synoptic view of party agency involved in the achievement of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts

Dimensions of party agency	Processes/features involved	Rationale	Result
Political actors as ‘inventors’ of a historical project/national consensus (society oriented party agency)	<p><u>India</u>: left-of-centre consensus on basic national policies (planned development, mixed economy, secularism, democratic socialism), transformative policies</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: RDP (‘A Better Life For All’), transformative policies, shift to GEAR, increasingly ‘Africanist’ stance of its transformative agenda</p> <p><u>India</u>: strong nationalist creed, emphasis on national integrity, democratic commitment tied to governmental authority</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: initial agreement on power-sharing and emphasis on reconciliation and national integration (‘rainbow nation’); initially participatory approach to decision-making (‘parliament of the people’)</p>	<p><u>India/South Africa</u>: close identification of the dominant party with the emancipatory goal of decolonisation/transition to democracy; emotional ‘bonding’ between dominant party and the mass of the electorate</p>	Achievement of one-party-dominance
Political actors as determining agents of institutional arrangements (state-oriented party agency)	<p><u>India</u>: largely predominated by the INC, no power-sharing arrangements, institutional continuity of the Westminster based parliamentary system suited INC; provision of ‘safety valves’ (unitary shape of federal arrangement, president’s rule)</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: agreement on (interim) power-sharing arrangement due to the specific mode of transition, party bias inherent to PR system chosen in favour of ANC, no ‘real’ devolution of power</p> <p><u>India</u>: basically interpretation of institutional rules (president’s rule; centre-States relations, executive dominance), less amendment</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: using electoral dominance to overcome power-sharing requirements, amendments for partisan reasons (e.g. floor crossing legislation)</p>	<p><u>India/South Africa</u>: provision of institutional guarantees that the dominant party is in a position to play its organisational advantage, electoral dominance and status of incumbency off against opposition</p>	
Political actors as interventionists and accommodationists (party system’s inner space)	<p><u>India</u>: ‘organisational mainstreaming’ immediately after independence, development of an effective pyramidal organisation</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: distancing from military wing and less disciplined grassroots components, ‘organisational mainstreaming’ by alliance-building</p> <p><u>India</u>: effective co-ordination of party-government relations and competences; provision of capacious appeal and autonomous party life</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: symbiosis and synergy through tripartite alliance, ambivalent stance towards the party’s activist base, organisation increasingly relegated to subsidiary role</p>	<p><u>India/South Africa</u>: shift from movement to party, retention of movement characteristics and catch-all character, organisational penetration of the electorate, co-ordination of party-government relations</p>	

A different way and manner of organisational mainstreaming, which nonetheless was intended to yield the same effect of achieving a broad-based electoral appeal among a wide range of social strata, prevailed in the area of generating and preserving mass appeal. The ANC relied more on organisational alliance-building to expand and cement its already vast support base, whereas the INC depended more on the accommodation and incorporation of India's diverse strands of society and their interests and representatives.

A clear difference separates the two dominant parties in terms of their crucial need to find and co-ordinate a balance between their more open and participatory features and the more centralised characteristics that are necessary for the party to gain coherence.⁷¹³ The ANC puts much more emphasis on party discipline and centralisation and displays a far more ambivalent and increasingly negligent attitude towards its activist base.⁷¹⁴

However, the ANC's manner of dealing with its activist base and the emphasis given to centralisation and discipline are not wholly beyond rationality. It is clear that the ANC has never reached and probably will never reach the societal penetration that was so characteristic of INC dominance. Yet, the political opportunity structure is different. With media access and modern technology, a dominant party today must not solely rely on its overarching presence in every corner of the country and its close ties to secondary organisations and its activist base. It therefore may be convinced that it can afford to neglect local organisation (only to a certain extent of course) and instead focus on media campaigning and the new methods of gathering information (Perkins 1996).⁷¹⁵

To give an example, to sense the mood and feeling of expectations in the electorate and to anticipate electoral outcomes, there was a need for the INC to rely on vertical faction chains in order to gain valuable information 'from below'. Today the ANC can and did/does rely on opinion polling as the means through which to process information about public sentiment.

⁷¹³ Amongst the more important differences between the post-independent INC and the post-apartheid ANC as (emerging) dominant parties one could add the growing relegation of the party organisation to a subsidiary role in the South African context. However, co-ordinating party-government relations in the early stages of a young polity is always an intricate undertaking and there have been similar phases of changing and unsteady party-government relations (of unity, convergence and divergence) in post-independent India as well (Kochanek 1968). It all depends on whether the trend of unconditional domination of the ANC's government wing over its organisational wing will continue and grow increasingly irreversible.

⁷¹⁴ This does not only and not necessarily refer to the ANC's winding up of its UDF component (a fair amount of distancing from the former liberation movement's all-embracing grassroots underpinnings is even necessary once the dominant party has reached the commanding heights of government; a similar process set in with regard to the INC's 'organisational mainstreaming' after independence). The above statement is also describing a trend that has emerged after 1994. The ANC initially took its participatory commitment rather seriously (see 3.1.).

⁷¹⁵ Moreover, the more national character of party political competition in South Africa (see 4.2.) adds to the perception that there is a lesser need to care about the lower levels of party organisation and working. This does not mean that the ANC did not fall back on traditional methods of political mobilisation and party campaigning (especially before 1994) for example, door-to-door canvassing, but that the party increasingly 'invests' less in the 'organisational renewal' and (re)building of its branch-structure and focuses more and more on top-down decision-making, displaying in the process oligarchic tendencies.

Nevertheless, there is a risk when the gap between cadre and the rank and file (and, consequently, the party's mass base) begins to widen. The party's leadership overlooks the fact that a healthy (working) relationship between the national, regional and local levels and functioning lines of communication between 'top' and 'bottom' are crucial parameters and determinants of the dominant party's status of legitimacy, as well as of the dominant party's capacity to react with flexibility and to be adaptive to processes of social change, its societal responsiveness and the maintenance of its 'umbrella' or 'omnibus' nature and image.

Thus, in all three dimensions of party agency that are relevant for the achievement of one-party-dominance, similar strategies have prevailed in the two regional and temporal contexts albeit unfolding sometimes differently (though following the same rationale) as a result of differences in the political opportunity structure. However, as the brief discussion about some of the differences in party agency, those considered to be relevant for further party system development, has shown, the seeds were also sown for the development of a potentially different trajectory for the South African system of one-party-dominance.

With regard to the mechanisms of control employed by the dominant party and the patterns of party competition in the two systems of one-party-dominance, there are even more marked and important differences. Commonalities nevertheless are evident, particularly in the ways, that party agency has helped to maintain and entrench the INC's and ANC's dominance and hence, to structure party system development. The first area in this regard is the specific interaction with opposition that occurred in both systems of one-party-dominance. Both the INC and the ANC employ(ed) a 'strategic mix' of deligitimation and co-optation of, as well as, co-operation with, opposition parties. There are however, different emphases, or different weightings given to the way and manner in which the two dominant parties did, or continue to make use of the strategic devices available to a dominant party in order to substantiate its position of (electoral) dominance and to prevent the opposition from gaining strength.⁷¹⁶ Thus, whereas the INC did rely heavily on an open consensus system and more accommodative stance towards opposition⁷¹⁷, basically by means of interaction via factions, the ANC falls back on deligitimation and (outright) co-optation more often.⁷¹⁸ This is of

⁷¹⁶ 'Interaction with opposition' is also an aspect or area of party agency where the institutional context, especially the electoral system but also the existing extent of federalism, plays a decisive role insofar as the winner-takes-all logic of a plurality system heightens the incentive for an accommodative strategy of interaction with opposition (whereas a PR system rather suggests a strategy based on alliance-building). The existence of substantial and rather autonomous subnational governmental areas, which may provide opposition parties with sources of power or influence, is potentially more conducive to consensual patterns of dominant party-opposition interaction than a more unitary or centralised system of governance.

⁷¹⁷ This includes of course co-optation of opposition as well.

⁷¹⁸ This is not to deny that deligitimation of opposition did not form part of the INC's strategic interaction with opposition parties, but that this device was not of the same importance as the other devices (and did not play the

course due to the fact that, for historical reasons, “(...) the ANC’s major opponents suffer from severe real or potential legitimacy problems” (Friedman 1999c: 109). Their support base is largely demographically confined (but also less dependent on state patronage), and at the time of transition the ANC, whose organisational and mobilisational pre-eminence as such is based on an alliance (with potential contenders), was confronted with opposition parties which had not been part of the ‘common struggle’ of the liberation movement and which were able to rely on, or create, a nation-wide organisational structure already at the founding elections.

As a result of these factors, the South African party system is characterised by a less volatile configuration of opposition parties.⁷¹⁹ A more ‘consensual’ model (of interaction with opposition) such as the ‘open’ Congress system was, was and is simply not on offer for the dominant party. However, the ANC has so far proved to be very apt at, and successful in, dividing the opposition by using the diverse strategic devices of interaction with opposition more flexibly and with greater deliberation. This holds true for incidences of strategic co-operation with, and/or outright co-optation of, opposition parties as well. These are a result of the dominant party having less latitude to ‘open its flanks’ to interaction between its factions and opposition, thus giving the latter leverage over decision-making. At the same time, the ANC is dependent on minority interest representation given the fact that there are constituencies beyond the the dominant party’s reach and that there is a more urgent need to retain the minorities’ loyalty to the new order as well as preserving the dominant party’s alliance character.⁷²⁰

Nevertheless, in one respect the ANC’s less accommodative or, (sometimes) less tolerant stance towards opposition may prove to be costly. The INC’s rationale to ‘leave its flanks open’ was to a great extent based on its (or any dominant party’s) need to be sensitive to social change and changes in the opposition camp as well as on its implicit understanding that such a model of party competition would keep the opposition from aligning while, at the same

same role as it does in current South Africa). Thus, for example, Nehru himself bowed down to partisan pragmatism or opportunism when denouncing the opposition parties as “counterrevolutionary” before parliament in the mid-1950’s (Lok Sabha Secretariat 1955 (17.9.): 1436). The trends, commonalities and differences outlined above refer to general and broad patterns and aspects of party agency anyway.

⁷¹⁹ In the case of India the split of the CPI, the history of mergers and schisms within the socialist spectrum, the short-term appearance of the *Swatantra* party, are all ample evidence of the volatile configuration of opposition parties. This volatility was an outcome of the fact that almost all opposition parties had once belonged to the national movement and/or that they had difficulties to overcome their ambivalent stance towards the INC - not least as a result of the open Congress system and (a concomitant opportunity for) movements in and out of the dominant party.

⁷²⁰ The alliance character of the ANC is also responsible for the party’s greater emphasis on delegitimation. The latter is often more due to the ANC’s need to preserve unity within the dominant party and the alliance than due to the incentive to outdistance an electoral contender.

time, retaining the perception of the opposition having a stake in decision-making. If the ANC goes too far with regards to the delegitimation of opposition and closes its ranks too rigidly, or, if it loses its flexibility in its strategic interaction with the opposition, it risks losing the opposition's crucial function as a 'thermostat'. The opposition would, and could, no longer function as a stimulus to the dominant party's partisan manoeuvring and societal responsiveness, an indispensable form of flexibility.⁷²¹

Table 31: Party agency and the maintenance of one-party-dominance in general

Mechanisms of control and competition	Processes/features involved	Rationale and characteristics	Result
Interaction with opposition	Delegitimation, co-optation, co-operation	Fragmentation of opposition, ensure opposition's loyalty to the existing order, opposition as stimulus for the dominant party's partisan manoeuvring and societal responsiveness	Maintenance of one-party-dominance
Selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market	Purchasing support by positive discrimination, granting resources to certain societal groups; aggregating a large range of interests but interacting only with few of these interests; seeking support pragmatically: ideological eclecticism, recruitment of local leaders	Shaping and accommodating voters' preferences, preservation of catch-all image, manipulation of cleavages	
Factionalism and party coherence	Furthering internal pluralism and maintenance of party cohesion by imposing party discipline whenever necessary	maintaining inclusiveness, mediation of intra-party factional conflicts, lessening distance between governing cadres and mass base	
State-party collusion and patronage	Blurring the line between the dominant party and the state, bestowal of patronage on the dominant party's clientele	Facilitating patronage politics, defining clientelist space and ideological centre of society	

⁷²¹ Such a development would probably also lead to a lessening of the opposition's loyalty to the existing order by creating 'permanent losers'.

The second area of party agency with respect to the maintenance of one-party-dominance is the one involving the dominant party's efforts at selective mobilisation and its entrepreneurship on the electoral market. Here, the differences between the two regional contexts are more pronounced, with the rather dissimilar political opportunity structure clearly a decisive factor.

The INC pursued a two-track strategy attempting selective mobilisation 'from above' (e.g. by means of positive discrimination, co-optation of interest groups, anticipatory policies), thus trying to manipulate the country's cleavage structure (depoliticising the more glaring sources of social conflict) and to shape voters' preferences accordingly, while, at the same time, pragmatically changing issue and ideological positions whenever necessary⁷²² and clearing the road for local and regional entrepreneurs to accommodate the country's diverse societal interests and social categories. This was a result of the party's crucial understanding that, given the country's social complexities and configurations, at the local and regional level it had to rely "(...) on the authority which was exercised locally by 'big men' and oiled by patronage – the exchange of offices, jobs and access to public resources for the mobilization of electoral support" (Corbridge and Harriss 2000: 50). At the same time the strategy was also a response to the dominant party's attempt to cope with (and benefit from) the country's multidimensional and cross-cutting cleavage structure at a time when its prime partisan task was to penetrate the electorate, i.e. the countryside, organisationally.⁷²³

The ANC on the other hand, less able to use state patronage and vote banks (because of the unavailability of strong pre-existing clientelist networks and the unfeasibility of outright protectionist and dirigiste policies) and confronted with politically sophisticated and more clearly defined core constituencies (its African labour base and the emerging African middle-class)⁷²⁴ as well as a vibrant civil society, is also less dependent on the progressive expansion of its support base and is more in need of protecting its (African) support base from fragmenting. Therefore, it was and remains rational for the ANC to pursue a strategy that highlights the racial cleavage ('two-nations thesis'), a strategy that gives an incentive for

⁷²² Always being cautious not to abandon the middle-ground of the ideological spectrum in order to allow the entrance of ever new social groups.

⁷²³ As Khilnani (1997:34) has noted about the 'accommodative' character of INC party politics after independence in his thorough account of the 'Idea of India': "Congress had functioned as a centrist party, spokesman for no single category or interest, and its coalitional character enabled individuals and groups throughout India to make a nest in it. Its pragmatic political determination in the two decades after independence had managed to confine the scope of the alternative definitions of Indianness which Hindu nationalists proposed. The later intensification of democratic competition forced it to appeal to more exclusive identities: this broke the old pattern of political representation and created opportunities for rival parties both in the regions and at the Centre."

⁷²⁴ Note that 'core constituency' is not the same as 'mass base'. The bulk of the votes for the ANC come from the rural poor.

(ethnically defined and demographically confined) opposition parties to do likewise, thus helping to perpetuate the dichotomy inherent in the racial cleavage. Again, the rationale and goal of this strategy was similar to that of the INC in post-independent India. Just as the ANC attempts to increase racial polarisation for the sake of suppressing the emergence of intra-African, ethnic politicisation, the INC tried to formulate (more) catch-all appeals and attempted to ‘mute’ cleavages in order to prevent sectarian (ethnic, religious, linguistic, class-based) political mobilisation and manifestations from gaining momentum (see also the Khilnani quote in fn. 723 above). At the same time however, the concrete ‘shape’ of the dominant party in South Africa, i.e. its alliance character and dependence on a powerful, organised working class, in combination with the political opportunity structure (a racially defined support base, a vibrant civil society and tradition of mass protest, a state with little autonomy from capital and the need for a general thrust of government economic policies geared to weaken the state’s direct involvement in the economy) pushed the ANC to rely on a more ‘selective’ strategy of mobilisation than did the INC⁷²⁵, which pursued (and could afford to pursue) a more catch-all and accommodative strategy. Hence, the greater emphasis on corporatist (elite) bargaining (resulting in the aforementioned bewildering mix of clashing commitments such as free market acceptance and tight regulation of the labour market, Giliomee and Simkins 1999b: 345) and on affirmative action and ‘black empowerment’. In general the ANC pursued mobilisational efforts aimed at selective African class interests - labour, the emerging middle class, business elites and public servants. As a result, the ANC, cognisant of the fact, or imbued with a perception that a full-fledged catch-all strategy is no longer feasible or necessary, is more inclined towards shaping voters’ preferences rather than to their accommodation. As my interview partner R.W. Johnson from the liberal Helen Suzman Foundation in Johannesburg somewhat cynically remarked, ‘the ANC tries to imitate to some extent the ‘social engineering’ that was so characteristic of the apartheid regime’ (see references). This is also reflected in the weak emphasis the ANC places on localised entrepreneurship on the electoral market, the lack of significant mobilisation at lower (local, regional) levels⁷²⁶ and the general neglect (and even disdain for and suppression) of the lower echelons of the party organisation. It was exactly the attention given to (and accommodation of) the lower levels of the party and the polity (granting them relative autonomy and resources in exchange for electoral support), which constituted the base of the INC’s dominance.

⁷²⁵ ‘Selective’ in the sense that mobilisational efforts and their concomitant distribution of resources and preferential treatment are less evenly spread and that the spokesmen of societal interests are chosen more deliberately (and selectively).

⁷²⁶ However, as the discussion in section 4.2. has shown, the recruitment and co-optation of local leaders is also part of the ANC’s entrepreneurial strategy and tactics.

Table 32: Synoptic view of party agency involved in the maintenance of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts

Mechanisms of control and competition	Processes/features involved	Rationale and characteristics	Result
Interaction with opposition	<p><u>India</u>: intricate relationship between INC as ‘party of consensus’ and opposition ‘parties of pressure’, ‘open’ Congress system (intra-party factions interact with opposition parties), co-optation and absorption of opposition, less deligitimation</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: intricate mix of deligitimation due to historical antagonism, outright co-optation (IFP), co-optation by alliance-building, co-operation for partisan reasons (NNP), more flexible definition of strategic interaction with opposition</p>	<p><u>India</u>: ‘thermostat’ function, preservation of opposition fragmentation, provision of internalised opposition, opposition parties as ‘feeder’ organisations to the dominant party, opposition parties have a stake in decision-making</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: preservation of opposition fragmentation, less tolerant towards opposition, less leverage for opposition parties on decision-making, creation of ‘imaginary’ enemies</p>	Maintenance of one-party-dominance
Selective mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the electoral market	<p><u>India</u>: reservations for SC’s and ST’s, engineering of patronage networks and clientelist vote-banks, co-optation of interest groups (INTUC), depoliticisation or ‘muting’ of cleavages, pragmatically changing issue and ideological positions, state interventionism</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: affirmative action and ‘black empowerment’, co-optation of interest groups (alliance and affiliates), highlighting a largely artificial racial cleavage, corporatist arrangements, less ideological flexibility, market-friendly policies, using list system to recruit local/regional leaders, less localised entrepreneurship</p>	<p><u>India</u>: more accommodation than shaping of preferences, drawing advantage from multidimensional and cross-cutting cleavage structure, occupying the middle-ground of the ideological spectrum, incorporation of newly enfranchised groups</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: preventing African support base from fragmenting, shaping preferences of organised labour and emerging African middle-class, less accommodative and catch-all, less reliance on mobilisation at lower levels</p>	
Factionalism and party coherence	<p><u>India</u>: factionalism as prime ordering mechanism, factions mainly based on personal ambitions, organisation of vertical faction chains, prevalence of stratarthy, national level autonomous of factional infighting, top-down intervention whenever necessary</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: ‘institutionalised’ factionalism (tripartite alliance), more ideological factions, oligarchic tendencies, cadre policy, emphasis on party discipline, democratic centralism</p>	<p><u>India</u>: channelling of intra-party conflict through dispersed power sites and factional balance, mobilisation of support, elite-turnover, channels of communication between party and society</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: fear of breaking-up of the alliance, less benevolent attitude towards factionalism, more top-down leadership style, growing awareness of a need to incorporate mass base more thoroughly</p>	
State-party collusion and patronage	<p><u>India</u>: ‘state-dominated pluralism’, omnipresence of the state facilitated patronage, making use of traditional clientelist institutions and attitudinal patterns</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: rhetorical equation of ANC and rationale of the state, ‘deployment’ of ANC loyalists into positions of power, less patronage due to limited reach of the state and unavailability of comparable traditional institutions and attitudes</p>	<p><u>India</u>: executive office as prime determinant of patronage distribution, synergy of party and society, INC = <i>sarkar</i></p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: moral legitimisation of ANC dominance, use of media for state-party collusion instead of traditional social institutions, less reliance on clientelism, more emphasis on defining ideological centre of society</p>	

The third aspect of party agency in the maintenance of one-party-dominance is the dominant party's management of the balance between its indispensable factionalism or internal pluralism and its dependence on preserving unity and cohesion. Managing this effectively is a *sine qua non* for the dominant party's ability to maintain dominance, for it guarantees the party's continuing inclusiveness, coherence (by means of effective mediation of intra-party factional conflict) and responsiveness (minimising the social distance between the party's governing cadres and mass base/organisation).⁷²⁷

In this regard, the differences between the two dominant parties are most obvious. For the Indian Congress system, factionalism provided the prime ordering mechanism for the dominant party in its effort to be responsive to social change and to remain broadly representative (while at the same time attracting new social strata). There was an extraordinary adherence to the rules guiding the management of internal pluralism on both sides, factional subgroups (at lower levels) and the (national) leadership stratum. This adherence arose not out of some moral commitment but out of a mutual give-and-take and self-interest in keeping the terrain of conflict, perceptible, and the rewards/sanctions for actions, predictable (and the perception that a more top-down leadership style would deprive the party of its flexibility and responsiveness, Kaviraj (1984: 237)).⁷²⁸ It was manifest in the intricate power balance or 'stratarchic' mode of intra-party conflict resolution and interests articulation (described in 4.3.), which was most visible in centre-States and ministerial wing-organisational wing relations and in the high degree of elite turnover.

It is interesting to note (at more length) how two of the most prominent and astute Indian political scientists, of entirely different theoretical provenance, came to strikingly similar conclusions with regard to this prominent but 'contained' role of factionalism within the INC. Thus, Kothari (1976b: 16) made the following assessment from a liberal, structural-functionalist perspective:

"(...) it is necessary to grasp the logic of the Indian model of politics that emerged in the first twenty years of independence out of the twin facts of a highly diverse social structure and its territorial spread, on the one hand, and the need to provide a framework of consensus and integration to carry out the major tasks facing the country. The model had two interrelated aspects: a structure of governance which allowed for an

⁷²⁷ Apart from the fact that an effective internal pluralism is a prerequisite for competitiveness and accountability in a system of one-party-dominance.

⁷²⁸ It is necessary here to note that, for example, even if one takes Nehru's attitude as reflecting more altruistic principles ('of serving the nation'), it was also based on a rationale of maximising utilities ('the need for an electorally dominant, powerful INC as agent of change').

authoritative exercise of power (...) and a wide and diffuse sharing of power at various levels which legitimized such a structure of authority and made it responsive to the diverse needs and demands of the population (...) The “system” that emerged out of such a structure of participation (...) continued to enjoy widespread acceptance (...) it worked and worked rather well for almost two decades (...) And central to its success was one key factor: the ability of the operators of the system to understand its logic and their willingness to play it out.”

Kaviraj (1984: 237), one of the most prominent representatives of neo-Marxist writing on Indian politics, shares the basic understanding of Kothari:

“In the Nehru era, although the Congress was too predominant electorally to be concerned about [political, C.S.] risks, its internal structure did call for such rules [of constitutionalism, C.S.]. The Congress was inhabited by such discordant ideological tendencies and social interests that its internal politics required some minimal trust, which could be secured by an implicit adherence to norms. The heterogeneity of the Congress made it necessary to work by some abstract, general, impersonal principles. For example, the principle of the majority decision usually went in favour of the modernist elite at the central levels of the Congress organisation; but equally frequently it went in favour of the landed elites in the provinces/states. In these circumstances, the Congress functioned by a miraculous balance of forces; the social or class divisions were reflected with almost linear directness in its spatial and structural characteristics (...) a functioning by fiat from the top, very largely the rule since the early seventies, would have been insupportable. The majority rule (...) was accepted as a shared institutional practice not because of its overwhelming Lockean rationality, but because it randomised victory well enough to be acceptable to both factions or both sets of interests.”

In South Africa the case is different. Although the ANC has so far succeeded in retaining its broad-church character (publicly and rhetorically it is still the ‘parliament of the people’) and has institutionalised factionalism to some extent in the form of the tripartite alliance, the discussion in 4.4. has shown that the party holds an increasingly less benevolent attitude towards intra-party factionalism, putting a strong emphasis on intra-party centralisation and discipline and basically imposing a top-down leadership style. Practicing a pattern of ‘deployment and redeployment’ of candidates and personnel (served by the list system of PR),

policy-making by fiat, the stifling of dissent at party conferences (plus the growing sensitiveness with censure from the press), the pursuit of a distinct cadre policy, or the containment of provincial autonomy within the party and the neglect of local branches are all signs of a growing fear of the party's, once propagated, diversity and of a departure from the party's catch-all and pluralist origins (Southall 1998: 446). Moreover, this intra-party centralisation has its parallels within parliament and the state, most notably seen in the curtailment of parliamentary accountability and the imposition of administrative and financial discipline upon the provincial governments (*ibid.*).

Again, as in the case of the dominant party's 'organisational mainstreaming', the oligarchic tendencies and the emphasis on centralisation and party discipline are not beyond rationality.

The ANC's alliance base and the fact that each constituent has preserved its own identity and independent structure make it much more vulnerable to serious internal contradictions and splits than was the case with the INC. Strong ideological factions and the national character of party competition in South Africa counteract the dispersion and containment of conflict sites. The dependence on, and requirements of, performance and delivery (against the backdrop of actual limits to the pursuit of patronage politics) make it appear advisable to stress party unity and central authority for the sake of efficient decision-making (including painful economic choices).⁷²⁹

However, denying a fair degree of autonomy to the party's (provincial and local) sublevels, factional substructure and activist base can easily bounce back. A similar process of centralisation took place under Indira Gandhi's reign of the INC, when personal loyalty replaced independent and diverse sources of support and a top-down leadership style and decision-making emerged as a substitute for the 'stratarchy-model' of intra-party conflict regulation. This process brought to an end the working of the Congress system and eventually also terminated the INC's electoral dominance. The catch-all, factionalised nature of the dominant party proving to be a prerequisite for continued dominance.

Finally, with regard to the last aspect of party agency in the maintenance of one-party-dominance, state-party collusion and patronage, the case is relatively clear-cut. Both the INC and ANC attempted and were/are successful in blurring the line between party and the state (an attempt which is based on the rationale that criticisms of the dominant party's authority can be characterised as conspirational resistance to social transformation and that the

⁷²⁹ The tradition of the ANC's and the SACP's ideological commitment to an organisational policy of 'democratic centralism' may be added as another reason for the emphasis on centralisation and discipline but is probably less influential given the relative ease with which both turned their ideas about macro-economic policy upside down.

anticipation of patronage prospects to a great extent determines voting behaviour and hampers opposition realignment). However, different methods did prevail in the two regional contexts, with the INC relying more on attitudinal patterns inherent in a then, largely traditional society and on the primacy of the state and executive office in all areas of social and economic life, and the ANC depending more on the deployment of party loyalists into positions of power (especially in the bureaucracy), a moral (historical-ideological) claim to governmental authority and media campaigning. This is so because the scope for the ANC to use patronage politics is clearly limited, compared to that of the INC, due to the state's ever diminishing role in economic/developmental affairs and the unavailability of comparable (clientelist) traditional institutions and networks.

In sum, although the ANC has proven to be flexible and capable of reacting to the different contextual parameters of post-apartheid South Africa's political opportunity structure, following similar but 'modified' lines of party agency as in post-independent India, the differences in party agency, as discussed above (and summarised in table 31), hint at a potentially different (and less benign) trajectory for South Africa's party system. If the ANC is to try and consolidate and maintain dominance over the electorate, polity and society, the party leadership will have to realise the need for, as well as exercise, a similar strategic judgement, pragmatism and adaptability⁷³⁰ as the INC did in post-independent India (Friedman 1999c: 125).⁷³¹ As Friedman (ibid. 126) notes, “ (...) [i]f it succeeds [in doing so, C.S.] while remaining within the parameters of constitutional democracy, its dominance will be richly deserved.” The contextual differences (including, a 'pact-driven' transition, intersection of race and class division, dependence on the domestic business sector and the pressures of a globalised international political economy, unavailability of state interventionism and comparable clientelist networks and institutions, the dominant party's alliance character and the strength of civil society and associational life in South Africa acting as a countervailing force to the dominant party's control over the electorate) and differences in party agency already mentioned, suggest that there is less scope for the ANC to rely on the

⁷³⁰ Above all, in terms of preserving the dominant party's catch-all nature and profile, a more benevolent attitude towards factionalism/internal pluralism, a greater effort at mobilisation at lower levels (caring about local and regional level party organisation), a more tolerant attitude towards the opposition, a greater adherence to constitutional norms and a more participatory stance of intra-party decision-making.

⁷³¹ That this is a difficult task is most visible from the fact that the ruling elite under Indira Gandhi reacted in a similar way and manner as the ANC in the face of structural fragmentation and waning popular support. Under her leadership the INC witnessed greater centralisation, rigidity and an increasingly authoritarian style of leadership culminating in the emergency. As Graves (1967: 878) diagnosed the rationality of the steps taken: “As the struggles among the political substructures became more intense and in the face of massive discontent and opposition, the ruling elite [under Indira, C.S.] opted for a tactic [of declaring the emergency, C.S.] they thought could be easily rationalized. Although not a decision which necessarily was in the interest of preserving the party system, it did seem the one most likely to preserve their personal positions of power.”

same strategies employed by the INC and that it will strive for the maintenance of dominance at the risk of doing away with the party's and polity's democratic nature and credentials, contributing to a shift from a system of one-party-dominance to a hegemonic party system.

In terms of prospects, three other scenarios based on the Indian experience of post-one-party-dominance development are possible to emerge in the South African context as well. Tensions within the ruling ANC-led tripartite alliance may foreshadow a split in the dominant party (or a breakaway of the alliance's trade union component, COSATU, along similar lines as in the case of recent development in Zimbabwe), as was the case with the INC in 1969. Under Indira the INC was able to consolidate electoral dominance once again, albeit through different strategies that neither restored the mechanisms and qualities of the 'old' Congress system, nor exerted a similar 'benign' function. A leftwing contender of the ANC, harping on a similar ideological programme and relying to some extent on the same clientele, would make a return to a system of one-party-dominance even more difficult and unlikely (Friedman 1999c).

Another scenario could be the regionalisation of the South African party system along the Indian pattern. Signs of a conflict between national leadership and provincial ANC cadres stemming from a neglect of the provinces by the upper echelons of the party are already visible, and remind one of the clashes between the INC's governing elite and the 'Syndicate'. Additionally, the demographic distribution within South Africa allows for the materialisation of differing patterns of party competition in the provinces (especially in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) and the emergence of sub-national tendencies. However, almost all of my South African interview partners were convinced that the 'national character' of party competition in South Africa, the 'weakness' of the provincial system and the reluctance of ANC leadership to grant more autonomy to its provincial and local units are likely to impede such a development.

The final and most dangerous scenario could be the turning of the ANC's leadership towards a kind of enforced and sustained centralisation of the dominant party and the state and the pursuit of populist politics as exercised by Indira Gandhi, based on the need to accommodate and mobilise the rural poor and unemployed in order to uphold control over the electorate.⁷³²

⁷³² As Butler (2003: 106-107) notes however, "(...) while analysts have explored the potential for urban populist opposition, we do not know very much about the too-easily assumed control of the ANC over the political allegiance of the rural poor. The social forces that can destroy or sustain democracy often lie in the countryside, a fact overlooked by most contemporary democratization scholars. While the black middle class and organized labour each has a strong voice in the movement, the far larger constituencies of the rural unemployed, the informally employed, the old, and – increasingly – the AIDS-victims, have little leverage. Macroeconomic conservatism precludes large-scale rural patronage; public service delivery has run aground beyond the towns; rural job creation is a lost cause; and the political fallout of the AIDS pandemic remains difficult to predict. The unusual political sophistication of South Africa's rural areas at the same time militates strongly against the

This brings us to the last dimension of party system examined in this study, the effects and functions of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts (see tables 33 and 34 below). With regard to the basic functions (governmental stability and societal inclusion) one-party-dominance in a sense, has acted as a 'safeguard' in different ways for the two young polities' post-independent/post-apartheid rationale. Visible from their respective choice of the electoral system, emphasis was either put on governmental stability or societal inclusion depending on the underlying rationale. Whereas the Westminster-style SMSP/first-past-the-post electoral system, as it operates in India, is said to explicitly favour government stability (and to largely neglect a 'fair' or proportional reflection of the electorate's social make-up), the rationality behind the closed-list PR system in South Africa (the 'purest' of its kind) is clearly biased towards societal representativeness at the (potential) expense of government stability. One could argue now that these contrasting (and often contradicting) principles of representative democracy and their concomitant rules of decision - a winner-takes-it all logic of electoral competition and a rule where the respective vote share is decisive -, have been balanced out by the nature of the two countries' party system. The doom-mongers who contend that ANC dominance in South Africa has distorted the intended effect of PR should be aware that one-party-dominance has ensured against a potentially fragile multi-party democracy. Likewise, the post-hoc analysts, who lament the ideologically eclectic, accommodative, factional and clientelist nature of the post-independent INC, whose dominance was overwhelmingly based on 'manufactured majorities' as a result of the 'unfair' SMSP/FTPT electoral system, should keep in mind that this very nature of the dominant party has shielded against a (potential) exertion and excess of a mere majoritarianism. Of course, no system of one-party-dominance is immune to the excesses of a dominant party using its relatively 'safe' position of power to abandon its democratic underpinnings and/or to narrow or close the intermediary channels between the state and society (which, in any case, would undermine the (legitimate) basis of its dominance) or to fall prey to illusions of the putative benefits of (more) populist politics (as was the case in India under Indira Gandhi). The deviations of the South African context from the Indian pattern (the trend towards imposing strict party discipline, a centralised approach to political mobilisation, a generally less sensitive attitude towards societal interests and social change) may have serious consequences in that regard.

In terms of the additional functions, of conflict-management and 'modernisation', the configuration of the Indian Congress system and its mode of operation (informal power-sharing arrangements, defusing of cleavages and devolution of conflict sites, a distinct

effectiveness of consolatory populist racial appeals. As the centre is merely forced to shore up its support beyond the cities, this will in itself further strain the ANC's labour and urban alliances."

bargaining culture and the greatest possible representativeness of the dominant party arising out of electoral dominance and the party's catch-all, accommodative nature) clearly contributed to a low salience of social/ethnic conflicts and cleavages.

In contrast, the cleavage-based nature of the South African party system, and the fact that elected candidates are less representative of their respective (minority) communities despite the appearance of greater power-sharing institutional arrangements conducive to co-operative dominant party-opposition parties relations, are evidence of the dominant party's less accommodative and decentralised nature. This very nature of the dominant party may prove to be less benign for the future containment of ethnic/social conflict. Though the highlighting of the racial cleavage has performed a benign function with regard to the containment of intra-African ethnic conflict, this may not continue to be the case in the future. So far the pragmatism of the dominant party in inter-party relations has prevented the high potential for conflicts from aggregating to the national level. The less accommodative and less decentralised nature of the ANC may also prove to be responsible for policy-making that is less informed by societal needs and interests, the enhancement of the party's capacity for policy innovation notwithstanding. The case was different with the INC, whose accommodative approach to political mobilisation catered to the most powerful groups and demands and to the concerns of the local party leadership and elite and still produced policies (however tardily implemented – if at all) that responded to social developmental needs and the growing aspirations (and discontent) of disaffected rural and urban groups.

With regard to the two party systems' contribution to democratic consolidation the differences in party agency and the political opportunity structure, discussed above, are again decisive. The Congress system first of all by accommodating (and serving) the interests of the dominant classes and elites reduced the incentive for these elites to defect from the nascent democratic bargain (until a process of democratic habituation had set in).⁷³³ Simultaneously it also created incentives for participation and the advancement of new entrants to formations of privilege (such as the middle peasants) and of the periphery.⁷³⁴ This helped to contain distributive struggles or, rather conferred a largely transactional and non-cumulative nature upon distributive demands, preventing these struggles from aggregating to the national level,

⁷³³ The transitions literature contends that the calculation made by dominant classes and elites as to whether democratic rule is tolerable is the foremost precondition for a successful establishment of democracy in the early stages of democratic transition.

⁷³⁴ 'Periphery' has to be understood here in a two-fold sense as 'hinterland' (formation and accommodation of regional aspirations, e.g. the gradual ascendance to power of the DMK) and as a social category (encompassing the "(...) depressed classes, scheduled and backward castes, tribals and so forth", which were linked to the political centre as represented by the dominant party, Kothari 1976a: 321).

Table 33: Ideal-type (benign) effects and functions of one-party-dominance

Spheres of impact to be considered	Relevant characteristics of one-party-dominance	Rationale and manifestation of impact	Result
The basic functions: governmental stability and societal inclusion	Clear majorities, factional sub-structure and a concomitant ‘openness’ of the dominant party in terms of recruitment and interaction with opposition, the dominant party’s catch-all rationale and legitimate status, the dominant party’s need for progressive expansion-selective mobilisation, accommodative approach to political mobilisation, state-party collusion	Accommodative approach facilitates incorporation of social elites and the ‘politics of entry’, elite-mass integration, pervasive factionalism encourages mobilisation, ‘taming’ of anti- system parties and forces, circumventing the potential fragility inherent in coalition-building, opposition has a stake in the political system	Provision of government stability and societal inclusion, no overpartitisation, no intermediary vacuum
The additional functions: conflict-management and modernisation	Electoral dominance provides enough latitude to accommodate societal demands, the dominant party’s pragmatic attitude towards mobilisation, cross-cutting coalitional character of the dominant party, the dominant party’s broad and decentralised nature, ‘open’ recruitment patterns, catch-all rationale and transformative agenda, state-party collusion	Depolarising society’s cleavage structure, transcending ideologies and class/ethnic differences, preponderance of consensual-accommodative patterns of conflict-resolution, devolution of conflict sites, politicisation, mechanisms of change and elite turnover, incorporation of new social strata, anticipatory policies of social transformation	Conflicts not cumulative, development of conflict-management skills, bargaining culture, policy innovation, adaptation to social change
The actor’s perception of the democratic game: resilience versus uncertainty	Organisational, mobilisational and ideological asymmetry of the party system, the dominant party’s need to retain its catch-all image and its capacity to ‘afford’ accommodation of (almost) all elite sections, no electoral uncertainty, the dominant party’s necessary dual strategy of promoting transformation nationally and relying on entrepreneurial mobilisation at lower levels, state-party collusion	Elites’ perception of a ‘chance’ to protect and advance their interests and to contain distributive struggles, mass perception of ‘points of entry’ into political decision-making and of worthwileness of interest articulation, no perception of politics as a zero-sum-game, distributive demands are dispersed, fed with hopes and/or are partially met	Positive elite and mass evaluation of democratic procedures and rules, process of democratic habituation gaining momentum
Democracy and development as two sides of the same coin: combined development versus developmental state	Long-term, dominant-party rule arising out of a democratically reached consensus, the dominant party’s need to build, maintain and to accommodate broad cross-cleavage coalitions	Provision of greater coherence, continuity and autonomy of decision-making, greater public good orientation by virtue of the dominant party’s coalitional, accommodative and catch-all rationale	Combined development conducive to the launching of a democratic process of development, potential emergence of a democratic developmental state

from transcending into ideological battles and, eventually, from spinning out of control.⁷³⁵ Thus, the foundations for a democratic mass culture were laid.

It has to be doubted whether a similar result or stabilising effect would have been obtained under the conditions of a two-party system (e.g. between a left-of-centre Congress and a (Hindu) right-wing party) or a fragile multi-party system, if no dominant centrist party had been available to contain the fluidity and entropy inherent in party politics in changing societies (at least in the crucial stages of early democratisation). The long-term inability of opposition parties to form a viable alternative to the INC points in the direction of a possible answer.

In light of the Indian experience, the signs of a waning democratic commitment of the ANC, described in 4.3., and the survey evidence suggesting that a democratic mass culture is far from entrenched in South Africa, raise doubts about the potential of the country's party system performing a benign function in the process of democratic consolidation. Given that the South African one-party-dominant system is so dependent on (economic) performance and the differences to the Congress system in terms of context (institutional incentive structure, nature of economy and socio-structural givens), nature of the party system (class-compromise vs. clientelist linkage mechanisms and factional bargaining), direction of party agency (centralisation vs. decentralised accommodation) and the ability to contain distributive struggles, this is of particular concern.

Finally, in terms of the two party system's effect on socio-economic development the findings have been more ambiguous. Taking together the two arguments put forward in 4.4. (the potential provision of greater coherence and autonomy of decision-making by a system of one-party-dominance in the context of changing societies and the greater public good orientation by virtue of the dominant party's coalitional, accommodative and catch-all rationale), it was argued that one-party-dominance is a crucial precondition for a changing society to launch a democratic developmental trajectory (or at least a much better point of departure than a two- or multi-party system). Furthermore, it was posited that the negative post-hoc assessments of India's developmental (and, to a lesser extent, democratic) record and the pessimism about South Africa's political and developmental future is more due to a

⁷³⁵ This impact of and the mechanisms inherent in the post-independent Indian party system have to be considered as much more important to the development of the country's democratic resilience than any rhetoric commitment to democracy as reiterated in the Congress party manifesto at election times, though the final sentence of the following quote unmasks the awareness that the adherence to democratic rules is seen as a strategic device as well. "The basic objectives of the Congress, it must be repeated, are democracy and socialism and the methods have to be peaceful. We have to adhere to peaceful methods not only because they are in tune with India's thinking (...), but also because only thus can we maintain the unity and integrity of India, and not waste our substance in internecine conflicts" (INC 1957: 7).

neglect of the contradictions inherent in democratic development or, for that matter, the double transition referred to in the beginning of chapter 5, than to the putative (liberal and developmental) flaws of one-party-dominance. The assessment in 4.4., which took these contradictions more seriously into account, came to the conclusion that the Indian approach of a ‘combined development’ was an appropriate one to tackle the dilemma of democratic development in the Indian context even though it impeded the emergence of a democratic developmental state (and thus did not produce spectacular growth rates).⁷³⁶ However, a similar approach is simply not available in the South African context where there is an urgent need for a transformative compromise as outlined in 4.4..

Table 34: Synoptic view of effects and functions of one-party-dominance in the two regional contexts

Spheres of impact	Relevant characteristics of one-party-dominance	Rationale and manifestation of impact	Result
The basic functions: governmental stability and societal inclusion	<u>India</u> : clear INC majorities nation-wide, electoral dominance tied to politicisation (party identification) and accommodation of support base, pervasive factionalism and ‘openness’ for opposition, localised and compensatory mobilisation, executive dominance, ‘bottom-up’ recruitment	<u>India</u> : electoral dominance allowed to control factional infighting, low volatility-high turnout, ‘politics of entry’ and centripetal party competition, ‘appeasement’ of vested interests, ‘partyness’ of political competition, declining role for independents, parties as gatekeepers to political power but open to individual advancement	<u>India</u> : effective government formation up to 1967 - decline in governmental stability from 1967 onwards (increase in defections from 1967 onwards), party system institutionalisation, societal inclusion and decline of anti-system forces, elite-mass integration, centrality of parties as intermediary institutions, forging of strong state-society linkages
	<u>South Africa</u> : clear ANC electoral dominance-governmental dominance after 1996, dominance less tied to politicisation and accommodation of support base , ‘mixed’ strategy of interaction with opposition, closing ranks for internal pluralism, centralised mobilisation, corporatism as a device for societal inclusion , executive dominance, ‘top-down’ recruitment	<u>South Africa</u> : electoral dominance allowed to restructure national executive and to provide continuity in office, low volatility-high turnout (recently declining), less ‘politics of entry’ but centripetal party competition, corporatism to bind vested interests, ‘partyness’ of political competition, no role for independents, parties as gatekeepers to political power but less open to individual advancement	<u>South Africa</u> : ANC dominance facilitated initial power-sharing arrangement and smooth functioning of government formation after 1996, party system institutionalisation, decline of anti-system forces, less elite-mass integration but potential to bind vested interests by corporatist means , centrality of parties but weak state-society linkages , latent threat of overpartitisation and intermediary vacuum

⁷³⁶ It is only in the context of democratic development, not development as such, that the Congress system’s impact can be considered as ‘benign’. As White (1998:24) notes, “(...) democracies are legitimised not by their performance, but by their procedures, whereas it is one of the inherent weaknesses of authoritarian regimes that they have to derive legitimacy from their performance and are thus vulnerable to economic downturns.”

<p>The additional functions: conflict-management and modernisation</p>	<p><u>India</u>: informal power-sharing at the national level and politics of accommodation at lower levels, democratic intra-party candidate selection, pragmatic intra-/inter-party federal bargaining, consociational policies, government-party organisation competition, open recruitment patterns ('vertical faction chains')</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: institutional base for power-sharing but display of power-sharing only (consociational party list nominations but low representativeness of candidates), less accom-modative and decentralised mobilisation, highlighting of one overarching cleavage, pragmatic inter-party bargaining, no consociational policies, alliance base of the dominant party, subsidiary role of party organisation, less devolution of power and decision-making, 'national' nature of ANC dominance</p>	<p><u>India</u>: greatest possible representativeness of the INC, incorporation of minorities, defusing of cleavages, devolution of conflict sites, development of a distinct bargaining culture, high degree of elite turnover, ever shifting leadership coalitions, low allegiance intensity, 'coalition of the whole' in times of crisis, responsiveness to societal interests</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: ANC largely representative of African majority, 'sense of community' of the ANC's core constituency, less accommodation of minorities, emphasis of racial cleavage, less devolution of conflict sites, development of a transactional bargaining culture, less participatory nature of policy-formulation, less 'infrastructural power', policy-making by fiat, availability of programmatic alternatives</p>	<p><u>India</u>: low salience of social or ethnic conflicts, no (clear) cleavage base of the party system nationally, low level of riots (increasing after 1967), national integration, peaceful adjustment of conflicts, reactive and anticipatory potential of the INC in terms of policy innovation (but lag in implementation) 'cushioning' of the impact of social change,</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: less political violence, cleavage-based party system, containment of intra-African conflicts but high potential for conflicts to aggregate to the national level, capacity for policy innovation but policy-making less informed by societal needs and interests</p>
<p>The actor's perception of the democratic game: resilience vs. uncertainty</p>	<p><u>India</u>: INC's organisational, mobilisational (and ideological) dominance, centrist outlook and catch-all rationale of the INC, local and regional factional/patronage networks, accommodation of dominant classes social elites, positive discrimination, state interventionism</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: mobilisational and ideological dominance, less organisational dominance, low level of electoral uncertainty, class-compromise nature of ANC dominance, primarily interaction with organised sections of society, less reliance on clientelist linkage mechanisms and factional bargaining, emphasis on corporatist bargaining, increasingly centralist approach to party organisation and political decision-making</p>	<p><u>India</u>: defenders and challengers of status quo could have a stake in the representational system, no fear of losing privilege, dispersed elite bargaining, opportunity for new entrants to formations of privilege, no disillusionment with participation, provision of democratically sustained 'breathing room', stable set of (economic) expectations</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: stable set of expectations facilitates elite pacts and grants a democratically sustained 'breathing room' but elite bargaining more transparent and less dispersed, no drastic change of social privilege, less societal participation in (economic) decision-making, growing disillusionment with participation, less accommodation of society at large</p>	<p><u>India</u>: neither reactionary nor revolutionary attempts to overthrow party-based democracy, elite perception of the appropriateness and 'profitability' of the nascent democratic bargain, public perception of the effectiveness of party-based democracy and of the value of participation (democratic habituation)</p> <p><u>South Africa</u>: general commitment to the principle of representative democracy, elite and mass perception of a need for democratic governance, predominant performance based perception of democracy, signs of waning democratic commitment of the dominant party, democratic mass culture far from entrenched, potential for distributive struggles to aggregate to the national level</p>

Democracy and development as two sides of the same coin: combined development vs. developmental state	<u>India</u> : catch-all, cross-cleavage rationale of the INC, prolonged and uninterrupted electoral and governmental INC dominance, INC's dependence on interest accommodation at the local and regional level, the INC's consensually unified national elite	<u>India</u> : continuity and (relative) relative autonomy of national economic planning, selective accommodation of rising expectations, national public good orientation, dispersion of distributive demands, compensatory strategy of 'combined development'	<u>India</u> : no explosive growth rates, incremental growth, democratically sustained development, low level of deprivation, effective mediation of development strategy, no emergence of a democratic developmental state
	<u>South Africa</u> : prolonged and uninterrupted electoral and governmental ANC dominance, ANC dominance based on class-compromise and pacted elite agreement, less reliance on clientelist linkage mechanisms and factional substructures, less reliance on state interventionism	<u>South Africa</u> : capacity to impose 'unpopular' economic policies, state autonomy and public good orientation compromised by elite dependency, confinement of accommodation to 'organised' interests of society, no dispersion of distributive demands	<u>South Africa</u> : Incremental growth, development approach less socially endorsed, no emergence of a democratic developmental state, unavailability of a strategy of 'combined development', need for a transformative compromise

The overall picture from the preceding comparison and discussion is one of the Indian Congress system providing a benign function with regard to, what is a party system's crucial role and contribution to democratic consolidation, the provision of governmental stability, societal inclusion, conflict-management and, to a lesser extent, policy innovation and democratic development. Likewise, ANC dominance (based on a coherent tripartite alliance) has surely benefited and facilitated governmental stability, party system institutionalisation, the containment of intra-African ethnic conflict, democratic consolidation and the taking of painful and unpopular decisions with regard to macro-economic policy. However, if the potential benefits or, the 'lessons' of the Indian experience of one-party-dominance, the catch-all, accommodative, internally pluralist nature of the dominant party and the openly collaborative dominant party-opposition relations marked by consensus and compromise within and between parties, are not being recognised and realised by the ANC, the popular scope and legitimacy of its dominance will inevitably erode and dominant party rule will, in all probability, take a turning towards a (more hegemonic/authoritarian and) less benign development.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁷ For example, as Friedman (1999c: 125) notes, "(...) an attempt to silence the ANC left could prompt its withdrawal from the ANC camp and, therefore, a significant threat to its dominance: this point applies with equal or more force to an attempt to silence the trade union movement." The tendency within the ANC to stifle internal dissent (see 4.3.) stands in stark contrast to the way the INC leadership, during the Congress system, handled internal dissent and pluralism. As Varshney describes the INC leadership-style taking Nehru as representing the post-independent generation of political leaders for the sake of analytical convenience: "When his [Nehru's, C.S.] colleagues in the Congress party disagreed with him on key policies or programs (proposed agricultural cooperatives, the reorganization of states along linguistic lines, the role of the public sector in the industrialization drive), Nehru did not expel the dissenters, but let the intraparty forums resolve the dispute. When the courts turned down his land-reform program on grounds that the right to property was a fundamental tenet of the Constitution, he did not attack the judiciary itself. Rather, he went through the constitutionally provided amendment process, seeking the approval of two-thirds of parliament and a majority of the state legislatures in order to gain the authority he needed to enact his plan. Nehru did not appoint state-level party chiefs or state chief ministers, leaving them to be elected instead by the local Congress party units in each state."

There are of course contextual features that prevent the ANC as dominant party from following exactly the same strategies employed by the INC such as the large-scale state-interventionism-based patronage or a great reliance on clientelist linkage mechanisms. Other party agentive factors and means however, such as a more benevolent attitude towards factionalism/internal pluralism or the pursuit of a more decentralised and participatory approach to party organisation (granting more autonomy to lower levels), policy determination and state-party relations could be accomplished with relative ease and would even further the party's dominance.

If, at such an early stage, the ANC is following in the footsteps of Indira Gandhi and continues to centralise authority within the party and the state, to stifle internal dissent, to lessen its catch-all rationale and to blur the line between party and state in too extreme a way and manner (largely as a result of a perceived growing threat to its dominance and a perceived need to strive for more effective governance and thus easily rationalised but inherently detrimental to the very base and nature of its dominance and status as a dominant party in a representative democracy), the end of a 'true' (democratic) system of one-party-dominance is rather foreordained. The democratic 'breathing room' granted through a system of one-party-dominance may in this case be too short to exert a 'benign effect' in terms of the establishment of a solid democratic base.

In conclusion, with regard to hypothesis 1 outlined in the introduction, the preceding has clearly shown that party agency is a crucial parameter of party system formation and development and that it is especially relevant in the context of one-party-dominance in changing societies. Neither institutional, nor socio-structural determinants or any kind of 'historical legacy' explanatory approach can elucidate why, for 20 years and more, no opposition party in post-independent India was able to gain national stature, no opposition party existed with a powerful electoral support base in more than five States, and why the ANC continues to dominate the South African party system in the context of a democratic competitive environment, despite the country's socio-cultural diversity, the existence of rival liberation movements and several powerful and well-equipped political parties right after the transition to democratic party competition, an electoral system of proportional representation and a far from impressive record of economic performance after 1994. The 'historical legacy' approach may explain the overwhelming electoral success of a liberation movement turned government party right after the inception of a new post-colonial/post-apartheid polity and the transition to democracy, whereas the two former explanatory approaches would have

predicted a different, even contradictory trajectory of the two regional contexts' party system, see 1.5.).

Party agency and strategy, as this study has shown, are the crucial elements that make institutions, cleavage structure and individuals interact and were clearly the most decisive factors in the shaping of the two regional contexts' systems of one-party-dominance. Therefore, a proper consideration of 'party agency' on the lines of the analytical framework put forward in this study should be part and parcel of any analysis of party systems in changing societies and especially of any analysis dealing with systems of one-party-dominance for this kind of party system is especially prone to manipulation 'from above'. In this sense, the study is also a *riposte* to all those who claim that 'parties or, for that matter, party agency, do(es) not matter'.

With regard to the second hypothesis, the potentially benign effect of a system of one-party-dominance on democratisation, national integration and democratic development in the crucial period of post-colonial/post-apartheid democratic transition and consolidation, the findings of this study confirm the hypothesised correlation. However, this was only against the backdrop of the Indian experience and the distinct qualities and structural principles that the Congress system possessed which were broken down under Indira and are currently being increasingly abandoned by the ANC in South Africa.

In addition, the benign effect of a system of one-party-dominance hinges especially upon the hypothesised positive correlation between dominant party rule and the consolidation of the nascent democratic bargain, a crucial prerequisite for all the other areas of impact that a party system can have and that are dealt with in this study. It is, in any case, a *sine qua non* for the achievement and maintenance of one-party-dominance (for if democratic essentials were not maintained, the phenomenon of one-party-dominance would become largely irrelevant since this study has argued that it makes sense to use this categorisation only of democratic systems).

The study therefore accords with Giliomee and Simkins' argument (1999a: 45, see quotation at the beginning of chapter 5) that the democratic credentials of a system of one-party-dominance ultimately depend upon the democratic commitment of the dominant party's leadership. However, it denies that one-party-dominance may exert a benign function as regards democratic consolidation in changing societies as a result of some sort of altruistic commitment on behalf of the leaders. Rather, the argument put forward is that it is rational behaviour. Aware that the own party's dominant position is relatively secure, leads party leaders to respect and value democratic principles and procedures. If this is to happen (for

reasons elaborated in chapter 5), a process of habituation sets in eventually leading to a perception of democracy as an intrinsic value in itself and thus rendering a more authoritarian alternative rather unlikely.

One-party-dominance in post-independent India and the INC elites' use of their strategic skills to secure their party's dominance in the way and manner described in chapters 3 and 4 were thus prerequisites for the country's democratic development. Without these prerequisites, the democratic commitment of the post-independent national elites would not have taken root and the room to manoeuvre would have been unavailable. These two factors were however crucial. As Varshney (1998b: 48) notes,

“[r]ecent scholarly writing on democratization has discussed the post-transitional ‘honeymoon’, when new democratic leaders enjoy maximal freedom of action (...) Bold choices shaping new structures could be made. The democratic temper of India’s first-generation leaders contributed handsomely to building up the system’s democratic base. Once such a solid base was in place, it became hard completely to undermine the democratic edifice, as Mrs. Gandhi’s failure showed. Her attempt to centralize politics and suppress dissent in formal politics only led to a flowering of political activity in civil society, as groups feeling marginalized formed organizations outside the state and mobilized the people, thus exerting democratic pressure on the state.”

The party system configuration in South Africa may perform a similarly benign function but the current development of party agency concerned with preserving ANC dominance, points in another direction, that of a shift towards a more authoritarian, hegemonic party system. If this development continues, South Africa's future will look bleak.

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- Interview with Dr. Harish Khare, Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*, *INS-Building*, New Delhi, December 7, 2000.
- Interview with V.N. Malhotra, Public Relations Department, *All India Congress Committee*, New Delhi, December 18, 2000.
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South Africa:

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- Interview with R. W. Johnson, *Helen Suzman Foundation*, Johannesburg, June 15, 2001.

- Interview with Ebrahim Fakir, Senior Parliamentary Researcher, *Institute for Democracy in South Africa*, Cape Town, June 22, 2001.
- Interview with James Myburgh, Parliamentary Researcher, *Democratic Alliance*, Cape Town, June 21, 2001.
- Interview with Hennie Kotzé, Professor, Dept. of Political Science, *University of Stellenbosch*, Stellenbosch, June 27, 2001.
- Interview with Pierre du Toit, Professor, Dept. of Political Science, *University of Stellenbosch*, Stellenbosch, June 24, 2001.
- Interview with Herman Giliomee, former Professor, *University of Cape Town*, former President of the *South African Institute of Race Relations*, June 24, 2001.
- Interview with Dr. Ulrich Golaszinski, Resident Representative, *Friedrich-Ebert Foundation*, Johannesburg, June 12, 2001.
- Interview with Pascal Corbe, Researcher, *Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation*, Johannesburg, June 13, 2001.
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